

Proposed Project(s):

Capital Request- \$500,000

Stepping Stones Crisis Society (SSCS) is undertaking an ambitious and transformative building project that will centralize and amalgamate the majority of our programs and services under one state-of-the-art facility. This new facility, located in Cold Lake, will enable us to expand and enhance the critical supports we offer to the entire Lakeland Region. While the building will be physically based in Cold Lake, SSCS's services extend far beyond its borders, benefitting residents from the Town of Bonnyville, M.D. of Bonnyville, and surrounding Reserves and Settlements, as well as other communities throughout the Lakeland Region.

The vision for this new facility goes beyond merely housing our existing services. It represents a comprehensive approach to addressing community needs, combining our 24/7 emergency residential shelter, 24/7 Helpline, Second-Stage Housing Program, and a host of community support initiatives, such as Healthy Babies, Empowering Women, A Better Way (for both men and women), and our Community Kitchens, outreach services, and educational programs. By integrating these services into one centralized location, we will be better positioned to serve vulnerable populations more efficiently and effectively, with a focus on fostering resilience, safety, and long-term empowerment.

At the onset of this project, a key priority was to engage local contractors and businesses wherever possible, ensuring that the construction and development of this facility also contributed to the economic vitality of the region. The generous support from the Lakeland communities over the years has been invaluable, and in this project, we remain committed to reinvesting back into the local economy.

Although we initially secured the full amount required for the build through our capital grant, the ongoing challenges of a post-pandemic economic landscape have driven costs significantly higher than anticipated. Rising material costs and labor shortages have placed an additional burden on our project budget. As a result, we are now seeking additional support from the Town of Bonnyville, M.D. of Bonnyville, and other local stakeholders to bridge this funding gap and ensure that the project can move forward without compromising the quality and scope of services.

Currently, the total project cost stands at \$34 million, with 70% of the required funding already secured. We are grateful for the support we have already received from the City of Cold Lake, and we look forward to collaborating with our other key partners in the Lakeland Region to make this transformative project a reality. We would be pleased to provide a detailed presentation on the full scope of the project, including its long-term benefits to the community, and to explore meaningful recognition opportunities for those who contribute to this vital cause.

Operational Request- \$50,000

In 2016, Stepping Stones Crisis Society (SSCS) recognized the growing need for services in Bonnyville and the challenge posed by the lack of reliable transportation to Cold Lake. As a result, SSCS opened the Bonnyville Community Support satellite office, funded through our dedicated fundraising efforts. This office was established with the mission to provide the same comprehensive outreach programs and

supports to Bonnyville residents as are available in Cold Lake, ensuring that all individuals, regardless of geographic barriers, could access the critical services they need.

The Bonnyville office plays a pivotal role in our outreach efforts, offering free services to men, women, youth, and seniors in the region. Our outreach team delivers personalized one-on-one support, advocates for clients, facilitates referrals to essential social services, and leads community programming, such as public education on family violence prevention and the facilitation of healthy relationship courses in schools. These services are a lifeline for vulnerable individuals and families, fostering empowerment and resilience.

However, the long-term sustainability of the Bonnyville office has come under scrutiny, particularly in the wake of the pandemic, which has exacerbated funding challenges. Despite these pressures, the Outreach Program remains a cornerstone of SSCS's work, helping to prevent family violence and improve community well-being. The cost to operate the Bonnyville office and continue offering these vital services is approximately \$100,000 annually.

Without continued funding and support, the future of the Bonnyville Community Support office—and the essential services it provides—remains uncertain. We are committed to ensuring its sustainability and invite our partners and supporters to join us in this mission. Together, we can ensure that all individuals in Bonnyville and the surrounding areas have access to the support they need to build safer, healthier lives.

Supplemental Attachments-

- Proposed Budget for 2025/2026 Operations
- Proposed Budget for 2025/2026 Bonnyville Office
- Proposed Budget for New Building Project (Phase 1)