

**Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services
Women's Services and Child Care Division**

JAN/02 (Revised)

**WOMEN'S CENTRES
SIX MONTH REPORT**

Please check period being reported:

For the period: July 01, 2003 – December 31, 2003
 January 01, 2004 – June 30, 2004

Society Name: West Kootenay Women's Association
Women's Centre Name: Nelson Women's Centre
Contact Name: Cheryl Dowden, Coordinator

The following items are Section 6.1 of the Component Schedule and are the agreed upon elements to be included in the six month report.

1. Component Schedule item 6.1a: The number of women who received service and/or were referred and the type of referral.

Please enter data requested in Appendix 1.

2. Component Schedule Item 6.1b: Information regarding possible service gaps and any measures the contractor may have taken to address them.

Service Gaps

Housing – There is a definite lack of safe and affordable housing for women and children in Nelson and District.

Food & Nutrition – There is a lack of an adequate centralized food distribution centre in Nelson. This means that women and children in need are not meeting their basic food and nutritional needs. Food donations attract a large percentage of women in need to our drop-in services.

Economic Opportunities for Women – Many women who use our services express a frustration with unemployment, underemployment or with being unable to find meaningful work that matches their skill set.

Action Taken

Housing – Our Economic Equality Coordinator has been working with members of the Homelessness Committee to find solutions to Nelson's Homelessness. There is now some short-term housing available, however there is no amount of sustainable funding available to pay for staffing. We are also looking at the feasibility of establishing a Co-op Campground for transient youth.

Food & Nutrition – We are working as part of the Food Coalition to establish a sustainable centralized Food Distribution Centre for Nelson. A Food Cupboard has been established and is currently operating out of the basement of the United Church. We are still providing some donations of nutritious food for women who come to the Women's Centre.

Economic Opportunities for Women – We recently ran a Women's Cooperative Ventures Training Program for women. The project was very successful and we are now seeking further funding for Women and Economic Development programs.

3. **Component Schedule Item 6.1 c: Participation/coordination in community events, media events, workshops, and/or committees.**

- Participated in local VAWIR meetings
- Represented WKWA on the West Kootenay Women's Council
- Represented WKWA on the Transition House Advisory Committee
- Participated in the Safe Haven Women's Safety Project sponsored through the Advocacy Centre and Funded by National Crime Prevention
- Participated as a Mentor for the Safer Spaces Project for glbt youth
- Staff & Volunteers organized a successful Art Auction fundraising event
- Held a December 6th Memorial
- Provided a feminist analysis of issues affecting women by providing commentary in the media.
- Staff provided a variety of media with interviews and articles including Kootenay Co-op Radio, CBC, The Nelson Daily News and The Express
- The Women's Economic Equality Coordinator participated as a member of the Food Coalition Advisory Committee and as a member of the Homelessness Committee
- The Women's Centre published 3 newsletters during this reporting period
- The following groups ran out of the Nelson & District Women's Centre: Tai Chi/Chi Quong, The Company of Older Women (COOWS), The Queer Women's Discussion Group, The Outdoor Women's Group and the Women Writer's Group.

4. **Component Schedule Item 6.1d: Activities and/or summaries of information gathered regarding women's needs, community needs and emerging issues, which may continue to affect women in the future.**

Please provide information, in point form, indicating the nature of identified needs and/or emerging issues.

Increase in women seeking emotional support around parenting (talk of welfare cuts and stress).

Increase in women reporting that they are not getting enough food to feed their families. Not enough money for clothing even from Thrift stores.

Increase in women needing emotional support regarding running from abusive partners. Approx. 50% of women are running and hiding from abusive partner. Some Canadians coming back to Canada to flee US partners.

Increase in women who have left abusive partners, who are either in safe homes or have their own apartment and who fear being found and fear for their children's safety.

Increase in women reporting depression related to financial concerns and extreme poverty.

5. **ENDNOTES: This section is OPTIONAL**

(i) Please provide, in order of priority, the 3 kinds of services most frequently requested by women who use the centre (e.g.: counselling, career planning, support groups, educational workshops, shelter for victims, drug and alcohol abuse programs, etc.).

1. Support & referrals re: poverty issues, abuse, housing, childcare, income assistance.
2. Support Groups re: sexuality, health & well being, etc.
3. Educational Workshops on a variety of issues relevant to women.

(ii) Indicate in order of priority, the 3 topics of information that are most relevant to the interests of women who visit the centre (e.g.: health, childcare, legal rights, literacy, skills training, abuse relationships, sexual abuse or harassment, divorce, self-help, etc.).

1. Employment and training
2. Housing
3. Violence & Assault and Financial Income Assistance (share same % of stats). The list of priorities from this reporting period reflect the current reality that many women in Nelson are living in poverty and are accessing the Women's Centre in order to receive support and referrals to get their basic needs met.

(iii) Program concerns or other comments.

Due to our funding concerns, in September we reduced our Drop-In Centre hrs from 4 afternoons to 2 afternoons/week. In spite of our drop in hours, there are still the same number of women coming through our doors on those 2 days as were coming when we were open 4 days/week. The demand for our services has increased dramatically over the past 2 years. This is particularly evident in the number of women requesting support around violence and assault and women who are dealing with extreme poverty issues. Now women are expressing real anxiety and stress regarding the upcoming cuts to social assistance as of April 1st, 2004. Although we have been able to fundraise towards our basic operating costs, we have no funding for staffing after March 31st, 2004. We strongly encourage MCAWS to reconsider re-instating funding to Women's Centres to allow for the high level of essential service we have always done for the betterment of our communities and especially for women and children who live in poverty.

APPENDIX 1
CLIENT STATISTICS – COMPONENT SCHEDULE 6.1.a
A. Women Receiving Services

Please tick the period being covered in this report:

July 01, 2003 – December 31, 2003

You will note that the following chart groups the months in accordance with reporting periods. Please enter data for the months covered by the period being reported.

Please note that women referred are also counted as having received service.

Month (by reporting period)	# of women who received service from the centre	# of women referred by centre
July	58 (and 15 children)	16
August	172 (72 children)	22
September	200 (39 children)	24
October	267 (51 children)	89
November	195 (20 children)	23
December	149 (5 children)	29
January		
February		
March		
April		
May		
June		

APPENDIX 1 CONTINUED

B. Type of Referral

Please tick the period being covered in this report:

July 01, 2003 – December 31, 2003

Please enter the number of women per month referred for each referral type.

Month (by reporting period)	Referral Type					
	Legal (# of women)	Financial/ Income Assistance (# of women)	Housing (# of women)	Abuse Counselling/ Support (# of women)	Employment and Training (# of women)	Other: please specify referral type and number of women referred
July	0	0	0	0	1	childcare/parenting (2) health (1)
August	0	4	1	1	2	violence/assault (2) health (8) childcare/parenting(1)
September	0	1	1	0	5	health (1)
October	0	3	16	*see violence & assault	17	violence/assault(11)
November	0	2	6	0	1	health (3), childcare/parenting (2)
December	0	7	1	1	30	violence/assault (4)
January						
February						
March						
April						
May						
June						