

# eliminating racism empowering women

# ywca

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## madison

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Dear Members of the Community Services Committee,

The YWCA Madison thanks you for the opportunity to participate in the funding process and for all of the wonderful community services you help to fund. We look forward to telling you more about our programs and answering your questions.

I'm here to speak tonight because the YWCA is concerned about the staff recommendation to combine our daytime and night-time Transit programs and put them both in the Access to Resources area.

The current members of the committee may or may not be aware that the YWCA originally started the YW Transit program at the request of the City (in fact, after several requests) when Women's Transit went out of business. It was the City's decision to fund the YW Transit night-time program out of the Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, Crisis Intervention and Safety & Support area. The premise, we believe, was that it is critical to the safety of our community to have an organization providing free, safe transportation for women in the evening/night time hours. We stepped in to provide that service and have done so effectively for several years now.

While it is true that we provide many rides to work at night, we maintain that this is part of preventing violence when women are going to work. One example is the woman we serve who had been sleeping at the west transfer point every night after work until she could get the first bus in the morning. We also provide many rides to and from DAIS, often helping shelter residents get there by the 10:00 PM curfew. We do serve men, who may also be in need of safe transportation, but we also get other funding so the City does not have to support those particular rides.

In addition, we do provide some emergency rides. One woman called the line around 12:15 AM, saying that she was hiding in her closet with her 2-year-old daughter. Her boyfriend was drunk and she was afraid that he was going to become violent with her. She kept saying she didn't know what to do and wasn't sure if she should have called. The dispatcher told her that she did the right thing by calling and it's better to be safe than sorry. Clearly distraught, she called the rideline two more times to make sure someone was coming. She was very thankful that YW Transit could help her get out of that situation safely with her daughter.

All that being said, if the committee prefers to move the night-time services into the "Access to Resources" area, we don't object. However, the funding must move along with the program. There are already many programs, including some of our own, competing for the funding in that area. Obviously, we will not be able to continue to provide night-time transportation services – either for violence prevention or for access to services – without funding. It would be ironic at best to lose funding for a program that was started at the request of the City and that the City worked so hard to have us preserve.

We thank you again for your time and attention this evening, and for your service to the City of Madison and its residents.

Sincerely,  
Rachel Krinsky, CEO

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inc.®

Girls Incorporated®  
at YWCA Madison

