

Toronto, ON — April 20, 2021.

YWCA Toronto applauds the federal government for prioritizing national child care in its 2021 budget plan and for putting forth investments that will support a feminist recovery. A \$30 billion investment over five years to create a system that will allow parents access to affordable child care will be a game changer for the women who left the workforce when COVID-19 shuttered schools and daycares. A publicly funded daycare system will also pave the way for better working conditions for chronically undervalued Early Childhood Education workers and care workers, many of whom are racialized women.

“As Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland said in her budget speech, this is not only good feminist policy, it is smart economic policy,” says YWCA Toronto Chief Executive Officer Heather McGregor. “We urge our provincial government to be a collaborative partner in building out the infrastructure required to make this ambitious, necessary vision a reality.”

The federal budget also includes some notable investments for employment, housing, income security and gender-based violence. That 40% of the \$960 million for skilled workers will go toward women, racialized and Indigenous communities is a promising sign that this government is serious about investing in jobs for women. We are also pleased to see a continuation of the National Housing Strategy gender target and that a quarter of the additional \$1.5 billion for the Rapid Housing Initiative this coming year will be put towards women-focused housing projects.

We are happy that the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence received \$600 million more in funding, and hopeful that it will soon be unveiled as the transformative roadmap to change it needs to be. The \$400 million for not-for-profits upon which our communities depend for crucial services will help us do the work that we do every day.

The budget document also included a promise to introduce legislation that will implement a \$15 minimum wage for the federally regulated private sector. This is necessary for income security in a country that has allowed precarious work to become the norm. Investments in Black-led community initiatives is a good start, but should be built upon with more funding as needed throughout the year to meet ongoing need.

Income security, child care, housing, safety from violence, racial justice – these intersectional issues impact so many facets of our community and form the basis of our work at YWCA Toronto. The 13,000 women, girls and gender diverse people we serve need solid supports so they can build safe, happy and fulfilling lives. Budget 2021 gives us hope and a much-needed chance to celebrate. After this week comes the hard work in holding governments to account to ensure these promises are kept.

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