



Women's Centres Connect



Presentation to the
Standing Committee on
Community Services
February 2011

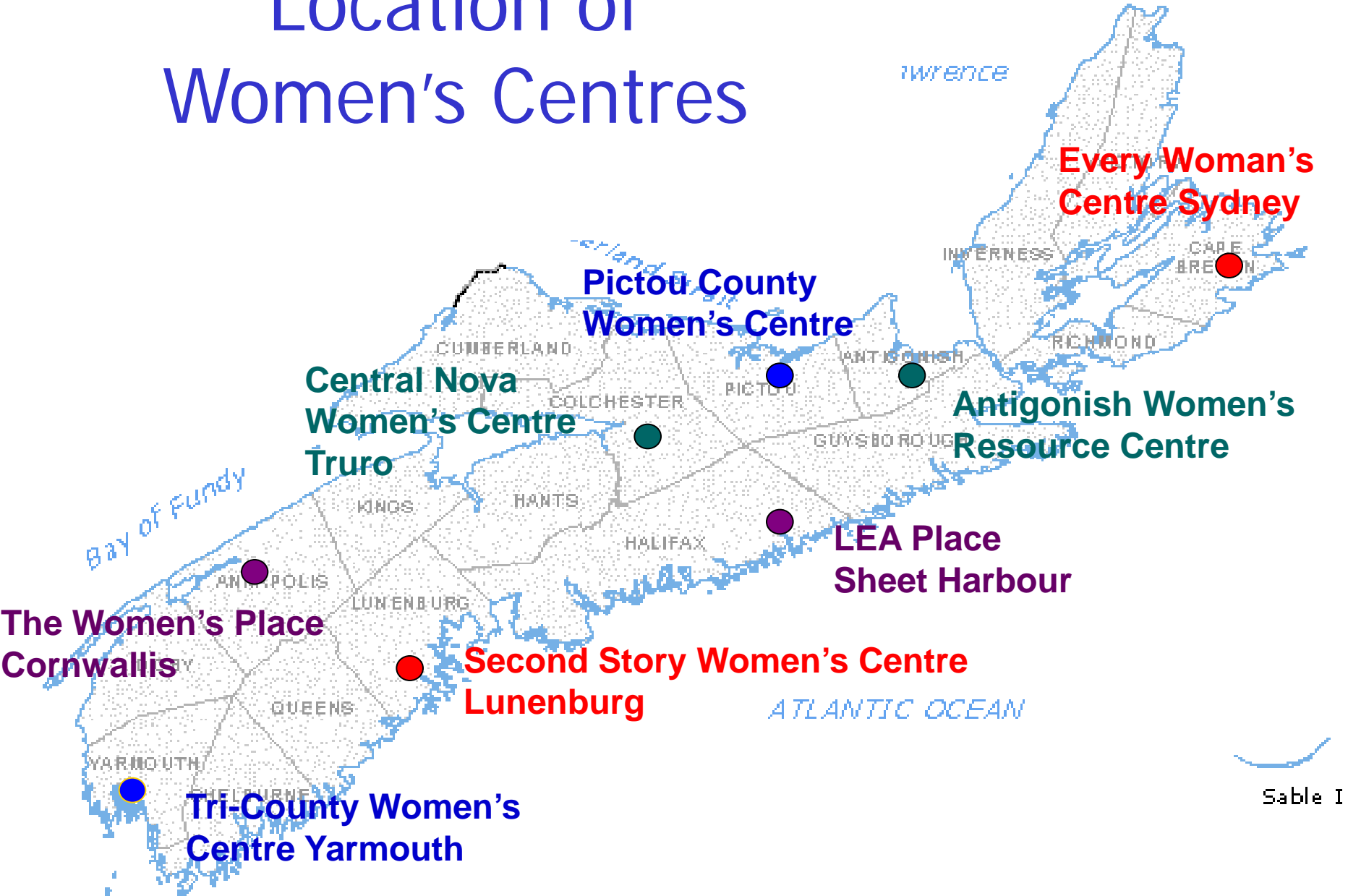
What Is A Women's Centre?

A women's centre is an independent, community-based, community-led organization that provides services and programs to women and adolescent girls on a wide range of issues and crisis situations.

A women's centre is woman-positive and woman supportive.



Location of Women's Centres



Women's Centres Multi-Dimensional Approach



Women's Centres Core Services

Direct Services

- Individual Support Counseling
- Crisis Intervention
- Information and Referral
- Individual Advocacy and Accompaniment

Programs

Outreach

Community Education

Community Development
Initiatives & Networks





Multiple Entry Points

For Issues related to:

- Poverty
- Economic Concerns
- Education and Training
- Workforce re-entry
- Housing
- Law-related issues
- Parenting issues
- Relationships
- Sexuality
- Sexual violence
- Family Dynamics
- Mental and physical health

Who Uses Women's Centres Services



Women with long term physical and cognitive disabilities

Single mothers with multiple barriers to employment

Teens at risk

Women with few barriers but who have short-term issues for which they require support.

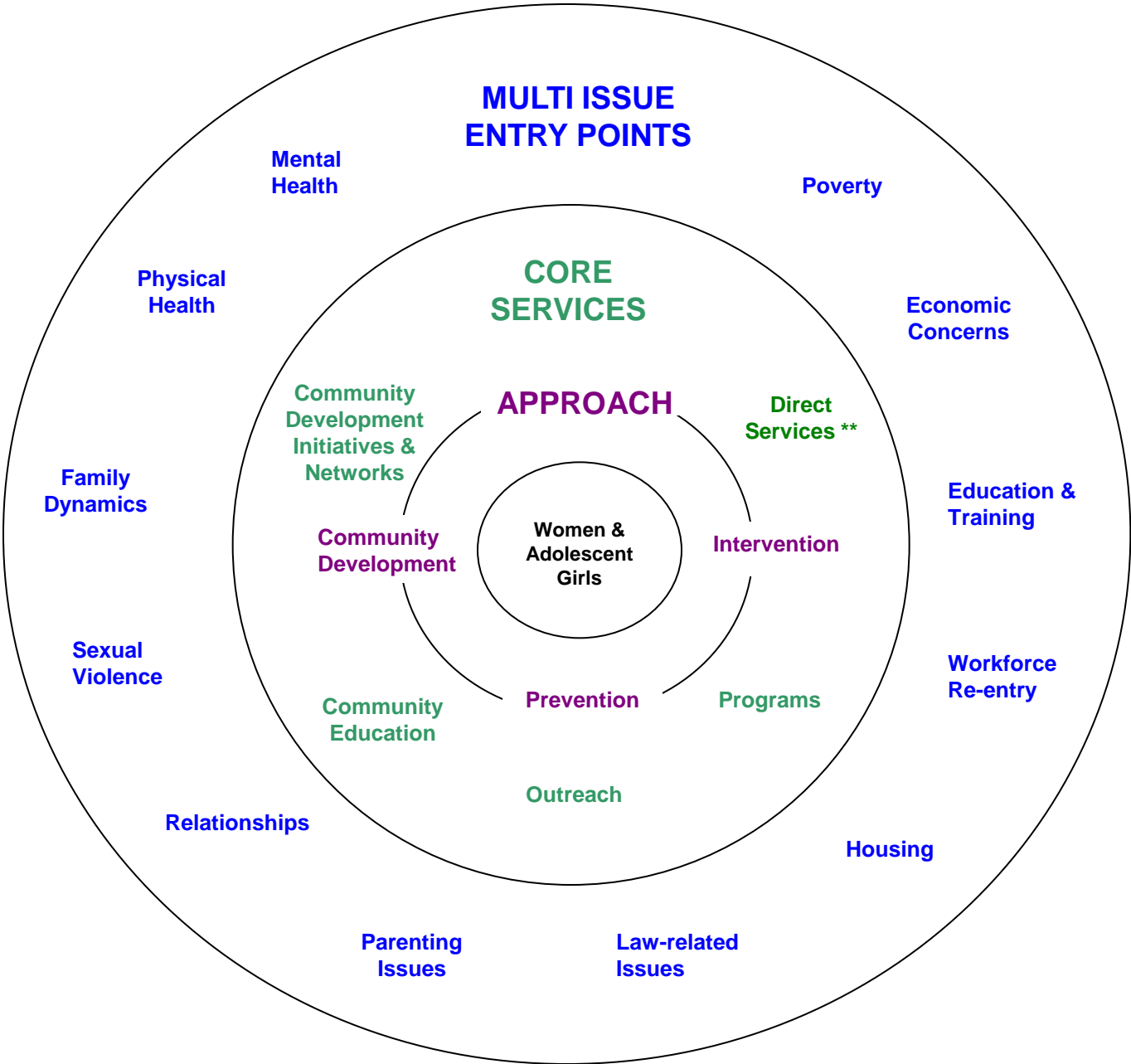


Planning with Government 2000 & 2003

1999-2000 Province of Nova Scotia/Women's Centres Connect! Joint Planning Committee. Planning Report submitted November 2000.

2002-2003 Planning with DCS related to proposed budget cuts and restructuring. Planning Report submitted May 2003

Women's Centres Approach, Core Services and Multi-Issue Entry Points



MULTI ISSUE ENTRY POINTS

Mental Health

Poverty

Physical Health

CORE SERVICES

Economic Concerns

Community Development Initiatives & Networks

APPROACH

Direct Services **

Family Dynamics

Education & Training

Community Development

Women & Adolescent Girls

Intervention

Sexual Violence

Workforce Re-entry

Community Education

Prevention

Programs

Relationships

Outreach

Housing

Parenting Issues

Law-related Issues

Planning Studies *found...*

1. Women's centres use an *effective multi-dimensional approach* that ensures immediate crises are addressed, while investing in capacity building over the long term to prevent more costly, ongoing and recurring crisis intervention activities.



Planning Studies *found...*

2. Women's centres are *accessible, flexible, versatile* and situated in local communities where core services are designed to meet women's needs.
3. Women's centres are not only effective, but *cost efficient* in the short and long term.



Planning Studies *found...*

4. Women's centres work closely and cooperatively with other agencies and are an *essential link in the service network* providing quality services, high level of expertise and unique multi-issue entry points.

5. If women's centres were absent, there would be a *significant gap in services* or more costly government services would be called upon to fill the gaps.



Planning Studies *found...*

6. The investment in women's centres by the Nova Scotia government *enables tremendous opportunities for women* and their families to improve the quality of their lives.



7. With adequate, secure funding for core services, women's centres would be *uniquely situated to meet current demands for services* and programs.

Women's Centres are currently experiencing demand for...

- Direct services
- Outreach services
- Sexual Assault Programs
- Youth Programs
- Re-entry training
- New women's centres or satellite centres





Key Challenges

identified in Planning Reports

- High demand for services and programs
- Inadequate financial resources to meet current demand for services
- Severe toll on both human and financial resources due to ongoing high demand for services and inadequate financial resources.
- Need for financial support for collaborative work through our provincial association, Women's Centres Connect

Two Key Recommendations from Planning Reports

Recognition that women's centres core services are distinct, essential and integral to the community network of services provided for women.

Full support and full funding for women's centres core services that enables the staff complement as defined by each Women's Centre in order to effectively deliver these core services.





Future Collaborations

Recognizing that government departments are working more cross-sectorally & recognizing the need to build and strengthen continually our collaborative efforts, women's centres welcome the opportunity to meet with individual departments to discuss potential collaborative efforts to strengthen services for women in our communities.





Future Collaborations

Recognizing that the government is encouraging collaborative efforts among community-based organizations, women's centres continue to

- develop and maintain positive, mutually beneficial, collaborative and supportive relations and referral protocols with government and other community-based agencies and initiatives
- Identify leadership in community development initiatives to advance long term solutions to local socio-economic problems
- Work closely with other services in our communities to ensure women have access to the services they need.





Since 2003...

Women's centres have been working collaboratively with the Department of Community Services to address key challenges and recommendations contained in planning reports.

In the 2010-2011 provincial budget, women's centres received some money to help address a long-standing need for staff salary increases.

More funding is needed, however. We continue to fall behind because there has been no increase in our operating budgets, let alone to meet the increased demand for our services.



Women Speak
