

Supporting Women

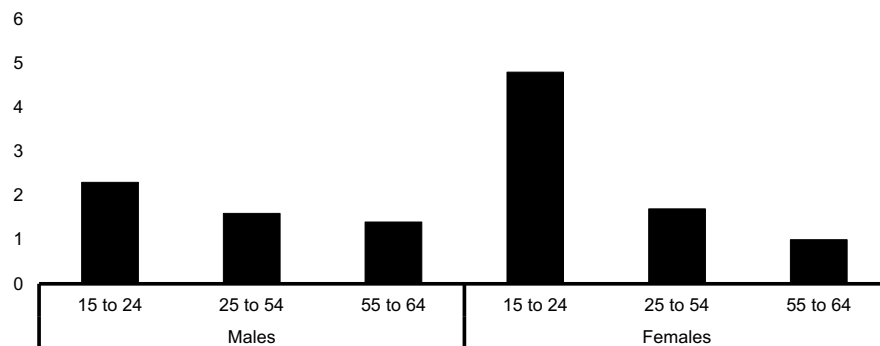
BACKGROUND

BUDGET
2021

COVID-19 has affected all Canadians, but women have been disproportionately affected. In the labour market, women were hit earlier and harder, and their jobs continue to recover more slowly. Long-standing gender inequities have only been amplified over the course of the pandemic—and it has put decades of hard-fought gains for women in the workplace at risk. Today, more than 16,000 women have dropped out of the labour force completely, while the male labour force has grown by 91,000. This is a she-cession.

Change in the Unemployment Rate, by Age and Sex, February 2020 to March 2021

percentage points



Source: Statistics Canada.

The work of creating a more inclusive, sustainable, feminist, and resilient economy that values women's work will take time. The government will continue its progress to build a feminist, intersectional Action Plan for Women in the Economy that will work to push past systemic barriers and inequities, for good. This will create an economy that works for everyone and build a stronger middle class.

Budget 2021 proposes investments to support women's health, and lays out an expansive jobs and growth plan that is very much a feminist plan. It seeks to build a recovery that gives all women in Canada the ability to fully participate in our economy.

Establishing a Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care System

Budget 2021 makes a generational investment to build a Canada-wide early learning and child care system. This is a plan to drive economic growth, a plan to increase women's participation in the workforce, and a plan to offer each child in Canada the best start in life. This plan will aim to reduce fees for parents with children in regulated child care by 50 per cent on average, by 2022, with a goal of reaching \$10 per day on average by 2026, everywhere outside of Quebec. Budget 2021 will invest almost \$30 billion over the next five years and provide permanent ongoing funding, working with provincial and territorial, and Indigenous partners to support quality, not-for-profit child care, and ensuring the needs of early childhood educators are at the heart of the system.

For more information, please see the Early Learning and Child Care Backgrounder.

Supporting Women Entrepreneurs

Canadian women entrepreneurs are important to Canada's economic success, but women still face unique and systemic barriers to starting and growing a business, and they remain underrepresented in the economy. The pandemic has disproportionately impacted women and the government is committed to supporting Canadian women entrepreneurs.

- To provide affordable financing, increase data, and strengthen capacity within the entrepreneurship ecosystem, Budget 2021 proposes to provide up to \$146.9 million over four years, starting in 2021-22, to strengthen the Women Entrepreneurship Strategy. Women entrepreneurs would have greater access to financing, mentorship, and training. Funding would also further support the Women Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Fund and the Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub.
- The government will work with financial institutions to develop a voluntary code to help support the inclusion of women and other underrepresented entrepreneurs as clients in the financial sector.

Strengthening Diversity in Corporate Governance

To foster inclusivity in the financial sector and ensure Canada's financial institutions are responding to changing social and economic conditions:

- Budget 2021 proposes a public consultation on measures that would adapt and apply the *Canada Business Corporations Act* diversity requirements to federally regulated financial institutions. This objective is to promote greater gender, racial, ethnic, and Indigenous diversity among senior ranks of the financial sector, and ensure more Canadians have access to these opportunities. Details on the consultation will be announced in the near future.

In addition, Budget 2021 proposes that Crown corporations will be required to implement gender and diversity reporting, starting in 2022.

Creating New Opportunities for Skilled Tradespeople

- The skilled trades are vital to our economy, and apprenticeships are the bridge that help skilled workers, especially young people starting their careers, connect with businesses and find well-paying jobs. Budget 2021 proposes to provide \$470 million over three years, beginning in 2021-22, to establish a new Apprenticeship Service. The Apprenticeship Service would help 55,000 first-year apprentices in construction and manufacturing Red Seal trades connect with opportunities at small- and medium-sized employers.

In addition, to boost diversity in the construction and manufacturing Red Seal trades, this incentive will be doubled to \$10,000 for employers who hire those underrepresented, including women, racialized Canadians, and persons with disabilities.

Advancing a National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence

The Government of Canada is committed to building a country free of gender-based violence. Gender-based violence costs women and gender-diverse people their lives. It has profound effects on children. And according to estimates, Canadians collectively spend billions annually to deal with the aftermath.

The government—in consultation with provinces, territories, municipalities, Indigenous peoples, gender-based violence experts, stakeholders, and, most importantly, survivors of gender-based violence—is moving forward on developing a National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence, focusing on ensuring that anyone facing gender-based violence has reliable and timely access to protection and services, no matter where they live.

- Budget 2021 proposes to invest \$601.3 million over five years, starting in 2021-22, to advance towards a new National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence, which will include support to:
 - Enhance the capacity and responsiveness of gender-based violence organizations, including women's shelters and sexual assault centres;
 - Make our communities more resilient to the threats of gender-based violence through the government's Gender-Based Violence Program;
 - Establish a dedicated secretariat to coordinate the ongoing work towards the development and implementation of the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence;
 - Assist crisis hotlines that are experiencing a rise in call volumes during the pandemic; and

- Bolster the capacity of Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ organizations to provide gender-based violence prevention programming aimed at addressing the root causes of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.
- Budget 2021 also proposes to provide \$236.2 million over five years, starting in 2021-22, and \$33.5 million per year ongoing, to the Department of National Defence and Veterans Affairs Canada, including \$158.5 million over 5 years, and \$29.9 million per year ongoing funded from existing resources, to expand their work to eliminate sexual misconduct and gender-based violence in the military and support survivors.

Responding to the Tragedy of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

The government is accelerating work on the National Action Plan in response to the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls' Calls for Justice and the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.

Budget 2021 lays out a plan that will build on progress and remain accountable to communities, families, and survivors across Canada.

To end the national tragedy of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, a new approach is needed—one that addresses the root causes of violence, that recognizes the scope of the problem, and one that factors in the different experiences of Indigenous peoples from coast-to-coast-to-coast. This work is anchored in four interconnected thematic areas from the national inquiry: culture, health and wellness, human security and safety, and justice.

Budget 2021 proposes to invest an additional \$2.2 billion over five years, beginning in 2021-22, and \$160.9 million ongoing, to help build a safer, stronger, and more inclusive society.

This investment would:

- support the preservation, restoration, and promotion of culture and language;
- foster health systems free from racism and discrimination where Indigenous peoples are respected and safe;
- support culturally responsive policing and community safety services in Indigenous communities;
- improve access to justice for Indigenous peoples and support the development of an Indigenous justice strategy to address systemic discrimination and the overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in the justice system;
- enhance support for Indigenous women's and 2SLGBTQQIA+ organizations; and
- work with Indigenous partners to ensure that appropriate monitoring mechanisms are in place to measure progress and to keep the government accountable, now and in the future.

More Affordable Housing

As part of the \$2.5 billion in additional funding and \$1.3 billion in reallocated funding to support affordable housing, Budget 2021 proposes:

- \$1.5 billion for the Rapid Housing Initiative to address the urgent housing needs of vulnerable Canadians by providing them with adequate affordable housing in short order. At least 25 per cent of this funding would go towards women-focused housing projects.
- \$315.4 million through the Canada Housing Benefit, to increase direct financial assistance for low-income women and children fleeing violence to help with their rent payments.
- \$250 million in reallocated funding to support the construction, repair, and operating costs of an estimated 560 units of transitional housing and shelter spaces for women and children fleeing violence.

For more information, please see the Housing Backgrounder.

Supporting Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health Care Information and Services

All Canadians should have access to a full suite of sexual and reproductive health resources and services, no matter where they live. To improve access to sexual and reproductive health care support, information, and services—including protecting access to abortion care:

- Budget 2021 proposes to provide \$45 million to fund community-based organizations that help make sexual and reproductive health care information and services more accessible for vulnerable populations. These organizations support activities such as producing inclusive training materials for sexual and reproductive health care providers, carrying out public awareness activities, and providing travel and logistical support to individuals who have to go long distances to access abortion care.

In addition, there are currently no existing resources that collect comprehensive data on a wide range of sexual and reproductive health indicators in Canada, limiting our ability to target supports. To address this:

- Budget 2021 proposes to provide \$7.6 million to develop and implement a national survey on sexual and reproductive health that captures data on race, household income, and sexual orientation—information often not captured in existing surveys. Better information will help ensure governments understand the challenges and improve the support they provide.

Establishing a National Institute for Women's Health Research

Sex- and gender-related disparities continue to persist in Canada's health system. Women are more likely to die of preventable illnesses and bear a higher burden of chronic illnesses. To improve health outcomes and eliminate the gaps in the quality of care women receive, we need to strengthen research.

- Budget 2021 proposes to provide \$20 million over five years, starting in 2021-22, to support a new National Institute for Women's Health Research. The new institute will advance a coordinated research program that addresses under-researched and high-priority areas of women's health and ensure new evidence improves women's care and health outcomes. It will also ensure an intersectional approach to research and care to tackle persistent gaps for all women, including for racialized women, Black and Indigenous women, women with disabilities, and members of LGBTQ2 communities.

Better Data for Better Outcomes

For every Canadian to reach their full potential, we need to properly understand the circumstances in which people live and the barriers they face. We cannot improve what we cannot measure.

Journalists and researchers have long worked to tell the stories of where and why disparities in our society exist—whether among racialized groups or the power gap that exists between men and women that leads women's careers to stall. Better disaggregated data will mean that investigative efforts or research projects like this will have more and better data to analyze.

- Budget 2021 proposes to provide \$172 million over five years, starting in 2021-22, with \$36.3 million ongoing, to Statistics Canada to implement a Disaggregated Data Action Plan that will fill data and knowledge gaps. This funding will support more representative data collection, enhance statistics on diverse populations, and support the government's, and society's, efforts to address systemic racism, gender gaps—including the power gaps between men and women—and bring fairness and inclusion considerations into decision making.