

October 1, 2026

Dear Candidate,

On behalf of the [Waterloo Region Gender-Based Violence Strategy](#) (The GBV Strategy), we would like to congratulate you on your candidacy and thank you for your willingness to serve our community.

The GBV Strategy is a collaborative network of organizations and community leaders working to prevent and end gender-based violence through advocacy, service coordination, public education, community engagement, and systems change. Our Leadership Table brings together organizations across Waterloo Region that support individuals impacted by domestic violence, sexual violence, human trafficking, and other forms of gender-based violence.

In 2023, gender-based violence was declared an epidemic in Waterloo Region, reflecting the urgent need for coordinated action to address its impact on individuals, families, and communities. As municipal leaders play an important role in shaping community safety, housing, service access, and community wellbeing, we are inviting all municipal candidates to share their perspectives and commitments on key issues affecting survivors of gender-based violence.

We invite you to respond to the following questions:

1. Preventing and Responding to Gender-Based Violence

Gender-based violence was declared an epidemic in Waterloo Region in 2023. Within the scope of municipal and regional government responsibilities, what specific actions would you take as a municipal leader to prevent and respond to gender-based violence in all its forms in our community?

2. Supporting Survivors and Community-Based Services

Survivors of domestic violence, sexual violence, and human trafficking rely on community-based organizations for counselling, advocacy, safety planning, outreach, and other essential supports. What role do you believe municipal and regional governments should play in strengthening these services and addressing gaps in support?

3. Housing and Safety

Women and gender-diverse people experiencing homelessness are rarely recognized as victims of gender-based violence, yet more than 74% experience gender-based violence on a weekly basis. Further, according to information gathered through the YWCA Women's Emergency Shelter, nearly half of women experiencing homelessness identify gender-based violence as the direct cause of their homelessness. For racialized and newcomer women, experiences of violence are often compounded by systemic barriers including poverty, discrimination, language barriers, lack of affordable housing, and limited access to culturally responsive supports.

What actions would you take to improve access to safe and affordable housing, strengthen community supports, and address the unique barriers faced by survivors of gender-based violence seeking safety and stability?



We encourage you to share your responses publicly through your social media platforms to help foster community dialogue and awareness around gender-based violence in Waterloo Region.

Please also submit a copy of your response to The GBV Strategy so that responses can be compiled and shared through our community networks.

Please submit your response no later than Sunday, October 11, 2026.

Responses may be submitted by email to gbvstrategy@sascwr.org. When posting on social media, please tag **@gbvstrategy** (please check the handle) where possible so that we may amplify and share your response.

Thank you for taking the time to engage with this important issue. Your leadership can play a significant role in building a community where all residents, particularly women and gender-diverse individuals affected by violence, can live in safety, dignity, and wellbeing. We look forward to learning more about your commitments to ending gender-based violence in Waterloo Region.

Sincerely,

The Waterloo Region Gender-Based Violence Strategy (GBV Strategy) Leadership Table