



YWCA
CANADA

A TURNING POINT
FOR WOMEN
UN POINT TOURNANT
POUR LES FEMMES

Prosperity Budgeting for a Feminist Government: Effective Gender-Based Analysis

**Pre-Budget Submission to the House Standing Committee on Finance
Federal Budget 2018**

**YWCA Canada
August 4, 2017**

As we approach 2018, women in Canada, though highly educated, continue to face barriers to employment and inequality in the workplace. A productive, prosperous, and vibrant Canadian economy requires federal government action to remedy economic and social inequity faced by women and gender non-conforming people to ensure their productivity and equality. The federal budget must take into account the lived experiences of women and trans people at every aspect of the policy process in order to create this change. YWCA Canada recommends gender-based analysis of the federal budget with an intersectional approach as the tool to ensure this result, and points to housing, child care, economic equality and violence as areas of focus.

Gender-Based Analysis of Budget 2018 – Intersectional and Comprehensive
The 2017 federal budget was the first to address the need for federal budgets to incorporate a gender-based analysis (GBA+). Budget 2017 recognized and acknowledged the gender wage gap, gender-based labour market challenges, the greater likelihood of women and girls to experience poverty, violence and harassment, and included a number of targeted provisions specifically aimed at remedying Canadian women’s economic inequality. YWCA Canada welcomed this important step toward addressing economic and social inequality experienced by women and gender non-conforming people. Approaching policy development and federal budgeting from a vantage point that incorporates a gender lens reminds decision-makers that “*all* policies and programs are gendered”.¹ In effect, the government needs to answer the question, “How does this impact women and girls?” about each and every policy and program.

It is imperative that the 2018 federal budget continue to build on the important work begun the preceding year through broad application of an

intersectional gender analysis in the budget process. YWCA Canada recommends that the federal government reinforce its commitment to implementing policy which improves economic equity for *all* Canadian women, by considering the various dimensions of inequality faced by Indigenous, Black, and other racialized women, newcomer women, disabled women, queer women, and gender non-conforming people.

Strengthening public capacity for GBA+ with an intersectional lens in policy-making has the potential for enormous positive impact for Canadian women, the economy, and government efficiency. As award-winning gender-budgeting specialist Isabella Bakker notes: “by identifying the needs of particular groups, and assessing how neutrally-defined programs fail or success to address them, gender budget analysis can also contribute to more effectiveness in public spending and taxation”.²

As promised in *Building a Strong Middle Class, #Budget 2017*, YWCA Canada looks forward to “more in-depth analysis of proposed budget measures”³ in 2018 and to implementation of the following measures to achieve economic equity for women, and enhanced growth and prosperity for the country.

Policy Recommendations for Achieving Enhanced Growth and Prosperity: Economic Equality

While the gender wage gap in Canada has decreased since the 1970s, due to women’s increased educational attainment and increased participation in the workforce, women still earn an average \$0.74 for every dollar earned by men.⁴ The 2017 budget promised that the federal government is working toward equalizing wages for women and men of diverse groups. The 2018 budget should include an intersectional analysis of the gender wage gap with indicators for race, disability, and gender identity.

- **Pay Equity**

Canadian women have been waiting decades for equal pay for work of equal value. The federal government needs to expedite their commitment to implement proactive federal pay equity legislation, with a commitment in Budget 2018 to pay equity and sufficient funds to implement.

- **Canada Child Benefit**

YWCA Canada supports the Canada Child Benefit (CCB) which includes mothers without taxable incomes.⁵ We raise concerns, however, that by exclusively using the income tax system to assess and deliver this benefit, the federal government runs the risk of leaving out mothers most in need of this transfer payment, who do not file taxes. The federal government needs to ensure that First Nation, Métis and Inuit mothers are accessing their full

entitlement to this benefit and suggests that the federal government work with Indigenous women’s organizations and governments to ensure women receive their full entitlement. The CCB should be indexed to maintain full value despite inflation.

- Poverty Reduction Strategy

Budget 2018 needs to provide funding for the federal Poverty Reduction Strategy currently in development. Canada’s Poverty Reduction Strategy must be integrated with the federal strategies on housing and gender-based violence, and the national early learning and child care framework. This requires policy coordination between intersecting federal strategies, across ministries and departments.

REDUCING ECONOMIC INEQUALITY	
Issue	Policies Recommended
Gender Pay Gap	Pay Equity
	Increase unionization
Barriers to Labour Market Access	Access to affordable child care
	Paternity benefits
Precarious Employment	Increase Labour Market Regulation
	Broaden access to Employment Insurance
Poverty level income	Increase minimum wage
	Increase income support rates
	Index CCB to inflation
Labour Market Discrimination	Employment Equity
Workplace Harassment	Improve enforcement and remedies, increase penalties

A Continuum of Housing Services & Safe Affordable Homes for Women
Women’s safety is a core mission for YWCA Canada and that requires access to safe, affordable homes. Our Member Associations have been providing safe housing for women for nearly 150 years. Nationally, YWCA Canada currently provides over 2000 units of housing, both permanent and transitional, along with 34 shelters for women and their families. Our continuum of housing approach, with supportive services and programs, has been tested and implemented to meet the needs of women and their families in their communities.

- National Housing Strategy

Both CMHC’s National Housing Fund and the federal-provincial-territorial framework needs an effective gender-based analysis that takes intersectionality – such as Indigeneity, race, disability, sexual orientation, and immigration status – into account. *The State of Homelessness in Canada* reports that women lead 89% of families in homeless shelters⁶ in addition to

leading all families in violence against women shelters. Funding should be dedicated to a continuum of housing that responds to homelessness as lived by women, girls and gender non-conforming and provide safe affordable homes with supports where needed:

- 1) A minimum of 25% of units in all projects funded by the National Housing Strategy be fully accessible for women with disabilities and their families using principles of universal design.**
- 2) \$50 million per year in the National Housing Fund for shelters and additional funds for a continuum of housing for survivors of gender-based violence and homelessness.**
- 3) Dedicated funds for safe affordable housing targeted to single women and women leading families.**
- 4) Long term funding of an Indigenous Housing Strategy that responds to the needs of Indigenous women and families wherever they live, including cooperative housing and integrating services such as child care, space for ceremony, collective kitchens and trauma-informed design, building on the \$525 million in Budget 2017.**

- **Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS)**

YWCA Canada looks forward to a re-envisioned Homelessness Partnering Strategy in 2018 which incorporates a gender lens and equity model and the proven continuum of housing approach to housing options for women and their families, alongside Housing First models.⁷ Gender violence is a major driver of homelessness for women and girls: many lose their housing to escape violence at home.⁸ Homeless women, girls, and gender non-conforming people experience high rates of abuse and violence.⁹ Dedicated funding for transitional housing programs offers women and who are survivors of homelessness and of gender-based violence critical supports and skills development to access employment, education, and transition to independent living.

Realizing the Promise of Child Care – Prosperity and Equality

Canada's economic prosperity is tied to the labour market participation of Canadian women. Despite being highly educated¹⁰ and comprising roughly half of the workforce, women are still overwhelmingly responsible for the majority of unpaid care work in the household, including raising children. Canadian women with young children are at a particular disadvantage economically: mothers with children under age 6 still experience the lowest rates of employment.¹¹ Women in child-rearing roles are often limited to part-time work due to lack of available and affordable childcare spaces.¹²

Access to child care increases women's labour force participation. The Quebec experience confirms broad access to low-cost child care as a poverty reduction tool, providing low-income mothers with access to the workforce. Between the introduction of child care as a social policy in 1996 and 2008,

employment rates for mothers with children under the age of six increased 22%, the number of single mothers on social assistance fell 55% - from 99,000 to 45,000 - and their after-tax median income rose by 81%.¹³ These gains for women and children cannot be replicated across the country without access to affordable child care. From last place when the program was introduced, Quebec now leads the country in women's workforce participation.

To foster prosperous and productive communities, Canada needs universal affordable child care with an equity lens across the country. National universal child care has the potential to generate an additional \$8 billion per year and fully fund itself in tax revenue.¹⁴ Quebec's low cost child care program confirms the potential for economic growth, generating an additional \$5.1 billion in provincial GDP in 2008.¹⁵ Budget 2018 should increase funding for the 2017 Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care framework to close this social policy gap. A national universal child care program, along the lines of the *Shared Framework for Building an Early Childhood Education and Care System for All* is the logical response to Canadian women's economic inequality.¹⁶

Addressing Violence Against Women

- National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
YWCA Canada is committed to Reconciliation and our services support First Nation, Métis and Inuit women who are violence survivors. We campaigned for a National Inquiry into Murdered Indigenous Women, and support the call from Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) "to restructure the current process" noting that course correction was "successfully adopted by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission."¹⁷ Budget 2018 should increase funding as necessary to ensure success of this process and the Inquiry itself.

"We need to see the implementation of a trauma-informed process with a human rights-based approach. There has to be a direct departure from the legalistic approach we've seen in the allocation of funds and multiple bureaucratic barriers to the participation of families."

NWAC President Francyne Joe

- National Strategy Against Gender-based Violence
YWCA Canada welcomed the announcement of *It's Time: Canada's Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence* which outlined the broad strokes for the Budget 2017 funding. Over 75% of that \$100.9 million (over five years) is allocated to Status of Women Canada for a Gender-Based Violence Knowledge Centre, and the balance goes to four federal government agencies and ministries. As a stakeholder, YWCA Canada looks forward to information on how the strategy will engage and support the sector, including funding to enhance work in communities.

About YWCA Canada:

YWCA Canada is the country's oldest and largest women's multi-service organization, with 32 Member Associations across the country serve women and girls in nine provinces and two territories. For more information visit www.ywccanada.ca, Twitter [@YWCA_Canada](https://twitter.com/YWCA_Canada) or www.facebook.com/ywccanada



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¹ <http://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/march-2017/the-budgets-baby-steps-on-gender-analysis/>

² https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National_Office_Pubs/2005/afb2006_tech_paper1_gender_budget_initiatives.pdf

³ Government of Canada, Department of Finance, Building A Strong Middle Class #Budget 2017, March 22 2017.

⁴ <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-503-x/2015001/article/14694-eng.htm>

⁵ <http://digitalcommons.osgoode.yorku.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2816&context=ohlj>

⁶ Canadian Observatory on Homelessness & CAEH, The State of Homelessness in Canada 2016,
http://homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/SOHC16_final_20Oct2016.pdf

⁷ Only 32% of Housing First users are women, (see endnote 4) while with VAW shelters included, women experience a disproportionate burden of homelessness.

⁸ Statistics Canada, Shelters for abused women in Canada, 2010, Juristat, February 2014

⁹ <http://ywccanada.ca/data/documents/00000532.pdf>

¹⁰ <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/161123/dq161123b-eng.htm>

¹¹ <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-503-x/2015001/article/14694-eng.htm>

¹² <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-503-x/2015001/article/14694-eng.htm>

¹³ Fortin et al, *The Impact of Low Cost Child Care on Women's Employment and Overall Economy*, University of Sherbrook, 2012.

¹⁴ ¹⁴ <https://www.thestar.com/amp/news/canada/2017/07/26/federal-government-can-afford-8-billion-a-year-on-child-care-program-imf-says.html>

¹⁵ Fortin et al, *L'Impact des services de garde à contribution réduite du Québec sur le taux d'activité féminine, le revenu intérieur et les budgets gouvernementaux*, Université de Sherbrooke, 2012

¹⁶ Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada,

https://ccaacacpsge.files.wordpress.com/2016/01/sharedframework_jan2016.pdf

¹⁷ Native Women's Association of Canada, "NWAC Joins the Call for a Restructure of the National Inquiry into MMIWG" 11 July 2017.