



## **Submission in Advance of the 2021 Federal Budget**

The Canadian Women's Foundation is a national leader in the movement for gender equality in Canada. Launched in 1991 and now one of the largest women's foundations in the world, the Foundation has raised more than \$100M and funded over 2,000 programs across the country. During the COVID pandemic, the Foundation successfully partnered with government to efficiently disburse \$13M to almost 450 women's organizations across the country.

### **Recommendations:**

**Building on long-standing calls for investments in women's equality and underlined by the COVID pandemic, the Foundation adds its voice to calls for:**

- **Investment in Women's Safety:**
  - Invest \$500M in GBV organizations, including \$20M for Inuit women's shelters.
  - Respond to Calls for Justice of the Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG).
- **Targeting Women's Economic Equality as key to recovery:**
  - Create high-quality care economy jobs in women-majority workforces through designated federal transfers.
  - Invest \$150m over two years in a renewed Investment Readiness Program (ESDC) that continues a focus on women's organizations.
  - Accelerate the Social Finance Fund launch to 2021 and focus \$20M over two years to an emerging women-focused social finance fund for investment.
- **Recognition of childcare and long-term care (LTC) in a healthy economy:**
  - Immediately increase the Safe Restart Agreement investment in childcare by \$1.875B.
  - Invest \$2B in a national childcare system in Federal Budget 2021.
  - Support expansion of public and non-profit LTC.

**Support the expanding role of diverse Women's Leadership in Canada's prosperity:**

- **Invest \$50M in the Canadian Women's Foundation** to fund, capacity build, convene and support policy and advocacy work throughout its network prioritizing marginalized women and girls facing systemic discrimination including anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism.
- **Invest \$400M to fund a diverse and sustainable women's movement** with long-term operational funding to women-serving agencies and equity seeking organizations.

## **She-covery, not She-cession**

The federal government's recovery plans in the COVID-19 pandemic must be diversified and focus on getting women back to meaningful work, supporting the economy, and ensuring the essential services that keep Canadians productive, safe and healthy - schools, childcare, and community organizations - are well placed to continue to function effectively.

Our July 2020 opinion poll<sup>1</sup> revealed that people in Canada are concerned about women in the recovery: 60% want government recovery plans to specifically address the unique impacts of the pandemic on women, including 70% of women and 49% of men. Women have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic in terms of their safety, employment, well-being and access to equality.

- All items in the recovery budget must be developed with a GBA+ and intersectional analysis and data to monitor the impact of the budget in terms of gender and intersecting identities must be available.

## **Invest in Women's Safety**

The government must undertake an intersectional analysis of GBV in the pandemic context, taking into account multiple factors affecting the experience of violence for diverse women and non-binary people. These include Indigeneity, racialization, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, ability, age, income, experience of migration and other equity grounds. Investment decisions must consider how systems establish discriminatory practices and barriers to access. Rural, remote, Indigenous, disabled, racialized, Black, gender non-conforming, trans and migrant women all experience elevated rates of violence, yet have the hardest time getting services.

The higher rates of GBV experienced by Indigenous women and girls - a result of Canada's historical and ongoing systemic racism and colonialism - intensified during the pandemic. The Native Women's Association of Canada reported that one in five Indigenous women had experienced physical or psychological violence during the first three months of the pandemic.

We support the Calls to Justice from the Report of the National Inquiry into MMIWG and implementation of resulting systemic change. Funding must be sufficient to undertake all recommendations with the full participation of families, communities, organizations and all of government. Consideration must be given to the different needs, on and off reserve, of First Nations, Inuit and Métis women.

- Implement the Calls for Justice from the Report of the National Inquiry into MMIWG, including a National Action Plan to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA people.

The UN is reporting pandemic increases in violence against women as high as 20-30% worldwide. Similar evidence is emerging across Canada. The Ontario Association of Transition Houses stated that shelters are experiencing a 20% increase in calls. In Alberta, the Edmonton

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<sup>1</sup> Canadian Women's Foundation, National Opinion Survey: Public Concern about COVID-19's Impact on Women, July 2020.

police have seen a 62% increase in domestic violence calls over last year (timeframe starts in January). Provincial and regional helplines have reported 30% increases in calls and online requests. Canadians are concerned. In April, a Statistics Canada survey revealed that one in 10 women are “very or extremely concerned about the possibility of violence in the home.”

While experiences of GBV and ongoing racism and gender bias in policing have been clearly linked, police services throughout Canada, including the RCMP, remain resistant to culture change. Serious consideration should be given to preventive investments in community programs addressing links between violence, mental health and racism.

Canada needs a National Action Plan on Gender Based Violence, with full implementation, that addresses provincial and territorial jurisdictions, supported by a feminist measurement, evaluation and learning framework, including a government tracking system for femicide in Canada.

- Embark on the national consultation promised in the previous budget on a National Action Plan on GBV.
- Invest \$500M in GBV organizations throughout Canada, including \$20M for five new shelters for Inuit women and children.

### **Ensure Women’s Economic Equality**

The latest employment data shows that while women have recouped one-third of their employment losses, recovery remains more advanced for men. Women continue to account for more than half of all job losses (53%) with a 17% drop in female employment and 14.5% drop for men.

Job losses have fallen most heavily on young women and women earning low incomes. Women 15 to 24 experienced a 38% drop in employment, which will have an ongoing impact. As Stats Canada noted: “...this year’s female postsecondary graduates may incur larger earnings losses during the next five years than their male counterparts.”<sup>2</sup> Women earning the lowest 10% of wages experienced job loss at 50 times the rate of the highest wage earners. This type of granular data revealed by intersectional gender-based analysis is needed to support decisions.

Women’s work is traditionally devalued, and majority-women sectors are often the lowest paid and highly precarious. Women are 73% of workers in service and care industries, predominating in retail, the service sector, including travel and tourism, care work, and the non-profit and charitable sector. Ninety-two percent of nurses in Canada are women as are 90% of LTC staff.<sup>3</sup> These sectors need particular attention to safeguard women’s economic security through ongoing stages of the pandemic. In our survey, 63% expressed concern that women face more exposure to COVID-19 due to working in high risk service and care industries.

Government economic recovery plans must take women’s employment and unemployment into account.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/200728/dq200728a-eng.htm>

<sup>3</sup> <https://thegatewayonline.ca/2020/06/covid-19-a-gendered-crisis-in-long-term-care-facilities/>

- Invest in women-majority care workforces through designated federal transfers to create high-quality care economy jobs.
- Raise federal, provincial, and territorial employment standards to include stable full-time employment at living wages, paid sick days, right to refuse unsafe work, improved working conditions and robust employment protections.
- Modernize and strengthen Employment Insurance to reflect current realities.
- Ensure migrant care workers have decent work and access to residential status.

The pandemic and related emergency measures reduced the capacity and stability of already stressed non-profit women's organizations to provide essential supports and services to women. With donations stalled, women's sector organizations are increasingly looking to social enterprise and social innovation to stabilize and support their work. Interest of women's organizations in access to the Investment Readiness Program and later, the Social Finance Fund, is high and growing.

- Invest \$150m to renew ESDC's Investment Readiness Program over two years with specific support for the women's sector and women-serving organizations, enhanced capacity in rural and remote regions, enhanced access for SPOs led by Black, Indigenous and racialized entrepreneurs and increased capacity building programs for equity-seeking groups.
- Invest \$400M over the next two years to accelerate the Social Finance Fund launch to 2021, including \$20M to an emerging women-focused social finance fund for investment. Require all wholesalers and intermediaries to apply a social equity and gender investment lens.

### **Support Women's Well-being**

Women are falling out of the workforce due to high unemployment in their sector and/or the pressures of children not in school or daycare. Without access to affordable, high-quality early learning and childcare, women's economic security and freedom from violence are both at risk.

With women comprising 96% of childcare workers, supporting this sector will support a women-majority workforce and create conditions for full re-opening in the short term.

- Immediately increase the Safe Restart Agreement investment in childcare by \$1.875B.
- Invest \$2B in early learning and childcare in Budget 2021 through transfers to the provinces/territories and Indigenous communities for non-profit and public services.
- Implement the national secretariat.

Women comprise more than two-thirds of nursing home, or LTC, residents.<sup>4</sup> Nationally, 81% of COVID-19 deaths were in LTC: nearly double the OECD average.<sup>5</sup> In Nova Scotia, as in several provinces, many COVID-19 cases were linked to LTC, and 62% of cases were women.<sup>6</sup>

Our survey discovered significant concern over the quality (79%) and safety (77%) of LTC facilities and about family members in them (71%). It also found high levels of agreement on

<sup>4</sup> <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/may-2020/covid-19-crisis-in-nursing-homes-is-a-gender-crisis/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-new-data-show-canada-ranks-among-worlds-worst-for-ltc-deaths/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/long-term-care-nova-scotia-pandemic-solutions-cost-1.5606228>

the need to improve standards and oversight for LTC facilities as soon as possible (91%), to prioritize funding for LTC (85%), and to completely overhaul LTC (84%).

- Increase federal and provincial public investment in LTC and related community-based supports for seniors and others in need of care, including services, infrastructure, and facilities.
- Expand public and non-profit LTC facilities and home care services.

### **Build Women's Leadership**

To maximize budget benefits and continue advances in women's equality the government must expand funding to equality-seeking groups. Considerable losses in fundraising and capacity resulting from the pandemic have created a danger that women's rights and equality measures will be treated as "nice to have" rather imperative human rights. Investments directly into all parts of the women's sector will ensure it continues to grow and preserve the valuable ground gained since 2015.

Canada needs a stabilization plan for the non-profit and charitable sector and funding to ensure thriving women's movements. Imagine Canada estimates the cost to bring this sector into a strong recovery is \$9B. In a recent survey of their membership by the Ontario Nonprofit Network, 26% of organizations primarily served women, girls and 2SLGBTQ communities. Any stabilization fund must have an intersectional lens that takes these organizations into account and makes investments in diverse communities, including Black, racialized and First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities.

The breadth and depth of gendered pandemic impacts<sup>7</sup> have increased urgency to strengthen the women's sector, prevent rollbacks and continue equality gains. The Canadian Women's Foundation is uniquely positioned to effectively and efficiently support the women's sector and ensure inclusion for all women. Throughout the pandemic, the Foundation has directed funds with laser-focused precision and speed to organizations serving the most marginalized women and girls regionally and nationally. With appropriate investment, we can continue deploying our expertise as a funder, capacity builder, collaborator, convener and knowledge mobilizer in support of inclusive gender equality.

- Invest \$400M to fund a diverse and sustainable women's movement with ongoing long-term operational funding to women-serving agencies and equity-seeking organizations to continue advances in gender equity and ensure national access to protections and supports, without a "one size fits all" approach.
- Invest \$50M in the Canadian Women's Foundation to apply an intersectional GBA+ lens to fund, capacity build, convene and support policy and advocacy work prioritizing marginalized women and girls facing systemic discrimination, including anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism, across our focus areas:
  - GBV
  - women's economic development
  - inclusive leadership
  - girls' empowerment.

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<sup>7</sup> Canadian Women's Foundation, Resetting Normal: <https://canadianwomen.org/resetting-normal/>