



Written Submission for the Pre-Budget Consultations in Advance of the Upcoming Federal Budget

By Canadian Women's Foundation

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 \$130 million to fund over 2,500 programs across the country. The Foundation has been a successful and trusted partner of the federal government during the COVID pandemic, efficiently disbursing over \$94 million to women's organizations across the country.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Enhance and Expand Gender Equality Support

Invest \$20 million over 3 years in the Canadian Women's Foundation to:

- Build a thriving women's and gender equality sector through funding, capacity building, convening, and policy and advocacy work prioritizing marginalized women, girls, and gender diverse people facing systemic discrimination.
 - Sustain momentum and ensure supports for women and gender diverse people in rural, remote and northern communities and strengthen capacity to advocate for culture change.
 - Engage youth as leaders and include youth voices and perspectives to ensure culture change for an equitable future.

Invest in \$125 million in WAGE to:

- Build capacity of the women's and gender equality sector by renewing and extending the Capacity Building funding stream with an investment of \$125 million over 5 years.

Continue Essential Gender Equality Initiatives

Invest in a Permanent Investment Readiness Program & a Feminist Finance Fund Intermediary

- Make the Investment Readiness Program permanent and include the Canadian Women's Foundation as an Investment Readiness partner with a \$5 million annual investment in the Foundation's program.
- Support the Canadian Women's Foundation to convene creation of a Feminist Finance Fund intermediary for the Social Finance Fund.

Continue Essential Transformative Gender Equality Initiatives

Looking ahead to Budget 2023, the Canadian Women’s Foundation, while maintaining our role as a national leader in gender equality, recognizes that the current global economic environment is a demanding one for consideration of investments. Yet, this is exactly the kind of moment when investments in women’s well-being, and economic participation and leadership, and particularly those most marginalized by systemic discrimination, are critical to economic growth, recovery, and social stability.

The Canadian Women’s Foundation supports continuation of the government’s work towards gender equality, strengthening its commitments to these essential transformative initiatives:

- **National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence**

Advancing gender equality requires ending violence against women, trans, and non-binary people, centring those who are most impacted, particularly First Nations, Métis, and Inuit women and girls. For over a decade, anti-violence experts have called on the government to implement a National Action Plan on violence against women and gender-based violence, and have provided [a road map with clear recommendations](#) for the plan. The Canadian Women’s Foundation is encouraged by the commitments in federal budget 2022 and the continuing development work with the provinces and territories. We support the government’s prioritization of sector sustainability, centering those who are most marginalized by systemic discrimination, and violence prevention.

We look forward to a robust plan, reflecting a strong intersectional gender analysis, that builds over time and includes specific timelines, targets, and disaggregated data collection on impact. We encourage the federal government to ensure that the plans created by the provinces and territories are created in consultation with anti-violence experts and are robust, covering the full spectrum of violence that women, trans, and non-binary people experience. Such a plan has the potential to contribute to a necessary culture shift away from the endemic violence diverse women, trans, and non-binary people experience daily, to safety and gender equality.

- **Affordable National Child Care**

The Canadian Women’s Foundation supports the urgent need to address the workforce crisis in child care expressed by Child Care Now in their [letter](#) of July 8, 2022 to Federal-Provincial-Territorial ministers including “a comprehensive transition strategy, supported by sufficient public funding, to raise wages, and to put in place decent pensions and employment benefits.”¹ Given the similarity of the situation across Canada, we encourage the federal government to “work collaboratively on systemic solutions that could be supported by the new federal early learning and child care secretariat.”² Also, we agree that “the transfer of early learning and child care must respect First Nations, Métis and Inuit rights and jurisdiction, including – but not limited to – fulfilling the distinctions in the Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Frameworks.”³

- **2SLGBTQ+ Communities**

The Foundation welcomes the release of the first National 2SLGBTQ+ Action Plan—a milestone

for queer, trans, and Two Spirit people throughout Canada. The promised \$100 million investment in 2SLGBTQ+-led organizations is an important public policy shift following years of underfunding. While the Action Plan sets important priorities related to 2SLGBTQ+ rights, Indigenous resilience and resurgence, data and evidence-based policy, and culture change towards more inclusive communities, we see a notable lack of investment specific to addressing gender-based violence as experienced by 2SLGBTQ+ people, which our recent research tells us is significant and on the rise.⁴ Additional, long-term investments are required in anti-violence and anti-hate with a specific 2SLGBTQ+ focus.

- **Investment Readiness Program & Social Finance Fund**

Through two iterations of the Investment Readiness Program (IRP), the Foundation has created a highly effective program building organizational skills, capacity and effective practices of women serving and led SPOs in different stages of investment readiness. The IRP itself has proven an excellent approach to increasing awareness of and participation in social innovation and the social finance (SI/SF) ecosystem, allowing the Foundation to reach organizations serving women and gender diverse people with multiple barriers to social and economic inclusion which are underrepresented in the SI/SF ecosystem.

This work should continue to support and strengthen communities. The Foundation is well positioned and ready to convene organizations for development of a community-designed and led entrepreneurial Feminist Finance Fund intermediary able to increase access to the Social Finance Fund for women and gender diverse people, in particular those from Black, First Nations, Métis, Inuit and racialized communities.

Enhance and Expand Gender Equality Support

The core of our ask to government at this time is to support permanent culture change for gender equality through investments in WAGE and in the Canadian Women's Foundation. Now is not the time to back away from gender equality as a priority for this government. In fact, this is exactly the moment to strengthen the commitment, under the Confidence and Supply Agreement with the NDP, to shape the future of gender equality in this country.

Fostering culture change is essential to achieving gender equality. The Canadian Women's Foundation, a national leader in the movement for gender equality, focused on funding, research, advocacy, and knowledge sharing, has been in the forefront of advancing culture change for decades. Since the early 1990s, the Foundation has helped shift Canada from a culture of silence around gender-based violence (GBV), to one of awareness, education, addressing harms and investing in prevention and safety. Our work on economic empowerment, the gender pay gap and pay equity has helped shift culture around gender, work, and women's roles in society. Our viral [Signal for Help campaign](#) is shifting culture by exposing the prevalence of gender-based violence and providing everyone with access to tools to recognize and respond to it in their daily lives. The federal government has contributed to shifting culture with initiatives such as the introduction of gender-based budget analysis, the creation of Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE), and gender parity in cabinet.

Promoting and advancing culture change requires supporting and investing in movements and organizations, combined with advocacy to change laws and government policies. Securing it

long term requires reaching youth with education that changes hearts, minds and awareness. Backed by a broad, inspiring vision of change, culture change work must also be evidence-based and grounded in relevant data, including lived experience.

To advance culture change towards gender equality and gender justice, accurate disaggregated data is needed. The most recent available data on the non-profit sector—including the number and geographic distribution of non-profit organizations, their areas of activity, and populations served—is nearly 20 years old and does not include specifics about organizations serving women and gender diverse people. We support Statistics Canada investing to gather data on the size and scope of the women’s and gender justice sector and its capacity to address the needs of those who are most marginalized, including disaggregated data on First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people; Black and racialized people; disabled people; young people; elderly people; those living on low incomes; migrant and precarious status people; 2SLGBTQ+ people. We welcome the opportunity to provide input in this area.

- **Build a Thriving Women’s and Gender Equality Sector**

Canada’s women’s and gender equality sector has achieved significant cultural shifts, from inclusion of women in the *Charter of Rights* to founding a national system of women’s shelters responding to gender-based violence. The sector’s critical role supporting communities became crucial during the pandemic. Despite confirmation that the sector and its services, workers, and advocacy are essential to maintaining our health, well-being and safety, and to our economy and prosperity, it is still expected to provide life-saving services and produce transformative change with limited resources while facing significant barriers: a lack of organizational capacity and sustainability, an underpaid and overworked workforce, and inequitable and inflexible funding.

With gender justice under threat, only an adequately resourced and strengthened sector can ensure that women and gender diverse populations do not continue to face vulnerabilities and setbacks. A stable, thriving sector can fully support women, children, and gender diverse people in their communities. With long term sustainability, the rich assortment of gender equality organizations - including those providing advocacy, research, education, legal reform, and policy - would foster vibrant communities across Canada.

- **Include Youth Voices to Generate Culture Shifts**

Reaching youth is key to securing a culture shift toward intersectional gender equality. In the past year the Canadian Women’s Foundation stretched resources to:

- Support First Nation, Métis and Inuit youth to survey their peers on their experiences during the COVID pandemic and produce a report on their findings
- Support Black and racialized young women (15-20) working to combat and prevent sexual assault in schools
- Establish a new inclusive Youth Advisory Committee to inform our work with the perspectives of young women and gender non-binary youth.

- **Advance Gender Equality in Rural, Remote, and Northern (RRN) Canada**

Through WAGE funding, the Foundation has increased multi-year funding and capacity building support for RRN organizations over the last three years. We have convened roundtables and peer learning circles for RRN service providers and advocates and provided

grants to address emerging and urgent issues as part of our ongoing efforts to ensure that women and gender diverse people have equitable access to services and to build momentum for culture change across all regions. Our current partnership with the MakeWay Foundation has resulted in the creation of a dynamic Northern Women and Girls Advisory Committee, with representatives from Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Nunavik, and Nunatsiavut. We require ongoing investment to continue this work.

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 - Sustain momentum and ensure supports for women and gender diverse people in rural, remote and northern communities and strengthening capacity to advocate for culture change.
 - Engage youth as leaders and include youth voices and perspectives to ensure culture change for an equitable future.

¹ Child Care Now, [Open letter to Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers with primary responsibility for early learning and child care](#), July 8 2022.

² Child Care Now, [Open letter to Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers with primary responsibility for early learning and child care](#), July 8 2022.

³ Child Care Now, [Open letter to Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers with primary responsibility for early learning and child care](#), July 8 2022.

⁴ Canadian Women’s Foundation & Wisdom2Action (2022). Queering Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response in Canada. https://fw3s926r0g42i6kes3bxg4i1-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/QueeringGBVPrevention-and-Response_English.pdf