

April 8, 2026

Housing Rights Advisory Committee
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Housing Rights Advisory Committee Members:

Re: Culturally Responsive and Trauma-Informed Program Models for Women and Gender-Diverse People, Including Survivors of Gender-Based Violence in Supportive Housing

Summary

Part of our mandate is to provide City Council with advice to ensure that the interests and needs of those with living or lived experiences of housing precarity, discrimination and homelessness are reflected in City programs and service delivery.

As a trauma survivor and person with lived experience of homelessness, addiction, and gender-based violence, I believe that there is currently a service gap for women and gender-diverse people, including survivors of gender-based violence, who are exiting homelessness. To ensure long-term housing stability, people who have experienced homelessness, violence, and addiction need culturally responsive and trauma-informed services once they are connected to housing.

Promising program models exist within Canada. For example, Darry's Place, funded by the Province of British Columbia, offers a supportive second-stage housing program for women and their children who have experienced gender-based violence or are at risk of violence. The three-story modular build offers a mix of studio and multi-bedroom units coupled with crisis counselling and poverty-reduction services.

The City of Toronto should consider program models within its City-funded and City-led supportive housing developments which serve the unique needs of women, gender-diverse people, and survivors of gender-based violence exiting homelessness. This helps ensure housing and support services are culturally adequate and trauma-informed, which is a core element of the City's Toronto Housing Charter commitment to progressively realize the right to adequate housing.

The City currently facilitates a Housing Pathways for Women and Gender Diverse People Working Group, with community advocates within Toronto's gender and violence against women (VAW) sector. While recognizing that provincial and federal funding is essential to advance and sustain new supportive housing projects, this Working Group can be a starting point for discussions on how to better support this critical and underserved priority population.

Recommendation

That the Housing Rights Advisory Committee:

1. Confirm its support for the work currently planned by the Executive Director, Housing Secretariat, in their role as Co-Chair of the Housing Pathways for Women and Gender Diverse People Working Group, to explore models of supportive housing programming that support women and gender-diverse people, including survivors of gender-based violence.

Submitted by Lindsey Lemieux, April 8, 2026.