

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**January 31, 2022**

**Downtown Eastside Women's Centre opens a new drop-in centre  
at 25 East Hastings Street**

**Xʷməθkʷəyəm (Musqueam), Sḵwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and Səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh)/Vancouver, B.C.** - The Downtown Eastside Women's Centre (DEWC) has opened a second drop-in centre at 25 East Hastings Street to address a significant increase in demand for safe and accessible spaces for self-identifying women (cis, trans & 2S) in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

DEWC service sites were already at capacity before the pandemic. Now, the organization is seeing a 40% increase in the number of women accessing its services daily as COVID-19 has exacerbated multiple community crises, including gender-based violence, mental health challenges, and opiate overdoses. We are currently seeing up to 700 women and children every day across our service sites.

Modelled on DEWC's drop-in centre at 302 Columbia Street, women will be able to access low-barrier basic needs services and will have the opportunity to build relationships with community peers, becoming familiar with other programs offered by DEWC, including emergency shelter services, counselling, advocacy, victim services, housing outreach, skills development, and cultural programming. This new drop-in centre offers all of the same services, including access to recreational and educational activities as well as support groups.

Situated in a different part of the Downtown Eastside neighbourhood, this new location may serve women who were previously restricted to this city block and were unable to travel due to fear of violence.

The new drop-in centre also represents an expansion of drop-in hours and services, open in the evening and serving daily dinner available to all women. This will extend our drop-in service hours by five hours a day, being open from 12:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. from Monday to Friday, with an anticipated capacity of 250 women daily.

We expect to serve the same diverse population that we see at our other four service locations - 70% are Indigenous, 100% are living in poverty, and approximately 80% are living with mental or physical health issues. As always, creating and maintaining a low-barrier safe space for all women accessing DEWC's services is our priority, particularly for the women who survive with complex trauma, mental health, and/or addiction issues who are often excluded from shelters and transition houses outside of the Downtown Eastside.

To learn more about the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre, or to donate, please visit: <https://dewc.ca/>

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