



YWCA
C A N A D A

NATIONAL ADVOCACY.
COMMUNITY ACTION.
UNE VOIX NATIONALE.
DES ACTIONS LOCALES.

Federal Budget 2025

Written Submission to the
House of Commons Standing
Committee on Finance

August 2nd 2024



RECOMMENDATIONS

1 END ANTI-INDIGENOUS RACISM AND VIOLENCE AGAINST INDIGENOUS WOMEN, GIRLS AND TWO-SPIRIT PEOPLE THROUGH:

- a) Fully implement the Calls to Action in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report.
- b) Fully implement the Calls for Justice in the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry Report.
- c) Fully implement the recommendations of the Standing Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples' Missing Records, Missing Children Report.

2 END THE GENDERED HOUSING CRISIS THROUGH:

- a) Dedicated funding for women's shelters, transitional housing and permanent affordable housing for women, gender diverse people and their families.
- b) Adequately funding the core operations of women's domestic violence shelters.

3 END GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE THROUGH:

- a) Dedicated investment toward the implementation of a nationally-coordinated, survivor-centric, comprehensive 10-year National Action Plan to end gender-based violence.
- b) The creation of an emergency, direct payment to survivors of gender-based violence to allow them to escape unsafe situations on an urgent basis.

4 ADVANCE ECONOMIC EQUITY THROUGH:

- a) Investing dedicated skills training, job placement programs and workforce development for women.
- b) Investing in dedicated skills training, job placement programs and workforce development for youth.

5 INVEST IN CARERS TO STRENGTHEN CANADA'S ECONOMY THROUGH:

- a) Supporting the community services sector and its workforce through the implementation of the recommendations of the Coalition of National Service Federations.

INTRODUCTION

For over 150 years, YWCA Canada has worked in communities across Canada to advance gender equality.

YWCA Canada represents member associations across nine provinces and two territories, whose programs and services ensure that women, girls and gender diverse people experiencing abuse, poverty, and homelessness can access services when and where they need them most. YWCA Canada is the largest operator of emergency shelters for women, the largest provider of employment services and counseling services to women and the second-largest provider of childcare in Canada.

With an organizational vision of empowered women and girls in a safe and equitable society, we know that stability, prosperity and fairness for all are only possible when people are able to live, work and rest free from threats to their survival. Achieving this goal requires feminist investments to ensure thriving communities, a strong economy and sustainable futures for all who call Canada home.

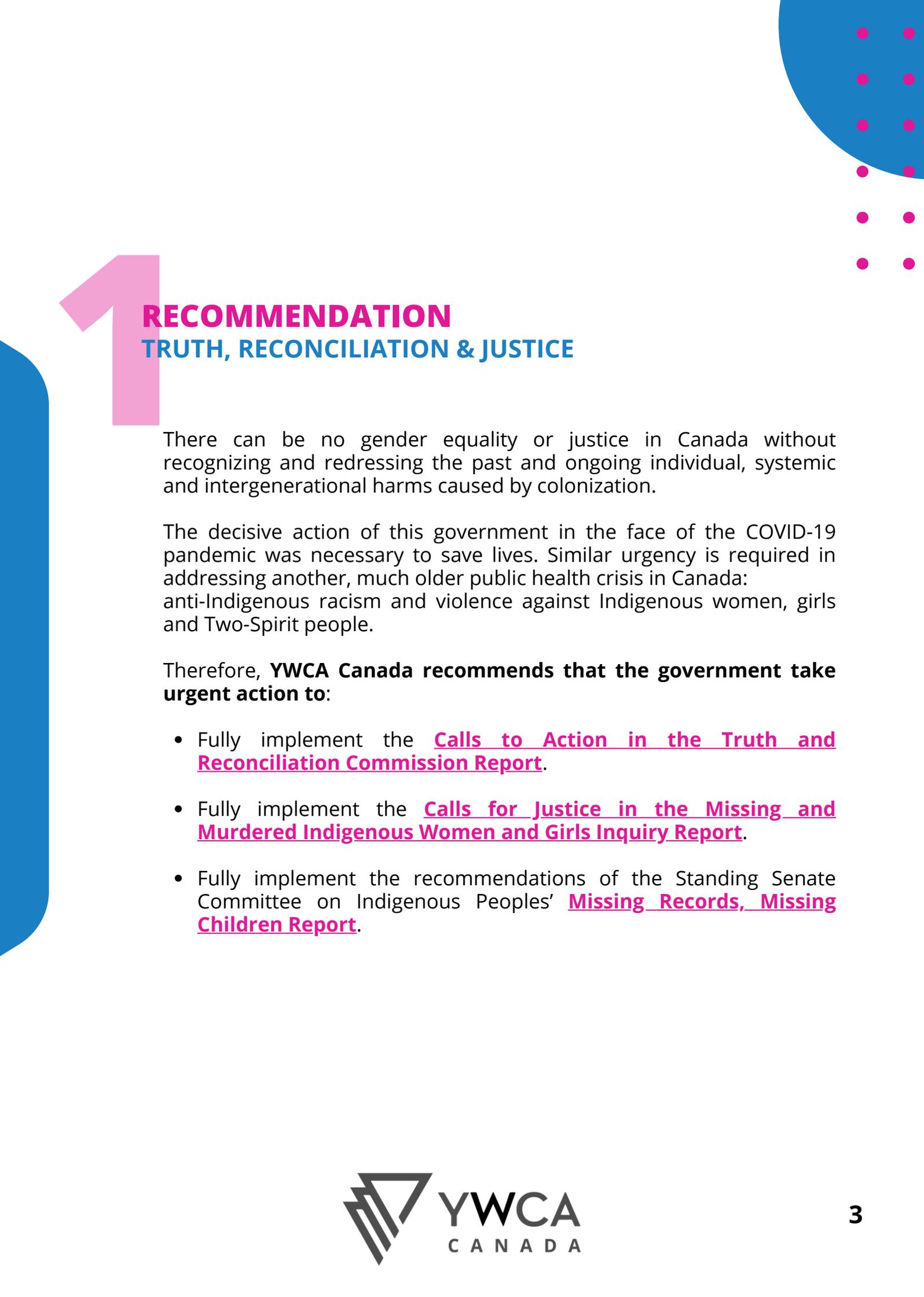
YWCA Canada welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance's pre-budget consultations in advance of the 2025 federal budget. We would be pleased to further discuss our recommendations and can be contacted directly.

Contact

Amanda Arella

Director, Public Policy, Advocacy & Strategic Communications
YWCA Canada
437.997.0992
aarella@ywcacanada.ca





1 RECOMMENDATION TRUTH, RECONCILIATION & JUSTICE

There can be no gender equality or justice in Canada without recognizing and redressing the past and ongoing individual, systemic and intergenerational harms caused by colonization.

The decisive action of this government in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic was necessary to save lives. Similar urgency is required in addressing another, much older public health crisis in Canada: anti-Indigenous racism and violence against Indigenous women, girls and Two-Spirit people.

Therefore, **YWCA Canada recommends that the government take urgent action to:**

- Fully implement the [Calls to Action in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report](#).
- Fully implement the [Calls for Justice in the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry Report](#).
- Fully implement the recommendations of the Standing Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples' [Missing Records, Missing Children Report](#).

2

RECOMMENDATION END THE GENDERED HOUSING CRISIS

Despite significant government investment, the intensity and urgency of Canada's housing crisis persists, disproportionately impacting women. For too many women, home is either unsafe or non-existent. One quarter of women-led, single-parent households are in **core housing need**. Domestic violence shelters are stretched beyond capacity and **turn away nearly 1000 women and their children every night** due to lack of space.

Shelters and transitional housing are essential, lifesaving social infrastructure. Across the country, the landscape in which shelters and transitional houses operate is one of increasing desperation: shelters operating over capacity. Months- and years-long waitlists for affordable housing units. Overburdened frontline staff forced to make impossible choices about whose life will be most at risk if they are turned away.

YWCA's are at the forefront of meeting the housing needs of women, gender diverse people and their children, particularly those fleeing situations of violence and those who face the most complex barriers to accessing housing—the very people whose housing needs must be prioritized the government's commitment to the progressive realization of the right to housing.

In addition to our shelters and transitional housing, YWCA's provide permanent, affordable homes to women and gender-diverse people leaving situations of violence, chronic homelessness, or poverty. Shelters, transitional housing and permanent affordable housing exist along a continuum: without permanent, affordable housing to move into, shelters and transitional houses are overburdened as the only available option, even if survivors are ready to move on in their healing journey.

Across the country, YWCA's are ready and able to expand shelters and transitional housing and build and operate more permanent affordable housing but are lacking the funds to do so. To keep the women and gender diverse people we serve housed, we must provide permanent housing at a deep level of affordability and with necessary wraparound services and supports. The calculation is simple: addressing the multifaceted barriers that prevent women and gender diverse people from accessing safe and affordable housing means that YWCA's are not able to repay loans for construction costs or cover operational costs through rents.

Therefore, **YWCA Canada recommends:**

- Dedicated funding for women's shelters, transitional housing and permanent affordable housing for women, gender diverse people and their families.
- Adequately funding the operations of women's domestic violence shelters.

3 RECOMMENDATION

END GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Gender-based violence is on the rise, with national sexual assault rates now at the highest in Canada since 1996. Canada's largest city has declared gender-based and intimate partner violence an epidemic.

We welcomed introduction of Canada's National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence (NAP). The \$539.3 million over five years set aside in Budget 2022 for provinces and territories to enhance their efforts to prevent gender-based violence is an important first step toward meaningfully addressing gender-based violence.

Urgent and more significant investment is needed to meaningfully address the scale of this crisis. The NAP will only be successful if it creates systemic change and addresses the root causes of gender-based violence. We know this will require action, oversight and coordination at the federal level in parallel with the work being done by provinces and territories. This includes meaningful investment in the federal Gender-based Violence Strategy to enable a whole-of-government approach to ending gender-based violence.

YWCA Canada engaged in extensive stakeholder with survivors on how they can best be supported. Survivors clearly articulated the need for upfront, material government support. YWCA Canada heard from survivors that not having enough money was one of the primary reasons they stayed in abusive situations.

To meet this urgent and unmet need, in July 2022, YWCA Canada in partnership with twelve of our member associations launched the National Emergency Survivor Support Fund (the NESS Fund). This initiative provides women, gender diverse people and their families with immediate financial support to leave unsafe homes or emergency shelters and begin their healing journeys.

Our experience delivering the NESS Fund has highlighted the need for federal government leadership in delivering this program. In the first year of the NESS Fund, we have seen requests for support far beyond what any single non-profit or charity can provide. We have also received many requests outside our twelve catchment areas. Financial support must be uniformly accessible, rapid and available to all survivors. Furthermore, the provision of this support must be designed with the increased costs and complexities of transportation and accessing services for survivors in rural, remote and Northern communities in mind.

Therefore, **YWCA Canada recommends:**

- Dedicated investment toward the development and implementation of the federal components, actions, and responsibilities of the National Action Plan to end gender-based violence, and continued investment to provinces and territories for the provincial and territorial components, actions and responsibilities.
- The creation of an emergency fund for one-time payments to survivors of gender-based violence to allow them to escape unsafe situations on an urgent basis.

4 RECOMMENDATION

ADVANCING ECONOMIC EQUITY

When women work, economies grow. When women break cycles of poverty, generations profit. As described by one graduate of a [YWCA Canada reskilling program](#), “a full-time income empowers women beyond being able to pay the bills. I now have the freedom to support my family and provide them with financial stability”.

1.9 million women, age 18 and up, [live on a low income](#) in Canada. The highest unemployment rate in Canada, 9.6%, is [experienced by racialized women](#). The World Economic Forum has stated that it would take [217 years](#) for disparities in pay and employment opportunities between men and women to end.

The Standing Committee on the Status of Women [identified specialized training programs and access to re-skilling and upskilling programs](#) for women as a pathway to bolstering women’s economic empowerment and participation in the labour force. Such programs require flexibility and innovation to meet the needs of women and ensure success.

Youth unemployment is on the rise, with [Statistics Canada](#) reporting that the overall unemployment rate for youth aged 15 to 24 rose 0.9 percentage points to 13.5% in June— the highest rate since September 2014 (outside of 2020 and 2021 during the pandemic). Programs such as the Youth Employment and Skills Strategy Program and the Canada Summer Jobs program support Canadian youth in gaining skills and experience they need to enter and succeed in the job market.

Therefore, **YWCA Canada recommends:**

- Investing in dedicated skills training, job placement programs and workforce development for women.
- Investing in dedicated skills training, job placement programs and workforce development for youth.

5

RECOMMENDATION

STRENGTHEN CANADA'S ECONOMY BY INVESTING IN CARERS

Investing in care work supports workers, the communities they serve, and Canada as a whole. The care economy and community services sectors are essential in supporting the overall Canadian economy. Due to the gendered nature of care work, it is underfunded and undervalued. 77% of workers in the charitable sector are women. Moreover, paid care work tends to be done by Black, racialized and immigrant women.

As such, **we also endorse the recommendations of the Coalition of National Service Federations Joint Budget Submission to:**

- Developing a Community Services Sector Labour Force Strategy, joining leading nonprofit and charitable sector organizations and private foundations to co-develop an all hands-on deck strategy to recruit and retain workers to future proof care and support a strong economy.
- Recruiting Talent for the Community Service Sector:
 - By creating and promoting job opportunities in the sector. There are opportunities to support these efforts through investments and scaling of existing programs such as Canada Summer Jobs.
 - By Supporting skills training and workforce development. This includes investing in skills training and workforce development in the sector, particularly for youth and newcomers, to better equip staff to meet future care needs in Canada. There are opportunities to support this effort through investments and scaling of existing programs such as the Sectoral Workforce Solutions Program which could provide micro-credentialing and training opportunities.
- Enabling the retention of talent in the sector:
 - By exploring the implementation of a tax credit for workers in the care economy, inclusive of workers in the community services sector.
 - By reducing the precarity of employment in the sector through stable, longer-term funding agreements, without delays between agreements.
- Evaluating progress, including collecting and analyzing data about demographic shifts, service demand and the sector's workforce capacity to enable adaptive service planning to support communities today and into the future.