



# **Community Voice for Systemic Change**

## **Shelter and Support Sector**

### **Working with the City**

**Janet Lambert**  
**Dixon Hall Board Representative**  
**City Budget Submission**  
**2026-01-20**

# To all our Shelter and Support Sector Workers

Emergency Shelter and Homelessness  
Service Worker Appreciation Week  
January 19 - 25, 2026



Building community care together

A STRONG

Shelter and

Support SECTOR





Founded in 2023 by the Fred Victor Board of Directors

Effecting systemic change in the shelter and support sector by mobilizing **Board Directors**, the community voice

SSBAC represents community operated agencies serving women, men, Black and racialized francophones, youth, refugees, people living with HIV/AIDS, seniors, persons with addictions, mental health challenges



## MEMBERS



CENTRAL NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE  
NEIGHBOURHOOD LINK  
ST. STEPHEN'S COMMUNITY HOUSE



## PARTNERS



# SSBAC Working with the City

## SSBAC Work Plan 2025-26

- Advocating for wage equity for shelter staff/managers
- Supporting new shelters through community engagement
- Broadening advocacy to include the Province and Feds
- Supporting refugee shelter/transition home services

# Wage equity

## 1. Lack of wage parity with City staff

Community operated shelter staff with the same job, responsibility, and qualifications as City operated shelter staff receive significantly lower wages

## 2. Inadequate City funding to pay a fair wage to shelter/support staff

Community operated shelter and support staff cannot sustain themselves on current wages

## 3. Staffing challenges that impact services and delivery of mission

Community operated shelters are competing with, and losing talent to, municipalities and private sector. Significant staff turnover, heavy reliance on temp agencies, recruitment and training, impacting shelter client services/costs

# Inadequate City Funding

## Community Operated Shelters vs. City Operated Shelters

- ❑ **15%: Frontline workers** in community operated shelters receive approximately 15% less in wages than city operated shelters due to inadequate City funding
- ❑ **30%: Managers** in community operated shelters receive 30% less in wages than city operated shelters due to inadequate city funding

## Impact of Inadequate Shelter Funding on Service Costs, Clients and Community



Shelters competing with, and losing talent to, municipalities, private sector



Significant staff turnover



Heavy reliance on temp agencies



Recurring recruitment, orientation and training



Staff health – sick days, short/long term disability, low morale



Impacting business continuity – service to clients and community

# Impact on racialized community



Devaluation of care work rooted in systems of oppression

Frontline shelter and support workers are predominantly racialized women

Shelter and support services are for the most vulnerable, voiceless in the community

Low value translates into lower funding and lower wages

# CITY COMMITMENT – Steps in the Right Direction



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City commitment to raise agency front line salaries to **\$65,000** over the next two to three years

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City's budget over the last three years contains a **\$7M** sector enhancement plus cost-of-living adjustment

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Average front line staff salaries in community operated shelters in 2025 was \$59,385 an increase of 12%

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Average front line staff salaries in City operated shelters in 2025 was \$71,726 an increase of 3.95%

# Salaries – Frontline Shelter Staff

	City Operated Front Line	Community Operated Front Line
2024	\$69,000	\$53,000
2025	\$71,726 (3.95%)	\$59,385 (12%)
2026	??	??

# Salaries – Shelter Managers

	City Operated Front Line	Community Operated Front Line
2024	\$104,000	\$73,000
2025	\$108,108 (3.8%)	\$75,000 (2.7%)
2026	??	??

# Ontario Non-Profit Network

## State of the Sector Survey 2025



The Survey identifies a decrease in recruitment and retention challenges  
More funding for better wages in the sector has contributed to this decrease

Wage disparity continues to be the top factor in recruiting and retaining staff.  
Social Services in Toronto 2025:

- 60% of social services in Toronto experienced recruitment/retention challenges
- 67% said wage disparity was the top factor impacting recruitment/retention

<https://theonn.ca/topics/advocacy/nonprofit-sector-surveys/>

# CUPE Collective Agreement 2025-28

SSBAC supports City operated shelter and support staff in their efforts to increase their wages. SSBAC commends the City for arriving at an agreement.

Without ongoing increases in funding for community operated shelter and support staff, the wage disparity and inequity will worsen for our staff.

## **CUPE: Collective Agreement 2025-2028**

*From 2026 to 2028, all members will receive annual wage increases of three to 3.9 per cent year over year.*

# THE ASK: Closing the Wage Gap

- City of Toronto budget (2024,2025,2026) contains \$7M in community operated enhancement funding primarily for **frontline staff**
- Please maintain and consider **increasing the \$7M to \$8M** to address the frontline staff wage gap
- Please consider enhancement funding for managers. The \$7M covers only frontline staff not managers, leading to sector wage compression

# INVEST

Community operated shelters provide close to 75% of frontline client care. Let's continue to invest. Demand for services keeps increasing.

More investment is needed to ensure

- Fair wages for community operated shelter staff to live and work in Toronto
- Less City funds go to temp agencies to fill shifts, constant recruitment and training
- Better and more homeless services from a supported and healthy workforce
- Equity for services provided by racialized staff, and dignity
- Stronger shelter and support sector – more homeless sheltered and cared for
- Healthier, stronger City of Toronto

# THANK YOU

Shelters are a pathway to stable housing, health, employment

Shelters reduce human and societal costs

Shelters are a cornerstone of a caring Toronto

