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## More supports for survivors of sexual violence

Survivors of sexual violence will have access to additional counselling, police and court support, and crisis assistance in more communities.



Ministers McLean and Sabir announce an increase in funding to AASAS to support survivors of sexual violence.

The province is expanding front-line services across Alberta with an \$8.1-million investment in the Association of Alberta Sexual Assault Services (AASAS), to ensure survivors who take the brave step to come forward have the supports they need.

Sexual assault centres and law enforcement are reporting increased demand for counselling services. The government-funded #IBelieveYou campaign against the backdrop of the global #MeToo movement, are starting to help survivors feel safe about reaching out for help.

“Courageous women in Alberta and around the world are finally breaking their silence and sharing their stories of sexual assault and harassment. We hear them and we stand with them. Today, we are taking action – funding more counselling and helping people navigate the court and police systems so all survivors are supported on their healing journey.”

- Stephanie McLean, Minister of Status of Women

AASAS will use the money for ongoing funding of front-line services, including expanding crisis response and greater use of specialized police and court support workers. The funding is from Community and Social Services, Health, and Justice and Solicitor General.

“As a government, we owe it to survivors to take every step necessary to ensure they have the supports they need when they come forward. This funding continues our government’s commitment to provide supports for survivors as well as tools for sexual assault prevention and education.”

- Irfan Sabir, Minister of Community and Social Services

“These funds will have a tremendous impact on the lives of survivors. They will not only address the 53 per cent increase in new counselling clients and unprecedented wait lists our member agencies faced, but will allow us to provide specialized services to rural areas of Alberta.”

- Debra Tomlinson, chief executive director, Association of Alberta Sexual Assault Services

AASAS will also hire more staff in seven under-served communities so survivors in those regions get the support they need close to home.

The funding is additional to the almost \$44 million invested since 2015 to support a wide range of programs and services to prevent sexual violence and support survivors in communities across Alberta.

“I am very encouraged to see the government’s additional funding commitment to the province’s Sexual Assault Centres. As police officers our responsibilities are to conduct unbiased and impartial investigations to put before the courts. Victims who are better supported throughout the criminal justice process, and whose physical and psychological needs are met, enhance the police ability to conduct a thorough investigation. I am hopeful that this announcement further supports a process where we all work collaboratively toward survivors’ journey to wellness.”

- Staff Sgt. Rob Rubuliak, RCMP "K" Division (Alberta)

“The Calgary Police Service believes everyone should feel comfortable and supported when reporting a sexual offence. We’ve seen a significant increase in victims reporting, and we want that to continue. We’re pleased the government is giving our partners this much-needed funding so they can continue to support those who need it the most.”

- Bruce Walker, Sex Crimes Unit, Calgary Police Service

Sexual violence refers to any violence, physical or psychological, carried out through sexual means or by targeting sexuality. Government works across ten ministries with agencies and community organizations across the province to prevent sexual violence, support survivors and ensure the social, justice, health and educational systems respond to survivors.

## Funding details


- \$6.225 million from Community and Social Services (CSS), for increased counselling, outreach and education services, and to develop a Collaborative Community Response Model targeting seven underserved regions in the province:

- North West – High Level, High Prairie, Peavine, Rainbow Lake, Fort Vermillion;
  - North East – Fort Chipewyan, Fort McKay, Janvier;
  - North Central – Wabasca, Slave Lake, Athabasca;
  - Central West – Hinton, Jasper, Edson;
  - Central East – Bonnyville, Cold Lake, St. Paul, Lac La Biche;
  - Bow Valley – Canmore, Banff, Lake Louise; and
  - South West – Lethbridge, Cardston, Taber, Pincher Creek
- \$750,000 from Health for specialized counselling and expanded services.
  - \$1.09 million from Justice and Solicitor General to enhance police and court support services.

## Quick facts

- Sexual violence is one of the most under-reported crimes in Canada. Of reported cases, 87 per cent of victims are women and 94 per cent of assailants are men.
- Government increased access to the legal system for survivors of family and sexual violence by removing the time limit to bring forward civil claims.
- Government has funded AASAS's [#IBelieveYou campaign](#), with \$800,000 invested over three years, to support survivors so that when they come forward, they are treated with respect and dignity, and not subjected to myths and stereotypes.

## Listen to the news conference



[Your Alberta](#)  
New funding to help sexual violence survivors – March 7, 2018

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## Media inquiries

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Press Secretary, Status of Women

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