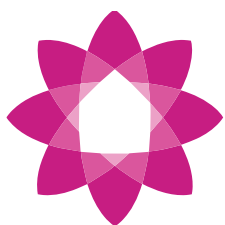




A year of **CONSTANT CHANGE**



WISH Drop-In
Centre Society

Annual Report
FY 2021-2022





MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND BOARD CO-CHAIRS

It will probably be years before we all, collectively, unpack and analyze the turbulent time we're living in. At WISH, we certainly have never seen so many simultaneous and concurrent crises. So, in times of grief and crisis, what gives us hope?

Knowing that social justice communities will stand up to affect change is validating and praise worthy. But, we must go further.

What does it look to do this work without burning out people, communities, organizations, or movements? What would it look like for us to be compassionate with each other and with ourselves when the pressures on our sector and work are at their worst?

What does it look like for us to practice and get better at having difficult conversations together? Finally, what does a sustainable organization resourced to make a positive impact while also focused on wellness look like?

As feminists, we know what grief and crisis look like. We've seen it and been here many times before. That being said, we're most compelled by dreaming of a future where doing this important work doesn't come at the expense of our health and safety – whether at an individual, organizational, community, or movement level. What keeps us motivated is dreaming about, imagining, and working towards feminist organizations that have successfully prioritized and formalized ways of slowing down, for reflection, and for wellness.

At WISH, this is what we are steadfastly and determinately working towards with our comprehensive and ambitious Organizational Development process. We do so because we know we can build a healthier, more resilient organization that is better resourced and best equipped to meet the needs of street-based sex workers.

Mebrat Beyene
Executive Director

Nic Wayara
Co-Chair

Zoe Grams
Co-Chair





"During COVID, you are so alienated. Without WISH's program, I don't where a lot of us would be, because everything was closed."

– SEP Staff

ORG. DEVELOPMENT: STRENGTHENING OUR CAPACITY

During the 2021-2022 fiscal year, WISH reached a point where investing in, and strengthening, our capacity to do the work became critical to our future. As we transitioned out of temporary COVID emergency response, it was crucial that we supported the growth we had experienced to strengthen our ability to support street-based sex workers.

This past fiscal year was one of extraordinary growth as demand for our services became critical. But, with more than 200 staff and 150 volunteers, plus over 800 street-based sex workers who depend on us, it became crucial that we identified priority actions toward a desired structural and operational state.

As part of our efforts to transition out of emergency response, we began a comprehensive organizational development process to map out a healthy, impactful, and values-driven way forward. The process included comprehensive surveys, interviews, and focus groups with peers, staff, volunteers, WISH's Board of Directors, as well as the review of hundreds of documents. Focus areas included access and equity, program and service management, governance, organizational frameworks and processes, and human resource management.

Embarking on this journey allows us to better understand our current organizational state and make informed decisions to support efficiency, effectiveness, and impact across the organization.

Although the process has been extensive, **this is just the start of a very important next chapter: reviewing and implementing the 53 recommendations that emerged from this process.** While the journey ahead may feel daunting, we look forward to unpacking the recommendations, raising the funds necessary to achieve them, and beginning to map our way forward. Already, there have been some encouraging and validating observations, including how WISH "demonstrates an organizational longevity and resilience that reveals WISH's tenacity and scrappiness." This is a testament to the support we've received from donors, supporters, and community allies.

The task that now lays ahead for WISH is to transparently and collaboratively set priorities for implementation. We hope we can continue to count on your support throughout this process so we can focus on our mission and continue to support street-based sex workers in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.



TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION AT WISH

September 30, 2021, marked the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. The day came in the wake of the horrific confirmation of the existence of the remains of thousands of Indigenous children in unmarked graves at former residential schools.

That day, we were privileged to welcome and feast with Matriarchs from all three local Nations. Matriarchs Carleen Thomas from Tsleil-Waututh Nation, Clarissa Antone from Squamish Nation, and Mary Point from Musqueam Nation, joined WISH on the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, and offered blessings to continue doing our work on their lands.

To stand in solidarity with Indigenous Peoples, it is our duty to work toward dismantling colonialism in this country and help to repair the damage it continues to cause. Our ongoing task is to learn about the injustice of colonialism and take seriously the 94 Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Report.

WISH stands in solidarity with Indigenous Peoples. We continue to ask all levels of government to do better. Taking six years

to establish a statutory holiday is not good enough. Establishing this day without ongoing commitment and focus on implementing the Calls to Action risks diverting energy from all the work that is still desperately needed.



Pictured in the middle, Matriarchs Carleen Thomas from Tsleil Waututh Nation, Clarissa Antone from Squamish Nation, and Mary Point from Musqueam Nation, join WISH on Sept. 30, offering blessings to continue doing our work on their lands.

A YEAR OF SAFE HOUSING

Canada's first-ever 24/7 emergency shelter for street-based sex workers reached a major milestone in 2021. The space celebrated its one-year anniversary in October.

The low-barrier shelter has operated at capacity since day one. Sadly, this means participants were turned away every single day, highlighting the critical need for shelter and safe spaces in the Downtown Eastside. Unable to secure a bed, dozens of participants routinely used WISH's drop-in and outdoor safe respite area to spend the night.

During the first year, a total of 119 people used the 23 beds available. The average length of stay was 105 days. The low turnover rate once again highlighted the overwhelming demand for long-

term housing and the urgent need for housing and safe spaces for women and gender-diverse people.

Our temporary shelter opened its doors thanks to the essential support of BC Housing and the City of Vancouver. The space provides 23 beds along with hot showers, laundry, meals, and critical access to WISH's supporting programs and services. Thanks to the shelter, more than 70% of residents surveyed reported experiencing fewer instances of violence and the increased ability to turn down dangerous work.

Spaces like the shelter continue to be critical—now more than ever. **We continue to advocate for and work towards a larger, permanent, and purpose-built shelter for street-based sex workers.**

YEAR AT A GLANCE

MAY 2021

Extra hour added to MAP Van day shift to extend service from noon to 6pm

WISH's first of its kind emergency shelter for street-based sex workers celebrates 6 months



JUNE 2021

WISH accepts temporary contract to run operations of Astoria washroom trailer to help prioritize safety of women and gender diverse street-based sex workers in the area

MAP Van celebrates one year of critical day shift

JULY 2021

WISH volunteer program re-opens after being on hold due to COVID-19

BC Bad Date and Aggressor Reporting Project shares FAQ document





NOVEMBER 2021

One year anniversary of Kílala Lelum's mobile clinic visits to WISH providing primary care and cultural wellness

Coalition on MMIWG2S+ Remembers Lillian Howard for her Legacy of Advocacy and Vision of Justice



AUGUST 2021

WISH's first-ever Manager of Indigenous Inclusion starts

OCTOBER 2021

WISH's shelter celebrates one year anniversary



JANUARY 2022

Women's organizations denounce VPD spin on arrest outside women's center; renew calls for real safety in face of increasing gender-based violence

In the media: COVID-19: Frontline workers on the Downtown Eastside

In the media: Staffing, isolation-space concerns mount as Omicron moves through DTES outreach workers

2021-2022 Financial Statements

Government Grant Revenue

* Provincial	\$	3,913,787.00
Municipal	\$	1,136,128.00
Federal	\$	185,554.00

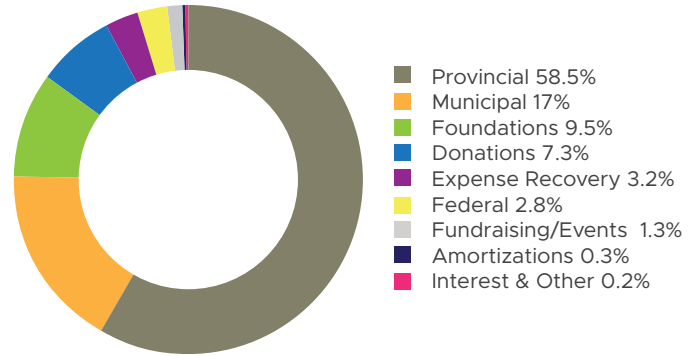
Total Grants Government \$ 5,235,469.00

Other Revenue

Foundations	\$	636,055.00
Donations	\$	487,375.00
Expense Recovery	\$	211,165.00
Fundraising & Events	\$	87,278.00
Amortization of Deferred Capital Contributions	\$	20,442.00
Interest & Other	\$	12,119.00

Total Other Revenue \$ 1,454,434.00

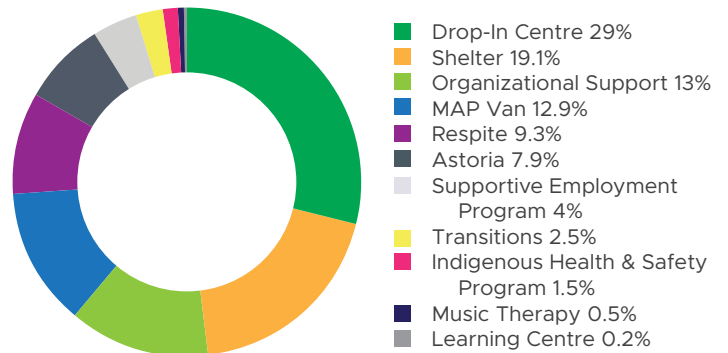
Total Revenue \$ 6,689,903.00



Program Expenses

Drop-In Centre	\$	1,795,290.00
Shelter	\$	1,183,373.00
Organizational Support	\$	804,269.00
MAP Van	\$	800,241.00
Respite	\$	577,473.00
Astoria	\$	489,569.00
Supportive Employment Program	\$	246,461.00
Transitions	\$	153,377.00
Indigenous Health & Safety Program	\$	90,966.00
Music Therapy	\$	29,774.00
Learning Centre	\$	12,736.00

Total Expenses \$ 6,183,529.00



Excess (deficit) of Revenues over Expenses before Transfers \$ 506,374.00

Transfer of Surplus to Externally Restricted Funds \$ 639,356.00

Excess (deficiency) of Revenue over Expenses **-\$ 132,982.00**
(Including emergency/contingency reserves)

* A word about government funding: The province of B.C. through BC Housing provides WISH with an annual funding commitment to operate the Shelter and 76.1% of the Drop-In costs, while the BC Ministry of Public Safety partially funds the operations of the MAP Van.

“Because of the nightly meals provided by WISH I did not have to take whatever I could get just to feed myself. Thank you WISH.”

– WISH participant

“I’m not in a place of desperation anymore and can up my prices. I don’t have to exchange low-cost sex work for a place to stay.”

– Shelter resident

2021/2022 Volunteer Board Members

Zoe Grams
Co-Chair

Nicolle Wayara
Co-Chair

Karina Munroe
Treasurer

Alessandra Smith
Member at large

Carly Teillet
Member at large

Tiffany Misri
Member at large

Robyn Baron
Member at large

Lisa Gibson
Member at large

Nycki Basra
Member at large



Photos: Wendy D. Photography

Acknowledgement of Funding

We acknowledge – and are thankful for – the financial support from the City of Vancouver, the Province of B.C. and the Government of Canada. We also want to thank all the public and private foundations, as well as the individual and corporate donors who make our work possible.



Mission

WISH's mission is to improve the health, safety and well-being of women who are involved in Vancouver's street-based sex trade.

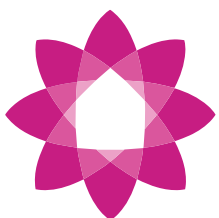
Vision

Our vision is that every woman should have access to opportunities to make free, healthy and positive choices.

Values

Acceptance, caring, dignity and respect.

WISH is located on the unceded, stolen lands of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) First Nations.



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