

November 20, 2025

CFUW Budget 2025 Statement

The "Canada Strong" Budget 2025 was unveiled on November 4th, 2025. The federal government has described this budget as a "generational budget," referencing the challenges facing Canada. The most significant investments in this budget are for defence, housing, and infrastructure.

CFUW welcomes the funding for the Department of Women and Gender Equality Canada, as included in Budget 2025, particularly since this is an issue we have advocated for.

In August 2025, CFUW President Linda Sestock wrote to the Right Honourable Prime Minister Carney to express concern about the scheduled end of certain funds to the Department of Women and Gender Equality, representing an 81% decrease over three years. CFUW's letter to the Prime Minister noted that:

"The projected reduction in spending 2027-2028 is of particular concern when gender-based violence is rising, misogyny is intensifying, and we are witnessing a rolling back of equitable rights internationally. Many organizations are already stretched to their limits. Canadians rely on the organizations that WAGE funds to provide programming that acts as a lifeline. The proposed cuts would reduce services for people fleeing abuse, weaken support for gender-diverse and 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals, force small local organizations to lay off staff or shut down, and eliminate essential programs that communities across Canada rely on."

The government announced increased ongoing funding of \$660.5 million over five years, including:

- \$382.5 million over five years, with \$76.5 million ongoing, to renew funding for the Women's Program, in support of the women's equality sector.
- \$54.6 million over five years, with \$10.9 million ongoing, to renew funding for the 2SLGBTQIA+ programming.
- \$223.4 million over five years, with \$44.7 million ongoing, to strengthen federal action in response to gender-based violence (GBV).
- Budget 2025 recognizes the value of protecting the essential mandates that some organizations have in delivering frontline services and social programs: "The Department for Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) empowers women and 2SLGBTQIA+ people through programs to eliminate discrimination and advance the rights of women

and 2SLGBTQI+ communities. To support WAGE in continuing this critical work, its annual savings target is being set at two per cent of its review base" (Government of Canada 2025, p.212).

Budget 2025 commits to funding for WAGE with scheduled ends. We will monitor the situation to see if WAGE will find itself in a similar position in a few years, at the end of their scheduled funding. Frontline service organizations deserve clarity and certainty regarding their funding, as it enables them to be better prepared and enhances their ability to deliver essential services and programs to Canadians.

The federal government should give similar priority to investment in social infrastructure as it does to investment in housing and infrastructure. The two must co-exist. The 2025 Budget falls short in key areas, including childcare and gender-based violence. On the issue of childcare, Morna Ballantyne, Executive Director of Child Care Now, notes that while Budget 2025 promises to protect affordable childcare for the 900,000 children who now have access, "The federal government's decision to hold child care transfer payments to provinces and territories at previously announced levels means hundreds of thousands of families will be denied access to the publicly funded Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) program." Ballantyne also notes that the absence of increased investments in childcare puts the CWELCC program's viability at risk. Childcare providers are facing increases in operational costs and an exodus of qualified early childhood educators who leave the sector in search of better-paying work.

Canadians are facing an affordability crisis. Investing in childcare is essential to provide relief for families who are already struggling to make ends meet. Investing in childcare is also crucial for progress for gender equality, as the shortfalls of childcare accessibility and affordability are often felt by women, with consequences to their careers, earning ability, and pensions. As the Canadian Women's Foundation noted in their Budget 2025 Statement, "women's access to the workforce – through affordable childcare and removing other barriers – is essential to building a strong economy. When women thrive, Canada thrives."

On the topic of gender-based violence (GBV), it is regrettable that there were no explicit mentions of sexual violence in Budget 2025. The Ending Sexual Violence Association of Canada stated that the omission of sexual violence prevention is of particular concern as due to the levels of GBV in Canada and "in light of the well-documented, disproportionate impacts of sexual violence on Indigenous and racialized women, newcomers and refugees, and people with disabilities, all of whom already face systemic barriers to safety, justice, and housing. The absence raises serious questions about whether GBV investments will reach sexual violence organizations or address the systemic barriers they continue to face." Additionally, no new

funding has been allocated to sustain federal transfers to the National Action Plan to End GBV beyond March 2027.

CFUW welcomes the explicit recognition of economic abuse in Budget 2025, along with the introduction of a new Code of Conduct for the Prevention of Economic Abuse for federally regulated banks.

For the first time in Canadian history, economic abuse and financial abuse are explicitly named in a federal budget. This is a significant step forward in acknowledging and addressing this pervasive form of gender-based violence.