

YESS

youth empowerment & support services



**We Need
Your Critical
Assistance**



YOUTH EMPOWERMENT & SUPPORT SERVICES

CASE FOR SUPPORT

A CALL FOR COMPASSION

Across our community, there are young people who are not safe, not seen, and not supported. They are navigating trauma, instability, and homelessness, often alone. At YESS, we see them, we welcome them, and we walk beside them every step of the way.

Established in 1981, Youth Empowerment and Support Services (YESS) stands as a beacon of hope, offering immediate support, and long-term solutions for youth aged 15–24. As the only Youth Support Centre with 24/7 care in Edmonton, we provide youth with the tools they need to heal and thrive.

YESS is a community of support for youth who are experiencing crisis and housing instability. Through trauma-informed care, inclusive programs, and relentless belief in their potential, we empower youth to build lives of dignity, stability, and hope.

In this Case for Support, we outline the urgent challenges youth face daily, the fundamental role YESS plays in meeting them, and the vital importance of community investment in creating a future where no young person is left behind.

THIS IS WHO WE ARE: YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Mission

Collaboratively build a network of care to ensure youth get the expert help they need, when they need it, and where they need it.

Vision

A more connected, holistic, and lower-barrier system for youth in crisis.

Values

Courage to be honest, vulnerable, and curious.

Connection with all stakeholders, both internal and external, to establish trust, empathy, and understanding.

Commitment to lead with intention, to make a meaningful difference, and be accountable in all we do.

THE CHALLENGE: WHY YESS EXISTS TODAY

Too many young people in Edmonton face impossible choices for basic needs: between safety and survival, food and shelter, trust, and self-protection.

Youth Represent

11.6%
of the 2,519 people

Experiencing Homelessness
in Edmonton*

We recognize the immense need to continue our programs and services so that youth get the help they so desperately need.

**Homeless Hub. (2022). Community Profiles Alberta. Retrieved from https://homelesshub.ca/community_profile/edmonton/*

Their paths to our doors are shaped by complex and painful experiences, including:

- Family breakdown due to abuse, neglect, substance use, or mental illness
- Chronic trauma, including physical, emotional, or sexual violence
- Poverty and systemic barriers that limit access to education, employment, and health care
- Aging out of care systems with little preparation or support on navigating networks

Yet within every young person, there is untapped potential.
YESS is here to unlock it with care, compassion, and commitment.

OUR APPROACH: YESS IS MORE THAN SHELTER

YESS offers a continuum of services that help young people through their healing journey. We meet youth where they are: physically, emotionally, and developmentally, and empower them to move forward.

Immediate Crisis Intervention

Our 24/7, 16-bed Youth Support Centre is a lifeline for youth in crisis.

We provide:

- A safe place to sleep
- Nutritious meals and personal hygiene supplies
- Physical, mental health, and emotional support from trained youth workers
- Intake and assessment to identify next steps into transitional/bridge housing

This low-barrier entry point is often the first-time youth feel seen, safe, and valued in a long time.

Transitional & Bridge Housing Program

For youth who are ready to move toward stability, our transitional/bridge housing options offer:

- Longer-term stays in a safe, staff-supported environment
- Life skills development (nutrition, personal care, and financial literacy)
- Systems navigation and connections to mental health, employment, education, and health services
- Individualized care plans developed with each youth

Trauma-Informed Care

All our services are grounded in trauma-informed practice.

This means we prioritize:

- Safety and trustworthiness
- Empowerment and choice
- Cultural responsiveness and inclusivity
- Respect for each youth's lived experience

Our staff help youth access mental health care, addiction support, housing resources, legal aid, and more.

OUR IMPACT: LIVES TRANSFORMED

Behind every number is a story. A life changed.
A young person who mattered.

21%

In 2024/2025, there was a
21% increase in youth
supported annually through
shelter, housing, and outreach

1000

More than 1000 meals,
leisure activities and hours
of 1-on-1 support provided

Our Youth Support Centre is

AT CAPACITY

almost every night of the year

with increased demand through
January to March

COUNTLESS

RELATIONSHIPS rebuilt, GOALS achieved,
and FUTURES reimagined

We don't just measure success by numbers, we measure it
by connection, healing, and empowerment.

THE NEED: WHY WE NEED YOU

Operating YESS is ***not an option***.

Without support from donors, young people in crisis have *nowhere* to go.

It costs \$750 per month to support one youth in our program, and we rely on the generosity of donors to keep our programs running, staff trained, and to keep the doors open to all youth. To break down the cost per month for one youth, \$750 goes towards:

- Personal hygiene supplies
- Bedding and mattresses
- Three meals a day
- Emergency medical needs including supplies, medication
- Mental health needs – programming supplies and journals
- Culturally appropriate support
- Building utilities (heat, electricity, and hot water)
- Laundry services
- Bus passes
- Recreational activities including programs with partners including Sarah McLachlan School of Music, weekend passes to Rec Room and movies

The impact of your gift to YESS is incredibly meaningful to the youth experiencing crisis who come through our doors. In the past year, donors have been able to support YESS with:

- Transition our Youth Support Centre to being open **24 hours a day, 7 days a week**
- New laptops for youth to use while in our program
- New bedding and mattresses for their overnight stays
- Bus passes for youth to get to and from school, employment, etc.
- **67%** of food costs are covered by donors, ensuring youth have three healthy meals a day
- Increased mental health and addictions support through specialized front-line youth workers

With your help, we can:

- Continue to keep our Youth Support Centre open 24/7 for crisis intervention, stabilization, and personal, individual support
- Expand our transitional/bridge housing and outreach programs to meet rising demand
- Provide specialized and trauma-informed mental health and medical treatment services
- Train more staff in trauma-informed care and cultural safety
- Improve physical infrastructure to provide increased accessibility and comfort

The cost of doing nothing is by far greater for our youth, and for our community.

Your Role: Be Part of the Solution

Your gift is not just a donation, it's an act of trust, partnership, and belief in youth potential. There are many ways to give:

- One-time or monthly donation
- Corporate or workplace partnerships
- Planned or legacy giving
- Gifting securities would create a larger impact and offers great tax advantages
- Volunteering at our Youth Support Centre to assist with yard clean up, cooking meals for our youth, and other activities
- In-kind donations (including personal hygiene items, clothing, food, supplies)

Whatever the size or form, your gift helps YESS say “yes” to youth when they need it most.



THANK YOU FOR BELIEVING IN THE FUTURE FOR OUR YOUTH

The road to healing is long and uncertain, but no young person should have to walk it alone, and this is why YESS exists.

Thanks to our supporters, YESS can be a light in the darkness, a place of safety, acceptance, and possibility.

We would love for you to be a part of this journey. Your generosity is not just an investment in our programs, it's an investment in the young lives we serve.

Together, we can build a future where all youth are empowered, supported, and given a real chance to thrive.

To make a gift, learn more, or to get in touch, please visit:
www.yess.org or contact giving@yess.org

There is a story behind every number. Contact us to find out more.

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