

**Youth Empowerment and Support Services (YESS)**

Youth Empowerment and Support Services (YESS) is an Edmonton-based, 24/7, single-point-of-access to immediate and low-barrier physical, mental and emotional health supports for youth aged 15-24 who are experiencing crisis and trauma.

YESS exists in our community to help youth who are in crisis because of family or community breakdown, mental illness, traumatic experiences, and often all of the above. We provide safe spaces for young people to get help, sleep safely, and access the basic necessities for survival, as well as build the tools and life skills they need for well-being and healthy adulthood. Over our 41 years of operation, we have evolved from an overnight emergency shelter to a collaborative partner in a youth care community, leveraging more than 25 Edmonton youth agencies. Our goal, first and foremost, is to ensure that young people have the help they need when they need it and to ultimately prevent adult chronic homelessness.

**Whyte Avenue Facility**

YESS's Whyte Avenue Facility houses our Youth Support Centre (YSC). The YSC is an evolution in youth care and crisis management. Recognizing the need for integrated service delivery that addresses all aspects of well-being, YESS combined all of our services into the overarching YSC in the summer of 2023. The YSC provides a centralized place for those in crisis to get immediate support, stabilization and assessment.

Specific components include:

• 27/7 Shelter and Stabilization: This program gives up to 16 youth a safe, secure and immediate place to stay when experiencing homelessness. Youth have access to food, dorms, showers and personal items such as jackets, backpacks, toothbrushes, shoes and other items as needed. The 24/7 model provides youth with a safe place to rest and ensure they are adequately energized and ready to face the day's challenges.

• Onsite Supports and Integrated Case Management: The YSC offers a variety of onsite supports, including medical care, addictions and mental health counselling, cultural and identity supports, art and recreation programming, help with continuing education and employment readiness, and help with housing resources. Staff work to build trusting relationships with youth, help the youth identify goals, and walk alongside youth as they begin to heal from the relationship trauma they have experienced.

• Transitional Beds: At present, YESS is still using a separate onsite space to provide group housing for eight youth. Upon the end of our Group Care contract in December 2024, these beds will become transitional beds, offering complex care to youth who need more support before transitioning to group care, supportive housing or independent living.

Built in 1911, the YESS'S Whyte Avenue facility, located at 9310 82 Avenue in Edmonton, Alberta, has required a number of repairs and renovations over the years to extend its life and provide a safe and comfortable environment for youth experiencing homelessness. The building has been zoned as a shelter and transitional housing building since YESS's inception in 1981.

Currently, the facility's roof is in dire need of replacement. The asphalt roof is in poor condition, causing leaks and multiple patchwork repairs throughout the year. Furthermore, the constant leakages are causing extensive damage to ceilings, walls and insulation. YESS's facilities team can no longer keep up with the constant repairs and maintenance.

From the occupant's perspective, the roof is impacting our ability to control temperatures and humidity, and we are highly cognizant of the health risks, including mould growth, conditions that can exacerbate allergies and asthma and the risk of pest infestations.

**Request**

YESS does not currently have the resources to undertake this project. Funding from No Room In the Inn will ensure that this project can be completed as soon as possible to ensure that our building can remain operational and we can continue to serve vulnerable homeless youth at our facility.