



**YWCA**  
CAMBRIDGE

# Strategic Plan 2026–2029

## Vision, Mission, Values

### Vision

We envision a world where all women, girls and gender-diverse individuals live their human rights and have the absolute freedom and tools to choose the path that is right for them. We believe that when women, girls and gender-diverse individuals are respected, valued and equal, we all flourish.

### Mission

We give voice to the changing needs of women, girls and gender-diverse individuals. We create safer, more supportive pathways to housing, learning, and economic stability. We spark changes in the way people, systems and the community think about equity. Rooted in the communities we serve, we create lasting opportunities for growth and well-being.

### Values

- Transparency** – We are open, honest and clear in our strategy, decisions, and relationships. We hold ourselves accountable to our interest-holders and community. We communicate decisions publicly whenever possible.
- Inclusivity** – We believe that diversity in experience, identity and opinion is crucial to a strong organization. We seek to create an environment of belonging and respect.
- Self-Determination** – We believe in the fundamental right of women, girls and gender-diverse individuals to make choices in their lives, and we support them as they do so.
- Equity** – We believe that every person should have what they need to be successful, in their specific circumstances. We actively identify and remove barriers, especially for those who are historically, persistently or systemically marginalized.
- Action** - We do not accept the status quo. We will courageously call out inequities, innovate in our programming, and advocate boldly with and for women and gender-diverse people. We will take on the risks involved in working to change entrenched structures and systems.

**YWCA Cambridge works from an intersectional feminist, anti-oppression framework. We emphasize feminist principles throughout our work, including collectivity, participation, diversity and wellbeing.**

## What We Know To Be True

**We live in times of constant change. The present is uncertain and the future is unpredictable. The fault lines of inequality are deepening and widening at a rapid rate.**

The realities facing women and gender-diverse individuals are complex. Gender-based violence is a global pandemic. Women are at greater risk of job loss, loss of income, food insecurity, and loss of housing. Women continue to earn less and be overrepresented in part-time, low-wage, precarious work.

Around the world, we are witnessing a resurgence of authoritarian politics that actively undermines women's rights. In part, this is manifesting as a strong and open backlash against equity initiatives. Algorithms used by social media platforms are amplifying extreme, misogynistic content and pushing it to young men in particular.

The rising cost of living is widening socioeconomic gaps. Disproportionate numbers of women are living in poverty. Women bear the brunt of the housing crisis and the severe shortage of quality childcare. While women live longer than men, they spend twenty-five percent more of their lives in debilitating health.

All of these issues are intensified for those living at the intersection of multiple identities, including Indigenous, Black, racialized, and 2SLGBTQIA+ women and gender-diverse people, youth, and those living with disability.

At the same time, the entire nonprofit sector is facing a trilemma: rising demand for services, financial instability, and workforce challenges. Volunteering is declining across the country. Operational costs are rising. Growing numbers of nonprofit workers are leaving the sector.

This broad context directly influences our choices, our programs and our options as an organization. It affects the clients we serve and the broader YWCA movement we are a proud member of.

This context also means that our work is absolutely critical. We must use all of our skills, resources and influence in support of the women, girls, and gender-diverse individuals in our community.

# Strategic Priorities

## Hold Fast

**Objective:** *To protect and maintain core offerings that are essential components of YWCA Cambridge.*

These are the areas where we must preserve the programs and services we have created. Growth is not the object, conservation is. We will take care of our people both internally and externally.

- ▶ Child care
- ▶ Employment services
- ▶ Youth programs
- ▶ Summer camp

## Dig In

**Objective:** *To deepen our ability to serve a critical need.*

These are the areas where growth is not only possible, but required. As the only organization in Cambridge with a mandate to focus on gender equity, this is where we can make the greatest difference. We must pursue every opportunity to expand our presence and offerings.

- ▶ Emergency shelter
- ▶ Housing

## Speak Out

**Objective:** *To be a trusted, visible and credible advocate for women, girls and gender diverse individuals and the issues that affect them.*

Leveraging the higher public profile that has come from our recent work, we must continue to advocate publicly and even more broadly.

This could include:

- ▶ Child care work force challenges
- ▶ Realities of women's homelessness
- ▶ Inequities in municipal resource and service allocation