



# Federal Budget 2023 Statement by Canadian Center for Women's Empowerment

**Ottawa, March 28, 2023.** The Canadian Center for Women's Empowerment (CCFWE) is the only national non-profit organization dedicated to empowering survivors of all forms of Economic Abuse (economic control, economic exploitation, and employment sabotage). The CCFWE seeks to offer valuable feedback on the **2023 Federal Budget** with regards to three key areas: gender equality, gender-based violence, and the difficulties that victims and survivors of economic abuse encounter. Our organization recognizes the importance of addressing these critical issues in the budget, as they have a significant impact on the well-being and safety of women across Canada. By providing feedback on these topics, we hope to contribute to a budget that reflects the needs and concerns of all Canadians, particularly those from marginalized and vulnerable communities.

## Renewed funding for women's and equality-seeking organizations

Since 2015, the federal government committed to enhancing women's and gender equality. It launched its Gender-Based Violence Strategy and created a \$100 million Feminist Response and Recovery Fund to increase the capacity of women's and equality-seeking organizations, including CCFWE.

With the support of this funding, CCFWE was able to raise awareness about the prevalent issue of Economic Abuse and to advocate for systematic change in responding to Economic Abuse. CCFWE has made significant strides in tackling the issue of economic abuse in Canada. Notably, it conducted the first-of-its-kind research studies on the nature and prevalence of economic abuse in the Canadian context, and organized the inaugural Canadian summit on economic abuse. Building on this momentum, CCFWE recently launched the Canadian Economic Abuse Screening Tool (EAST), which marks a critical step in identifying and addressing economic abuse. Additionally, the organization is set to release the STEAR Mobile App, which will provide victim-survivors of economic abuse with the necessary resources to rebuild their lives. These achievements demonstrate CCFWE's unwavering commitment to promoting economic justice and empowering those affected by economic abuse.

The successful completion of this vital work was made possible thanks to the funding received from the federal government. Over the past five years, the same fund has facilitated the implementation of more than 275 similar projects across Canada. This highlights the significant role played by the government in supporting initiatives that are geared towards improving the lives of Canadians.

In times of economic recession, inflation, and increasing backlashes against women's rights and gender-diverse people, CCFWE believes that funding women's and gender equity organizations to be more important than ever.

**Therefore, CCFWE applauds the federal government for renewing funding for women's and gender equity organizations through its Women's Program. As Black-led organization, CCFWE also welcomes the federal government's focus on Indigenous women, women with disabilities, members of the 2SLGBTQI+ communities, and newcomer, Black, racialized, and migrant women.**

### **1. Economic justice and economic equity**

Amid the pandemic, incidents of domestic violence have surged, and CCFWE's research study has found a corresponding increase in cases of Economic Abuse. Many survivors of abuse cite a lack of financial resources as a significant obstacle to leaving their abusive relationships. Therefore, providing financial support to women and their children to cover basic necessities as they flee abusive situations is critical.

CCFWE is encouraged to hear that women labour force participation is at an all time high with 85.7% labour force as of February 2023 and that the federal government commits to making child care and dental care for children affordable from coast to coast.

**While CCFWE welcomes financial support to low-income and vulnerable Canadians in the form of e.g. increased GST and a one-time grocery rebate. CCFWE is concerned however that this won't be enough to tackle systematic challenges that many low-income households and particularly women-led households are currently facing. CCFWE therefore urges the federal government to address critical policy gaps that are preventing survivors from recovering and becoming economically secure and independent.**

### **2. Increased safe and affordable housing for women fleeing abuse**

The CCFWE expressed their appreciation to the Canadian Government for recognizing housing as a fundamental human right for all Canadians, as evidenced by the National Housing Strategy Act. For far too long, women, especially those from marginalized and gender-diverse groups, have encountered systemic obstacles to accessing safe and affordable housing, including homelessness, prejudice, and financial constraints. This announcement is a crucial step towards addressing these long-standing issues and ensuring that all individuals have access to secure and affordable housing.

CCFWE was further encouraged by the federal government's commitment in the 2022 budget to additional funding for housing, particularly reinvestment in the Rapid Housing Initiative, dedicating 25 percent of investments toward women-focused housing projects. Funding has been slow, however, while women fleeing abusive relationships and gender-diverse people continue to struggle to find safe and affordable homes. According to Statistics Canada, about

1,000 women and children across Canada are being turned away from shelters daily due to overcapacity.

With the current rate of inflation, rising food prices and skyrocketing rent, victim-survivors are more likely to remain or return to abusive relationships if they find themselves unable to secure housing for themselves and their children.

While last year's budget had a strong focus on housing, the current budget mostly recognizes Canada's housing affordability crisis, but falls short on providing urgently needed measures to address it.

**CCFWE calls on the federal government to ensure that the federal budget includes funding that reflects its commitment to realizing the right to housing for all Canadians, including the most vulnerable. The National Housing Strategy needs to prioritize the needs of women, their children, and gender-diverse people, so that no one is left behind.**

**CCFWE does welcome however the federal government's commitment of \$ 4 billion over 5 years for Indigenous Housing strategy.**

**As part of the Pan-Canadian Voice for Women's Housing (PCVWH), CCFWE also fully supports PCVWH's calls to action to address the inequities in access to safe, affordable, appropriate housing for women, their children, and gender-diverse people in all communities across Canada.**

### **3. Funding for Black, Indigenous and other racialized communities**

In a recent study on criminalized black women's experience of IPV in Canada, [Duhaney \(2021\)](#) highlights the structural barriers of sexism, racism, immigration status, and lack of financial resources that hinder Black women from leaving abusive relationships.

According to CCFWE's research study conducted in 2021, survivors of colour who are essential workers are facing a disproportionately high risk of food and housing insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic. Shockingly, the study found that survivors of colour are nearly twice as likely to experience high economic insecurity during the pandemic compared to their white counterparts. These alarming findings highlight the intersectionality of racial inequality and the pandemic's impact on vulnerable communities.

CCFWE welcomes the federal government's commitment to fight hate, racism and harassment in the public sphere but also within the public sector. CCFWE is encouraged by measures to implement an Action Plan to Combat Hate, an Anti-Racism Strategy and the creation of an Equity and Inclusion Secretariat to ensure that all federal government policies include an intersectional approach and address barriers to racial equity and inclusion in policy proposals.

**CCFWE urges the federal government to include the voices of women, Black, Indigenous and other racialized communities, seniors, gender-diverse people, immigrants and newcomers as well as persons with disabilities in the development of these new measures.**

### **About the Canadian Center for Women's Empowerment (CCFWE)**

The Canadian Center for Women's Empowerment (CCFWE) is the only Canadian national non for profit organization based in Ottawa dedicated to addressing Economic Abuse and injustice through advocacy, education, research, economic empowerment, and policy change.

CCFWE works collaboratively with organizations and individuals to develop a comprehensive approach that enables domestic violence survivors to recover from Economic Abuse. It also addresses critical policy gaps preventing survivors from recovering and becoming economically secure and independent.

#### **Contact**

Michaela Mayer  
Director of Policy, CCFWE  
[michaela.m@ccfwe.org](mailto:michaela.m@ccfwe.org)  
514-619-6414

Meseret Haileyesus  
Executive Director, CCFWE  
[mesi.haileyesus@ccfwe.org](mailto:mesi.haileyesus@ccfwe.org)