

November 26, 2025

YWCA NWT commends the Government of the Northwest Territories' (GNWT) Standing Committee on Social Development for its recently released *Report on Committee Project: Housing as a Human Right*. Our organization advocates for and serves Northern women, families, and youth by providing safe and supportive housing, as well as a range of integrated and culturally relevant programs and services and are acutely aware of the housing crisis and its negative impacts. As such, we stand in full support of the **44 recommendations** made within this report to advance the right to housing in the Northwest Territories, and we urge the GNWT **to take swift action**.

YWCA NWT routinely witnesses gaps within the territory's housing continuum. The soaring cost of living, lack of suitable, affordable and adequate housing units, and often confusing or inconsistent government policies and programs create challenges for families to find and maintain adequate housing. Unsurprisingly, this lack of housing negatively impacts families and our communities. We presented on such challenges to the Standing Committee on October 10, 2024, and are heartened to see our observations included in this Report.

In particular, we are pleased to see discussion around transitional and supportive housing within the report. We share the conviction of our partners at the Yellowknife Women's Society and Salvation Army that such programs are sorely needed. As operators of transitional and second-stage housing ourselves, we are keenly aware of the difference that trauma-informed, inclusive wraparound services can make. These tailored support services are key for people remaining safely and stably housed, and we are keen to see long-term, substantive investment in these options.

We also echo Yellowknife Women's Society in highlighting the disproportionate impact of the housing crisis on Indigenous women and gender-diverse individuals. While the housing crisis impacts everyone, government responses to the housing crisis often fail to incorporate a gendered lens. As a result, the unique ways in which women, gender-diverse people, and their families experience housing insecurity (such as "hidden homelessness") go unaddressed. This is **not** a gender-neutral issue. We encourage both the Standing Committee and the GNWT to reflect on this understanding in its analysis and actions moving forward.

As we noted in our presentation to the Standing Committee, the findings in this report are not new. Communities, housing advocates, and non-profit organizations have consistently raised these issues. It is now essential to demonstrate the concrete commitment needed to advance meaningful change.

With our decades of experience providing emergency and transitional housing to women and families, we would welcome the opportunity to work with you as you continue this important work to put these recommendations into action. Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

**Hawa Dumbuya-Sesay**

**Executive Director, YWCA NWT**