

What is the "Step it Up!" Campaign?

"Step it Up!" is our message from women to the Province of Ontario. We want better, faster government action to end violence against women.

All governments say they care, but they don't often show it with effective action. Governments have either given small, unpredictable resources to under-funded women's and equality-seeking organizations or have expected more and more financial support to come from private citizens. Organizations and services are grateful for the crumbs they get to work with women and children who are victimized, but it's not enough.

No government has so far created a broad strategy that would get beyond a narrow view to the big-picture things all women and children need to end male violence. Women have the vision that could make a difference, and we want government to act on it. We're tired of waiting!

Based on what women who experience violence have told us, we've come up with 10 Steps necessary to end violence against women and support women in achieving equality and freedom from violence. We want action now to make these 10 Steps real for all of the women of Ontario.

The campaign has already started! Women's equality-seeking groups, shelters, rape crisis centres, unions, anti-poverty groups, community groups — and, we hope, you — are already joining together to plan activities and speak out for about the 10 Steps across Ontario.

The "Step it Up!" campaign will continue into next year, when Ontario goes to the polls to elect the next provincial government. And it will continue beyond that if necessary.

"Step it Up!" was created after a June 2006 meeting of women activists from across Ontario who are working to end violence against women. The meeting was sponsored by the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses (OAITH), the province-wide network of women's shelters.

The campaign was developed in working groups at the meeting and email discussions after that. Its goal is to encourage women, children and communities across the province to get involved in actions to spread the word about the 10 Steps to end violence against all women. These 10 steps represent areas for concrete actions that our government can take to reduce and ultimately end violence against women.