



# Building better futures for women and their families

## Introduction

This plan defines high-level strategic directions for Advocacy and all Core Service areas for YWCA Metro Vancouver. It also documents our progress and serves as a guide for departmental activities and program development as they relate to the ongoing, mission-based work of the organization.

Underpinning our strategic plan is the Balanced Scorecard Performance Measurement System, which tracks performance in all YWCA programs and departments. The strategic directions highlighted in this plan will be integrated into our 2012 Balanced Scorecard, translating mission into action and action into outcomes, as we move forward to achieve the desired future for YWCA Metro Vancouver and those we serve.



## Vision

To achieve women's equality

## Mission

To touch lives and build better futures for women and their families through advocacy and integrated services that foster economic independence, wellness and equal opportunities

## Strategic Plan

### ADVOCACY

Universal Early Learning  
& Care

Women's Safety &  
Healthy Relationships

Affordable Housing

Support for  
Single Mothers

Work/Life Balance  
&  
Family-Friendly  
Workplace

### CORE SERVICE AREAS

Crabtree Corner

Early Learning &  
Care Operations

Employment Services

Health + Fitness

Hotel & Housing

International Services

Mentorship

Single Mothers' Services

Youth—Education

Finance & IT

Fund Development

Human Resources

Communications  
& Marketing

Risk Management

Sustainability

Volunteer Services

## Balanced Scorecard

Serve the Client

Run the Business

Learn & Grow

Be Financially Healthy

# Our 2012 Strategic Plan At a Glance

ADVOCACY STRATEGIES	RANGE Short-term 0-2 yrs Mid-term 2-5 yrs Long-term 5-10 yrs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeted engagement of business, community and government leaders to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Build support for the family policy framework articulated in the UBC HELP 15 by 15 report</li> <li>- Build understanding of the economic cost/benefit of public investment in the early years</li> <li>- Work to ensure that implementation of full-day kindergarten does not destabilize existing early learning and care services</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Short- to mid-term
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise public awareness of the inappropriate sexualization of women and girls in contemporary media</li> </ul>	Short- to mid-term
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate advocacy messages (housing, women's safety, work/life balance and support for single mothers) in YWCA materials and CEO speaking opportunities</li> </ul>	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mothers Without Legal Status               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work with governments and community partners to implement policy and procedure reforms to better serve mothers without legal status in Canada</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Short- to mid-term

CORE SERVICE AREA	STRATEGIES	RANGE Short-term 0-2 yrs Mid-term 2-5 yrs Long-term 5-10 yrs
Crabtree Corner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult with clients, supporters and peer organizations to reconfigure and expand YWCA services offered in the Downtown Eastside</li> </ul>	Short-term
Early Learning and Care Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate parents, YWCA supporters and government officials about the true cost and benefits of quality care</li> <li>• Educate parents and community partners about the benefits of play-based learning</li> </ul>	Short- to mid-term Short- to mid-term
Employment Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement new employment programs, as approved through the Provincial RFP process</li> <li>• Seek additional funding sources for employment programs</li> <li>• Explore opportunities to facilitate seniors' participation in the labour force</li> </ul>	Short-term Ongoing Ongoing
Health + Fitness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on member growth through corporate and group business</li> <li>• Focus on member retention through excellent customer service</li> <li>• Increase promotion through new technology and social media</li> <li>• Provide training and development for staff, volunteer instructors and coaches</li> <li>• Expand Personalized Services to meet the needs of members and the community</li> </ul>	Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing
Hotel and Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open Coquitlam and Surrey housing communities in early 2012</li> <li>• Design and develop YWCA Cause We Care House in collaboration with the Vancouver Public Library</li> <li>• Build partnerships with housing providers to improve access for single mothers and at-risk women</li> <li>• Explore new opportunities to develop housing for single mothers, marginalized women and mature single women</li> <li>• Undertake hotel expansion as market conditions or funding opportunities warrant</li> </ul>	Short-term Mid-term Ongoing Mid- to long-term Mid- to long-term
International Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in YWCA Honduras project</li> <li>• Provide support to the YWCA of Russia</li> <li>• Provide support to the Serbian Apatin Women's Centre</li> <li>• Explore new opportunities to share YWCA Metro Vancouver best practices in other countries</li> </ul>	Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing
Mentorship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement new mentorship initiatives as funding and partnership opportunities arise</li> </ul>	Ongoing

# Our 2012 Strategic Plan At a Glance

CORE SERVICE AREA	STRATEGIES	RANGE Short-term 0-2 yrs Mid-term 2-5 yrs Long-term 5-10 yrs
Single Mothers' Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain strong links with community partners</li> <li>Build capacity in service delivery through volunteer development</li> <li>Explore new opportunities to expand service in Surrey, the Tri-Cities and the Fraser Valley</li> </ul>	Short- to mid-term Short- to mid-term Short- to mid-term
Youth – Education, Welcome to My Life™ and Boys 4 Real™	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand Welcome to My Life™ and Boys 4 Real™ to new locations in Metro Vancouver</li> <li>Review the strategic direction of the YWCA Youth Education Programs and explore technology-based options for service delivery</li> <li>Identify additional sources for volunteer Facilitators and Wisdom Champion™ mentors</li> </ul>	Mid-term  Short-term  Short- to mid-term
Balanced Scorecard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop new scorecards as new programs are undertaken</li> <li>Continue to refine and track success measures</li> </ul>	Ongoing Ongoing
Communications and Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase print and broadcast coverage to support organizational objectives</li> <li>Increase online presence and engagement with supporters via online vehicles</li> <li>Profile the diversity of our staff and clients</li> <li>Whenever applicable, ensure that advocacy messages (e.g. housing, anti-violence, work/life balance and support for single moms) are included in all YWCA communication materials</li> </ul>	Ongoing  Short- to mid-term  Ongoing Ongoing
Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build capital reserve through operating surpluses and undesignated bequests</li> <li>Ensure that revenue-producing areas of the organization generate 50% or more of operating revenues</li> <li>Explore opportunities for new social enterprise activities</li> <li>Monitor investment performance and alignment of investment policy</li> <li>Ensure annual balanced budgets</li> </ul>	Ongoing  Ongoing  Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing
Fund Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build endowment through legacy gifts</li> <li>Increase major gifts from individuals and corporations</li> <li>Undertake capital campaign for YWCA Cause We Care House</li> <li>Undertake endowment campaign when circumstances are appropriate</li> <li>Assess funding opportunities for seniors and mental health issues</li> </ul>	Ongoing Ongoing Short-term Mid- to long-term Ongoing
Human Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emphasize coaching, performance feedback and internal staff recognition</li> <li>Conduct periodic surveys to track employee engagement</li> <li>Build on our reputation as a supportive and family-friendly organization to optimize recruitment and retention</li> <li>Emphasize workplace wellness to maintain the physical and mental health of our aging workforce</li> </ul>	Short- to mid-term Ongoing Short- to mid-term  Ongoing
Risk Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build a culture of risk awareness among employees</li> <li>Annual review of key risk areas</li> </ul>	Ongoing Ongoing
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achieve Gold LEED certification in Coquitlam and Surrey housing projects</li> <li>Priority selection of environmentally sustainable products and suppliers</li> <li>Monitor, measure and reduce GHG emissions</li> <li>Ensure reserve funds are invested through socially responsible investment screens</li> </ul>	Short-term Ongoing  Ongoing Ongoing
Volunteer Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emphasize group volunteer opportunities</li> <li>Develop new strategies to engage skilled volunteers, young professionals and youth</li> </ul>	Ongoing Short- to mid-term

## The Current Environment

In 2011 we conducted an environmental scan on key trends and issues affecting YWCA Metro Vancouver and its clients, then analyzed the information in relation to our service delivery and advocacy efforts. The research results reinforce front-line evidence gathered through YWCA programs.

The global economic downturn of 2008 and 2009 brought significant challenges for all sectors of the economy. Many non-profit organizations were seriously impacted by reductions in donations, endowment payouts and earned revenue as the demand for service increased dramatically. While not immune to these challenges, the YWCA managed effectively in this environment, due to diversified revenues and a culture of prudent fiscal management. In 2010 and 2011, the organization achieved solid financial results and implemented new initiatives in response to critical community needs.

While the economic picture has improved, there remains considerable uncertainty about the future performance of the local and global economy. A combination of factors—challenges in the US and European economies, a strong Canadian dollar, a forestry sector in transition, the high cost of housing and a weak export base—all indicate that economic recovery will continue to be slow and the job market will lag. Our low birth rate and aging population compound concerns about long-term competitiveness and sustainability. These factors may generate new financial and human resource challenges for YWCA operations, while increasing demand for YWCA services—including services for seniors. As well, we expect the years ahead to bring greater



retrenchment in government funding at all levels and increased competition in fundraising. Strong emphasis on short- and long-term financial strategy will continue to be critical.

The stock of human capital is key to our province's long-term success. Groundbreaking work by UBC's Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP) demonstrates that one-third of BC children entering kindergarten do not have the skills they need to learn and thrive both now and in the future. This developmental vulnerability is three times what it could be and is not relegated to the poor—in fact, it is a middle-class problem. It reflects the current context for families today who struggle with stagnant incomes, the rising cost of housing and lack of time to participate in family and community activities.

Economic analysis demonstrates that our failure to reduce child vulnerability is depleting our future stock of human capital, causing BC to forgo 20% in GDP growth over the next 60 years—an amount that is 10 times the total provincial debt load.

On the other end of the spectrum, we see many senior citizens choosing to work beyond conventional retirement age—either from financial necessity or for reasons of personal and professional

fulfillment. The YWCA will build on our employment expertise to facilitate their participation in the labour force, according to their interests and recognizing their increasing importance to our economy.

The discourse on how best to address the human capital shortage has also largely ignored the fact that many BC women are under-employed in part-time roles or positions that do not fully utilize their education and experience.

In terms of women's equality, we see that Canadian women enjoy a measure of freedom and legal equality not experienced by most women in all countries around the world. More women than men now have university degrees; however, public policy and prevailing social norms still discourage many from assuming a full and equal role in society.

In recent decades, there has been little progress towards gender equality on key social indicators and even a backwards trend on some. Although women now comprise half the paid labour force there has been no change in the gender earnings gap. Women working full-time still earn just 71 cents for every dollar earned by men, and numerous studies confirm that women still carry a disproportionate share of unpaid work—housework, child and elder care.

It may seem counterintuitive, but women's share of senior and executive management positions is actually dropping. We have long believed that the first female executives would lead the way for other women to assume these roles, but the statistics show that the path of senior leadership is one that fewer women are able, or are choosing, to follow. Work/life conflict and lack of quality early learning and care are key reasons why women are struggling with and, in many cases, forgoing these roles.

their own homes and they are among the most likely to go hungry. This is a common experience for many YWCA clients. Contradictory social policies that force single parents into the workforce, without access to child care, housing or training, serve only to reinforce this social inequality and the social costs that result.

A comprehensive policy response to many of these societal issues is articulated in *15 by 15: A Comprehensive Framework for Early Human Capital*

expanding housing opportunities for single mothers, we will also assess how we can address the housing needs of senior women.

Reflecting the major demographic shifts in Canadian society, we are experiencing increased demand for services for seniors. As well, front-line staff are reporting a higher incidence of mental health and substance use issues among existing clients.

We welcomed recent changes to the minimum wage in BC. However, we recognize that broader change is required to significantly reduce poverty and reap the benefits in reduced crime, increased educational attainment and improved physical and mental health for BC citizens.

Sadly, there has been no positive movement on rates of violence against women in recent years and we will continue to develop new services that assist women leaving violence to build new lives of personal and economic independence. The hyper-sexualization of young girls and women in contemporary media is increasingly of concern; we will work to raise public awareness and counteract this disturbing trend.

The increasing diversity of the Metro Vancouver population is reflected in the YWCA's client base and will continue to be an important factor in the Metro Vancouver economy. We are proud to employ a highly diverse workforce, providing services that reflect the needs of our clients and position the YWCA to compete effectively in the competitive labour market.

Research and evidence reinforce the critical role of YWCA Metro Vancouver in Greater Vancouver, providing essential services and advocating for social change, as we build better futures for women and their families.



The YWCA understands the economic and social benefits that will result from supporting the best-educated generation of women in our history to use their skills and education fully. There is also much to gain by assisting women at the lower end of the income spectrum to enhance their employability.

Canada ranks 12th among 17 comparable countries in terms of income inequality and BC's wealth gap is among the largest in Canada. BC also has the highest poverty rate in Canada.

Single moms and their children remain the poorest families in BC; they have the most difficulty finding affordable housing, the least chance of owning

*Investment in BC*, authored by leading academics with the UBC Human Early Learning Partnership. We will work to advance the new policy vision framed in this report in order to eliminate unnecessary early vulnerability, provide an array of supports for children and families, and produce a spectacular economic return on investment of 6 to 1.

Vancouver remains Canada's least affordable city for housing and YWCA waiting lists continue to increase. This means that the provision of safe, affordable housing for women will continue to be a key focus for service expansion and advocacy. In addition to

# Advocacy

## Profile and Strategies

YWCA Metro Vancouver is committed to advocating for social change to promote the full realization of women's equality. This section outlines key advocacy issues and strategies. Our work aims to address the systemic causes of poverty and social inequality and the particular challenges faced by single moms.

As always, our advocacy positions are grounded in our front-line service delivery and informed by current research and evidence. We will continue to collaborate with key partners such as the UBC Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP), the United Way of the Lower Mainland and women's equality organizations, and will help advance the advocacy work of YWCA Canada and its member agencies.

A strategic and sustained approach to advocacy is fundamental to promoting positive, systemic social change. By allocating resources to advocacy, we will be positioned to expand our sphere of influence on key issues and respond to new opportunities as they arise.

## UNIVERSAL EARLY LEARNING AND CARE

YWCA Vancouver has consistently advocated for public investment to build a national system of early learning and care that is accessible for all children. This is fundamental to our mission and will continue to be a key advocacy focus. Our goals are to support the healthy development of children, build a strong economy and achieve women's equality.

A compelling body of research confirms that high-quality early learning and care "sets the foundation for lifelong learning, behaviour and health" (Margaret McCain and Fraser Mustard,

*Early Years Study: Reversing the Real Brain Drain*, 1998). The period from birth to six years is the most rapid period of brain development with maximum refinement in social and emotional functioning, language, cognition, vision and hearing.

Numerous studies demonstrate that such investment also generates significant economic benefits. Nobel laureate and University of Chicago economist James Heckman concludes, based on his study of neuroscience, that "investment in the pre-school years raises the productivity of schooling and training" and attributes broader benefits to individuals and society through better health outcomes and reduced crime (James Heckman, *The Productivity Argument for Investing in Young Children*, 2004).

Today only 70% of BC children arrive at kindergarten meeting all the developmental benchmarks they need to thrive both now and in the future: 30% are developmentally vulnerable. This means that nearly one in three children are at risk of failing to develop into the healthy, well-educated, innovative and productively employed adults we need to secure our long-term economic sustainability.

Early vulnerability rates reflect the different circumstances facing parents today, compared with the baby boomers raising children in the 1970s. While the Canadian economy has grown 108% since 1976, adjusted for inflation, the new reality for parents with pre-school children is a decline in the standard of living. Compared with the previous generation, young families have less time together, less household income after housing and insufficient services to balance work and young children.

The Province of BC has established a goal of reducing early vulnerability to

15% by 2015. This goal is a step along the way to reducing child vulnerability to 10% by 2020.

The UBC Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP) has undertaken groundbreaking research on the costs and benefits of addressing early vulnerability in BC. *15 by 15: A Comprehensive Framework for Early Human Capital Investment in BC* calls for old post-war thinking to be replaced with a new family policy framework that reflects 21st-century economic and social realities. It illustrates why individuals, businesses and governments should care about the real brain drain in BC today, resulting from early vulnerability. Key among the recommendations is a comprehensive system of early education and care services which is consistent with the YWCA's long-standing advocacy position. The report also calls for measures that:

- build on maternity and parental leave to enrich the benefit value and extend the total duration, reserving additional months for fathers; and
- promote flex-time for employees by adapting overtime, Employment Insurance and Canada Pension Plan premiums paid by employers to make it less costly for business to use employees up to 35 hours per week and more costly for hours thereafter.

While there are significant costs associated with implementing this vision, analysis demonstrates that it will reap spectacular economic returns. Over 60 years, the benefits outweigh the cost by more than 6 to 1, with a substantial portion of costs recovered in the short and middle terms through productivity gains from increased labour supply—especially among women; productivity gains from reduced absenteeism and improved work/life balance; child welfare and

health savings; and reductions in crime and expenditures on the justice system.

YWCA Metro Vancouver has established itself as a credible, leading voice on this complex issue. We will continue to advance our three-part strategy of government relations, business engagement and public education to build support for the *15 by 15* vision. We will maintain our focus on engaging business and community leaders in supporting our advocacy work and we will continue to collaborate with pan-Canadian advocacy efforts and UBC HELP.

We are also committed to continuing our advocacy on early learning and care services to ensure:

- an integrated vision of learning and care that provides a seamless day for children;
- the need for play-based learning and qualified educators; and
- careful consideration of the impact on existing community services as new initiatives—such as full-day kindergarten—are implemented.

We know that a long-term commitment is required to realize this new policy vision. We will continue to carry the message that this vision—providing comprehensive and high quality early learning and care services, nested within a new family policy framework for the 21st century—is the key to leveling the field for all women and children, positioning BC as a leader in the global knowledge-based economy and achieving BC’s goals as they relate to literacy, healthy living and supporting children and families with diverse needs.

**WORK/LIFE BALANCE AND FAMILY-FRIENDLY WORKPLACE**

At the YWCA, we understand that work/life conflict is a societal issue, requiring a systemic response. Most families today

need two incomes to manage and frequently both partners are under pressure to work increasingly long hours.

We know that both women and men are affected by role overload, but research shows that it is women who are affected to a greater degree. Although an increasing number of men are playing a more active role at home, women still carry a disproportionate share of responsibility for unpaid work—housework, child and elder care. Surveys show that half of female executives would change jobs to achieve better balance and that flexibility is valued over salary. Flexibility is also emerging as a major concern for students and young graduates.

We will continue to encourage broader acceptance of family-friendly workplace practices, offering expertise to organizations seeking to improve productivity, retention and the working environment. As well, we will advocate for changes that address the imbalance in unpaid care—such as universal early learning and care and pension or parental leave reforms that encourage men to play a stronger role in the domestic sphere.

**WOMEN’S SAFETY AND HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS**

Violence against women is a systemic social problem that transcends class, culture and socio-economic conditions. In the absence of supports that enable women to live autonomously—early education and child care, housing, training and legal aid—many women return repeatedly to abusive partners.

We know that domestic violence is a key factor that drives women into welfare dependency. It also has long-term, intergenerational implications and children who witness abuse are much more likely to be overtly aggressive.

The hyper-sexualization of girls and women in contemporary media is

increasingly of concern. Evidence suggests that women are three times more likely than men to be portrayed as sexually provocative in advertising and magazines and are frequently featured as decorative objects rather than as active users or consumers of products. As well, a variety of sources confirm a trend towards increasing sexualization of female athletes comparable to their overall increasing visibility, while male athletes are rarely depicted as sexual objects.

Most disturbing are the examples that permeate contemporary culture of the inappropriate imposition of sexuality on young girls. This is evident in:

- availability of “sexy” clothing in child and teen sizes;
- beauty pageants for five-year-olds; and
- teen magazines that include articles on physical fitness centred on increasing sexual desirability rather than health or portray sexuality and the pursuit of males as the key/sole focus of life.

It is well accepted that such sexualization can contribute to low self-esteem, body dissatisfaction, eating disorders, depression and other health concerns and can impair the ability of both males and females to establish healthy relationships. It is also linked to societal tolerance of sexual violence and exploitation of girls and women.

The YWCA will continue to raise awareness of the implications of violence in society and of the inappropriate sexualization of girls and women. We will advocate for reforms and supports that enable women to make a successful transition to economic independence and ensure their safety. We will also continue to educate youth about the behaviours and attitudes that are fundamental to healthy relationships.

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

Vancouver remains Canada’s least affordable city for housing. With limited rental stock suitable for families—and virtually no new rental construction—the need for affordable family housing has never been greater. This problem is particularly acute for single moms. At the YWCA, we are seeing lengthy waiting lists at our housing communities and longer crisis stays at the YWCA Hotel/Residence.

The YWCA believes that we must do more than deal with the victims of poverty and social inequality. We must attack the root causes, by providing single moms and their children with services such as affordable housing and quality early learning and care.

The YWCA will continue to build understanding of the importance of housing to creating a healthy society and supporting the autonomy and independence of women. In 2012, we will open two new housing projects—in Surrey and Coquitlam—for single mothers living in poverty and leaving abuse. We will advance the development of YWCA Cause We Care House—a collaboration with the City of Vancouver and the Vancouver Public Library—located in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside. And we will explore opportunities to address the housing needs of senior women.

**SUPPORT FOR SINGLE MOTHERS**

In BC today, 20% of families are headed by single moms—half of whom live in poverty. They have great difficulty obtaining affordable housing and are among the most likely citizens to go hungry. These are common experiences for many YWCA clients.

Research by Dr. Paul Kershaw of UBC’s Human Early Learning Partnership documents what single moms and the YWCA have known for some time—the poverty in which many single moms and their children live is not a result of poor personal choices, but rather a combination of factors, including lack of child care and housing, low minimum wage rates, reductions to funding for education, as well as the challenge of balancing parental and work responsibilities. The YWCA has a special role to play in advocating on behalf of single mothers to reduce the barriers to their full participation in education, employment and economic independence.

**LEGAL EDUCATOR AND MOTHERS WITHOUT STATUS**

Many of our clients need support in addressing a range of legal issues such as restraining orders, child custody and access, and eligibility for income assistance or social housing. YWCA Metro Vancouver provides such

assistance on an individual basis and also seeks to educate employees, volunteers and clients through ongoing workshops on a range of relevant topics.

We will work to advance the implementation of recommendations in the *Mothers Without Legal Status in Canada* report. Commissioned by YWCA Metro Vancouver and funded by the Law Foundation of BC, this report examined the circumstances for women—most of whom have fled their relationships because of abuse—whose ex-partners had cancelled their in-country sponsorship, leaving them without permanent status. While trying to rebuild their lives and still adapting to a new country, these women are truly in limbo—unable to legally work or collect income assistance, yet unable to leave Canada and take their children with them due to family court orders. We will work with local and national organizations, and our counterparts in government, to eliminate the unfair circumstances these women face. As well, we will continue to educate service providers on how best to advocate for women in these circumstances.

2012 ADVOCACY STRATEGIES	RANGE
Targeted engagement of business, community and government leaders to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build support for the family policy framework articulated in the UBC HELP 15 by 15 report</li> <li>• Build understanding of the economic cost/benefit of public investment in the early years</li> <li>• Work to ensure that implementation of full-day kindergarten does not destabilize existing early learning and care services</li> </ul>	Short- to mid-term
Raise public awareness of the inappropriate sexualization of women and girls in contemporary media	Short- to mid-term
Integrate advocacy messages (housing, women’s safety, work/life balance and support for single mothers) in YWCA materials and CEO speaking opportunities	Ongoing
Mothers Without Legal Status <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with governments and community partners to implement policy and procedure reforms to better serve mothers without legal status in Canada</li> </ul>	Short- to mid-term

## Core Service Areas

This strategic plan gives direction to our external and internal core services in working towards their respective objectives, as they relate to the ongoing mission-based work of the organization.



### CRABTREE CORNER FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE

#### Profile and Strategies

YWCA Crabtree Corner provides a healthy and secure environment for women and their families in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, one of Canada's most impoverished neighbourhoods.

At Crabtree Corner, we serve a diverse and challenging population, with about 75% of clients identifying as Aboriginal. In addition we serve women and children from Chinese,

Vietnamese, Iranian, Latin American, Afro-Canadian, Korean and European backgrounds.

Crabtree Corner is unique in its innovative approach to holistic service delivery. We offer a rich array of programs to improve quality of life for our clients, including transition housing, food and nutrition programs, clothing, parenting support, family recreation and early learning and care for infants and toddlers.

Our Violence Outreach Program addresses the significant level of violence against women in the community. We work to establish trusting relationships with our clients to encourage them to take action against abuse and are encouraged by the positive outcomes for the women who have participated so far. In 2009, this program was expanded to include a support group for women dealing with abuse in partner relationships.

Our Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Prevention Project is designed to provide support to parents and intergenerational caregivers who are raising children with FASD. An Aboriginal Infant Development Program (AIDP) Consultant supports families with infants who may have developmental delays. Our FASD Key Support Worker assists families with diagnosing, supporting and living with children with FASD.

Our early childhood literacy program—Books, Bags and Babies—which incorporates storytelling, drumming, acting and other traditions of Aboriginal peoples and is the winner of

a 2009 United Way Community Spirit Award, will continue to be a strong element in our array of programs.

We are also proud to house the Sheway Program, a pregnancy outreach initiative that provides health and social service supports to pregnant and parenting women who have substance use issues.

YWCA Crabtree Corner employs a peer support model of service delivery. Many Crabtree Corner employees are women who have overcome challenges similar to those faced by our clients. Our employees are outstanding role models for the women they serve, and their personal example helps to reduce barriers to women accessing services at Crabtree Corner. As well, parents are actively involved in all aspects of Crabtree Corner programs, from planning and implementation to evaluation.

In 2011, we announced a partnership with the City of Vancouver and the Vancouver Public Library (VPL) to develop a new facility two blocks east of the present Crabtree Corner location. This facility will house a new Strathcona Branch Library, 17 to 23 units of housing for single moms and program space to complement our existing Crabtree Corner services. The YWCA component of the project will be called YWCA Cause We Care House, in recognition of a lead donation from the Cause We Care Foundation. For additional information, refer to the New Housing Communities section under Affordable Housing at [ywcavan.org](http://ywcavan.org).

2012 CRABTREE CORNER STRATEGIES	RANGE
Consult with clients, supporters and peer organizations to reconfigure and expand YWCA services offered in the Downtown Eastside	Short-term

**EARLY LEARNING AND CARE OPERATIONS**

*Profile and Strategies*

High-quality, affordable early learning and care is a top priority for parents across Metro Vancouver. At the YWCA, we strive to fulfill this need for a range of families.

Consistent with leading-edge research, the YWCA employs a “play-based” approach to supporting the optimal learning and development of young children. There is considerable evidence that children who engage in quality play experiences are more likely to have well-developed memory skills, language development and ability to regulate their behaviour. This enhances confidence, school adjustment and academic learning. We will work to educate parents and community partners about the benefits of play-based learning.

We currently operate four licensed facilities for children under six:

- Emma’s Early Learning and Care Centre focuses on supporting teen mothers;

- Citygate Early Learning and Care Centre prepares children to be kindergarten ready;
- Leslie Diamond Early Learning and Care Centre serves working families in Downtown Vancouver; and
- Crabtree Corner Early Learning and Care offers short-term care in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside.

Historically, the YWCA has specialized in infant/toddler care because the first three years are the most critical period for child development. However, this is also the most expensive early learning and care to operate. We remain committed to quality care delivered by qualified, professional employees who are compensated appropriately, but parent fees and government funding do not cover the full cost.

The shortfall must be funded by the YWCA through our mission-related social enterprises and committed donors such as the United Way of the Lower Mainland and Vancity. It is important that we continue to evaluate our ability to provide these services on an ongoing basis. We are also committed to educating govern-

ment officials, parents and the YWCA network about the true cost of high quality early learning and care.

The Province’s commitment to implementing full-day kindergarten for four- and five-year-olds and reducing child vulnerability presents important opportunities to advance an integrated system of early learning and care nested within a new family policy framework that reflects the needs of contemporary society. The YWCA will continue to advocate for public investment to support this vision.

2012 EARLY LEARNING AND CARE OPERATIONS STRATEGIES	RANGE
Educate parents, YWCA supporters and government officials about the true cost and benefits of quality care	Short- to mid-term
Educate parents and community partners about the benefits of play-based learning	Short- to mid-term





**EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**

*Profile and Strategies*

YWCA Metro Vancouver is one of the largest and most respected employment service providers in the Lower Mainland. Our innovative programs encourage youth, jobseekers and professionals to secure meaningful employment.

Consistent with other YWCA programs, we are seeing an increasingly diverse client population, which we are proud to serve with an equally diverse staff team. Many of our clients face additional barriers to successful integration in the labour force. Because our approach to service delivery is inclusive of all, we are particularly successful in helping clients integrate in the Metro Vancouver community.

Given current high unemployment rates, YWCA clients with multiple barriers find it particularly difficult to access meaningful employment. These clients require more intensive supports to make a successful and sustained connection with the labour market. On the other end of the spectrum, the recession has brought large numbers of new clients into our centres who find themselves without stable employment for the first time in their lives. These clients may lack the technical skills required to re-establish themselves in a transforming economy.

Our World Beat program for young adult immigrants has had its funding extended. Music is the centre of the program for youth who come from countries across the globe. They learn English, gain life skills, explore their career options and learn to belong.

Recently, responsibility for government-funded employment programs has devolved from the federal government to the provincial government. In 2011, we submitted proposals under the Province’s Request for Proposal (RFP) process to deliver employment services in partnership with various peer organizations in Metro Vancouver. We look forward to the conclusion of this process and to continuing to assist Metro Vancouver citizens in finding meaningful employment.

New initiatives will be assessed in terms of alignment with our mission and existing programs and impact on the proportion of government funding in the organization’s operating budget.

2012 EMPLOYMENT SERVICES STRATEGIES	RANGE
Implement new employment programs, as approved through the Provincial RFP process	Short-term
Seek additional funding sources for employment programs	Ongoing
Explore opportunities to facilitate seniors’ participation in the labour force	Ongoing

**HEALTH + FITNESS**

*Profile and Strategies*

The YWCA Health + Fitness Centre is a revenue generating, co-ed fitness facility that provides members with services that are consistent with the YWCA’s core values. Our 30,000-square-foot facility provides innovative personalized services and 60+ group fitness classes, an ozone pool and the latest in cardio and weight equipment.

In 2010, we undertook an extensive renovation and expansion of this facility and are now focused on building a loyal and stable membership through excellent service and positive health and fitness results.

The health and fitness industry across North America continues to face the challenge of growing and maintaining business in an uncertain economy. While the YWCA is not immune to broader economic circumstances, our strong emphasis on customer service and member retention will continue to be a significant asset in this competitive environment.

We will build on strategies currently in place to engender loyalty among current members. We will also build our group/corporate business clientele, linking our Health + Fitness service with our advocacy on workplace wellness and work/life balance. A key element in our strategy will be to increase the use of new technology to promote our services and facilities.



2012 HEALTH + FITNESS STRATEGIES	RANGE
Focus on member growth through corporate and group business	Ongoing
Focus on member retention through excellent customer service	Ongoing
Increase promotion through new technology and social media	Ongoing
Provide training and development for staff, volunteer instructors and coaches	Ongoing
Expand Personalized Services to meet the needs of members and the community	Ongoing



**HOTEL AND HOUSING**

*Profile and Strategies*

Vancouver remains the least affordable location for housing in Canada, and there has been limited new construction of rental accommodation suitable for families in recent years. At the YWCA, we work to ensure that single moms have appropriate housing as they, and their children, are at great risk of living in unsafe and unhealthy environments.

In Metro Vancouver, we address the hardships faced by single moms through a range of integrated services that includes affordable housing. We operate Munroe House, a second-stage transition house for women who have experienced abuse, and three housing communities for single moms: Semlin Gardens, Fraser Gardens and Crabtree Corner Housing. We are seeing longer wait lists for all our housing communities and longer crisis and residential

stays at the Hotel/Residence. Our long-term strategy involves developing more social housing for women in locations throughout Metro Vancouver. Our primary focus will be to serve the needs of single mothers and their children. However, we will also assess opportunities to serve marginalized single women and mature single women.

Early in 2012, we will open new housing communities in Surrey and Coquitlam, which will provide long-term and stable support for 36 and 30 families respectively. Both projects will incorporate green features and will meet the Gold LEED environmental standard.

Plans are also underway to develop YWCA Cause We Care House, providing 17 to 23 units of housing for single mothers and building on services provided at YWCA Crabtree Corner. The project will be developed in partnership with the Vancouver Public Library (VPL) on city-owned land provided at

nominal value and will be co-located with a full-service Strathcona Branch of the VPL.

The YWCA Hotel/Residence is an excellent example of a mission-related social enterprise, providing affordable accommodation for travellers and generating revenue that sustains our community service work. It is also an important source of emergency and temporary housing for people in need. In the past year, the YWCA Hotel/Residence provided about 24,000 room nights of subsidized accommodation to women in crisis, families in transition, students, seniors and refugees.

The YWCA Hotel/Residence is located on land owned by the YWCA and current zoning will allow for a 70-room addition to be constructed above the existing main-floor platform. We will continue to monitor the feasibility of developing Phase II of the Hotel/Residence.

2012 HOTEL AND HOUSING STRATEGIES	RANGE
Open Coquitlam and Surrey housing communities in early 2012	Short-term
Design and develop YWCA Cause We Care House in collaboration with the Vancouver Public Library	Mid-term
Build partnerships with housing providers to improve access for single mothers and at-risk women	Ongoing
Explore new opportunities to develop housing for single mothers, marginalized women and mature single women	Mid- to long-term
Undertake hotel expansion as market conditions or funding opportunities warrant	Mid- to long-term

**INTERNATIONAL SERVICES**

*Profile and Strategies*

YWCA Metro Vancouver was proud to support the Russian Association of Christian Women to form the first ever YWCA of Russia, which was officially inaugurated at YWCA World Council in July 2007. We continue to work with this new organization to build organizational capacity.

We will also work with the YWCA of Honduras to strengthen leadership and build organizational capacity, advocacy and good governance. This work is being undertaken through the International Cooperation Committee (ICC) of YWCA Canada, with financial support from the World YWCA Power to Change Fund.

As well, we continue to support the growth of the Apatin Women’s Centre in Serbia by providing training and seminars based on our programs, delivered by a staff representative from YWCA Metro Vancouver.

We continue to host senior delegates from various countries who wish to develop programs based on Canadian models. As these opportunities unfold, we will determine how best to participate.



**MENTORSHIP**

*Profile and Strategies*

Since 1991, the YWCA High School Mentorship Program has served over 1,800 female high school students by matching them with professional women in one-to-one mentoring relationships. This program is currently offered in partnership with eight schools in the Coquitlam and Vancouver school districts. In addition, up to 10% of program spaces are open to students not attending any of the partner schools. The YWCA Aboriginal Mentorship Program, in its third year of operation, continues to evolve as we find better ways to serve our mentees and mentors. In the 2010/2011 school year, the project served 13 Aboriginal teen girls between ages 13 and 16.

Our Welcome to My Life™ and Boys 4 Real™ programs provide a school-based, intergenerational mentorship experience for Grade 7 girls and boys (see page 17).

The YWCA also operates mentorship programs to help men and women in their search for work. For more than eight years, YWCA Career Links has been connecting YWCA employment clients with professionals and potential employers in their areas of interest. In 2010, we expanded this program to include clients from YWCA Single Mothers’ Services. And since 2006, mentors of the Connect to Success program have helped more than 300 women by assisting them with their job search, building their networking skills and providing career insight.

Our mentorship programs continue to be seen as leading edge, and we are often asked to share our expertise with both private-sector and non-profit organizations.

2012 INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIES	RANGE
Participate in YWCA Honduras project	Ongoing
Provide support to the YWCA of Russia	Ongoing
Provide support to the Serbian Apatin Women’s Centre	Ongoing
Explore new opportunities to share YWCA Metro Vancouver best practices in other countries	Ongoing

2012 MENTORSHIP STRATEGIES	RANGE
Implement new mentorship initiatives as funding and partnership opportunities arise	Ongoing



**SINGLE MOTHERS' SERVICES**

*Profile and Strategies*

In partnership with various community agencies, YWCA Single Mothers' Services provides group support, information and referral to community services for women who are dealing with the challenges of parenting alone. We aim to support our clients' goals related to enhancing their economic independence—an approach that is yielding tangible results like new jobs, career and educational planning and training opportunities.

Single Mothers' Services currently operates ten groups in Vancouver and Burnaby. We continue to work closely with the partners to monitor the needs and ensure quality of services.

Consistent with the experience of other YWCA programs, we are seeing an increasing number of immigrant single mothers from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Our community partnerships are key to ensuring we serve these clients well.

In 2011, we collaborated with Marpole Oakridge Family Place and Marpole Oakridge Area Council Society (MOACS) to offer a new support group, and with St. James Community Square to house our Kitsilano-based program, while the Kitsilano Neighbourhood House is redeveloped.

We also focused on keeping costs low by expanding volunteer initiatives:

- thirteen new volunteer positions provide current and former program participants with opportunities to lead and develop workshops, events and a regular newsletter, enhancing self-confidence and building skills and resumes; and
- qualified female volunteers—such as life coaches and leadership trainers—are recruited to deliver life and leadership skills workshops for the support groups.

2012 SINGLE MOTHERS' SERVICES STRATEGIES	RANGE
Maintain strong links with community partners	Short- to mid-term
Build capacity in service delivery through volunteer development	Short- to mid-term
Explore new opportunities to expand service in Surrey, the Tri-Cities and the Fraser Valley	Short- to mid-term



**YOUTH – EDUCATION**

*Profile and Strategies*

YWCA Metro Vancouver has long been committed to supporting youth as they make the challenging transition from childhood to adulthood. Welcome to My Life™ and Boys 4 Real™ build on our long history and solid reputation for providing innovative and supportive programs.

These groundbreaking programs address girls’ and boys’ concerns about entering the complex world of high school, examine issues of gender and the prevention of violence against women, and help define attitudes and behaviours that are fundamental to healthy relationships.

Girls and boys participate in seven after-school sessions, each focusing on a different theme, and then work together on a community project specifically designed to address issues in their schools or the wider community. Welcome to My Life™ and Boys 4 Real™ engage parents through various resources available in multiple languages.

The programs are facilitated by university/college students who receive between 16 and 22 hours of facilitation training from YWCA staff. Some use these volunteer hours to earn academic credits towards the completion of their degrees. The university/college facilitators are supported by Wisdom Champions™—mature, male and female volunteers who are established in their career paths and serve as mentors. Finally, Grade 10 and 11 students serve as high school mentors for the Grade 7 participants, creating a unique, intergenerational mentoring framework.

Since inception, over 90 programs have been delivered to over 1,000 participants. Most participants are from culturally and ethnically diverse backgrounds. Accordingly, leadership training on Cultural Diversity, Anti-Homophobia and Special Needs is provided by YWCA staff and Vancouver School Board consultants.

An internet usage, safety and cyber bullying module has recently been added to both programs. In fall

2011, a new workshop on Assertive Communication was piloted at Sir Charles Tupper Secondary School for all 8th grade students.

The programs currently run in the Vancouver and New Westminster school districts.

In 2012, we will create an after-school program for girls—specifically meeting the needs of local students—for the Surrey school district and will continue to seek opportunities to bring both programs to new locations in Metro Vancouver. As well, we will undertake a strategic review and visioning exercise of all YWCA Youth Education Programs that will include exploring the development of more educational workshops.

To support the growth of our youth education programs, we have initiated new partnerships with various UBC faculties as well as Langara College, Douglas College and diverse corporate and community organizations.

2012 YOUTH STRATEGIES	RANGE
Expand Welcome to My Life™ and Boys 4 Real™ to new locations in Metro Vancouver	Mid-term
Review the strategic direction of the YWCA Youth Education Programs and explore technology-based options for service delivery	Short-term
Identify additional sources for volunteer Facilitators and Wisdom Champion™ mentors	Short- to mid-term

**BALANCED SCORECARD**

*Profile and Strategies*

The Balanced Scorecard Performance Measurement System is a tool for the YWCA to communicate with internal and external stakeholders about the program outcomes and performance drivers through which we achieve our mission and strategic objectives.

The Balanced Scorecard strikes a balance among four financial and non-financial perspectives: Serve the Client, Run the Business, Learn and Grow and Be Financially Healthy. The YWCA recognizes the importance of balancing these components to effectively implement organizational strategy.

Through the Balanced Scorecard, we monitor our current performance—including finances, client satisfaction and business processes—as well as our efforts to improve processes, motivate and educate employees and enhance information systems.

A key feature of our approach involves defining measures of success for each program we operate, thus enabling us to demonstrate positive changes in the life status of our clients. Our goals are to:

- identify and improve upon the factors that are fundamental to client progress;
- ensure organizational resources are targeted to best effect; and
- demonstrate to donors and supporters the impact of their financial contributions.

The Balanced Scorecard system is now fully implemented across the organization, with scorecards in place for all core programs. We have aligned program scorecards to reflect the objectives in our strategic plan, allowing us to focus on those measures that are most critical to achieving success.

The Balanced Scorecard also engages employees throughout the organization in monitoring results and trends and evaluating program efficacy. Program scorecards are also used to report results to donors and funders. In this way, we can demonstrate the success that clients achieve through the support of YWCA services.

2012 BALANCED SCORECARD STRATEGIES	RANGE
Develop new scorecards as new programs are undertaken	Ongoing
Continue to refine and track success measures	Ongoing

**COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING**

*Profile and Strategies*

The Communications and Marketing department is responsible for internal and external communications, including oversight of our websites, guidance on strategic marketing initiatives and support for social media and media relations. Our goals are to promote awareness of YWCA programs and services and increase revenue generation. The department also assists with advocacy and public education to support the achievement of the YWCA mission and vision.

While the YWCA is proud to employ a highly diverse workforce that reflects the diverse populations and communities we serve, this is not always recognized by the broader community. We will work to ensure that our diversity is reflected strongly in our communication activities.

Our three strategic goals are to increase our media coverage, increase our online presence and leverage connections by making the best use of the YWCA network. We aim to tell the YWCA story most effectively by emphasizing the three key pillars of YWCA service delivery:

- supporting single mothers to achieve personal and economic independence;
- ensuring that children get the best start in life and helping youth make healthy choices; and
- creating safe and healthy communities for women and their families.

Social media brings increased traffic to our website and helps to expand our reach. We will build on our online presence by supporting staff to be YWCA brand ambassadors on social media outlets. We will also measure the effectiveness of our online presence in promoting our brand and building community support for our work.

2012 COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING STRATEGIES	RANGE
Increase print and broadcast coverage to support organizational objectives	Ongoing
Increase online presence and engagement with supporters via online vehicles	Short- to mid-term
Profile the diversity of our staff and clients	Ongoing
Whenever applicable, ensure that advocacy messages (e.g. housing, anti-violence, work/life balance and single moms) are included in all YWCA communication materials	Ongoing



**FINANCE**

*Profile and Strategies*

Long-term reserves are critical to ensuring the stability and sustainability of the organization. As such, the YWCA continues to grow its reserves while diversifying its funding to build a strong financial base. This diversification is particularly important given the current uncertainty in the local and global economy. A key strategy is to ensure that the YWCA is not dependent on any one source of funding, the loss of which could seriously impact the organization.

The YWCA has assets in land and buildings appraised at close to \$61.8 million. The contribution target to our

capital reserve is reviewed every year. This contribution is required to

maintain and appropriately replace our physical infrastructure. We will build our capital reserve primarily through contributions from operating surpluses and, to a lesser extent, through a portion of undesignated bequests and planned gifts, within the parameters established by Board policy.

The YWCA has an investment portfolio of over \$4.4 million, with the funds invested in socially screened instruments. The long-term growth and security of this portfolio is critical to the operations of the organization. Adherence to the investment policy and careful monitoring of the investment performance, in light of challenging

developments in the financial markets, is a continual focus for the organization.

In 2012, we will explore opportunities to develop new social enterprise activities, with the potential to increase the YWCA's discretionary revenues.

Consistent with risk management objectives, the YWCA engages periodic audits to identify the risks inherent in revenue collection and recording, and assess whether the controls are adequate to mitigate such risks. The organization has established a rolling plan to continually review controls within the finance and accounting functions, and reports annually on the adequateness of these controls.

2012 FINANCE STRATEGIES	RANGE
Build capital reserve through operating surpluses and undesignated bequests	Ongoing
Ensure that revenue-producing areas of the organization generate 50% or more of operating revenues	Ongoing
Explore opportunities for new social enterprise activities	Ongoing
Monitor investment performance and alignment of investment policy	Ongoing
Ensure annual balanced budgets	Ongoing

**FUND DEVELOPMENT**

*Profile and Strategies*

To ensure YWCA Metro Vancouver's long-term financial viability in an increasingly competitive fundraising environment, the YWCA's Fund Development strategy is diversified and includes monthly giving, direct mail, major gifts, legacy giving, gifts-in-kind, special events and a thrift shop. Since 1991, membership in the YWCA Inner Circle has more than tripled, providing significant undesignated funding for programming. We remain committed to full transparency and accountability in our financial reporting and donor relationships.

In recent years, we have successfully completed capital campaigns to develop new housing communities in Coquitlam and Surrey (see page 14) and to renovate and expand our downtown Health + Fitness Centre.

In 2011, we launched a new capital campaign to raise \$6.6 million for YWCA Cause We Care House, comprising 17 to 23 units of housing and program space for single mothers and their children. The project will be developed in partnership with the Vancouver Public Library and will be co-located with a full-service Strathcona Branch library. Lead gifts have been secured from the Cause We Care Foundation and the Streethome Foundation. As well, we are pleased to partner with the Ismaili Council for BC on the highly successful Ismaili Walk for Women, with proceeds donated to this project.



A priority for 2012 will be to raise funds to continue to expand the reach of our highly successful youth education programs. Seed funding provided by Status of Women Canada will enable the YWCA to implement a YWCA Leadership Program for Girls in Surrey based on our experience with Welcome to My Life™. This project aims to reduce violence against women by engaging girls at a particularly sensitive period of emotional development. The project will employ a unique intergenerational and intercultural model that will enable young women to improve their confidence and decision-making skills in a safe, supported environment. We will enlist community donors to raise the outstanding funds needed to launch, expand and sustain this new program.

We will continue to emphasize major gifts and legacy giving as the key elements in our fund development strategy. Undesignated legacy gifts comprise the primary method of building the YWCA



Endowment Fund. We remain interested in undertaking an endowment campaign when economic circumstances are appropriate and volunteer leadership can be recruited.

The Fund Development department also manages the YWCA Thrift Shop and oversees special events including the YWCA Women of Distinction Awards, which recognizes the achievements of exceptional women and companies. In recent years we have incorporated an online award category that enables all Women of Distinction nominees to connect their networks with a critical YWCA issue of their choice.

2012 FUND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES	RANGE
Build endowment through legacy gifts	Ongoing
Increase major gifts from individuals and corporations	Ongoing
Undertake capital campaign for YWCA Cause We Care House	Short-term
Undertake endowment campaign when circumstances are appropriate	Mid- to long-term
Assess funding opportunities for seniors and mental health issues	Ongoing



**HUMAN RESOURCES**

*Profile and Strategies*

Our employees mean everything to us. Their skill and commitment is crucial to achieving our mission and delivering excellent service to more than 50,000 clients every year. In today’s competitive labour market, creating and retaining a dynamic, collaborative, highly skilled and diverse workforce must remain a top priority for YWCA Metro Vancouver.

Overall, employees are engaged with the organization and the communities we serve and employee satisfaction remains consistently high, as evidenced by our employee retention rate of 93%. Our success is largely due to our exceptional culture and workplace practices, which ensure respect for employees, create a family-friendly environment and facilitate work/life balance. We are fortunate that our workplace culture and practices have assisted us in

recruiting top talent within Metro Vancouver. We will continue to conduct periodic surveys to identify areas for improvement, track progress and monitor engagement levels.

Our human resources practices are grounded in employee needs and reflect employee input. Our workplace wellness initiatives ensure that employees are physically and mentally fit, and focus on individual, community and environmental wellness. Employees value ongoing feedback, and managers recognize that providing support, coaching and recognition is essential. Succession plans have been developed for critical positions and significant retention risks are analyzed each year.

While research shows that pay is not the main driver of employee satisfaction and engagement, we recognize that competitive compensation, including benefits and pension, is important. Our compensation philosophy is to pay at

the 50th percentile of the market, including all sectors where we compete for labour.

We are also proud to employ a highly diverse workforce. Forty percent of our employees identify as being from visible minorities and 5.6% identify as Aboriginal. This compares favourably with 2006 Census Canada data, which records a national average of 16.2% visible minorities and 3.8% Aboriginal peoples.

Consistent with the general population, the YWCA is experiencing an aging workforce. A strong commitment to workplace wellness will be critical to ensuring these employees can bring their best to the YWCA in the years ahead.

Women comprise the majority of our workforce, and we are proud of our success in facilitating their participation, especially when so many employers are struggling to engage female employees. We will continue to encourage broader acceptance of family-friendly workplace practices, offering expertise to organizations seeking to improve productivity, retention and the working environment.

A tremendous source of pride are those employees who began their involvement with the organization as clients, successfully completed our programs, further developed their skills and education, and were ultimately hired by the YWCA. These employees are key contributors to our work and serve as role models for our clients.

2012 HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGIES	RANGE
Emphasize coaching, performance feedback and internal staff recognition	Short- to mid-term
Conduct periodic surveys to track employee engagement	Ongoing
Build on our reputation as a supportive and family-friendly organization to optimize recruitment and retention	Short- to mid-term
Emphasize workplace wellness to maintain the physical and mental health of our aging workforce	Ongoing

**RISK MANAGEMENT**

*Profile and Strategies*

In order to protect the health, safety and integrity of the YWCA, an Organizational Risk Management Plan has been developed. This plan identifies the strategic, operating, compliance, environmental and reputational risks that are inherent to the activities of the YWCA and may expose the organization to loss. It also identifies the controls and systems required to manage these risks.

A key element in the Risk Management Plan is a Business Continuity Plan for the organization. The Business Continuity Plan enables the organization to limit losses and ensure that critical business operations can continue in the event of a disruption or loss of a critical service (e.g. power loss, telecommunications breakdown), a physical catastrophe (e.g. earthquake, fire) or a pandemic. An organizational pandemic plan has been developed and sub-program pandemic plans have been completed for key YWCA operations.

The YWCA's approach emphasizes employee communication and training to build a culture of awareness and vigilance with respect to risk management. In 2011, we identified three areas for priority attention: reputational risk, activity risk and potential allegations of abuse. We annually review organizational policies and procedures related to these risk areas in order to reflect changes in the internal and external environment and current best practices.

2012 RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES	RANGE
Build a culture of risk awareness among employees	Ongoing
Annual review of key risk areas	Ongoing

**VOLUNTEER SERVICES**

*Profile and Strategies*

Consistent with worldwide trends, YWCA Metro Vancouver is experiencing a significant shift in the interests and expectations of volunteers. In general, volunteers are more goal oriented—wanting their personal objectives for volunteering to be met—and less interested in regular assignments. Most prefer short-term projects that do not require ongoing commitment.

Volunteer Services works with program managers to develop meaningful volunteer opportunities that support our mission and programs and ensure satisfying volunteering experiences. As well, the YWCA has had a long history of providing volunteer opportunities for clients that support them in developing new skills and opens doors to employment.

Our group volunteer experiences continue to be very successful. We will continue to facilitate these opportunities as they meet the needs of the YWCA and provide outside organizations with team-building and staff development opportunities.

In the coming year, we will place special emphasis on volunteer opportunities for young professionals that will enable them to gain skills and knowledge working with our experienced staff. Our website will outline opportunities to inform and engage these special volunteers.

We will focus on maximizing volunteer engagement and retention by ensuring that volunteers understand the mission of the YWCA and have opportunities to connect with our programs and services.

2012 VOLUNTEER SERVICES STRATEGIES	RANGE
Emphasize group volunteer opportunities	Ongoing
Develop new strategies to engage skilled volunteers, young professionals and youth	Short- to mid-term





**SUSTAINABILITY**

*Profile and Strategies*

At the YWCA, we know that creating a healthy society requires an integrated vision that links our social, economic and physical environment. We are committed to innovation that supports sustainability.

In recent years, various capital improvements at the YWCA Program Centre and Hotel/Residence were completed, all of which save energy, reduce water consumption and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and will achieve significant operating savings over time.

Our initial measurement of the organization’s GHG emissions, based on 2007 data, provided a baseline of 998 tonnes. We have set a goal to strive for a reduction of 20% by 2013.

Educational awareness and engagement initiatives—for staff, volunteers and clients—continue to support our GHG reduction plan. A two- or three-week focused campaign is held every fall and educational messages are included in the Eco-Corner section of our monthly staff newsletter. The YWCA Program Centre has also hosted several successful Farmers’ Market events.

Current purchasing practices ensure that the most economical and environmentally sustainable products and suppliers are selected.

The value we place on sustainability is reflected in the conversion of our ornamental rooftop garden, located at the Hornby Street Program Centre, to a productive farm garden, providing fresh fruits and vegetables for women and children in YWCA programs. The goal is to harvest one tonne per year, and we are well on our way with a 2010 harvest of 685 kg.



YWCA Metro Vancouver is also committed to ensuring that any new YWCA development is “green,” and we are pleased that our new housing projects for single moms in Coquitlam and Surrey will meet the Gold LEED environmental standard.

2012 SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIES	RANGE
Achieve Gold LEED certification in Coquitlam and Surrey housing projects	Short-term
Priority selection of environmentally sustainable products and suppliers	Ongoing
Monitor, measure and reduce GHG emissions	Ongoing
Ensure reserve funds are invested through socially responsible investment screens	Ongoing

## YWCA Canada and World YWCA

This document is a strategic plan for YWCA Metro Vancouver. However, it is important to mention our considerable work with YWCA Canada. As one of its larger member agencies, we have consistently taken leadership in a variety of important areas.

Our goals are to:

- support the leadership development objectives of YWCA Canada through the Emerging Leaders Program, a program initiated by YWCA Metro Vancouver that has now been adopted by YWCA Calgary and YWCA Toronto;
- support the International Cooperation Committee of YWCA Canada by providing expertise and advice to projects in Honduras and other international communities; and
- play a leadership role in the Western Region by providing support to our peer associations.

We are also strong supporters of the World YWCA and member countries around the world. Our ongoing work is highlighted in the International Services section of this plan.

## Conclusion

YWCA Metro Vancouver's annual strategic planning process provides an excellent framework for planning and implementing major new initiatives. The strategies outlined in this plan position us to build better futures for women and their families and to create a more open and equal society. Combined with the Balanced Scorecard, we have a comprehensive planning and performance measurement system to guide the organization in achieving its desired future.





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