

For Immediate Release

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ATIRA PROVIDES 200-DAY UPDATE ON CONTINUED SUCCESS TOWARDS OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE, GOOD GOVERNANCE, AND FINANCIAL INTEGRITY

New CEO Donnie Rosa and the Atira leadership team continue to build on the progress and success of the past year while supporting some of the most vulnerable individuals in the DTES and greater Metro Vancouver region.

Over the past 200 days, Atira Women's Resource Society has made significant advancements in its mission to reset and renew as a leader in the women's anti-violence and supportive housing sectors. The Society continues to operate as the largest supportive housing organization in British Columbia, offering over 2,500 units of housing and shelter across Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley.

Between April 2023 and March 2024, Atira housed 1,565 women and 360 children. In addition to safe housing, Atira provided over 5,000 hours of support to women and children through its non-residential programming, which includes housing advocacy, support groups and counselling, workshops, and drop-in outreach services.

"I am focused on fostering relationships with all stakeholders to ensure Atira continues to be a leader in this sector, doing essential work and building a strong future for the supportive housing sector to support more people," said Donnie Rosa (they/she), CEO. "As we continue implementing effective and necessary organizational changes, Atira remains committed to delivering Housing to Hope for the most vulnerable members of our communities."

Vancouver Office

#201-190 Alexander Street
Vancouver, BC V6A 1B5
Phone: (604) 681-4437

www.atira.bc.ca

info@atira.bc.ca

Surrey Office

#107-2430 King George Blvd
Surrey, BC V4P 1H5
Phone: (604) 681-4437

Rosa has taken the following actions since beginning their term as CEO:

Financial Integrity

- Held ongoing leadership meetings with funders and auditors to foster clarity and mutual understanding, establishing a confident go-forward plan.
- Completed Atira's FY2022 audit and successfully appointed an auditor for FY2023 and 2024, to be completed by end of FY2025.
- Divested underperforming assets to reduce Atira's financial liabilities.
- Implemented regular meetings with BC Housing executives to ensure clarity of expectations and improve financial oversight. Focused on policy development, prioritizing finance-related policies such as RFP policies and approval thresholds to ensure accountability.
- Implemented a procedural system to ensure that public funds are allocated exclusively to their intended programs.
- Improved relationships with BC Housing and better aligned Atira's financial and operational strategies with BC Housing's goals through the development of a Financial Management Plan.

Operational Excellence

- Restructured the People & Culture team to support Atira's growing workforce of approximately 1253 employees.
- Focusing on reconciliation and decolonizing our systems, the CEO supports the Atira Indigenous Advisory (AIA) by creating space for their voices at the decision-making level.
- Strengthened organizational partnerships and continued to build trust with key stakeholders.
- Met directly with approximately 85% of employees and visited all Atira sites within the first six weeks of tenure.
- Supported innovative and much-needed work in the DTES area, including the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Wellness Centre in the DTES.
- Finalized Atira's first Comprehensive Occupational Health and Safety Program.
- Trained over 600 staff in Non-Violent Crisis Intervention.

- Co-created a training video with Vancouver Fire and Rescue Services to ensure all staff receive current and ongoing training.
- Created a Health and Safety Management Plan (submitted to BC Housing) in compliance with the province's one-time funding for infrastructure and capacity building to address unique health and safety challenges in the single-room occupancy buildings on the DTES.
- Atira continues to receive funding and support from federal and provincial agencies, including— but not limited to— Women and Gender Equality Canada, Correctional Service Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada, and Vancouver Coastal Health, all of whom renewed their contracts with Atira for FY2024-2025 to provide supports, services, and interventions for women and gender-diverse people.
- BC Housing continued its partnership with Atira, funding and supporting low-barrier and no-barrier housing units that eliminate the intersectional barriers often preventing BC's most vulnerable citizens from accessing support.
- Atira leadership engaged with various ministries in Ottawa during the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness, advocating for housing and support services for women, children, and gender-diverse individuals fleeing violence. In addition, Atira presented the work at Aoki Ross and underscored the importance of including the voices of those with lived experience in the decision-making process.

Good Governance

- Strengthened Atira's governance by developing a new phase of best practices related to Operations, Health and Safety, Administration, Finance, Procurement, and People and Culture to ensure open, transparent, and proactive communication.
- Hosted two all-day staff events and visited all Atira programs to meet one-on-one with staff teams within the first six weeks of tenure.
- Came into compliance with the Lobbyist Registration Act by engaging and reporting according to the legislation.
- Strengthened organizational partnerships and built trust with key stakeholders.
- Developed a 12-18-month bridge strategic plan, laying the groundwork for a longer-term strategic plan that will guide Atira's future.
- Developed a Business Plan for East Van Roasters (EVR), one of Atira's social enterprise programs, to ensure long-term sustainability.

- Implemented internal communication meetings where leaders and staff can discuss various topics, concerns, and ideas, creating a transparent bridge between leadership and staff.
- Conducted a comprehensive risk assessment through a participatory and inclusive process that actively engaged staff members from every level of the organization, including the Board of Directors. The resulting risk assessment will ensure Atira's operations continue to run with a continually evolving and clear understanding of risks, supported by effective mitigation measures.
- Continued to review compliance with all applicable statutes and regulations, such as the lobbyist registry.
- Continued to welcome an independent BC Government representative to attend Board meetings and the AGM.
- Atira has signed a partnership agreement with the Women's National Housing and Homelessness Network to strengthen a community of co-advocacy. Together, we will champion the right to dignified housing for women and gender-diverse individuals across Canada on a national scale.
- The organization was awarded a Vancouver Foundation Grant of \$993,000 to support the administration of the organization.

“Throughout the past 200 days, the thought leadership that Atira brings to housing and support services never faltered,” said Elva Kim (she/her), Board Co-Chair, Atira Women’s Resource Society. “While the Society’s leadership team has been making organizational and governance changes, Atira’s employees have continued to provide necessary support to women, children, gender-diverse individuals, and mixed-gender tenants across exceptional and innovative programs.”

Atira Women’s Resource Society remains committed to its mission of fostering safety and empowerment for all individuals affected by gender-based violence and homelessness. As the organization moves forward, its focus will be on strengthening partnerships, advocating for systemic change, and ensuring that its services meet the evolving needs of the community.

Atira invites community members, stakeholders, and partners to join in this critical work. For further information about Atira's initiatives or to explore partnership opportunities, please visit our website [here](#).



Atira recognizes that our organization operates on the unceded ancestral lands of the x^wməθk^wəy^əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) peoples in “Vancouver,” the qíçəy’ (Katzie), Kwantlen, and Semiahmoo First Nations in “Surrey,” the k^wik^wəłəm (Kwkwetlem) First Nation in “Port Coquitlam,” and the Lək^wəjən (Songhees and Esquimalt) First Nations communities in “Victoria.” As an organization, we make a collective commitment to keep truth and reconciliation real in our communities and, in particular, bring justice for murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls across the country. We ask that all readers learn the true history of the lands on which we reside and join us in giving thanks to its past, present, and future caretakers.

Media Contact:

Tannaz Alesafar

Director of Communications and Fundraising, Atira Women’s Resource Society

604-830-1923

Tannaz_alesafar@atira.bc.ca