

YUUS

STRAT PLAN

2026-2031





STEVE DOHERTY

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

At Youth Without Shelter, we believe every young person deserves a safe place to stay and a real opportunity to build a future. A future which includes long-term stability.

As we launch our five-year strategic plan, we are responding to a critical moment. Youth homelessness is becoming more complex, driven by rising housing costs, mental health challenges, and increasing economic pressure. Alongside these challenges, we see resilience, potential, and possibility in the young people we serve every day. This plan is our commitment to act.

Over the next five years, we will strengthen our services, expand housing solutions, and create clearer pathways to education, employment, and long-term stability. Grounded in the voices of youth, staff, and partners, this strategy reflects both where we are and where we must go.

This is more than a plan, it is a call to action. It is time to **Rise Up.**

WHO WE ARE

Since 1986, Youth Without Shelter (YWS) has grown from a grassroots initiative with just 22 beds into a full continuum of care: redefining, reshaping, and reimagining the shelter system while remaining guided by the voices of the youth we serve.

Located in North Etobicoke, we provide a safe, welcoming space for youth aged 16-24 who are facing homelessness, mental health support, and other evidence-based services to help youth move from crisis to independence. Our wrap-around model of programming includes one-on-one guidance, delivered in a trauma-informed, strength-based environment. We provide emergency shelter, education and employment pathways. Every youth is seen, heard, and supported.

Our experienced team supports youth in building resilience, confidence, and independence, empowering them to chart their own path out of homelessness and thrive in their communities.

VISION

A COMMUNITY WHERE ALL YOUTH HAVE ACCESSIBLE PATHWAYS TO INDEPENDENCE AND A SAFE PLACE TO CALL HOME

MISSION

EMPOWER YOUTH FACING HOMELESSNESS TO REACH THEIR INDIVIDUAL POTENTIAL





**YWS STRATEGIC GROWTH PLAN
2026 - 2031**

1



01 Expansion of the Stay In School Program (SIS)

2



02 Upgrade of the Existing YWS Emergency Shelter

3



03 Mental Health Service Expansion

4



04 Scattered Site Housing & Rental Subsidy Programs

5



05 Trades and Expanded Pathways to Independence

6



06 Five-Year Capital Campaign with Sustainability Strategy

Research, Data, and Evidence Based Strategy Development

HR Support and Resources

ROAD WORK AHEAD



THE ROAD AHEAD

Every young person's journey is unique, and so is our pathway forward. Our strategic priorities are shaped by the stories, insights, and experiences of the youth we serve, alongside the dedication of our staff and community partners. Grounded in what we've learned and inspired by what's possible, these priorities represent a bold and focused commitment to reimagining how we support youth facing homelessness. They will guide how we grow, adapt, and lead in the years ahead by strengthening supports, expanding opportunities, and helping every young person build a future rooted in stability, possibility, and hope.

INITIATIVES

- 1 Transition to a Multi-Site and Scattered Housing, Primary Case Manager Model to Expand YWS Capacity.**
- 2 Create and Expand Education, Employment and/or Training Pathways.**
- 3 Build Productive Long-Term Relationships for Advocacy, Partnerships, Sponsorships & Donors.**

PRIORITIES

- 1 Expansion of the Stay In School Program (SIS)**
Transform SIS into an independent youth shelter by 2031 for youth attending school, supported on-site by a Primary Case Manager, with access to additional services as needed.
- 2 Upgrade of the Existing YWS Emergency Shelter**
Reconfigure the current site into a 55-bed emergency shelter.
- 3 Mental Health Service Expansion**
Build a comprehensive mental health service for YWS, SIS and alumni.
- 4 Scattered Site Housing and Rental Subsidy Programs**
Supporting youth transitioning to independence.
- 5 Trades and Expanded Pathways to Independence**
Develop a robust trades-to-housing program within YWS, utilizing a scattered housing model.
- 6 Five-Year Capital Campaign with Sustainability Strategy**
Raise \$10 million over five years for capital construction, renovations, program expansion and organizational capacity.



1

EXPANSION OF THE STAY IN SCHOOL PROGRAM (SIS)

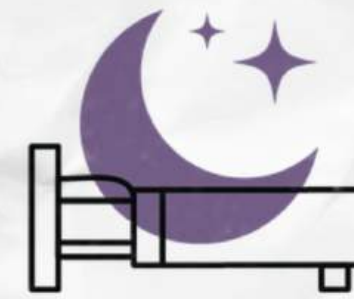
GOAL

- Transform the YWS Stay In School Program into an independent youth shelter by 2031.

KEY ACTIONS

- Develop a full real estate strategy to secure a Rexdale location close to high schools and transit.
- Complete site acquisition, design and renovation planning supported by an external project manager.
- Create a phased project timeline covering acquisition, design, construction and launch.
- Secure multi-year operational funding before opening.





2

UPGRADE OF THE EXISTING YWS EMERGENCY SHELTER

GOAL

- Reconfigure the current site into a 55-bed emergency shelter.

KEY ACTIONS

- Conduct a capacity assessment for staffing space, kitchen expansion, safety upgrades and accessibility.
- Develop a five-year staffing plan that includes primary case managers, trades coordinators, housing workers, night staff, and program leads.
- Establish partnerships with trade unions, colleges and employers.
- Create a structured trades readiness curriculum with clear competencies and graduation criteria.
- Design contingency pathways for youth not completing trades programs.



3

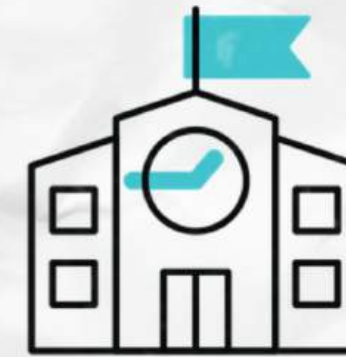
MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE EXPANSION

GOAL

- Build a comprehensive mental health service for YWS, SIS and alumni.

KEY ACTIONS

- Conduct a formal needs assessment to determine clinical staffing.
- Hire additional full-time clinician and expand based on demand.
- Partner with local mental health agencies for psychiatric consultation and crisis support.
- Implement a trauma-informed practice framework across all programs.
- Integrate mental health outcome tracking into the agency database.



4

SCATTERED SITE HOUSING AND RENTAL SUBSIDY PROGRAMS

GOAL

- Develop a Scattered Housing Program to Support Youth Transitioning to Independence.

KEY ACTIONS

- Create a scattered site housing program using leased private market units supported by a flexible rental subsidy.
- Build a cost model that includes rent, utilities, insurance, furnishings and vacancy loss.
- Start with a small number of units and scale to 40 by 2031.
- Hire dedicated housing workers or mobile case managers to manage landlord relations, tenancy stabilization and crisis intervention.
- Establish strict eligibility criteria and risk protocols for non-payment, eviction prevention and rapid rehousing.



5

TRADES AND EXPANDED PATHWAYS TO INDEPENDENCE

GOAL

- Build a robust trades-to-housing program, starting with 10 youth and scaling over time.

KEY ACTIONS

- Leverage YWS's scattered housing model to support youth participating in the program.
- Identify additional employment pathways through a sector scan, including entrepreneurship, service industries, technology basics, creative fields and post-secondary options.
- Use readiness assessments to evaluate motivation, attendance, skill level and stability before youth enter training or placement.
- Build employer partnerships for paid placements and early work experience.
- Track outcomes such as job placement, six-month retention and earnings.



6

FIVE-YEAR CAPITAL CAMPAIGN WITH SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

GOAL

- Raise \$10 million over five years via capital campaign.
- Build a diversified and sustainable revenue model supporting the operations of all YWS properties.

KEY ACTIONS

- Develop a balanced revenue mix across government funding, private philanthropy, corporate partnerships, and reserve income.
- Begin building endowment and legacy giving programs.
- Engage a capital campaign and planned giving firm to support fundraising.
- Establish a Campaign Cabinet and a Board Capital Campaign Committee.

SUPPORTING STRATEGIES

RESEARCH, DATA, AND EVIDENCE BASED STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

GOAL

- Create a research and evaluation system that guides program design and demonstrates impact.

KEY ACTIONS

- Partner with universities for evaluation, longitudinal studies and data analysis.
- Use standardized tools to track diversion, housing outcomes, employment outcomes and well-being.
- Assign a Data and Evaluation Lead to manage research partnerships.
- Publish annual outcomes reports.
- Involve youth in research to build valuable skills.

HR SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

GOAL

- Expand human resources capacity to support organizational growth.

KEY ACTIONS

- Add an HR Assistant to support recruitment, onboarding and training coordination.
- Strengthen policy development, KPI tracking and staff monitoring.
- Improve hiring efficiency and ensure consistent staff development and performance management across all locations.

Financial donations, media and sponsorship:

416-748-0110 ext. 26
communications@yws.on.ca

Volunteer opportunities and donation scheduling:

416-748-0110 ext. 39
communications@yws.on.ca

Educational outreach program and Youth and Philanthropy projects:

416-748-0110 ext. 62
education@yws.on.ca

Marketing and Communications:

416-748-0110 ext. 35
communications@yws.on.ca



**DONATE. VOLUNTEER.
CHANGE THE NARRATIVE.**



YWS.ON.CA



416.748.0110



COMMUNICATIONS@YWS.ON.CA

CHARITABLE REGISTRATION NO. 119307817 RR0001

If you are a youth (age 16-24) who urgently needs a safe place to sleep, please call our emergency shelter at

416.748.0110. Press 0.



United Way
Greater Toronto



@YWSTORONTO