



What will it take to end gender-based violence in Canada?

Preliminary Findings on a National Action Plan on Violence Against Women and Gender-Based Violence

What it will take is the federal government to lead the way with bold, ambitious, intersectional investment.

Women's Shelters Canada was asked and funded by the department of Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) to develop a strategic engagement with anti-violence leaders across Canada to inform the development of a National Action Plan (NAP) on Violence Against Women (VAW) and Gender-Based Violence (GBV).

Our final report will be submitted to WAGE on April 30, 2021.

What We've Found

Federal Budget 2021-22 cannot be built without the central consideration of [escalating gender-based violence in Canada](#).

Job #1: Make good on [election platform promises](#) of **\$30 million** to develop a National Action Plan: This money is not for consultations or small projects. **This money is to establish and oversee the 10-year action plan the Canadian electorate was promised.**

Job #2: Ensure **\$250 million** is earmarked for ongoing emergency COVID-19 related GBV response while the NAP proper gets started.

Job #3: Fund a diverse and sustainable women's movement by answering the Canadian Women's Foundation's call for **\$400 million** in funding for ongoing, long-term operational funding to women-serving agencies and equity-seeking organizations.

We are here to help build a National Action Plan on VAW/GBV that will survive successive governments and end GBV in Canada. But this interim report and the final one delivered at the end of April is NOT that plan.

National Action Plans are a state responsibility.

The populations most affected by inaction are those with the highest risk of gender-based violence: People living in rural and remote areas. Indigenous people. Black people. People with disabilities. People of colour. Gender non-conforming and trans people. LGBTQ+ people. Migrant people. The needs of these populations must be at the centre of the National Action Plan.

Our report will begin the job of reframing out-dated recommendations in light of old realities not accounted for and new realities in the current context. It will offer a preliminary glance of the kinds of short-, medium-, and long-term recommendations that can be actioned through an arm's length process, funded by government.

In our preliminary review of over 650 recommendations on VAW given to government over the last decade, we uncovered a lot of unknowns:

1. We do not have the full accounting from all levels of government on what is currently spent on VAW/GBV.
2. The true cost of violence is hard to measure in human terms, in dollars, and in what it takes for good public policy to move the needle forward. We need to work together longer to make this happen.
3. Countries that have National Action Plans fund structures outside government to oversee the plan's roll out. What would be a made-in-Canada response to this global best practice?

If the federal government is serious about getting at the intersectional and escalating nature of VAW/GBV, then:

- systemic problems need systemic solutions
- international standards need to be adhered to
- a multigenerational problem requires a multigenerational set of solutions
- annual investment hereafter needs to be sustainable and escalating over the ten-year period: it will be billions, not millions

In addition to the \$30 million to establish a planning, implementation, and accountability structure, we need a sustainable and escalating annual amount (**\$650 million** for 2021/22) for violence-related measures, including:

- emergency COVID mitigation (\$250 million)
- prevention, education, and attitude change
- justice and policing reform, which includes resource redistribution
- stabilization of supports for survivors and their families
- changes to systems that perpetuate and maintain the conditions for violence not covered elsewhere in the budget, or where significant coordination is required to make an investment elsewhere responsive to GBV

Again, in the years to come: **It will be billions, not millions.**

We did our work in less than three months. However, getting at the mass of violence beneath the tip of the iceberg cannot be done so quickly.

What we do know is:

6.3 million women and girls in Canada will experience sexual violence or intimate partner violence in her lifetime, according to [World Health Organization](#) estimates.

[Every 2.5 days](#), a woman or girl is killed in Canada.
In 2020 alone, [160 women and girls](#) were violently killed here.
In 2021, 7 were killed in 7 weeks in both [British Columbia](#) and [Quebec](#).

Indigenous women and girls are still disappearing and being killed.

Despite the increasing number of daily headlines about femicide, misogynist attacks, and gender-based assault, abuse, and cyberbullying – plus countless stories unseen, untold – various policies and pieces of legislation undertaken by governments have failed to significantly lower the levels of violence experienced by women, girls, and gender-diverse people in Canada.

No comprehensive NAP or national legislation has been pursued in Canada to date.

We have provided successive governments with expert knowledge, findings, experiences, best practices, international models, and blueprints for a bold, ambitious, intersectional NAP.

We tabled the [Case for a NAP](#) in 2013.
In 2015, we issued a Call for a NAP and crafted a [Blueprint](#).
In 2020, we released a [Reissued Call for a NAP](#).

In April 2021, we will be offering a 10-year framework that takes this effort to the next level.

What it will take now is the federal government to lead the way with bold, ambitious, intersectional investment.

We define violence against women (VAW) and gender-based violence (GBV) as inclusive of cis women, trans women, and people of all marginalized genders, including Two-Spirit, trans, and non-binary people.