

NEW REPORT HIGHLIGHTS INEQUITIES WORSENER BY COVID-19

Even before the pandemic, many struggled with access to education, employment, housing, and support services

TORONTO, ON — June 16, 2020. The Canadian Women’s Foundation has released a report that highlights how gender-based inequalities play out for different segments of the population. In the context of COVID-19, these results are even more concerning and highlight the need for an intersectional gendered approach in post-pandemic recovery plans.

We asked people in Canada from different backgrounds and identities about the barriers they experience in the following key areas:

- access to education;
- access to employment/fair pay;
- access to housing; and
- experiences of abuse and access to support services

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND ACCESS TO SUPPORT SERVICES

- 38% of Indigenous women, 32% with a physical disability, and 41% of women with another type of disability* have experienced physical violence in their personal life.
- 50% of those who identify as 2SLGBTQI+, 45% of Indigenous women, and 51% of women with a disability other than physical* have experienced emotional abuse.
- Of the 35% of respondents who sought support services, 20% say the waitlist was too long, 21% say they didn’t know who to contact, and 18% said there was a lack of access or no relevant services in their area.

“Many experts are concerned that COVID-19 isolation measures may have led to a surge in gender-based violence”, says Paulette Senior, President and CEO of the Canadian Women’s Foundation. “And we know that marginalized women, girls, and trans and non-binary people experience higher rates of violence. The federal government has provided emergency funding for shelters and sexual assault services, but in coming months, more support will be needed. Violence prevention and intervention services were already struggling to meet needs before the pandemic.”

ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT/FAIR PAY

More than 60% of early job losses due to the pandemic were experienced by women, and many were already struggling:

- Only half of all respondents say their household income covers monthly expenses and allows for some savings. For some groups, the picture is bleaker: 38% of those who identify as 2SLGBTQI+; 16% of those with a physical disability, and 28% of those with another type of disability.
- Only 27% report being paid equally to their peers. That number goes down to 16% with a physical disability and 23% of those with another type of disability.
- Only 26% report being paid fairly for their experience. That number goes down to 22% for those who identify as 2SLGBTQI+, 21% for racialized women, and 18% for newcomers and recent immigrants.

As employment becomes scarcer for vulnerable workers in the pandemic, women will face increased financial instability. Women are often in low-wage, precarious jobs. They're most likely to lose work and have no savings to rely on for themselves and their dependents. Right now, steady services tailored to their needs are a must.

In a recent joint statement, the Chief Commissioner of the Canadian Human Rights Commission and the Federal Pay Equity Commissioner expressed concern that the pandemic could “erase the gains that have been made towards gender equality in Canada”.

The “Until all of Us” report is based on an opinion survey the Foundation commissioned in early 2020. To view the full report, visit canadianwomen.org/until-all-of-us.

WHO WAS SURVEYED

An online survey was conducted by MARU/Matchbox among 1,332 people from different backgrounds and identities living all over Canada. The survey was extended to people over 18 years of age who are not retired, and who identify as female, trans, non-binary, or Two Spirit. The survey did not include those who identify as male. It was conducted in English and French between January 28 and February 11, 2020.

*Respondents who selected ‘other disability’ may have been referring to mental health-related disabilities, disabilities caused by brain trauma, neurodivergence etc.

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ABOUT THE CANADIAN WOMEN’S FOUNDATION

The Canadian Women’s Foundation is a national leader in the movement for gender equality in Canada. Through funding, research, advocacy, and knowledge sharing, the Foundation works to achieve systemic change that includes all women. By supporting community programs, the Foundation empowers women and girls to move themselves out of violence, out of poverty, and into confidence and leadership.

Launched in 1991 to address a critical need for philanthropy focused on women, the Canadian Women’s Foundation is one of the largest women’s foundations in the world. With the support of donors, the Foundation has raised more than \$100 million and funded over 1,900 programs across the country. These programs focus on addressing the root causes of the most critical issues, and helping women and girls who face the greatest barriers.

The Canadian Women’s Foundation aims to be inclusive of diverse people across gender and sexuality spectrums. We focus our efforts on supporting those who face the most barriers and have least access to relevant services. This includes people who identify as women, girls, trans, genderqueer, non-binary, and 2SLGBTQI+.

In response to the pandemic, the Canadian Women's Foundation launched the Tireless Together Fund: a national emergency fund to provide critical support to women and girls through the COVID-19 crisis. It will help vital services to reach women and girls now and continue to support them in the coming months.

Those who wish to contribute can do so online at canadianwomen.org/covid-19. Funds raised are flexible, designed to be used by service providers in every province and territory to meet greatest needs, and ensure programs at risk of closure and interruption can continue.

To learn more, visit canadianwomen.org, sign up for the [e-newsletter](#), and read the [blog](#). Follow the Foundation on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#).

Editor's Note: When referring to the Canadian Women's Foundation, please use the full name. Please do not abbreviate or use acronyms.