

Women's Center gets one year reprieve

By

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ANTIGONISH - The Antigonish Women's Resource Center will be one of the 74 centers across the country to have its funding restored. The federal government announced Friday a \$1.2 million plan to keep the centers afloat for one year.

The February federal budget slashed funding for centers nationwide, leaving centers like the one in Antigonish struggling for survival.

Friday's announcement was made by Mary Collins, the minister responsible for women's issues.

For the Antigonish Center the announcement means it's back to business as usual for at least one year. Co-director Lucille Harper does not know yet the exact amount the center will receive, but she expects it will be in the area of the \$43 000 granted to the center last year.

Although the reinstated funding will give the center much needed financial assistance, Harper points out it is not a secure funding formula by any means.

"It gives us a very insecure funding system. It's only for one year - another 10 months really."

The government has said it will then match dollar for dollar the funding the province provides. So far the province has not made any indication of what level of funding it will provide.

As a part of the CONNECT group, a group of provincially connected women's organizations, the AWRC will continue to lobby both the federal and provincial governments for a comprehensive funding system. Last year CONNECT received a grant to employ a woman to set up a lobbying program for the group.

Harper also said efforts to have \$400 000 in funding restored to the national women's groups will be undertaken.

"The national groups give us a national voice. We are quite connected by the groups. Much of the research information that the national groups do gets passed on to

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the grassroots level in programs provided by the center."

Even with the restored funding the AWRC will be grateful for any donations it receives, says Harper.

"Our future is so uncertain and we were caught in such a crisis situation this year that any money we receive in future donations will go in a reserve fund in case we are faced with another crisis."

The center has received an inten-

tion of donation of \$1500 from the Antigonish County Council and is waiting to hear from town council.

"I'd like to say how appreciative we are of the support we got from the county and beyond. So many people wrote letters on our behalf and encouraged us. Sometimes it looks like its a small group that does the lobbying. It's not though. It's such a large group and we are really appreciative of all their help."