



**Pre-Budget Submission to the House of Commons Standing Committee on  
Finance**

**CANADIAN FEDERATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN**

**August 3, 2018**

**About CFUW:** The Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) is a non-partisan, voluntary, self-funded organization with over 100 CFUW Clubs, located in every province across Canada. Since its founding in 1919, CFUW has worked to improve the status of women, promote human rights, public education, social justice, and peace. Every year, CFUW and its Clubs award close to \$1 million to women to help them pursue post-secondary studies.

## Summary of Recommendations:

1. That the government commit to funding **Universal Child Care** at an annual cost of 1% of the GDP.
2. That the government commit to affordable, flexible maternity, paternity, and **parental leaves**, increasing parental benefits to 75% of weekly insurable earnings.
3. That the government allocate adequate financial resources to hire 50 pay equity enforcement officers and \$80 million per year to the new Pay Equity Commission.
4. That the government adopt all recommendations in “It’s Time to Act”, the Special Committee on **Pay Equity’s** 2016 Report.
5. That the government develop best practices to address intersectional barriers to women in **male-dominated fields** and support wage increases for workers in female-dominated fields in collaboration with provinces and territories.
6. That the government develop and fund comprehensive policies and programs for **affordable housing and homelessness**.
7. That the government develop, fund, and implement a **National Action Plan on Violence against Women** including Sexual Violence and Discrimination Training on campuses and in the workplace.
8. That the government continue to fund the MMIWG inquiry’s work for an additional 2 years and collaborate with Indigenous governance, organizations, and women’s groups to guarantee Indigenous peoples’ access to essential services, on and off reserves.
9. That the government expand access to legal aid, especially in rural areas.
10. That the government expand resources, training, counselling, and infrastructure to the appropriate municipal, provincial, territorial and federal entities to create an efficient and effective refugee claims system and to continue to increase the number of refugees accepted, settled, and integrated into the country.

To ensure economic competitiveness, Canada must invest in a diverse and vibrant workforce. “Women’s Economic Security: Securing the Future of Canada’s Economy,” the 2018 report from the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, made important recommendations to improve women’s economic security, many of which are echoed in this brief.

CFUW commends the government for committing to a mandatory gender-based analysis. We strongly encourage the government to continue to build on this GBA+ framework, using intersectional gender analysis to inform the 2019 Budget.

### **Universal Child Care:**

Women’s career advancement and financial security depends on access to quality, affordable, flexible, and inclusive child care. The current Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework cannot deliver the Universal Child Care System that advocates have been asking for. Neither political leadership nor funding for licensed childcare spaces meet the federal government’s commitment to make child care accessible and affordable for all Canadian families.

Current spending is 50% of what it was 10 years ago under Paul Martin.<sup>1</sup> According to the Canadian Center for Policy Alternatives (CCPA), 44% of Canada’s non-school-aged children live in communities with limited access to child care. Only a few provinces regulate child care costs and large discrepancies in access to child care exist across Canada.

A gender-focused Budget 2019 must include significant investments to end Canada’s child care crisis. UNICEF recommends benchmark spending of 1% of a country’s GDP for child care; Canada spends less than 0.3% of its GDP.

CFUW urges the government to commit to Universal Child Care, a publicly funded, quality, affordable, accessible, flexible, and inclusive child care system with consistent standards and measurable benchmarks. We recommend that the government allocate \$1-billion for 2019, and plan for total annual child care spending to reach 1% of the GDP.

### **Financial Incentive for Parental Leave:**

CFUW endorses a use-it-or-lose-it approach to parental benefits that supports gender equality by encouraging fathers to spend time with and care for their child. In budget 2019, we recommend that the government increase the rate of parental benefit, a key element in the second parent’s decision to use their leave and share child-rearing responsibilities. In Quebec, second parents have access to a use-it-or-lose-it parental leave program that provides 70-75% of average weekly insurable earnings resulting in over 80% of second parents taking an average of 5 weeks parental leave, compared to only 12% in the rest of Canada. We also ask the government to commit to more affordable, flexible maternity, paternity and parental leaves, and ensure parental benefits policies are aligned with child-care policies.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.childcarecanada.org/blog/no-equality-without-universal-child-care>

## **Pay Equity:**

In 93.8% of the occupations measured by Statistics Canada (469 of 500), women earn less than men. This pay discrimination is not only unacceptable it is also illegal. Closing the gender pay gap is essential to economic justice and pay transparency and pay equity legislation are key components in closing this gap. CFUW welcomed the proactive pay equity legislation and pay transparency measures announced in Budget 2018. Now what is needed are robust financial commitments to pay equity and pay transparency. CFUW recommends that the government allocate adequate financial resources to hire 50 pay equity enforcement officers and allocate \$80 million per year to the new Pay Equity Commission to enable enforcement, education and research to close the gender gap. We also recommend that the government adopt all recommendations in “It’s Time to Act”, the Special Committee on **Pay Equity’s** 2016 Report.

## **Gender Bias in the Workplace:**

CFUW supports all efforts to recruit and retain women in underrepresented fields. Although we were pleased to see \$2.9-billion annual transfer to provinces and territories for women in skilled trades in Budget 2018, only 23% of women, compared to 39% of men choose a STEM program in university,<sup>2</sup> indicating that additional actions are necessary to support women in STEM. All plans to recruit and retain women in male-dominated fields must address barriers to women’s presence in these fields, including discrimination in the workplace, sexual harassment, lack of flexible working arrangements, and access to affordable childcare.

We urge the government to research and implement best practices to address barriers to women in male-dominated fields including STEM, skilled trades and academia, and act within an intersectional framework that recognizes additional barriers faced by indigenous and racialized women, LGBTQIA2+ individuals, and women with disabilities.

The social bias against female dominated fields such as healthcare, social work and education contribute to making women the lowest paid workers in Canada’s work force. To create a strong middle class and strengthened women’s economic security, CFUW recommends that the government work with the provinces and territories to support wage increases for workers in female-dominated fields.

## **Targeted Investments to End Homelessness:**

The 2017 National Housing Strategy allocates \$40 billion over 10 years and aims to reduce chronic homelessness by 50% to respond to Canada’s long-standing housing crisis. According to the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness, chronic and episodic homelessness represents less than 15% of individuals experiencing homelessness.<sup>3</sup> The full scope of homelessness, especially invisible homelessness experienced by women

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/75-006-x/2013001/article/11874-eng.htm>

<sup>3</sup> [http://homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/FINAL\\_COH\\_housing\\_Submission\\_180607.pdf](http://homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/FINAL_COH_housing_Submission_180607.pdf)

and youth must be taken into account in the government's needs assessment and target-setting.

Budget 2019 has to address the root causes and intersection of discrimination for marginalized population and have a responsive approach to their needs. Among these individuals facing barriers in housing are women, Indigenous and racialized Canadians, migrants, youth and LGBTQIA2+ individuals. Youth homelessness is of particular concern; on any given night, ~6,500 people aged 13 to 24 experience homelessness.<sup>4</sup> CFUW urges the Government of Canada to provide sufficient funding to combat youth homelessness specifically targeting those aging out of government care, Indigenous youth, youth with mental health and addiction issues, youth with physical health issues, and LGBTQIA2+ youth.

CFUW also urges the government to fund comprehensive housing policies and programs that address the needs of marginalized populations, especially women living in poverty, Indigenous women, LGBTQIA2+ and youth.

### **National Action Plan on Violence against Women:**

The costs of intimate partner and sexual violence, including social services, healthcare, the justice system, and lost productivity, is estimated at \$7.4 and \$1.9 billion respectively.<sup>5</sup> The Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence is a positive step towards ending violence against women, but it is not enough. Canada needs a comprehensive National Action Plan on Violence against Women that integrates all levels of government (federal, provincial, municipal, Indigenous).

CFUW urges the Federal government to develop, implement and fund a National Action Plan on Violence Against Women that focuses on the most vulnerable, Indigenous and immigrant women, women with disabilities, young women and LGBTQIA2+ individuals. The plan must provide coordination between legislation, policies and programs, including federal action plans: the housing strategy, the poverty reduction strategy, the feminist assistance policy and the strategy to address GBV and integrate comprehensive targets and indicators, timelines and accountability mechanisms.

CFUW welcomed increased investments for organizations providing support to victims of gender-based violence in Budget 2018. In Budget 2019, we ask for stable core funding for women's organization and community organizations serving women, including rape crisis centres and shelters.

Risk of sexual violence is particularly high for female students who are Indigenous, individuals with disabilities, and LGBTQIA2+ folks. Acts of sexual violence and discrimination against women in the work place and on campuses have serious

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<sup>4</sup> [http://homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/AnyGivenNight\\_II\\_final.pdf](http://homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/AnyGivenNight_II_final.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2013001/article/11805/11805-3-eng.htm>

repercussions on women's physical and mental health and their ability to pursue their studies, advance their careers and guarantee their financial security.

CFUW recommends the government to ensure sufficient funding for training on **sexual violence in the workplace and on campuses**, including training on reporting processes, the root causes of sexual violence and bystander intervention.

Ensuring that all Canadian universities have adequate sexual assault policies that are well publicized and enforced is key in creating a culture shift. We ask the government to continue to show leadership regarding sexual violence on campuses by working in collaboration with provinces and territories, women's groups, student groups and universities to develop and implement comprehensive sexual violence policy standards and prevention strategies.

CFUW welcomed new funding for legal aid in Budget 2018. We recommend the continued expansion to its access, especially in rural areas.

### **Ending Violence against Indigenous Women:**

Not only is the rate of homicide for Indigenous women is 6 times higher than for non-Indigenous women, they represent ¼ of the victims killed by casual acquaintance and are twice as likely to be sexually assaulted.

Native Women's Association of Canada's latest report card on the progress of the National Inquiry gives it failing grades, highlighting issues in communication and transparency, particularly with the families. In May 2018, the organization supported the two-year extension, stating, "as long as there are families and survivors who want to use this avenue to share their truths and their loved ones' stories."

CFUW recommends that the government provide necessary funds to ensure all families wanting to take part in the process are able to do so, and to support the extension and improvement of the MMIWG inquiry's work.

We recommend the government to work in collaboration with Indigenous governance, organizations, and Indigenous women's groups to guarantee access to essential services, including social and community-based services for indigenous peoples such as safe drinking water, housing, healthcare, education, employment, and child care with specific targeted investments that fit the needs of Indigenous women.

### **Refugees:**

CFUW members are deeply concerned by the global refugee crisis. As a signatory to the United Nations Convention related to the Status of Refugees, Canada has the obligation to ensure the human rights of asylum seekers are respected within its borders.

In 2018, the CFUW voting body passed a Resolution entitled: Fair and Non-Discriminatory Management of Refugees and Asylum Seekers. CFUW recommends that the government expand resources, training, counselling, and infrastructure to the appropriate

municipal, provincial, territorial and federal entities to create an efficient and effective refugee claims system and to continue to increase the number of refugees accepted, settled, and integrated into the country.