

YWCA Regina

Regina, Saskatchewan



Key Insights:

- Recognize when you aren't the expert, and work in partnership with trans organizations who have this expertise.
- Create spaces where people can discuss openly, uncover their fears, unlearn what they've been told, and begin to think differently.

Shelter Profile: [YWCA Regina](#) operates a domestic violence shelter, a low-barrier homelessness shelter, a residence for people leaving jail and youth transitioning to independent living, emergency and longer-term housing for children, fitness programs, and social programs for youth. Their domestic violence shelter has 10 beds, with three additional emergency spaces that provide flexibility when needed.

Making Changes: One of the first changes YWCA Regina took on was **updating the policy manual**. They **reached out to a local trans organization for input** because they recognized that they did not have the expertise in this area. The [updated policy](#) requires that staff receive inclusivity training within six months of starting work and adjusts the intake process to ask about preferred pronouns and names.

YWCA Regina has placed a lot of emphasis on **training and education**. Initially, they had someone from an organization that supports gender and sexually diverse people come in to train staff, rather than trying to do it themselves. This training session was successful because it provided staff with a safe space where they could ask 'bad' questions without the fear of being judged or getting in trouble. For their staff, this was a crucial step in uncovering their biases and beginning to think differently. YWCA Regina has also been working on **educating shelter residents**. Providing information to residents begins with the intake forms, as asking everyone for their pronouns creates space for conversation. They have a safe space poster up in the lobby, to indicate that the shelter is intended to be a place where everyone can have their needs met. When other residents do express concerns, staff use educational materials like the [Genderbread person](#) to talk through people's fears and myths.



YWCA Regina provides space to an organization that runs programs for parents of trans youth. They have also become more involved in pride activities and other events in the community. This **active community engagement** create openings for discussions with residents and the broader community, while acting as a reminder of the organization's inclusive mandate.

Overcoming Barriers: Early on in the process, **staff felt like they had to problem solve how trans people would access their services**, rather than following the lead of the individuals themselves in terms of what support they needed and what they were comfortable with. Eventually, they recognized that everyone is different, and requires customized support.

"Our goal is for trans and non-binary people to come here and feel safe... We want them to feel comfortable coming in rather than wondering if they will be accepted."

