



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 and Canada's public foundation for gender justice and equality. We advance this by growing support for grassroots feminist action, partnering with communities and organizations to improve conditions, and building diverse leadership and knowledge for sustainable change. Since 1991, our generous donors and supporters have contributed more than \$185 million to fund over 3,000 life-transforming programs throughout Canada.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Invest in our Northern Strategy for Women, Girls and Gender Diverse People

- \$10 million over 3 years to the Canadian Women's Foundation to provide, in partnership with corporate and private funders, flexible and sustainable grants in the Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, and Nunatsiavut to local grassroots organizations, programs and initiatives that serve women, girls, and gender-diverse people to support entrepreneurship and self-employment, skills, training, and increased workforce participation.

Invest in the Investment Readiness Program

- \$10 million annual investment to the Canadian Women's Foundation as an Investment Readiness Partner through extending the Investment Readiness Program to match the full 10 years of the Social Finance Fund.

Support a Feminist Finance Fund Intermediary

- Support the Canadian Women's Foundation to convene creation of a Feminist Finance Fund as an emerging intermediary for the Social Finance Fund.
- Invest in the remaining recommendations identified by the Government of Canada's Social Innovation and Social Finance Strategy Co-Creation Steering Group.

Close the Gender Gap in Emergency Preparedness

- \$5 million over 3 years to the Canadian Women's Foundation to convene a Gender & Disaster Network working with academic and practitioner partners and to create an online Gender & Disaster resource hub and mobilize knowledge transfer, informed by the work of *Gender & Disaster Australia*.

Apply an Intersectional Gender Lens to the Climate Crisis and Adaptation

- \$3 million over 3 years to the Canadian Women’s Foundation to convene development of an intersectional gender and climate crisis lens and adaptation strategy guidance for the non-profit, social service, and health sectors and to mobilize knowledge transfer.

Invest in our Youth Strategy

- \$1.5 million over 3 years to the Canadian Women’s Foundation to program and fund innovative and youth-led initiatives.

Explore a Gender Justice Sustainability Fund

- The Canadian Women’s Foundation encourages the federal government to engage in an exploratory discussion about creating an external long-term sustainability fund for women’s and gender justice organizations in Canada, convened by a national, domestically focused organization or organizations.

The Canadian Women’s Foundation supports the following recommendations advanced by partner organizations:

Women’s Shelters Canada:

National Action Plan to End Gender-based Violence

- Additional investment of \$600 million or more over the next 4 years in Canada’s National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence for the development and implementation of the federal components, actions, and responsibilities.
- Establish and fund an independent oversight body to act as an accountability mechanism to monitor and report on the implementation of the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence.

The Non-Profit Sector Federal Budget Coalition:

Federal Funding Reform

- Shift from one-time funding to multi-year funding agreements
- Allow greater flexibility in how funds are used, including flexibility for accommodations
- Index nonprofit sector funding to inflation
- Cover all costs, including equity and accessibility measures, associated with delivery of a funded project
- Include representatives from diverse nonprofits in decision-making processes about funding processes and policies.

Permanent Non-profit Secretariat

- Create a permanent Non-Profit Secretariat in the federal government with a strong policy capacity.

Canada faces an uncertain recovery and the challenges exposed during the pandemic remain. Broader stresses around health care, climate change and equality of economic opportunity continue to require attention and action. Heavy residual impacts of the pandemic have left a strained and woefully understaffed health care system. The frequency of extreme climate events is increasing rapidly, with pollution from wildfires impacting downwind across Canada and well beyond. While wages lag, particularly in many women-majority sectors, price hikes on life essentials such as food and housing have been followed by increases in interest rates and the cost of living.¹ Women and gender diverse people, especially those most marginalized, continue to feel these pressures disproportionately.

The Canadian Women's Foundation is a valued federal government partner on women's and gender equality, delivering on key government objectives, co-hosting national and international events, and informing policy. Our collaboration on pandemic initiatives ensured emergency funds quickly reached struggling organizations and communities.

The Canadian Women's Foundation recommends that Federal Budget 2024 include specific and targeted investments in key tools and approaches - guided by an intersectional gender lens - that will work to enhance stability for women, girls, youth and gender diverse people from First Nation, Métis, Inuit, Black, racialized, migrant and 2SLGBTQ communities and/or with disabilities and strengthen gender justice over the long term.

Enhancing Stability with the Economy in Flux

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

The Foundation's highly effective Investment Readiness Program (IRP) reaches organizations led by and serving women and gender diverse people who face multiple barriers to social and economic inclusion, those most at risk in the current economic conditions. Our IRP builds organizational skills, capacity, and effective practices, while supporting the Foundation to engage communities underrepresented in the social innovation/social finance ecosystem such as First Nations, Métis, Inuit, Black, racialized, and 2SLGBTQ communities.

- **Social Finance Fund**

The Foundation has initiated research toward convening organizations interested in a community-designed and led Feminist Finance Fund intermediary that would support access to the Social Finance Fund for women and gender diverse people, in particular those from marginalized communities.

- **Northern Strategy**

The Foundation's Northern Strategy is a transformative project focused on achieving justice for women and gender-diverse individuals in the geographically challenging and underserved northern territories and provincial areas of Inuit Nunangat, which often face isolation and limited resources. Our dedicated strategy - guided by a Northern Women and Girls Advisory Committee with representatives from the Yukon, the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, and Nunatsiavut - engages directly with communities, fostering meaningful relationships and gaining insights from our grantees. High-touch engagement ensures that skills and knowledge are connected to and informed by local communities. Our economic development programming aims to foster entrepreneurship and self-employment, enhance skills, provide training in the skilled trades and technology, and increase workforce participation for women, girls, Two Spirit, trans, and non-binary people.

- **Intersectional Youth Strategy**

The Canadian Women's Foundation engages youth through our inclusive national Youth Advisory Committee, our Teen Healthy Relationships (anti-violence) program, grants through our Girl's Fund, and the Building the Field initiative. From the Signal for Help Art Campaign to youth participation in strategic planning, our Youth Engagement Strategy, developed by the Youth Advisory Committee, informs our work. Our March 2023 Youth Summit in Ottawa gathered together 60 young women and gender diverse youth engaged in grassroots organizations and gender justice movements from across the country. Teen Healthy Relationships supports youth hubs in the Atlantic, Quebec and nationally for First Nation, Métis, and Inuit youth. Our Girls' Fund is piloting new transformative work on mental health in the face of racism or ableism. These innovative and youth-led initiatives are rich with possibility and urgently need support.

Gaps in Federal Policy Related to Women and Gender

There are two areas where current federal policy does not adequately address issues for women in Canada. It is time to correct these gaps in emergency preparedness and in climate justice domestically.

- **Gender Gap in Emergency Preparedness**

Women and gender diverse people who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination are disproportionately unsafe during disasters, and disproportionately worse off in their aftermath. This reality makes it essential to apply Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) to disaster and emergency preparedness work.

New research commissioned by the Canadian Women's Foundation² documents that despite the federal commitment to apply GBA+ government-wide, it is consistently absent from emergency planning processes of not only the federal government, but provincial, territorial, and municipal governments as well.

This gap is particularly dangerous as the nonprofit sector is without surge capacity. Community-based organizations cannot absorb the service demand that results from disasters and emergencies affecting entire communities. As frequency of local and large-scale disasters rises, this gap becomes increasingly critical.

The Canadian Women's Foundation urges the federal government to ensure ministries and other federal bodies tasked with for Canada's emergency preparedness and disaster management apply a GBA+ analysis to their work, planning and advisories, and advocate for provinces and territories to do so as well. Working with feminist emergency preparedness practitioners, the Foundation has created Service Continuity Guidelines for agencies working on gender-based violence. We are working with the Canadian Municipal Network on Crime Prevention to create GBA+ guidance for municipal hazard, risk, and vulnerability assessments and are eager to collaborate with the federal government to make GBA+ in emergency planning a reality.

- **Gender Lens on Climate Justice**

Work on gendered impacts of climate change in Canada has lagged behind both the pace of climate change and work on global gender impacts in Canada and around the world. Emerging research is now identifying gendered impacts in Canada - though this remains minimal for historically marginalized communities of women - and demonstrating how climate change is exacerbating inequalities between women and men.³ The federal government must apply an

intersectional gender lens, which takes impacts on women, trans and non-binary people into account and includes adaptation support for the women's and gender justice sector, on all government climate change plans and initiatives, with a priority on federal government plans and initiatives.

Fragile Gender Justice and Non-Profit Sector

Amid a gender-based violence epidemic, accelerating reliance on food banks and an intractable housing crisis, organizations that serve women and gender-diverse people continue to lead innovative and timely responses. Dependent on partial and irregular funding through an unpredictable combination of individual donations, corporate gifts, and project grants, these vital organizations are facing staff burnout, desperate communities, and unstable funding. While the sector welcomed the increase in Women's Program funds committed in federal budget 2023, greater investment is needed and time-limited project funds cannot, in the long term, build stable, sustainable organizations.

- **Gender Justice Sustainability Fund**

Gender justice cannot be achieved in Canada without the work of women's and gender justice organizations to address root causes, advocate for systemic change and meet community needs. Organizations need lasting, sustainable operational funding that is flexible, predictable, and long term to support women, girls and gender diverse people from First Nation, Métis, Inuit, Black, racialized, migrant and 2SLGBTQ communities and/or with disabilities. A well-managed, well-endowed, external Gender Justice Sustainability Fund could provide that for women's and gender justice organizations in Canada. The Canadian Women's Foundation encourages the federal government to engage in an exploratory discussion with national, domestically focused organizations.

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

Consistent with growing recognition of the gender-based violence pandemic, the Canadian Women's Foundation urgently supports recommendations from our partner, Women's Shelters Canada, enhancing development of the National Action Plan through major investments in at the federal level and establishment of an independent oversight body.

- **Federal Funding Reform**

The non-profit sector needs funding reform. With little federal operational funding available, project-based funding can fail to cover all costs associated with a project. As an active member of Imagine Canada that works on gender justice with an equity lens, the Canadian Women's Foundation supports the recommendations of the Non-Profit Sector Federal Budget Coalition on Federal Funding Reform.

- **A Home for the Non-Profit sector in the Federal Government**

The Canadian Women's Foundation supports the recommendation of the Non-Profit Sector Federal Budget Coalition to create a stable, long-term home for the nonprofit sector in the federal government. A secretariat with a strong policy capacity could support a transformation of federal funding practices and policies.

¹ Statistics Canada, [The Daily](#), 2023

² Jean Slick, [Recognition of the Gender Impacts of Disasters](#), Canadian Women's Foundation 2022

³ L. Williams et al, [Women and Climate Change Impacts and Action in Canada Feminist, Indigenous, and Intersectional Perspectives](#), CRIAW, 2018