

**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, 2001 – December 31, 2001  
 January 01, 2002 – June 30, 2002

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.**

Please provide sufficient detail to clearly indicate the activities your centre has been involved in during the reporting period.

**Service gaps**

**Housing** – There is a definite lack of safe and affordable housing for women and children in Nelson & District. There is also no emergency housing available in Nelson.

**Food and Nutrition** – Food donations draw a large percentage of women in need to our drop-in services.

**Health services** – The Health Council's Women In Health Survey identified a number of significant gaps in health services for women in Nelson & District. Women reported that they felt that lack of affordable health services, lack of knowledge regarding available health care services, lack of transportation in rural areas, waiting lists for women doctors, etc. were obstacles to having their basic health needs met.

**Services for Transgendered (M/F)** – As a result of the type of discrimination faced by those who identify as being transgender, there is a lack of safe spaces where they can receive support. There is also a lack of education on transphobia and related issues in the Nelson & District Community.

**Pay Equity** – There is a lack of work opportunities and equal pay for women workers in the trades and in technology in the West Kootenay Region.

**Action Taken**

**Housing** – The Nelson Women's Centre is involved with the work of the SCPI (Supporting Community Partnership Initiative) Committee. SCPI has been assessing the housing needs of people in poverty in the Nelson area. A community plan on homelessness was completed and submitted to the National Housing Initiative. \$240,00 will be donated to help purchase Ward St. Place to be used as short term and transition housing.

**Food** - The food coalition is researching the feasibility of a central food distribution point that will house the food cupboard and will further the work around food security. A pilot project of community kitchens funded by the local health capacity bldg project has been initiated.

**Health** – A women's health working group has grown out of the Community Action Forum on Women's Health. It is hosted at the Women's Centre once a month and the group is working on improving access to information re community health care by creating a women's health directory.

**Transgender** – We are working to create safe spaces and services for male to female transgendered. We are developing policy and have held educational sessions for our staff, volunteers and coordinating collective.

**Equity** - We have initiated the 3<sup>rd</sup> phase of the pay equity project and are in the process of creating an advisory committee to focus on the hiring of a Labour and Equity facilitator funded by CPC in the West Kootenays.

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

Please provide information, in point form, on the nature of the activities your centre has participated in and/or coordinated during the report period.

- Attended 5 VAWIR committee meetings and 5 West Kootenay Women's Council meetings
- Partnered with the local health authority in organizing a Community Action Forum on Women's Health
- Facilitated a session on rural women's health at the Community Action Forum on Women's Health
- Participated in other community committees including the Nelson Food Coalition, SCPI (Supporting Community Partnership Initiative), the Advocacy Centre Advisory Committee and Women Plan Nelson.
- Provided a feminist analysis of issues affecting women by providing feminist comment in the media.
- Provided a variety of media with interviews and articles including the Vancouver Sun, CBC Radio, The Nelson Daily News, The Express, The Barter Times
- The Women's Centre hosted a regular Tuesday morning spot on Kootenay Co-op Radio. Used this opportunity to provide a feminist analysis of a broad base of issues important to women. Topics included, women's sexuality, economic equality, health, etc.
- Hosted a community workshop called Sacred Lives: Canadian Aboriginal Children & Youth Speak Out About Sexual Exploitation (funded by Save The Children).
- Participated in the formation of a Women's Health Working Group that grew out of the Community Action Forum on Women's Health. This group is hosted by the Women's Centre.
- Formed a Women's Outdoor Club to provide a venue for Nelson & District Women to engage in outdoor activities and to learn new skills in a women-centred and non-threatening environment. This club provides women with an opportunity for self-empowerment through outdoor learning activities and pursuits.
- Staff participated in meetings with local MLA and union rep on the topic of Pay Equity legislation.
- Participated in conference with BC Association of Women's Centres in Vancouver
- Participated in a meeting with the Hon. Lynn Stephens in Victoria
- Volunteer Coordinator conducted a 10 week training session of 20 new volunteers
- As part of the Women's Events Planning Committee, Organized and participated in the Take Back the Night March
- As part of the Women's Events Planning Committee, organized and participated in the Dec 6<sup>th</sup> Memorial, and the Dec 7<sup>th</sup> Women's Centre Fundraising Event, Singing For Our Sisters.

**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.

- After the Sept 11<sup>th</sup> attack on the World Trade Centre, our center noted an increase in calls from women concerning abuse counselling, safety and support. This increase was 40% over previous months calls. The increase continued through the month of October. These stats are consistent with a feminist analysis of violence that suggests a correlation between social and economic crisis and an increase in violence against women.
- the community action forum on women's health identified the need for more affordable access to health care services.
- Service users, local organizations and committees such as WKWC, identified women's growing concerns regarding cuts to legal aid, social assistance, health care and employment in the public sector. Women, especially single mothers expressed fear of being financially unable to have their basic needs met.

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

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(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. Economic assistance (affordable housing and food access)
2. Counselling & Support (re: physical & sexual abuse, health issues, and childcare and parenting)
3. Employment & Education (job finding, career planning & educational workshops regarding a variety of topics of relevance 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. Violence against women (physical, sexual, adult survivor of childhood sexual abuse).
2. Economic assistance (employment, housing, food).
3. Health and parenting issues (childcare, referrals to health care, emotional support).

(iii) Program concerns or other comments.

Our concern is the decision to cut core funding to BC Women's Centres. The Nelson & District Women's Centre provides an essential service to 10% of the Nelson and area population. Women and children rely on our services for information and referrals in order to maintain and improve their basic needs. These basic needs include adequate shelter, food, safety, health, emotional support and housing. Our Women's Centre is often the first point of contact for women leaving an abusive situation. With many people facing loss of employment and cuts to social assistance and legal aid, the number of women using our services is expected to increase. We have already noted an increase in crisis calls in the 2 months following the Sept. 11<sup>th</sup> attack on the World Trade Centre in New York. Again, this indicates that in times of social and economic crisis women and children are often disproportionately affected. Thus, the number of job losses and cuts to social services faced by Nelson & District residents will more than likely have a great impact on the economic, physical and emotional well-being of women and children. Further, as other community-based organizations experience an increase in the need for their services and are unable to take on more clients, more women will come to the women's centre seeking our services. This is already beginning to occur.

It is our concern that the loss of our core funding will mean a loss of a variety of essential services that our organization provides to the community of Nelson & District. With respect, we urge MCAWS to reconsider its decision and to reinstate core funding to BC Women's Centres.

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

Please tick the period being covered in this report:

July 01, 2001 – December 31, 2001

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<br>(by reporting period) | # of women who received service<br>from the centre | # of women referred<br>by centre |
|--------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| July                           | 138  | 5                                |
| August                         | 271  | 31                               |
| September                      | 194  | 26                               |
| October                        | 298  | 49                               |
| November                       | 268  | 30                               |
| December                       | 192  | 16                               |
| January                        |  |                                  |
| February                       |  |                                  |
| March                          |  |                                  |
| April                          |  |                                  |
| May                            |  |                                  |
| June                           |  |                                  |

**APPENDIX 1 CONTINUED**  
**B. Type of Referral**

Please tick the period being covered in this report:

July 01, 2001 – December 31, 2001

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

| Month<br>(by reporting<br>period) | Referral Type         |  |                         |  |  |   |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|--|-------------------------|--|--|---|
|                                   | Legal<br>(# of women) | Financial/<br>Income<br>Assistance<br>(# of women) | Housing<br>(# of women) | Abuse<br>Counselling/<br>Support<br>(# of women) | Employment and<br>Training<br>(# of women) | Other: please specify referral type<br>and number of women referred |
| July                              | 0                     | 0  | 4                       | 0  | 0  | Health issues (1)   |
| August                            | 0                     | 5  | 13                      | 3  | 7  | Health issues (3)   |
| September                         | 1                     | 0  | 8                       | 22   | 1  | Health issues (3)   |
| October                           | 2                     | 1  | 6                       | 26   | 2  | Childcare/parenting (5), Health (7)                                 |
| November                          | 0                     | 8  | 4                       | 9  | 1  | Childcare/parenting (3), Health (5)                                 |
| December                          | 0                     | 1  | 2                       | 1  | 4  | Childcare/parenting (4), Health (4)                                 |
| January                           |                       |  |                         |  |  |   |
| February                          |                       |  |                         |  |  |   |
| March                             |                       |  |                         |  |  |   |
| April                             |                       |  |                         |  |  |   |
| May                               |                       |  |                         |  |  |   |
| June                              |                       |  |                         |  |  |   |