



Manitoba Association of Women's Shelters Annual Report 2024-2025



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Land Acknowledgment

The Manitoba Association of Women's Shelters (MAWS) carries out its work on the original lands of the Anishinaabe, Ininew, Anishininew, Dakota and Dené Peoples, and the National Homeland of the Red River Métis.

We respect the Treaties that were made on these territories, we acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past and present, and we dedicate ourselves to moving forward in partnership with Indigenous communities in a spirit of reconciliation and collaboration.

Mission & Story

MAWS provides leadership and support for organizations working with those experiencing abuse, by identifying and addressing common areas of need, strengthening standard practices and increasing public awareness of domestic abuse.

The Manitoba Association of Women's Shelters Inc. (MAWS) is dedicated to providing a unified voice for those affected by all forms of gender-based violence (GBV) and to supporting Manitoba GBV prevention service providers.

MAWS was formed when family violence (FV) shelters across Manitoba began to work together in the 80s to improve services for those affected by interpersonal and family violence.

Today, MAWS members include all eleven provincially funded FV shelters in Manitoba, as well as associate members who work in the GBV prevention sector.

Values & Guiding Principles

Principles of Harm Reduction

Values + Beliefs that underpin Harm Reduction:

- **Strengths-Based:** Focusing on strengths first and foremost while acknowledging that there are areas of improvement.
- **Empowerment:** Affirming and supporting those who experience violence where they are at.
- **Dignity and Compassion:** Allowing those who experience violence to feel that their needs are met without judgment

Principles of Trauma-Informed Practice

Values + Beliefs that underpin Trauma-Informed Practice:

- **Safety:** Includes cultural safety and trauma safety.
- **Trust:** Developing relationships that foster trust.
- **Collaboration:** The belief that those who experience violence are experts in their own lives.
- **Empowerment:** Affirming where those who experience violence are, and empowering them to make decisions for their own lives.

Values & Guiding Principles

Principles of Intersectional Feminist Practice

Values + Beliefs that underpin Intersectional Feminism:

- Ensure that services meet the unique needs of those who experience violence and are reflective of their lived experience.
- Acknowledge the multiple identities of service users beyond that of "victim."
- The work of MAWS is to challenge patriarchal structures and misogyny.

Principles of Decolonization

Values + Beliefs that underpin Decolonized practice —

Acknowledge that:

- The experiences of those who experience violence are framed by settler colonialism and historical trauma.
- The result of settler colonialist policies is violence against Indigenous women, girls and members of the 2SLGBTQQIA community.
- That the work of shelters and MAWS is to be actively anti-racist.

Message from the Co-Chairs



Ang Braun & Helen Trudeau

Ang Braun & Helen Trudeau

As we reflect on this extraordinary year for the Manitoba Association of Women’s Shelters Inc. (MAWS), we do so with profound pride in our shared accomplishments and steadfast resolve to confront the enduring challenges that persist within the Gender-Based Violence (GBV) sector.

This fiscal year stands as a defining chapter in MAWS’ journey. We took a historic step forward by convening our first-ever Provincial and Federal Shelter Symposium in November 2024—an unprecedented gathering that united shelters across Manitoba and was sold out.

Funded through the National Action Plan in partnership with WAGE Manitoba and WAGE Canada, this landmark event brought together representatives from over 20 Manitoba family violence shelters to address common challenges, including fundraising constraints, mental health supports, shelter transfer processes, and Indigenous wellness strategies.

From this symposium emerged collaborative working groups committed to innovative, sector-wide problem-solving. Whether advancing shared databases for shelter availability or creating specialized transport teams, these initiatives embody the truth that systemic barriers demand collective action—solutions no single shelter could achieve in isolation.

Cultural Responsiveness & Training

This year deepened our commitment to culturally responsive service delivery. The knowledge shared during the Indigenous-focused sessions of our symposium—particularly the insights on culture shock and the profound trauma faced by Indigenous women transitioning between communities and shelters—has strengthened our resolve to decolonize our practices and to ensure that our services honour the diverse needs of the communities we serve.

Our continued partnership with Red River College on the Shelter Micro-Credential program remains an essential strategy in addressing persistent staffing challenges. In a sector marked by high turnover, such capacity-building initiatives are indispensable for maintaining consistent, high-quality care and the ability to address changing service user needs.

Expanding upon our cultural responsiveness framework, the Still I Rise Program—delivered in partnership with Elmwood Community Resource Centre—has emerged as a beacon of empowerment for racialized women confronting barriers to GBV services. Through intersectional needs assessments, strategic sector partnerships, and peer-support leadership training, this initiative fosters resilience, leadership, and a strengthened network of community supports.

Overcoming Barriers



Yet, even as we celebrate these strides forward, we cannot turn away from the escalating crisis before us. Chronic underfunding continues to leave critical service gaps, while the complexity of client needs grows in scope and urgency. Rates of gender-based violence are climbing, and wraparound supports remain especially scarce in northern and remote regions.

Our Survivor Advisory Group has underscored urgent concerns regarding accessibility for individuals with disabilities—reminding us of our need to ensure that no one, regardless of circumstance, is left without support.

The Road Ahead

Guided by our strategic priorities—strengthening shelter executive leadership, amplifying advocacy and awareness, and influencing funding and policy—MAWS remains unwavering in our role as the unified voice for GBV shelters in Manitoba. From engaging with legislative frameworks to forging local partnerships, our advocacy is anchored in the pursuit of equitable funding and transformative policy change.

We continue to equip our member shelters with essential infrastructure, including robust database management and HR support. These systems enable us to measure impact, identify emerging trends, and advocate with the strength of evidence-based insight.

Above all, the work that is being done to enhance trauma-informed and inclusive service models practiced in our shelters reflect our deepest commitment: that every individual seeking refuge will be met with dignity, respect, and culturally grounded care.

A Call to Action

The overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in violence statistics, the alarming rates of family violence, and the urgent strain on shelter capacity—driven in part by the shortage of affordable housing—are not just statistics. They are powerful reminders of the work still before us and of our shared responsibility to create lasting change.

This is a moment to stand together. To listen deeply. To honour lived experience. To strengthen partnerships, mobilize resources, and embrace bold, creative solutions that grow our sector's ability to protect, support, and uplift.

Together, we can build a future where safety is not earned, but ensured—where every person affected by gender-based violence is met with compassion, culturally grounded care, and the unwavering support they need to heal and thrive.

Provincial Coordinator's Report



Dear Stakeholders & Partners,

Before the first light touches the prairie sky, a quiet resilience is already at work.

It lives in the voices of survivors who choose to step forward. It flows through the hands of shelter staff who hold space for hope in its most fragile form. It moves in the determination of communities that refuse to turn away from injustice.

At MAWS, we believe change begins here—
in courage shared,
in knowledge passed,
in the unwavering belief that safety and dignity are not privileges, but rights.

The Manitoba Association of Women's Shelters Inc. (MAWS) stands strong in its role as a guiding force for change—working tirelessly toward the elimination of intimate partner, gender-based, and family violence. Our purpose goes beyond simply responding to crisis; we are here to inspire hope, strengthen resilience, and create pathways to safety and dignity for all.

Through advocacy, deep collaboration, and intentional support, we ensure that survivors, shelter staff, and community partners have the tools, knowledge, and connections they need not only to survive but to flourish.

Over the past year, we have celebrated significant milestones that address pressing challenges while laying the groundwork for lasting transformation. Among these are the continuation of the **Micro-credential Shelter Support Worker Program**, the successful hosting of Manitoba's first-ever **Shelter Symposium**, and the inaugural year of the **Transforming Workplaces Grant**, which fostered important bridges between service providers and the business community.

Each of these accomplishments reflects our commitment to innovation, sector strength, and sustainability—ensuring that help today leads to healing tomorrow.

Advocacy: Driving Change

We believe that safety and justice are not privileges – they are rights. This year, MAWS amplified its voice to influence policies and laws that protect survivors and hold systems accountable. **Highlights of our advocacy work include:**

- **Keira's Law & Clare's Law:** Partnering with community leaders, legislators, and policymakers to improve judicial responses to family violence, ensuring survivors are met with understanding, fairness, and protection.
- **Ankle Monitoring & Survivor EmpowerApp:** Advancing proactive safety measures that empower survivors and give communities better tools to prevent harm before it happens.
- **Legal Professionals Education:** Creating opportunities for intersectoral learning to deepen understanding of the survivor experience, fostering compassion, informed decision-making, and better legal outcomes for survivors.

Building Capacity & Partnerships

We know that real progress happens when knowledge flows freely, partnerships are nurtured, and silos are removed. This year brought important advancements in sector-wide learning and cross-sector cooperation:

- **Elmwood Resource Centre's "Still I Rise" Program:** Uplifting survivors through empowerment-focused workshops, community connections, and skill-building opportunities.
- **University of Manitoba RESOLVE's Traumatic Brain Injury Project:** Advancing research and awareness on the hidden impacts of brain injury in survivors of intimate partner violence, ensuring this often-overlooked issue receives the attention and resources it deserves.
- **Micro-Credential Program:** Equipping shelter staff with specialized expertise in trauma-informed care, legal advocacy, and sector leadership to better serve survivors with compassion and confidence.
- **Sector Symposium:** Bringing together experts, frontline workers, researchers, and policymakers to share best practices and innovative solutions for supporting survivors, service providers, families and communities.

Amplifying Our Voice

Meaningful change in the gender-based violence sector requires community-driven/culturally-responsive advocacy, strategic partnerships, and unwavering commitment to amplifying survivor voices. This year, we demonstrated the power of collective action through purposeful media outreach and cross-sector stakeholder collaboration:

- **Government Engagement:** Met with key officials, including Minister Fontaine, MLA Leah Gazan, and the Justice Minister, to advocate for critical issues such as funding gaps in the CAPC program, declaring IPV/GBV an epidemic, and expanding judicial training, resulting in concrete commitments and policy discussions.
- **Media Presence and Public Education:** Conducted extensive media interviews across CBC, CTV, Global News, CJOB, Multicultural, Winnipeg Free Press and La Liberté, effectively communicating shelter needs during Domestic Violence Awareness Month, responding to critical announcements about provincial strategies and funding and addressing challenges in our communities. In addition, we recorded a podcast episode addressing financial abuse.
- **Cross-Sector Partnership Development:** Built meaningful relationships with diverse stakeholders, including the Infinity Women's Secretariat of the Manitoba Métis Federation, Indigenous education leaders, Chambers of Commerce, Manitoba Association of Friendship Centres, newcomer service providers like MANSO, and organizations like LEAF, Shelter Movers, Humane Canada, and Air Canada.

Sustaining and Growing Shelter Support

At the heart of our mission is a promise—to ensure shelters have the strength, stability, and resources to provide unwavering care. This year, we worked to uphold that promise through:

- **Transforming Workplaces Grant (TWA):** Providing targeted resources to help businesses recognize and respond to employees experiencing violence, creating safer, more supportive workplaces.

- **Ongoing Training and Development:** MAWS hosted province-wide training sessions—both in person and online—on topics such as trauma-informed care, crisis de-escalation, and cultural safety. These sessions were co-led by sector experts and survivor advocates, ensuring the learning was both grounded in research and enriched by lived experience.
- **Shelter Leadership Support:** Recognizing the immense responsibilities carried by shelter directors and managers, MAWS facilitated a leadership onboarding. This included monthly peer roundtables, one-on-one coaching for complex operational challenges, and curated resources to strengthen strategic planning, governance, and staff well-being initiatives.

Through these efforts, we worked not only to build shelter capacity at every level—from the frontlines to the boardroom—but also to ensure that every survivor entering a shelter is met by an organization led with vision, compassion, and stability.

The Road Forward



Our recent successes are not an ending, but a beginning. They position us to step into the coming years with renewed energy, clearer vision, and deeper resolve. By continuing to champion progressive policies, strengthen sector capacity, and nurture a culture of solidarity, we are creating the conditions for lasting change.

With our members, partners, and community allies, we envision a Manitoba where every person can live free from violence—surrounded by networks of care that are strong enough to hold them, and a society courageous enough to stand with them. Together, we are not only changing systems; we are changing lives.

Tsungai Muvingi Van Landeghem

Tsungai Muvingi Van Landeghem
Provincial Coordinator

Our Impact

Survivor Advisory Group Statement

MAWS has played a pivotal role in my life regarding the direction I am taking academically. After participating in the council advisory, I was inspired to pursue a Post-secondary education focused on helping men and boys who have experienced trauma, and I am now enrolled in the Inner City Social Work program at the University of Manitoba. I've been able to forge connections with others from the lived council advisory, and this means the world to me.

I believe the council had a positive impact on different perspectives and offered new suggestions that added to the existing policies implemented in women's shelters. I would love to witness some of the changes that have occurred since.

Amber

Survivor Advisory Group Member



Treasurer's Report

This year has been a transformative chapter for MAWS, defined by continued progress with ongoing commitment to our mission. Notable among our achievements are the continuation of the Micro-Credential Shelter Support Worker Program and the first annual successful Shelter Symposium for the gender-based violence sector; both made possible through funding under the National Action Plan.

As we reflect on the 2024–2025 fiscal year, we recognize it as a time shaped by both stability and transition. As our sector continues to evolve in the wake of the pandemic, new challenges have emerged alongside powerful opportunities. Guided by a vision of resilience, we have embraced this evolving landscape with a renewed dedication to sustainability, growth, and the advancement of our capacity to serve.

Here are the highlights of the fiscal position of the Manitoba Association of Women's Shelters for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2025.

- We completed year one of the WAGE Canada Transforming Workplace Approaches to Gender-Based Violence grant and year two of the Micro-Credential Support Worker Program, which are instrumental in maintaining the positions of three of our valuable staff members. This support ensures the continuity of critical roles within our organization.
- In 2024/2025, MAWS secured \$39,578 in donations, an increase from the previous fiscal year. We are grateful for the ongoing support from our donors and appreciate the increase in third-party events in support of MAWS. Their contributions remain crucial to our operations.

- Expenses were slightly lower than the previous year (FY2024/2025 – \$1,122,653, FY2023/2024 – \$1,129,677). This was due to the ending of a grant in the previous year and starting a new grant with different project objectives.
- Thanks to provincial support, we have been able to work with provincial family violence shelters and agencies to enhance Indigenous cultural training. This initiative has been a significant focus, with funding flows reflecting the investment in these essential training programs.
- At the close of the fiscal year, we recorded \$156,328 in deferred contributions. These funds are designated for programming that is yet to occur. The deferral method helps us match income with related expenses, providing a more accurate fiscal representation of our organization's financial health.

The net effect was a FY2025 surplus of \$108,417 (FY2024 – \$95,778).

The 2024–2025 fiscal year has been a transformative year for MAWS—a year in which strategic vision was translated into meaningful action. We proudly completed the first year of our three-year strategic plan, advancing our goals through increased memberships, new grants, and generous donations, all of which strengthen our ability to support member shelters and programs across the province. This progress is a testament to the collective dedication of our members and supporters. Your unwavering commitment has not only sustained our mission—it has propelled us forward, empowering MAWS to expand its reach, amplify its impact, and shape a future of safety, dignity, and hope.

Respectfully Submitted,



Lois Ruston,

Executive Director, YWCA Westman
Treasurer, Manitoba Association of Women's
Shelters

Financial Statement

THE MANITOBA ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN'S SHELTERS INC.
Statement of Operations and Changes in Net Assets
For the year ended March 31, 2025

*Issued for discussion
on August 25, 2025*

	2025	2024
REVENUE		
Prov of MB - MicroCredential	\$ 335,376	\$ 174,753
Grants - other	316,413	59,116
Community Action Program for Children	222,947	222,947
Women and Gender Equality - TWA	193,751	
Prov of MB - Red Road to Healing	134,850	203,150
Donations	39,578	36,028
Interest income	45,596	47,630
Prov of MB - Family Violence Prevention	33,686	137,940
Memberships	13,375	8,700
Prov of MB - FVCM	3,849	146,151
Women and Gender Equality - GBV		189,040
	1 339 421	1,225,455
OPERATING EXPENSES		
FVCM backbone org. - consultants		136,122
Honoraria and other professional fees	36,478	47,066
Insurance	8,394	7,920
Memberships and subscriptions	1,000	677
MicroCredential - course development	280,000	139,600
Office expenses	60,887	34,991
Professional fees	6,997	14,506
Red Road to Healing agency grants	69,440	203,150
Salaries and wages	362,234	340,093
Shelter operating grants	178,434	178,434
Shelter supplies grants	9,000	9,000
Shelter training grants	4,500	6,788
Travel and training	21,583	11,330
	1 038 947	1,129,677
EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	300,474	95,778
NET ASSETS - Beginning	423,246	327,468
NET ASSETS - Ending	\$ 723,720	\$ 423,246

Our Impact

Survivor Advisory Group Statement

When I first came into contact with MAWS, I was just leaving Willow Place after 3 months. I don't even remember how long ago that was, but some days it feels like it was yesterday. Willow Place connected me with MAWS, as I wanted to be part of anything that could help with domestic violence (DV). That is when Amber contacted me. I was very interested in joining the Survivor Advisory Group.

It began something in me I didn't even see coming. I just slowly started to advocate when it came to DV, and when opportunities came up, I had to jump on them.

The questions Amber asked were very legitimate concerns, and getting the information from an actual person who has survived domestic violence and been in a shelter was the most sensible thing I heard of. Something so simple like that can get lost in "translation". If you have never experienced either, you cannot begin to understand what it is like. Go right to the source, and that is where you find the truth.



Survivor Advisory Group Statement

I started my first year of university in September 2024, after being out of school for over 25 years. I did an essay in a class about "Domestic Violence, mental health and disabilities". Did you know that there are 1 billion people in the world who deal with disabilities? That is 15% of the world's population.

The premise of the paper was to show that disabilities must be part of the conversation when discussing DV and IPV. Without that in the discussion, you are losing a whole group of people who end up feeling unheard and do fall through the cracks. People with disabilities need proper support with dealing with things like this, and that means more accessible resources and better access to shelters.

MAWS and Willow Place continue building a block for me to move into my future. I want to pursue a degree in Urban and Inner-City Studies and work in a non-profit upon completing it. My hope and faith in is God.

We all need hope; without it, we have nothing.



Survivor Advisory Group Member



Meet the Team

MAWS Board of Directors

- **Ang Braun:** Executive Director, Genesis House, Winkler (South Central Committee on Family Violence) (Co-Chair)
- **Helen Trudeau:** Executive Director, Thompson Crisis Centre, Thompson (Co-Chair)
- **Viktorija Westgate:** Executive Director, Nova House, Selkirk (Secretary)
- **Tracy Whitby:** Executive Director, Agape House, Steinbach (Treasurer)
- **Kim Fontaine:** Executive Director, Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin, Winnipeg
- **Tara Hayes:** Executive Director, Prairie Harbour Inc., Portage La Prairie
- **Kari Prawdzik:** Executive Director, Parkland Crisis Centre, Dauphin
- **Marcie Wood:** Executive Director, Willow Place, Winnipeg
- **Jean Clearwater:** Executive Director, Aurora House, The Pas
- **Joy Escalera:** Executive Director, YWCA Westman Women's Shelter, Brandon
- **Nazish Tayab:** Executive Director, Sakeenah Canada, Winnipeg

MAWS Staff



Tsungai (Tsue) Muvingi Van Landeghem

Provincial Coordinator



Amber Merucci

(PhD) Project Specialist



Riches Samson

Program & Administrative
Assistant



Sally Ogoe

(PhD) Project Specialist



Kevin Kowal

Technical Support



Maria Paz

Communications Specialist



Meaghan Ranseth

Bookkeeper

MAWS Members

Family Violence Shelters

- **Agape House, Steinbach**
(Eastman Crisis Centre):
204-326-6062
- **Aurora House, The Pas** (The
Pas Committee for Women in
Crisis): 204-623-7427
- **Genesis House, Winkler**
(South Central Committee on
Family Violence):
204-325-9957
- **Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin, Winnipeg:**
204-987-2780
- **Nova House, Selkirk:**
204-482-7882
- **Parkland Crisis Centre,**
Dauphin: 204- 622-4626
- **Prairie Harbour Inc., Portage**
La Prairie: 204-239-5234
- **Sakeenah Canada, Winnipeg:**
1-888-671-3446 Ext 130
- **Thompson Crisis Centre,**
Thompson: 204-677-9668
- **Willow Place, Winnipeg:**
204-615-0313
- **YWCA Westman Women's**
Shelter, Brandon:
204-727-3644



Associate Members

Intimate Partner Abuse Recovery Programs & Long-Term Shelters

- **Bravestone Centre, Winnipeg:** 204-275-2600
- **Chez Rachel, Winnipeg:** 204-925-2550
- **The Salvation Army Winnipeg Centre of Hope, Winnipeg:** 204-946-9400

Other Programs

- **Circling Buffalo, The Pas:** 204-779-4318
- **Elmwood Community Resource Centre, Winnipeg:** 204-982-1720
- **Fort Garry Women's Resource Centre, Winnipeg:** 204-477-1123
- **House of Peace, Winnipeg:** 204-942-5535
- **Healthy Muslim Families:** 204-202-6491
- **Interlake Women's Resource Centre, Gimli:** 204-642-8264
- **Lakeshore Family Resource Centre, Ashern:** 204-768-3016
- **Manitoba Moon Voices Inc., Winnipeg:** 204-942-1828
- **MAPS (Men Are Part Of The Solution), Thompson:** 204-778-6040
- **Survivor's Hope, Pinawa:** 204-753-5353
- **Swan Valley Crisis Centre, Swan River:** 204-734-9368
- **Wahbung Abinoonjiiag, Winnipeg:** 204-925-4610
- **Westman Immigrant Services, Brandon:** 204-727-6031
- **Women's Resource Centre, Flin Flon:** 204-681-3105

A Year In Review

New Staff

- **We welcomed a new staff member to the MAWS Team:** Maria Paz, Communications Specialist! Maria brings over four years of expertise in developing and implementing human-centred communication strategies for the non-profit sector. She will focus on building partnerships with service providers across Manitoba, expanding MAWS membership, and creating impactful content while managing media relations, coordinating fundraising events, and providing administrative support.

In the last year, we wrapped up the following grants

- **Red Road to Healing Grant:** This grant focused on funding and supporting the provision of Red Road to Healing and Indigenous Cultural Healing programming delivered through agencies funded by the Gender Based Violence Program (GBVP) of the Province of Manitoba. The goal was to improve access province-wide to cultural healing programming that supports the recovery and healing processes of those who have been impacted by gender-based violence. 12 organizations, including shelters, resource centers and community organizations, participated.
- **Shelter Support Worker Micro-Credential Program:** We completed cohorts three and four, with half of the registrants already working in the sector, twenty-five percent new to the sector, and the other twenty-five percent familiar with it. Thirty students graduated, and we have ongoing student placements.

MAWS 2024–2027 Strategic Goals

Everyday GBV shelters stand at the frontlines of safety, support and hope for survivors. To ensure these vital services remain strong and responsive, we have set three strategic goals that guide our work.

These goals are more than strategies. They are our commitment to building safer, stronger communities.

Here's what we've accomplished and engaged in Apr 2024–Mar 2025

Shelter ED Capacity: Training & Resources

To build ED Capacity by providing updated information, best practices, training and communication in GBV.

- **Quarterly meetings between Federal and Provincial Shelters** to understand the resources and needs of each community.
- **Several Federal Shelter EDs have received training** at our Transforming Workplace Approaches to Gender-Based Violence Train-the-Trainer.
- **CAPC and WebWISH trainings were provided** to nine shelter CAPC staff working with children between 0–6 years old and their caregivers. Overall, approximately 30 or more training sessions and follow-up sessions have been provided.
- **Developed and facilitated introductory training** on trauma, intergenerational trauma, trauma-informed care, conflict de-escalation and documentation with Aurora House frontline staff.
- **Created a resource portal for the Provincial Family Violence Executive Directors** to access information in one location, including upcoming training, resources, and events.
- **Added a calendar of upcoming events and training sessions** to the MAWS website to make it easier for sector staff and leaders to access tools and resources.

Voice for GBV Shelters: Advocacy & Awareness

To serve as the collective voice for GBV shelters, raising awareness and driving change.

- **Participated as panellists** on the Skills for Change webinar, “Reimagining Support for Immigrant Women in Shelters.” We explored advocacy strategies to drive systemic change in shelter services and highlighted best practices for providing culturally responsive, trauma-informed, and inclusive support to immigrant women.
- **Attended the Infinity Women’s Secretariat Annual General Assembly** of the MMF, a powerful gathering that amplified the voices of Métis women and strengthened commitments to advancing equity and leadership within the community.
- **Met with Humane Canada** to explore opportunities to collaborate on addressing gender-based violence in cases where pets are involved, recognizing the deep bonds between families and animals and the importance of protecting both.
- **Engaged with U of M** in consultation on the development of a new undergraduate Family Program, with exciting potential for student work placements, mentorship opportunities, and guest speaking roles to inspire the next generation of leaders.
- **Participated in multiple media interviews** where we had the opportunity to share critical messages during Domestic Violence Awareness Month through La Liberté, U Multicultural, CBC, Winnipeg Free Press, Global News and CTV, raising awareness on intimate partner violence, the tragedy of the Carmen family deaths, and the importance of community-driven solutions. Also spotlighted the TWA Grant through CTV Morning Live, connecting with the business community to foster change.
- **Hosted the “GBV in the Workplace” webinar** with Lori Colquhoun from CLEA to provide knowledge and tools for creating safer, more supportive work environments free from gender-based violence.
- **Built meaningful connections across sectors** by strengthening relationships with MANSO in the settlement sector, N’Dinawemak–Our Relatives Place, and engaged with the Red Response Team, fostering a united network committed to community care and safety.

Funding and Policy Influence

To advocate for equitable funding and proactive policy influence to support gender-based violence (GBV) shelters in Manitoba.

- **Advocated for continued funding for the Shelter Symposium**, which the sector needs as a way to break down silos between organizations and address GBV/IPV from a united perspective.
- **Pursued continued funding for the CAPC** work that shelters do to support families with children between the ages of 0–6 years.
- **Continue to advocate for increased resources for front-line staff** to be able to better support survivors, including addressing wages, mental health supports, and affordable housing, among others.
- **Explored Keira’s Law & Clare’s Law**, which included engaging in critical conversations on how these legislative tools can strengthen protections for survivors, improve accountability, and enhance safety measures across communities.
- **Met with Minister Nahanni Fontaine, Minister of Families & Kendra Nixon from Resolve** – advocated for the Province to formally recognize intimate partner violence and gender-based violence as an epidemic, underscoring the urgent need for systemic change and coordinated action.
- **Participated in the Intimate Partner Violence Response Team** meeting where we collaborated with partners to strengthen immediate and long-term responses, ensuring survivors have timely access to safety, resources, and justice.
- **Joined the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) advisory circle with U of M Resolve**, where we examine the often overlooked connection between IPV/GBV and brain injuries, highlighting the need for increased awareness, specialized supports and informed care pathways.
- **Spoke at the Justice Minister’s announcement** providing perspective at the launch of new and expanded initiatives, including the expansion of ankle monitoring technology to rural communities and the release of the EmpowerApp, both designed to enhance survivor safety and perpetrator accountability.

First Provincial & Federal Symposium Empower, Connect & Inspire

This year marked a significant milestone for MAWS with our first-ever Shelter Symposium, held November 20-21, 2024, in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Over 20 Manitoba family violence shelters came together for this groundbreaking two-day event, which has already begun transforming how we approach shelter services across the province.



We extend our heartfelt gratitude to WAGE Canada and the Government of Manitoba for their invaluable support in funding this project through the National Action Plan, and to Indigenous Services Canada for its commitment to fostering meaningful change and advancing equity.

The symposium tackled the most pressing issues facing our shelter network

Fundraising and Donations

Shelters explored best practices for building donor trust through transparency, impactful storytelling, and genuine gratitude.

Mental Health and Substance Abuse

With mental health challenges at the forefront of shelter services, we addressed complex decisions around intake, medication management, and trauma-informed care.

Shelter-to-Shelter Transfers

Through interactive mapping exercises, participants identified the complex factors contributing to transfers, developed recommendations, including the establishment of a unified database for real-time availability and the creation of specialized transportation teams.

Indigenous Wellness

Elder Marilyn Hart-Murdock from FNHC led meaningful Conversation Circles emphasizing traditional healing methods and the importance of cultural identity in the healing process.

Culture Shock & Transit Experiences

Katina Cochrane, Director of the First Nation Healing Centre, presented "Roaming with Buffalo," exploring the emotional and cultural obstacles that Indigenous women face when transitioning between shelters and urban centers.

Data Collection

University of Manitoba's Kendra Nixon highlighted how thoughtful and ethical data collection can improve operations by integrating Indigenous worldviews and holistic wellness metrics.



"I decided to come to the event because I think it's important for federal and provincial shelters to come together, connect and share experiences, knowledge and overall tips on how we can move forward with our work."

- Shayna S., First Nation Healing Centre

"I really enjoyed being able to be here to connect with everybody, to be able to learn and see how different people are approaching, the different kind of shared concerns, and it kind of shows that we're not alone, that some of the problems we're having aren't unique and understanding okay, let's look at it from this different point of view."

- Mary T., The Salvation Army Winnipeg Centre of Hope



Moving Forward: Sustainable Impact

The symposium's success extends beyond the two days in November. Participants have formed **ongoing working groups to develop solutions for each focus area, ensuring sustained momentum and strengthening relationships across our network.** This collaborative approach represents a new chapter in how Manitoba shelters will work together to address shared challenges.

As we move forward, the symposium has established a foundation for better coordination, increased funding advocacy, and a deeper understanding of trauma-informed care. **This event represents MAWS' commitment to innovation, collaboration, and continuous improvement in serving Manitoba's most vulnerable populations.**

Micro-Credential Shelter Support Worker Program

The Shelter Support Worker Micro-Credential Program is a free, virtual, comprehensive training initiative designed to prepare individuals for careers in family violence and unhoused shelter sectors.

Graduates are equipped to serve diverse client populations across all genders while maintaining the highest standards of privacy, confidentiality, and professional service.

The Micro-Credential program addresses Manitoba's critical need for qualified shelter support workers by providing training in trauma-informed care, cultural competency, professional boundaries, and the practical skills required for 24/7 shelter operations.

The Shelter Support Worker program is possible through a strategic partnership among family violence shelters, unhoused shelters, and Red River College Polytechnic, with funding provided by the Governments of Manitoba and Canada, supporting the implementation of the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence (GBV-NAP) in Manitoba.

76

Applications
received

60

Students
enrolled

44

Program
graduates

This initiative represents a significant investment in **strengthening Manitoba's capacity to support vulnerable community** members experiencing homelessness and family violence, directly contributing to the province's commitment to ending gender-based violence.

Community Action Program for Children (CAPC) Grant

This grant, provided by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) helps **fund children's programs in provincial shelters**. This funding contributes to a children's worker's salary, and a small amount is provided for training and materials. Children's programs in shelters are critically underfunded.

Teaching and modeling parental skills, child development and self-care for the parent, as well as teaching and modeling positive behaviour in children at the very earliest stages of growth, can influence their choice to be violence-free as they mature. This is a crucial pathway to reducing interpersonal and family violence in future generations.

Here's what we've accomplished this fiscal year

- **Delivered ongoing training** for shelter staff, where we provided continued professional development, including WebWISH training, to strengthen staff capacity and enhance support services for women and families accessing shelters.
- **Engaged EDs and shelter staff** in program evaluation through facilitated interviews and surveys to assess the effectiveness and impact of the CAPC program, ensuring that frontline experiences and insights guide future improvements.
- **A new grant period has been applied** for on behalf of the shelters to secure continued funding that will sustain vital programming, expand resources, and ensure the shelters meet the evolving needs of their communities.
- **Compiled and analyzed valuable data** from shelters, including client feedback, staff surveys and program statistics, showcasing the meaningful impact of their work and reinforcing the importance of continued investment in shelter services.

Transforming Workplace Approaches to Gender-Based Violence: Systemic Changes that Promote Women's Social & Economic Growth

With domestic violence representing 30% of violent crimes in Canada, most workplaces lack adequate gender-based violence (GBV) prevention strategies, leaving employers unprepared to address workplace spillover effects that negatively impact employee safety and performance.

This project developed comprehensive training programs, policies, and resources through certified GBV service providers and Train-the-Trainer workshops to transform workplace cultures, reduce safety risks, and provide employers with tools to respond effectively to GBV while meeting their legal obligations.

Here's what we've accomplished this fiscal year

- The **Train-the-Trainer program has completed** one of two training sessions this year. The spring session had 22 participants from across Manitoba. The fall session has 25 participants registered, with participants also spanning across Manitoba. Participants who attended received a comprehensive curriculum package, including a Community Facilitator Manual and a Community Facilitator Toolkit, as well as interactive tools to use when delivering training in their communities. Participants also receive a Certificate of Completion.
- **Hosted three webinars featuring guest speakers** to provide the community with additional information on receiving training for their businesses and organizations. We will have two roundtable discussions during the fall/winter months to gather data on how the training is being delivered in the community and the results.

Building Leadership in Family Violence: Gender-Based Violence Shelters & Agencies in Manitoba



This project focuses on approaches to leadership in the Family Violence (FV)/Gender-Based Violence (GBV) sector, including internal structures and governance, maintaining capacity at the management level, and achieving organizational strategic planning.

Our work in this project directly impacts the leadership and staff of family violence emergency shelters in Manitoba. Hence, the main objective has been to create a Leadership Orientation Guidebook for FV emergency shelter Executive Directors (EDs) to support new and existing leaders in effectively managing and guiding their organizations.

Here's what we've accomplished this fiscal year

- **Developed** an extensive collection of educational resources specifically designed to enhance the leadership capabilities of directors and staff at family violence emergency shelters across Manitoba.
- Initiated a targeted blog series designed to address specific, practical challenges frequently encountered by Executive Directors in the family violence shelter sector, focusing on actionable guidance for complex leadership scenarios often under-addressed in general management literature. **Additional blog topics are currently in active development.**

Elmwood Community Resource Centre: “Still I Rise” Program

The Still I Rise: Scaling Up GBV Support for South Asian, Black, and Arab Women program, led by MAWS and Elmwood Community Resource Centre, is designed to **address barriers faced by racialized women in accessing gender-based violence (GBV) services**. This initiative enhances community support through intersectional needs assessments, sector partnerships, and peer-support leadership training.

This project aims to improve the GBV sector at all levels through knowledge mobilization and sharing of best practices.

Here’s what we’ve accomplished this fiscal year

- Uploaded two Modules for the Still I Rise Program partnership. They are up and running on the MAWS website, ensuring the continuous expansion of culturally responsive resources that enhance GBV sector capacity at all levels through the systematic sharing of proven best practices tailored specifically for South Asian, Black, and Arab women.



Thank You to Our Generous Donors

We'd like to thank our supporters, donors, funders, and all individuals, those named below and those who wished to remain anonymous, who have been thinking of the Manitoba shelters.

Through your generosity, MAWS is able to continue our support work for Family Violence (FV) shelters and agencies in Manitoba.

- Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC)
- Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) – Canada
- Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) – Manitoba
- Women's Shelters Canada
- Winnipeg Foundation

- Portage La Prairie School Division
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- Inwood Ladies Golf Club
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