



CANADIAN CENTER
FOR WOMEN'S
EMPOWERMENT

CENTRE CANADIEN
POUR L'AUTONOMISATION
DES FEMMES

Federal Budget 2022 Statement by Canadian Centre for Women's Empowerment

The Canadian Centre for Women's Empowerment is the only Canadian national non for profit organization, based in Ottawa, dedicated to addressing Economic Abuse and injustice through advocacy, education, research, and economic empowerment, and policy change. We bring research, evaluation, practice, lived experience, and theory to inform critical thinking and enhance the field's knowledge to better serve survivors and their families.

In 2021, the Government of Canada under the Ministry of Women and Gender Equality and Youth (WAGE) provided funding to CCFWE. **This was the first time the Canadian government-funded an initiative specifically addressing Economic Abuse.** The funds have been used for research and the creation of the National Task Force for Women's Economic Justice which will assist in the development of resources and policy recommendations to advocate for the prevention of economic abuse as well as break down the systemic barriers that exist in order to assist survivors in regaining their financial independence.

We are pleased to comment on Budget 2022.

Looking back ten years ago the Status of Women Canada (SWC) had a mission to advance equality for women, focusing its efforts in three priority areas: increasing women's economic security and prosperity; ending violence against women and girls; and encouraging women's leadership and decision-making roles. Back then it had an estimated budgetary expenditure of only \$29.4 million for 2012-13. Last year the budget was estimated to be \$125 million, thankfully, the government made adjustments to assist in coping with the added challenges to vulnerable Canadians presented by Covid-19. As a result the government increased spending to \$236 million for WAGE. **The budget estimates \$310.3 million will be needed for the Department for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, however, the expenditure should match the economic cost of the problem in order to eliminate it, therefore, should be \$9.3 billion¹. Until the government makes a serious investment they will continue to have an economic loss of \$9 billion annually with negative impacts on the lives of vulnerable Canadians.**

¹ <https://www.in2013dollars.com/canada/inflation/2009>

Budget 2022 will offer some help to vulnerable Canadians in several ways with the following investments and legislative changes;

1. \$50 million over 2 years for Black Community Initiatives for inclusiveness.
2. \$600 million over 5 years started in 2021 to create the *National Action Plan to End GBV*.
3. \$ 539.3 million over 5 years starting in 2022 to implement the *NAP to End GBV* and enhance services and supports to prevent GBV in collaboration with provinces and territories (adding to the \$600M).
4. Amendments to the *Income Tax Act* to allow a charity to provide its resources to organizations that are not qualified donees, provided that the charity meets certain requirements designed to ensure accountability. This should boost charitable spending in communities starting in the fiscal year 2023.
5. \$227.6 million over two years, starting in 2022-23, to maintain trauma-informed, culturally-appropriate, Indigenous-led services to improve mental wellness, and to support efforts initiated through Budget 202.
6. \$1.5 billion over two years, starting in 2022-23, to extend the Rapid Housing Initiative hopes to create at least 6,000 new affordable housing units, with at least 25 per cent of funding going towards women-focused housing projects.
7. \$475 million for a round of one-time, direct payments of \$500 to Canadians facing “housing affordability challenges”.
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9. \$5.3 billion for households with an income of less than \$70,000 annually should have basic dental care for children under 12 in 2022 and for children under 18 by 2023 followed by \$1.7 billion annually.
10. \$4 billion for affordable housing and \$4 billion for Indigenous housing.
11. \$25 million for the Menstrual Equity Fund for free menstrual products for those in need.

Sadly, at this time, there appears to be no statement that the government will make legislative changes to the Divorce Act or the criminal code regarding the addition of Economic Abuse under the definition of Domestic Violence. Countries like Australia and the UK have made this legislative change. We will continue to advocate for this change in order to move closer to preventing GBV.

Overall, we applaud the government for their investments to help vulnerable Canadians however, **there is significant work to be accomplished and funding in this area needs to match the economic cost of domestic violence.** According to Cohen (2005) “the cost of crime” is equivalent to the “benefit of reducing crime”, which in turn is tantamount to “the monetary amount that society would be willing to spend to prevent a criminal incident from occurring”. When we look at the true cost of domestic violence

of which 94% also experience Economic Abuse, the cost in Canada in 2009 was estimated at \$7.4 billion². The United States estimated the cost in 2011 to be \$6.9 billion³ in USD (converted to 2017 USD would be \$9.3 billion⁴). Below is a table from a Justice Canada report contained in the Summary of Results. *Table 6.1 below presents a summary of all economic impacts in the report. The total economic impact of spousal violence in 2009 in Canada is estimated at \$7,420,301,324 (\$7.4 billion). Figure 6.1 presents the breakdown of costs by who bears the impact.*

Table 6.1: Costs of Spousal Violence, 2009 (\$'000)

| | Violence against females | | Violence against males | Total |
|--|--------------------------|--|------------------------|--------------------|
| Criminal Justice System | \$271,965 | | \$48,102 | \$320,067 |
| Civil Justice System | \$182,257 | | \$42,860 | \$225,118 |
| Total | \$454,222 | | \$90,963 | \$545,185 |
| Victim Health Care | \$8,160 | | \$12,766 | \$20,926 |
| Victim Mental Health Issues | \$146,868 | | \$32,613 | \$179,482 |
| Victim Productivity Losses | \$37,126 | | \$16,240 | \$53,365 |
| Victim Other Personal Costs | \$211,865 | | \$59,397 | \$271,262 |
| Intangible Costs | \$3,290,720 | | \$2,169,480 | \$5,460,200 |
| Total | \$3,694,739 | | \$2,290,496 | \$5,985,235 |
| 3rd party Funeral Expenses | \$1,023 | | \$426 | \$1,449 |

² https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cj-jp/fv-vf/rr12_7/p1.html

³ Fact sheet written by Gladys McLean and Sarah Gonzalez Bocinski, supported by Grant No. 2014-TA-AX-K433 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice.

⁴ Varcoe et al. (2011) in 2017 dollars

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| | Violence against females | Violence against males | Total |
|--|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| Loss of Affection/Enjoyment to Family Members | \$26,268 | \$10,902 | \$37,170 |
| Costs to Other Persons Harmed/threatened | \$9,047 | \$2,199 | \$11,246 |
| Social Service Operating Costs | \$353,039 | \$57,556 | \$410,596 |
| Losses to Employers | \$52,123 | \$25,795 | \$77,919 |
| Negative Impact on Children Exposed to SV | \$153,242 | \$82,000 | \$235,242 |
| Other Government Expenditures | \$96,270 | \$19,990 | \$116,260 |
| Total | \$691,013 | \$198,869 | \$889,882 |
| Total Costs | \$4,839,974 | \$2,580,328 | \$7,420,301 |

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⁵ https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cj-jp/fv-vf/rr12_7/p1.html