

Building a National Narrative

A SELECT REVIEW OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE POLICIES, LEGISLATION,
AND SERVICES ACROSS CANADA



**WOMEN'S
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Against Women



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Women's Shelters Canada (WSC), headquartered in Ottawa, brings together 16 provincial and territorial shelter organizations. We represent a strong, unified voice on the issue of violence against women on the national stage. Through collaboration, knowledge exchange, and adoption of innovative practices, we advance the coordination and implementation of high-quality services for women and children accessing shelters.

Women's Shelters Canada acknowledges that the location of our office and the work that we do in Ottawa is on the traditional, unceded territories of the Algonquin Anishnaabeg people.

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Background and Objective of Review

This document aims to provide a cross-jurisdictional comparison of key legislation and service provision to highlight the variations and gaps across the country.ⁱ To create a desk review, Women’s Shelters Canada (WSC) began mapping out the terrain, based on information available online, that survivors of violence against women (VAW) must navigate to rebuild their lives. This exercise was much more challenging than initially anticipated. The lack of accessible information and data on government websites makes finding current and reliable information extremely difficult.

Since its initial creation,ⁱⁱ this document has served as a tool for multiple provincial and territorial advocates to highlight the progress and shortcomings of their respective governments compared to others across the country. The 2025 update of *Building a National Narrative* celebrates the progress made since 2019 as a result of this advocacy. At the same time, this report continues to emphasize a lack of consistency in policies and benefits across the country which contributes to differing survivor outcomes and experiences based on postal code. It is in part because of these varying levels of services and protection that WSC and many gender-based violence (GBV) organizations have strongly advocated for a bold, robust, well-resourced, and intersectional National Action Plan (NAP) on VAW and GBV.

NAPs are critical frameworks for coordinating efforts and maximizing resources to address VAW.¹ The United Nations (UN) called on all countries to have a NAP by 2015. NAPs establish national standards and call for collaboration between all levels of government, civil society, survivors, and service responders.

Women’s Shelters Canada commends the federal government for committing to the [10-year National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence](#) (NAP on GBV) in November 2022 and signing bilateral agreements with all provinces and territories by the end of year 2023. Specific financial contributions to the NAP were included in [Budgets 2021 and 2022](#), totalling \$539 million.

We continue to work to ensure that Canada’s NAP on GBV reflects the expansiveness of our country, the importance of policies and practices that respond to the intersections in women’s lives, and the needs of those marginalized by systems and society. In addition, spending on the NAP on GBV must be transparent; a strong accountability infrastructure informed by experts from the anti-violence sector needs to be present.

Despite the NAP on GBV, provincial and territorial governments continue to develop and implement VAW response systems independently, based on differing definitions of and

ⁱ This is a living document. Tables will be updated as changes occur across provinces and territories.

ⁱⁱ The first National Narrative document was written in 2018, with updates in 2019, 2021, and 2022.

approaches to violence. This is done without reliable, generalizable data or clear oversight by and accountability to the federal government. The implications of this fragmented and discretionary approach include:

- a missed opportunity to capture and disseminate knowledge and best practices;
- a poor understanding of anti-violence work that often results in guidelines and levels of support not corresponding to the actual needs or range of services offered;
- significant variances in funding; and
- a climate not conducive to working toward, monitoring, and achieving lasting change.

Context of VAW in Canada

Since the creation of this document in 2018, the context of VAW in Canada has drastically shifted due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its lasting effects. The pandemic forced women into unprecedented levels of isolation and financial distress, and violence rates skyrocketed – a woman is now killed every 48 hours on average.² From 2019 to 2022, the murder of women and girls involving a male accused increased by 27%.³ In 2022 alone, there were 129,876 victims of police-reported family violence. Despite this, 80% of spousal violence is not reported to the police.⁴

Shelters deeply felt the impacts of this phenomenon, called “the shadow pandemic.” Over the lockdown periods, shelters and crisis lines saw a significant increase in calls for help.⁵ Among GBV workers surveyed, 82% noted an increase in the prevalence and severity of GBV, while 34% noted a decrease in the mental health and well-being of survivors.⁶

On a single day in 2023, there were 7,581 women and children staying in shelters across the country primarily because of abuse.⁷ On that same day, 918 women and children were turned away from shelters because they were already operating at maximum capacity.⁸ This number will only grow because of the effects of the housing crisis on victims of abuse and shelters.⁹

These figures tell us that too many women and children in Canada continue to experience alarming rates of violence and that current demands exceed existing resources. However, the issue goes beyond the number of beds available.

Shelters have long been reporting chronic systemic barriers that prevent women from living violence-free lives and hinder shelters from delivering much-needed services. These include poor legislative protections, insufficient social and housing supports, inadequate funding increases, deficient data collection and monitoring, and convoluted and overlapping information. As a result, there have been repeated calls for greater cohesion within and across jurisdictions and sectors to align better the many moving and interconnected parts involved in preventing and responding to VAW.

What This Review Includes

We begin this review by looking at the various provincial and territorial action plans on VAW, followed by an exploration of the action plans on missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls (MMIWG) created in response to the National Inquiry on MMIWG. We then provide information on key aspects of the shelter architecture across the country – the number of VAW shelters receiving government funding, the departments or ministries that provide operational funding to VAW shelters, the maximum length of stay, and the presence of shelter standards.

We proceed with a review of regional domestic homicide review committees, provisions for domestic violence in tenancy acts, provisions for leave from work in cases of domestic violence, and Clare’s and Keira’s Law. Finally, we present legislation regarding the non-consensual distribution of intimate images.

Action Plans on VAW

In June 2017, the Government of Canada announced a [Gender-Based Violence Strategy](#), laying out a federal plan to address GBV. Most provinces and territories have independently implemented some form of action plan or initiative related to VAW and/or GBV since, and many already had some strategy in place before the Canadian government implemented the NAP on GBV. The Federal Gender-Based Violence Strategy is not a NAP, as it only applies to federal entities. It would take five more years of unrelenting advocacy before the implementation of the first Canadian NAP on GBV.

According to the United Nations, a NAP is a key mechanism for countries to coordinate the effective prevention of, and appropriate responses to, all forms of VAW. NAPs “establish a coherent and strategic long-term program of activity that address root causes of VAW, strengthen systems that respond to it (including legal systems), and assign accountability and appropriate resources.”¹⁰

Among the 14 recommendations outlined in the UN Handbook, the UN stipulates that, to be effective, NAPs should:

- recognize women as the primary victims of domestic violence and gender inequality as its root cause;
- involve meaningful participation by community agencies;
- identify adequate budgetary resources;
- ensure consistency among relevant legislation and policies;
- specify data collection and research; and
- include monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.¹¹

In 2013, WSC released [*The Case for a National Action Plan on Violence Against Women*](#). The report's overall finding was that VAW responses have been "largely fragmented," are "often inaccessible," and that many current policies, legislation, and strategies across Canada "lack effective coordination of efforts, conflict with one another, and/or have unintended (negative) consequences."¹² It also noted that several provinces had action plans that provided a promising foundation on which to build a NAP on all forms of VAW.

In November 2022, the federal government announced a NAP on GBV. The NAP is built around five pillars:

1. Support for victims, survivors, and their families;
2. Prevention;
3. Responsive justice system;
4. Implementing Indigenous-led approaches; and
5. Social infrastructure and enabling environment.¹³

So far, the implementation of the NAP has consisted of bilateral funding agreements between the federal government and provincial and territorial governments. While this is a commendable step in the right direction, the execution of the NAP thus far has fallen short of expectations. There is a lack of transparency in the bilateral agreements about how the funding is being used and where the funding will be directed.

At the one-year anniversary of the NAP, WSC released a joint statement endorsed by many feminist organizations regarding accountability: "The gender justice sector has repeatedly asked for greater accountability and transparency including a recommendation in the NAP Roadmap document for an oversight role for GBV/VAW experts. To date, within provinces and territories, expert organizations have, by and large, been left out of negotiations, including priority setting within bilateral agreements. **We also have no clarity on how the NAP will be monitored and evaluated.**"¹⁴

The table below provides links to the provincial and territorial domestic violence (DV) and/or VAW Action Plans (APs), as well as plans that address specific communities or forms of VAW.

Table 1: Federal, Provincial, and Territorial Action Plans, Initiatives, and Strategies on VAW

	Name of VAW or DV AP / Framework / Initiative	APs for Specific Communities / Forms of VAW
Canada	<p><u>Canada’s National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security 2023-2029 (2023)</u></p> <p><u>National Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence (2021)</u></p> <p><u>Federal Gender-Based Violence Strategy (2017)</u></p>	<p><u>Federal 2SLGBTQIA+ Action Plan 2022</u></p> <p><u>National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking (2012)</u></p>
Alberta	<p>No formal plan currently exists</p>	<p><u>Preventing Violence Against Women and Girls Commitment to End Sexual Violence</u></p> <p><u>Human Trafficking Action Plan</u></p> <p><u>Family Violence Hurts Everyone: A Framework to End Family Violence in Alberta (2013)</u></p> <p><u>Alberta’s Plan for Promoting Healthy Relationships and Preventing Bullying (2014)</u></p>
British Columbia	<p><u>Safe and Supported: British Columbia’s Gender-Based Violence Action Plan (2023)</u></p> <p><u>A Vision for a Violence Free BC: Addressing Violence Against Women in British Columbia (2015)</u></p>	<p><u>AccessibleBC: B.C.’s Accessibility Plan for 2022/2023 to 2024/2025 (2023)</u></p> <p><u>TogetherBC: British Columbia’s Poverty Reduction Strategy (2019)</u></p> <p><u>A Pathway to Hope: A Roadmap for Making Mental Health and Addictions Care Better for People in British Columbia (2019)</u></p>

		<p><u>Provincial Domestic Violence Plan (2014)</u></p> <p><u>Together to Reduce Elder Abuse: B.C.'s Strategy (2013)</u></p> <p><u>ERASE (Expect Respect and A Safe Education) Bullying Strategy (2012)</u></p>
Manitoba	<p><u>Manitoba's Framework: Addressing Gender-Based Violence (2020)</u></p>	<p><u>Pathways to a Better Future: Manitoba's Poverty Reduction Strategy (2019)</u></p> <p><u>Improving Access and Coordination of Mental Health and Addiction Services: A Provincial Strategy for all Manitobans (2017)</u></p> <p><u>Safe and Caring Schools: Taking Action Against Bullying (2014)</u></p> <p><u>Manitoba's Multi-year Domestic Violence Prevention Strategy (2012)</u></p> <p><u>Tracia's Trust: Manitoba's Sexual Exploitation Strategy</u></p>
New Brunswick	No formal plan currently exists	<p><u>Preventing and Responding to Sexual Violence in New Brunswick (2018)</u></p> <p><u>New Brunswick Family Plan: Advancing Women's Equality (2017)</u></p>
Newfoundland and Labrador	No formal plan currently exists	<p><u>Poverty Reduction Strategy (2023)</u></p> <p><u>Provincial Strategy for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Newfoundland and Labrador</u></p>

Northwest Territories	No formal plan currently exists	<p><u>A Strategic Framework for Addressing Family Violence in the Northwest Territories (2023)</u></p> <p><u>Coalition Against Family Violence: Strategic Directions in Ending Family Violence in the NWT (2018)</u></p>
Nova Scotia	No formal plan currently exists	<p><u>Nova Scotia Equity & Anti-Racism Strategy (2023)</u></p> <p><u>Standing Together to Prevent Domestic Violence: Building a provincial action plan (2019)</u></p> <p><u>Breaking the Silence: A coordinated response to sexual violence in Nova Scotia (2015)</u></p> <p><u>Domestic Violence Action Plan (2010)</u></p>
Nunavut	No formal plan currently exists	<p><u>Government of Nunavut Family Violence Prevention Framework for Actionⁱⁱⁱ</u></p>
Ontario	<p><u>Ontario-STANDS: Standing Together Against Gender-Based Violence Now Through Decisive Actions, Prevention, Empowerment, and Support (2023)</u></p>	<p><u>Ontario’s Anti-Human Trafficking Strategy, 2020-2025</u></p> <p><u>It’s Never Okay: Action Plan to Stop Sexual Violence and Harassment (2015)</u></p>
Prince Edward Island	<p><u>Strategic Plan 2024-2029</u></p>	<p><u>A Strategy for Preventing and Responding to Adult Sexual Violence in Prince Edward Island (2023)</u></p>

ⁱⁱⁱ The document published by the Nunavut Legislative Assembly states that it is a draft.

		<u>Strategies for Addressing Family Violence in Prince Edward Island (2015)</u>
Quebec	<u>Counteract Sexual Violence and Domestic Violence, and to Rebuild Trust (2022-2027)</u>	<u>Plan d'action spécifique pour prévenir les situations de violence conjugale à haut risque de dangerosité et accroître la sécurité des victimes (2020-2025)</u> <u>Actions prioritaires pour contrer la violence conjugale et les féminicides (2021)</u>
Saskatchewan	No formal plan currently exists	<u>Saskatchewan Sexual Violence Action Plan (2020 update)</u>
Yukon	No formal plan currently exists	<u>Government of Yukon LGBTQ2S+ Inclusion Action Plan (2021)</u> <u>Safe at Home: A Community-Based Action Plan to End and Prevent Homelessness (2017)</u>

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG)

The National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls was established as a response to the alarming rates of violence against Indigenous women across Canada. While Indigenous women only make up 4.3% of the Canadian population, they represent 16% of all female homicide victims and 11% of missing women.¹⁵ They are twice as likely to experience intimate partner violence compared to non-Indigenous women; 56% have suffered physical assault and 46% sexual assault.¹⁶

In its final report, the National Inquiry on MMIWG compiled testimonials from survivors, family members and experts on Indigenous law, human rights, racism, government services, policies, and practices.¹⁷ Based on its findings, the Inquiry made 231 Calls for Justice addressed to governments, industries, institutions, services, partnerships, and all Canadians. They also made Distinctions-Based Calls relating to specific Indigenous communities to reflect their distinct realities, including Inuit, Métis, First Nations, and Indigenous 2SLGBTQIA+ people.¹⁸

The first call urges federal, provincial, territorial, municipal, and Indigenous governments to develop and implement a NAP addressing MMIWG and 2SLGBTQIA+ people.¹⁹ The [MMIWG and 2SLGBTQIA+ People Action Plan](#) was published in 2021 in response to this recommendation, and many provincial and territorial governments have since developed their own. The federal plan includes plans specific to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples.

The Ontario Native Women's Association performed a review of the progress made since the Inquiry. After five years, little has changed, and Indigenous women are still not safe. Inadequate investments to implement the Action Plan and its slow execution have hindered the efforts to counter the violence experienced by Indigenous women.²⁰ Hence, the violence not only continues but keeps increasing in numbers and severity.

Governments, organizations, and settlers alike must actively work toward reconciliation and fulfilling the Calls for Justice, centring and amplifying Indigenous voices to build a safer country for Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQIA+ people.

The following table compiles federal, provincial, and territorial MMIWG Action Plans.

Table 2: Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Action Plans

MMIWG Action Plans	
Canada	<u>2021 Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ People National Action Plan: Ending Violence Against Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ People</u>
Alberta	<u>Alberta Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) Roadmap (2022)</u>
British Columbia	<u>A Path Forward: Priorities and Early Strategies for B.C. (2024 Status Update)</u> <u>Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan (2022)</u>
Manitoba	No formal plan currently exists
New Brunswick	<u>Weaving Our Voices Together: New Brunswick's Path to Safety for Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People (2023)</u>
Newfoundland and Labrador	No formal plan currently exists
Northwest Territories	<u>Action Plan in Response to the Calls for Justice on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People (2021)</u>
Nova Scotia	No formal plan currently exists

Nunavut	<u>Strategic Plan for Inuit Violence Prevention and Healing (2016)</u>
Ontario	<u>Pathways to Safety: Ontario’s Strategy in Response to the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (2021)</u> <u>Indigenous Healing and Wellness Strategy (2021)</u>
Prince Edward Island	No formal plan currently exists
Quebec	<u>Ensemble pour les prochaines générations : plan d’action gouvernemental pour le mieux-être social et culturel des Premières Nations et des Inuit 2022-2027</u>
Saskatchewan	<u>Saskatchewan Response to Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls^{iv}</u>
Yukon	<u>Changing the Story to Upholding Dignity and Justice: Yukon’s Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-spirit+ People Strategy (2020)</u>

^{iv} This document highlights the actions taken by the Saskatchewan Government as a response to MMIWG; it is not an action plan.

Funding

The lack of adequate, transparent, and long-term funding is a central issue across the VAW shelter sector. Funding for women’s shelters is typically funnelled through two distinct streams: capital and operations.^v Operational funding is administered through one or more provincial/territorial departments. Monies are determined by government agencies and/or designated for distinct projects or programs.

The services and programs that ministries fund differ from one province and territory to the next, as do the amounts of funding provided, the types and lengths of agreements, the survivor supports required, accessibility, and guidelines and standards related to admission criteria, length of stay, staff training and remuneration, reporting, legislative compliance, and so on.^{vi} In addition to differences in the shelter service standards across the country, these standards documents can often be difficult for the public to access. This variability and lack of clarity, transparency, and informed decision-making, particularly at the ministerial level, leads to confusion and frustration for those in the shelter sector and interferes with their capacity to carry out their work.

These system gaps translate to out-of-touch, inappropriate, and inadequate service agreements and contracts between shelters and provincial/territorial funders, which negatively impacts workers as well as the women and children they serve. For example, eligibility restrictions or funding holes sometimes reflect a lack of understanding about the actual services shelters offer and the communities they serve. An example of this disconnect is around length of stay maximums. Given the current high demand for shelter space and lack of housing options for survivors, maximum lengths of stay are not realistic for much of the country. Lengths of stay are also different across the country, despite housing issues being similar everywhere (stay lengths are indicated in Table 3 below). This disconnect means that women fleeing violence are not guaranteed the same services and supports from one shelter and jurisdiction to the next.

^v A comprehensive picture of funding schemes in each province and territory is beyond the scope of this review.

^{vi} A criterion of provincial/territorial funding can be abiding by the shelter standards/mandates. These can include requirements on admissions, length of stay, services offered, and organizational policies.

Table 3: Department/Ministry Responsible for Operational Funding, Provincial Length of Stay Standard, and Shelter Service Standards

	Department / Ministry Responsible for Administering Funding to Shelters	Number of VAW Facilities to which Operational Funding is Provided^{vii}	Provincial Length of Stay Standard^{viii}	Shelter Service Standards^{ix}
ISC-funded shelters	Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)	55 shelters, mostly on reserve, including 45 crisis shelters, 4 mixed shelters, 3 second stage shelters, and 3 safe homes	No stipulated length of stay	NACAFV Policies and Procedures Guidelines for Shelters^x
Alberta	Community and Social Services	56 shelters, including 30 crisis shelters, 17 second stage shelters, and 1 elder abuse shelter Additionally, there are 7 ISC-funded shelters in Alberta	21 days	Women’s Shelter Program Manual (Government of Alberta, 2002) and Alberta Council of Women’s Shelters Aspirational Service Standards (2005)
British Columbia	BC Housing	185 shelters, including 79 crisis shelters, 57 second stage shelters, 4 third stage	10 days for safe homes, 30 days for transition	Women’s Transition Housing and Supports Program Framework (2019)

^{vii} These numbers are based on Women’s Shelters Canada’s membership database as of May 2024, as well as confirmed numbers from provincial and territorial associations. ISC-funded shelters are not reflected in the provincial or territorial totals but are listed underneath for reference.

^{viii} These figures have been retrieved from provincial shelter standards documents. Due to lack of safe and affordable housing, extensions and increases in length of stay are regularly given to women across the country.

^{ix} Unlinked titles are documents not available online. These have been provided by provincial and territorial shelter associations.

^x ISC-funded shelters are members of NICAFCV, formerly known as NACAFV. Some of these shelters are also members of provincial associations and thus covered by those standards as well. This document is cited as it is listed on the NICAFCV website as of July 2024.

		shelters, 13 long-term housing projects, and 32 safe homes Additionally, there are 7 ISC-funded shelters in British Columbia	houses, 18 months for second stage housing	
Manitoba	Department of Families	16 shelters, including 12 crisis shelters and 5 second stage shelters Additionally, there are 5 ISC-funded shelters in Manitoba	30 days	Manitoba Standards Manual for Women's Shelters (2014)
New Brunswick	Department of Social Development and Women's Equality ^{xi}	23 shelters, including 13 crisis shelters and 10 second stage shelters Additionally, there are 2 ISC-funded shelters in New Brunswick	30 days for crisis shelters, and up to 2 years for second stage housing	Standards & Procedures for Adult Residential Facilities (2013) and Women Victims of Abuse Protocols (2014) ^{xii}
Newfoundland and Labrador	Department of Health and Social Services	10 shelters, including 10 crisis shelters which operate 6 stand-alone second-stage shelters Additionally, there are 2 ISC-funded shelters in Newfoundland and Labrador	6 weeks	Provincial Transition Houses Operational Standards (2010)
Northwest Territories	Department of Health and Social Services	8 shelters, including 5 crisis shelters, 1 second stage shelter, and 2 safe homes	6 weeks	Family Violence Shelter Standards (2019)

^{xi} Social Development funds crisis shelters, while Women's Equality funds Second Stage Housing.

^{xii} These standards apply to second stage housing.

Nova Scotia	Nova Scotia Department of Community Services	15 shelters, including 9 crisis shelters, 1 mixed shelter, and 5 second stage shelters Additionally, there are 2 ISC-funded shelters in Nova Scotia	6 weeks	Nova Scotia Standards for Member Organizations of the Transition House Association of Nova Scotia (2020)
Nunavut	Department of Family Services	5 crisis shelters	6 weeks	Family Violence Shelter Minimum Standards (2009)
Ontario	Ministry of Community and Social Services	150 shelters, including 108 crisis shelters, 4 mixed shelters, 37 second stage shelters, and 1 transition house Additionally, there are 13 ISC-funded shelters in Ontario	No stipulated length of stay	Standards for Ontario Indigenous Shelters (2017) and Services Delivered: VAW emergency shelter and supports (2023)
Prince Edward Island	Interministerial Women's Secretariat	3 shelters, including 1 crisis shelter and 2 second stage shelters Additionally, there is 1 ISC-funded shelter in Prince Edward Island	No stipulated length of stay	Unpublished; some guidelines are provided in funding agreements
Quebec	Ministry of Health and Social Services	126 shelters, including 94 crisis shelters, 10 mixed shelters, and 22 second stage shelters Additionally, there are 7 ISC-funded shelters in Quebec	No stipulated length of stay	Unpublished; some guidelines are provided in funding agreements

Saskatchewan	Ministry of Justice	<p>12 shelters, including 7 crisis shelters, 3 mixed shelters, and 2 second stage shelters</p> <p>Additionally, there are 8 ISC-funded shelters in Saskatchewan</p>	6 weeks	<p>Provincial Association of Transition Houses of Saskatchewan Shelter Standards (2019)</p> <p>and</p> <p>Saskatchewan First Nations Women's Shelter Standards (2018)</p>
Yukon	Yukon Government Health and Social Services	<p>4 shelters, including 2 crisis shelters, 1 mixed shelter, and 1 second stage shelter</p> <p>Additionally, there is 1 ISC-funded shelter in Yukon</p>	No specified length of stay	Unpublished; some guidelines are provided in funding agreements

Death Review Committees

Leaving an abusive relationship can be a difficult and even dangerous decision for survivors to make. For example, the Ontario Domestic Violence Death Review Committee found that in 81% of the domestic homicide cases they reviewed, the couple was separated or in the process of separating.²¹

Domestic violence death review committees (DVDRCs) are multi-disciplinary advisory committees composed of experts in different fields who review domestic violence-related deaths and provide non-binding recommendations for change to provincial governments, non-profit organizations, provincial associations, and other professional bodies to help prevent future deaths.²²

DVDRCs focus on addressing systemic issues that lead to domestic homicides but do not investigate the criminal culpability of individual perpetrators. Their reports are often structured along the themes of awareness/education, assessment/intervention, and providing resources. Two shortcomings of DVDRCs are their lack of binding recommendations and standardization; this absence of structure can result in different findings and procedures followed across Canada.

DVDRCs currently exist in Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, and the United States. In 2002, Canada's first DVDRC was established in Ontario based on recommendations from two major inquests into the killings of Arlene May and Gillian Hadley.²³ All provinces have since formed their own committees, one-time death review panels, or inter-provincial committees, while the territories have not established any.

Table 4: Domestic Violence Death Review Committees and Panels

	Name of the Committee / Panel	Year Committee / Panel Was Established	Most Recent Report
Alberta	<u>Family Violence Death Review Committee</u>	May 2013 ²⁴	<u>Family Violence Death Review Committee 2022/2023 Annual Report</u>
British Columbia	<u>Domestic Violence Death Review Panel</u> (Not an established committee; convened on an ad hoc basis)	In March 2010, the panel reviewed and composed a report on 11 domestic homicides selected from coroner files between 1995 and 2010. ²⁵ June 8 & 9, 2016, the British Columbia Coroners Service (BCCS) held an additional death review panel on the 100 deaths that resulted from intimate partner violence between 2010 and 2015. ²⁶	<u>A Review of Intimate Partner Violence Deaths 2010-2015 (November 2016)</u> and <u>A Report to the Chief Coroner of BC: Findings and Recommendations of the Domestic Violence Death Review Panel (May 2010)</u>
Manitoba	<u>Domestic Violence Death Review Committee</u>	June 2010 ²⁷	<u>Manitoba Domestic Violence Death Review Committee Annual Report 2018/2019</u>
New Brunswick	<u>Domestic Violence Death Review Committee</u> and <u>Atlantic Domestic Homicide Review Network</u>	February 2010 ²⁸ and December 2020 ²⁹ respectively	<u>Recommendations From the Domestic Violence Death Review Committee 2020</u>

Newfoundland and Labrador	Atlantic Domestic Homicide Review Network	December 2020 ³⁰	No report has been released yet
Northwest Territories	N/A	N/A	N/A
Nova Scotia	Atlantic Domestic Homicide Review Network and Nova Scotia's Domestic Violence Death Review Committee	December 2020 ³¹ and March 2023 ³²	No report has been released yet
Nunavut	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ontario	Domestic Violence Death Review Committee	2003 ³³	2019-2020 Annual Report
Prince Edward Island	Atlantic Domestic Homicide Review Network	December 2020 ³⁴	No report has been released yet
Quebec	Domestic Violence Death Review Committee	January 2018 ³⁵	Deuxième rapport annuel du comité d'examen des décès liés à la violence conjugale (2022)

Saskatchewan	<u>Saskatchewan's Domestic Violence Death Review Panel</u>	Summer 2016 ³⁶	<u>Interpersonal Violence and Abuse: Response to the Domestic Violence Death Review 2019</u> and <u>Saskatchewan Domestic Violence Death Review Report (2018)</u>
Yukon	N/A	N/A	N/A

Provincial and Territorial Tenancy Acts

Fleeing an abusive relationship is always difficult, but the added economic barriers relating to the ever-increasing cost of housing and other living costs can make this even more challenging. One study by the Canadian Center for Women's Empowerment found that 78% of women experiencing physical abuse had a co-occurrence of financial abuse.³⁷ Amid the housing crisis, having to pay monetary penalties for ending their leases early may prevent people from leaving their unsafe environment and abusive partner.

To address this, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) has [signed bilateral agreements](#) with all provincial and territorial governments in the context of the National Housing Strategy. These agreements seek to provide rental support to multiple vulnerable populations through the Canada Housing Benefit, including women and children fleeing domestic violence.

In addition, residential tenancy acts have been amended to allow tenants experiencing domestic violence to end their tenancies early with a notice period of approximately one month if they provide their landlord with proper documentation (see examples in Table 5). Provincial and territorial governments created these laws to make it easier for victims to leave violent situations without bearing the burden of additional financial penalties.

Table 5: Domestic Violence Provisions in Provincial and Territorial Tenancy Acts

	Tenancy Act Provisions
Alberta	<p>In August 2016, Bill 204, the Residential Tenancies (Safer Spaces for Victims of Domestic Violence) Amendment Act, Termination of Tenancy (Domestic Violence) Regulation, and amendments to the RTA Ministerial Regulation were proclaimed.³⁸ These changes allow tenants experiencing domestic violence to end their residential tenancies early without the usual financial penalties. To do so, they must get a Certificate Confirming Grounds to Terminate Tenancy from the government by submitting either a court order or a Certified Professional Statement. Tenants must use this certificate to give their landlord at least 28 days’ notice, and they must still pay rent during the notice period.³⁹</p>
British Columbia	<p>According to revisions of the Residential Tenancy Act that came into force in December 2016,⁴⁰ a tenant may end a fixed-term tenancy before the term is finished if they need to leave the rental unit to protect themselves or their children from family violence. They must have their eligibility confirmed by an authorized third-party verifier using an Ending Fixed-Term Tenancy Confirmation Statement form. The tenant must give the landlord this completed and signed form and a one-month written notice. Tenants are responsible for paying rent until the end of that notice period but not for any additional months’ rent or any of the landlord’s costs to re-rent.⁴¹</p> <p>On May 29, 2020, Bill M206, the Residential Tenancy Amendment Act,⁴² came into force. It provides tenants with the ability to end their fixed-term lease if staying in the rental unit is a threat to their safety or security. It broadens the existing family violence provisions and gives a tenant exposed to sexualized violence by a roommate or a neighbour the right to break their lease so they can move to a safer home.⁴³</p>
Manitoba	<p>The 2011 amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act stipulate that a tenant may end a tenancy if, because of domestic violence or stalking, they fear for their safety or the safety of their dependent child if the tenancy continues.⁴⁴ The tenant must give the landlord a notice of termination that is not less than one rental payment period and a certificate signed by the Victim Services Branch of Manitoba Justice (the designated authority) confirming there are grounds to terminate the tenancy.⁴⁵</p> <p>In June 2019, Bill 19, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act, received Royal Assent.⁴⁶ It expands the act to include sexual violence and simplifies the procedure for establishing that violence or stalking has occurred, such as by allowing specific</p>

	<p>individuals acting in their professional or employment capacity to provide a statement confirming violence or stalking has occurred.⁴⁷</p> <p>In 2023, the Residential Tenancies Amendment Act (2) came into effect. This amendment includes a definition for “household violence,” which extends the right to terminate a lease to a broader spectrum of victims.⁴⁸ Additionally, if the landlord is responsible for said household violence, they can be held accountable for up to \$500^{xiii} in moving fees.⁴⁹</p>
New Brunswick	<p>In June 2020, Bill 20 to Amend the Residential Tenancies Act entered into force.⁵⁰ The Act protects victims of domestic abuse, intimate partner violence, sexual violence, and criminal harassment. The mechanisms for qualifying for early lease termination are an emergency intervention order, a court order, or a verification statement.⁵¹ The document must be presented to the landlord with at least one month's notice.</p> <p>Additionally, emergency intervention orders (EIOs) allow victims of abuse to remain in their homes, requesting that the abuser leave the residence.</p>
Newfoundland and Labrador	<p>Bill 15, An Act to Amend the Residential Tenancies Act, received Royal Assent in late May 2018.⁵² It allows tenants experiencing family violence to terminate fixed-term rental agreements early without penalty by providing the Director of Residential Tenancies with a court order such as a peace bond or a statement from a designated authority indicating they believe the tenant or the child with them to be subject to family violence.⁵³ Designated authorities include physicians, nurses, social workers, psychologists, police officers, and individuals employed by an agency or organization recognized by the Director of Residential Tenancies.⁵⁴</p>
Northwest Territories	<p>On March 12, 2015, Bill 42: An Act to Amend the Residential Tenancies Act introduced changes allowing victims of domestic violence with emergency protection orders, or other court orders that demonstrate domestic violence has occurred, to terminate their tenancy agreement. The protection order must be in effect when the tenant applies to terminate the tenancy. The rental officer will issue a termination order if the application meets the necessary criteria, which must be given to the landlord no later than 30 days after it is issued. Once the landlord reviews the order, the tenant has 30 days to leave the rental unit.⁵⁵</p>

^{xiii} This amount is set in provincial regulations. As of July 2024, the maximum amount prescribed is \$500.

Nova Scotia	<p>Changes implemented as of September 16, 2013, to the Residential Tenancy Act in Nova Scotia allow victims of domestic violence to work with the Department of Justice’s Victim Services to end a year-to-year or fixed-term lease with one month’s notice and without paying a penalty.⁵⁶ The tenant must also provide the landlord with a Certificate Confirming Grounds to Terminate Tenancy Due to Domestic Violence within 60 days after the Director of Victim Services has issued the certificate to them.⁵⁷</p>
Nunavut	<p>Nunavut’s Residential Tenancies Act does not include special provisions for the early termination of a lease due to violence.</p>
Ontario	<p>The Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act, which came into effect on September 8, 2016, amended the 2006 Residential Tenancies Act to shorten the notice period to end a tenancy for tenants who are survivors of sexual and domestic violence.⁵⁸ They can now end their tenancy in 28 days if they believe they or a child living with them may be harmed or injured if they do not leave the unit. Tenants must give their landlord a Tenant’s Notice to End My Tenancy Because of Fear of Sexual or Domestic Violence and Abuse (N15) and either a signed Tenant’s Statement about Sexual or Domestic Violence and Abuse or a copy of a court order.⁵⁹</p>
Prince Edward Island	<p>The Residential Tenancy Act came into effect in 2022, allowing tenants to terminate their lease in case of family violence or other forms of abuse.⁶⁰ The tenant must give one month’s notice before their departure, and the date of said departure must be set to at least one day before rent is due.⁶¹ This notice must be presented to the landlord with a court or protection order.⁶² Written statements by the tenant alleging DV are also acceptable if they comply with the regulatory requirements.⁶³</p>
Quebec	<p>The Civil Code allows a tenant to terminate their residential lease early if their safety or that of a child living with them is threatened because of domestic violence on the part of a spouse or a former spouse or because of sexual aggression.⁶⁴ The tenant must give the landlord a termination notice of lease and an attestation from a public officer indicating that it is necessary to terminate the lease to ensure their safety or that of a child living with them. The lease will be terminated two months after a termination notice has been sent or one month after the notice has been sent in the case of a lease for an undetermined period or lasting less than 12 months.⁶⁵ In 2022, the Civil Code was amended and now refers to violence as a broader term.</p>

Saskatchewan	<p>Bill 67, An Act to Amend the Victims of Interpersonal Violence Act and Residential Tenancies Act, 2006, was passed in April 2017, allowing a tenant to end a fixed-term agreement within 28 days if they or their family members are experiencing abuse by another resident or former resident of the home. They must obtain a Certificate Confirming Safety Risk from the Victims Services Branch by providing a copy of a court order/bond or a Professional Person Statement (from a social worker, psychologist, registered nurse, police officer, etc.). The tenant should then provide this certificate and a Notice to Landlord to Terminate a Fixed Term Tenancy for Interpersonal Violence.⁶⁶</p>
Yukon	<p>Yukon's Residential Landlord and Tenant Act does not include special provisions for the early termination of a lease due to violence. In 2018, the Yukon government released a document titled "What if Domestic Violence Affects my Tenancy?" It provides survivors with instructions on how to end a tenancy, negotiate new terms, and other housing resources and information.⁶⁷</p>

Paid and Unpaid Leave

The momentum in Canada to recognize the need for paid leave from work in circumstances of domestic violence is linked to the effort of the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse, which collaborated with organized labour in 2011 to conduct a groundbreaking survey⁶⁸ on the prevalence and impact of domestic violence on the workplace.

Australia's advancements inspired the Canadian Labour Congress and the University of Western Ontario to conduct a similar national survey in 2014. Canadian data revealed that domestic violence makes it difficult for one-third of survivors to go to work, continues for more than half of them during work, and negatively affects work performance.⁶⁹ Survivors often require unforeseen time to seek medical attention, file protective orders, receive legal assistance, and find safe housing for themselves and their children. The threat of unemployment or financial insecurity can prevent many women from leaving abusive relationships.⁷⁰

In 2016, Manitoba became the first province to ensure protected leave for domestic violence survivors, providing them with greater social support and increased job security.⁷¹ All provinces and territories have now adopted policies that give protected leave to victims of domestic abuse. Some have also given protected leave to parents of victims of abuse and legal guardians; others have also given this benefit to employees whose relatives or friends are experiencing domestic abuse. It must be noted that this leave is not always paid, which can prevent victims of abuse from using it due to financial consequences.

Table 6 outlines the different protections guaranteed by each level of government.

Table 6: Provincially and Territorially Legislated Paid/Unpaid Leave for Domestic Violence Survivors

	Provision of Law Guaranteeing Domestic Violence Leave	Paid or Unpaid	Total Length of Protected Leave	Eligibility
Canada	Canadian Labour Code ⁷²	5 days paid, remaining unpaid ⁷³	10 days every calendar year ⁷⁴	Employee experiencing DV; parent of a child experiencing DV ⁷⁵
Alberta	Employment Standards Code ⁷⁶	Unpaid ⁷⁷	10 days every calendar year ⁷⁸	Employee experiencing DV; parent of a child experiencing DV; guardian of a protected adult ⁷⁹
British Columbia	Employment Standards Code ⁸⁰	5 days paid, remaining unpaid ⁸¹	10 consecutive days and up to 15 consecutive or intermittent weeks over a 52-week period ⁸²	Employee experiencing DV; employee who is a family member of a person experiencing DV ⁸³
Manitoba	Labour Standards Code ⁸⁴	5 days paid, remaining unpaid ⁸⁵	10 consecutive or intermittent days and an additional 17 continuous weeks over a 52-week period ⁸⁶	Employee experiencing DV; employee who has dependents experiencing DV ⁸⁷
New Brunswick	Employment Standards Act ⁸⁸	5 days paid, remaining unpaid ⁸⁹	10 days to be used intermittently or continuously, and up to	Employee experiencing DV; parent of a child experiencing DV ⁹¹

			16 weeks in one continuous period ⁹⁰	
Newfoundland and Labrador	Labour Standards Code ⁹²	3 days paid, remaining unpaid ⁹³	10 days ⁹⁴	Employee experiencing DV; employee who has dependents experiencing DV ⁹⁵
Northwest Territories	Employment Standards ⁹⁶	5 days paid, remaining unpaid ⁹⁷	10 days and up to 15 weeks per calendar year ⁹⁸	Employee experiencing DV; parent of a child experiencing DV ⁹⁹
Nova Scotia	Nova Scotia Labour Standards Code ¹⁰⁰	3 days paid ^{xiv} , remaining unpaid ¹⁰¹	10 continuous or intermittent days and up to 16 continuous weeks ¹⁰²	Employee experiencing DV; parent of a child experiencing DV ¹⁰³
Nunavut	Labour Standards Act ¹⁰⁴	5 days paid if the employee has been employed for 3 months, remaining unpaid ¹⁰⁵	If the employee has been employed for a month, 5 days unpaid and up to 15 weeks per year. If the employee had been employed for 3 months, they get an additional 5 days paid ¹⁰⁶	Employee experiencing DV; employee who is a family member of a person experiencing DV; employee who cares for someone experiencing DV ¹⁰⁷
Ontario	Employment Standards Act ¹⁰⁸	5 days paid, remaining unpaid ¹⁰⁹	10 days and an additional 15 weeks every calendar year ¹¹⁰	Employee experiencing DV; parent of a child experiencing DV ¹¹¹

^{xiv} The Nova Scotia government is undergoing consultations to increase the number of paid days to five days.

Prince Edward Island	Employment Standards Act ¹¹²	3 days paid, remaining unpaid ¹¹³	10 days, continuous or intermittent over a 12-month calendar period ¹¹⁴	Employee experiencing DV ¹¹⁵
Quebec	Loi sur les normes de travail ¹¹⁶	2 days paid, remaining unpaid ¹¹⁷	26 weeks over 12 months ¹¹⁸	Employee experiencing DV ¹¹⁹
Saskatchewan	Saskatchewan Employment Act ¹²⁰	5 days paid, remaining unpaid ¹²¹	10 days continuous or intermittent in a 52-week period ¹²²	Employee experiencing DV; employee who has dependents experiencing DV ¹²³
Yukon	Employment Standards Act ¹²⁴	5 days paid, remaining unpaid ¹²⁵	10 days and an additional 15 continuous or intermittent weeks ¹²⁶	Employee experiencing DV, parent of child experiencing DV, family member of someone experiencing DV, close friend of someone experiencing DV, intimate partner of someone experiencing DV ¹²⁷

Clare's Law and Keira's Law

Clare Wood was brutally murdered in 2009 in England by her boyfriend, who had a record of aggression against women that Clare was completely unaware of.¹²⁸ Her family argued that she would still be alive today if she had known of her boyfriend's violent past.¹²⁹ Clare's Law is the legislative response to her murder.¹³⁰ The United Kingdom led the legislative effort to address this issue, and many countries have since followed its lead.¹³¹

Interpersonal Violence Disclosure Legislation, or Clare's Law, seeks to make certain records accessible to current or future intimate partners who are at risk of domestic violence so they can make informed decisions about their safety in the relationship.¹³² These records include convictions and complaints made to the police.¹³³ So far, four Canadian provinces have adopted Clare's Law.

In 2020, four-year-old Keira Kagan was killed by her abusive father as an act of revenge filicide.¹³⁴ Her parents were in a custody battle, and Keira's mother had raised the father's abuse to the family court. Still, the judge disregarded the information, stating that domestic abuse was not relevant to parenting and allowing the father permissive access to Keira.¹³⁵ Keira's mother, Jennifer Kagan-Viater, has tirelessly advocated for a shift in the court system; Keira's Law is the culmination of that work.

The Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Judges Act (violence against an intimate partner), or Keira's Law, was passed by the federal government in 2023. This Act requires educational seminars for federally-appointed judges regarding intimate partner violence and coercive control in intimate and family relationships.¹³⁶ Since provincially- and territorially-appointed judges do not fall under federal jurisdiction, this Act does not apply to them; each province and territory must pass Keira's Law for it to be applicable. So far, only Ontario has passed Keira's Law, but it has been introduced in other provinces.

This table showcases both Clare's Law and Keira's Law's progress in federal, provincial, and territorial jurisdictions.

Table 7: Interpersonal Violence Disclosure Legislation (Clare’s Law) and Keira’s Law

	Clare’s Law	Keira’s Law
Canada	Since 2021, The Royal Mounted Police (RCMP) can participate in the implementation of Clare’s Law in Alberta and Saskatchewan	In Force Bill C-233: An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Judges Act (Violence Against an Intimate Partner) received assent on April 27, 2023; it came into force 30 days later
Alberta	In Force The Disclosure to Protect Against Domestic Violence (Clare’s Law) Act received assent in October 2019 and entered into force on April 1, 2021, following consultations on the implementation of Clare’s Law in 2020	Currently, no legislative measure exists
British Columbia	Bill M 217 – 2019: Interpersonal Violence Disclosure (Clare’s Law) Act was introduced as a private member’s bill in May 2019 but did not make it to second reading	Currently, no legislative measure exists
Manitoba	Bill 43: The Disclosure to Protect Against Intimate Partner Violence Act was introduced by the Manitoba Government in 2022	Bill 209: The Provincial Court Amendment Act (Expanded Training for Judges and Judicial Justices of the Peace) is in second reading as of April 2024
New Brunswick	In Force The Disclosure to Protect Against Intimate Partner Violence Act was introduced in November 2022 and	Currently, no legislative measure exists

	received assent in December 2022 following consultations; protocols and procedures relating to Clare’s Law are still underway	
Newfoundland and Labrador	In Force Bill 6: An Act Respecting Disclosure of Information Under An Interpersonal Violence Disclosure Protocol (Clare’s Law) was tabled on November 4, 2019, and received assent on December 6, 2019; it was proclaimed in November 2023	Currently, no legislative measure exists
Northwest Territories	Currently, no legislative measure exists	Currently, no legislative measure exists
Nova Scotia	Currently, no legislative measure exists	Bill 361: Provincial Court Act (amended) is in first reading as of October 2023
Nunavut	Currently, no legislative measure exists	Currently, no legislative measure exists
Ontario	Private Member Bill 274, an Act respecting the disclosure of information related to intimate partner violence , was introduced on April 1, 2021, to be Ontario’s Clare’s Law ; a motion for second reading was defeated by a deferred vote of 34 nays to 15 ayes on April 14, 2021	In Force Bill 102: Strengthening Safety and Modernizing Justice Act, 2023 received assent and came into force on June 8, 2023

Prince Edward Island	Currently, no legislative measure exists	Currently, no legislative measure exists
Quebec	Currently, no legislative measure exists	Currently, no legislative measure exists
Saskatchewan	<p style="text-align: center;">In Force</p> <p>Clare's Law was first implemented in Canada in Saskatchewan, receiving royal assent in May 2019 and going into effect on June 29, 2020; the Saskatchewan RCMP initially refused to participate, slowing implementation in rural areas under their policing jurisdiction, but they aligned their internal regulations to allow participation in March 2021</p>	Currently, no legislative measure exists
Yukon	Currently, no legislative measure exists	Currently, no legislative measure exists

Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence

Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV) is a growing concern in the GBV sector. As our day-to-day realities become increasingly digitized, aggressors are finding ways to weaponize technology against survivors and advocates.¹³⁷ TFGBV encompasses many behaviours that usually fall into one of two categories: harassment (stalking, spying, threats) and image-based abuse (voyeurism, the non-consensual distribution of intimate images [NCDII], and other behaviours relating to the exploitation of images).¹³⁸ Only NCDII legislation will be reviewed in this document.

The federal government, which has authority over criminal law, criminalized NCDII in 2014. This was an enormous step toward protecting victims, but not all victims want to engage in a criminal procedure. Civil actions can be an alternative to a criminal procedure.

Provincial and territorial governments have authority over civil law. The following table showcases the civil legislation relating to NCDIIs, including their definition of “distribution,” the tort,^{xv} and the remedies available.

It is important to note that all provinces and territories use the same definition of “intimate image”^{xvi} – a visual recording (photo, film, video, live stream) of a nude person or a person engaging in explicit sexual activities; the person does not have to be identifiable, and the recording can be altered or unaltered. Additionally, the victim must have a reasonable expectation of privacy concerning the setting of the recording and the recording itself.¹³⁹ This need for a reasonable expectation of privacy is ongoing, and consent can be withdrawn at anytime.

^{xv} A tort is an act of injury or damage to a person or property that is covered by a law so that the person can start a court action. It is an action that is wrong but not criminal, and so can be dealt within a civil court. Retrieved from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/tort>.

^{xvi} This definition has been consistently used by the federal, territorial, and provincial governments alike.

Table 8: Non-Consensual Distribution of Intimate Images

	Definition of “distribution”	Tort	Remedies
Alberta	Knowingly publishing, transmitting, selling, advertising, or otherwise making an image available to a person other than the person depicted in the image ¹⁴⁰	Knowingly distributing an intimate image of another person if said person did not consent to the distribution or if the person publishing it is reckless when asking for said consent ¹⁴¹	General, special, aggravated, and punitive damages; order the defendant to account to the plaintiff any profits made from the distribution; issue an injunction; make any other reasonable orders ¹⁴²
British Columbia	Transmitting, publishing, or otherwise making available ¹⁴³	Distributing or threatening to distribute an image depicting an individual without the consent of that individual; proof of damage is not necessary ¹⁴⁴	Compensatory, aggravated, punitive damages; determine that the image was distributed without consent; order the person to make reasonable efforts to make the image unavailable to others and to destroy it; order Internet platforms or other organizations to remove the image; make any other reasonable orders ¹⁴⁵
Manitoba	Knowingly publishing, transmitting, selling, advertising, distributing, or making an image available to a person other than the person depicted in the image ¹⁴⁶	Distributing an intimate image knowing that the person depicted did not consent to the distribution or being reckless when asking for said consent; proof of damage is not necessary ¹⁴⁷	General, special, aggravated, and punitive damages; order the defendant to account to the plaintiff any profits made from the distribution; issue an injunction; any other reasonable order ¹⁴⁸
New Brunswick	Transmitting, publishing, or otherwise		

	making available ¹⁴⁹	Distributing or threatening to distribute an intimate image that a person has a reasonable expectation of remaining private; proof of damage is not necessary ¹⁵⁰	Declare the distribution to be unlawful; order the respondent to make a reasonable effort to make the image unavailable to others; order an Internet platform to make a reasonable effort to remove the image; order the respondent to pay nominal damages; make any other appropriate court orders ¹⁵¹
Newfoundland and Labrador	Publishing, transmitting, selling, advertising, or otherwise making an intimate image available to a person other than the person depicted in the image ¹⁵²	Distributing an intimate image of another person without their consent, while knowing that the person did not consent to the distribution or while being reckless when asking for consent; proof of damage is not necessary ¹⁵³	General, special, aggravated, and punitive damages; order the defendant to account to the plaintiff any profits made from the distribution; issue an injunction; make any other reasonable orders ¹⁵⁴
Northwest Territories	Currently, no legislative measure exists	Currently, no legislative measure exists	Currently, no legislative measure exists
Nova Scotia ^{xvii}	The Act does not define “distribution,” but it defines “distribution without consent” as publishing, transmitting, selling, advertising, or distributing an image or making it available to another person while knowing the person in the image did not consent to the distribution or being reckless when asking for consent ¹⁵⁵	Distributing an intimate image without consent ¹⁵⁶	General, special, aggravated or punitive damages; order to account for profits; order prohibiting the distribution; order prohibiting future contact between the parties; order to disable access to an intimate image; any other order or reasonable action ¹⁵⁷

^{xvii} [The CyberScan Unit](#) in Nova Scotia helps victims navigate NCDII protections and remedies.

Nunavut	Currently, no legislative measure exists	Currently, no legislative measure exists	Currently, no legislative measure exists
Ontario	Currently, no legislative measure exists	Currently, no legislative measure exists	Currently, no legislative measure exists
Prince Edward Island	Transmitting, publishing, or otherwise making accessible ¹⁵⁸	Distributing or threatening to distribute an intimate image; proof of damage is not necessary ¹⁵⁹	Compensatory, aggravated, and punitive damages; declare the distribution to be unlawful; order the defendant to make a reasonable effort to recover the images; order Internet platforms to make a reasonable effort to remove the intimate image; and any other reasonable court order ¹⁶⁰
Quebec ^{xviii}	See footnote	See footnote	See footnote
Saskatchewan	Publishing, transmitting, selling, advertising, distributing, making an intimate image available to someone else apart from the person depicted in the image ¹⁶¹	Distributing intimate images while knowing that the person depicted in the image does not consent to it or being reckless in asking for such consent ¹⁶²	General, special, aggravated, and punitive damages; declare the distribution to be unlawful; give any profits made by the defendant from the distribution to the plaintiff; order the defendant to make a reasonable effort to recover the images, issue an injunction, and any other reasonable court order ¹⁶³
Yukon	Currently, no legislative measure exists	Currently, no legislative measure exists	Currently, no legislative measure exists

^{xviii} While Quebec does not have specific legislation regarding NCDII, article 1457 of the Civil Code holds people accountable for the extra-contractual damages caused to a person. Additionally, sections 4 and 5 of the Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms protect the dignity, honour, reputation, and privacy of a person; section 49 of said Charter entitles the victim of unlawful infringement of said rights and freedoms to be compensated for damages suffered. Retrieved from <https://techsafety.ca/resources/toolkits/legal-and-victim-service-supports-and-resources>.

Concluding Remarks

Although by no means exhaustive, it is clear from the tables presented in this review that survivors and their dependents fleeing violence in Canada do not have access to the same levels of services or protection across the country. Beyond the above-discussed policies and programs, many others also differ widely from region to region, creating wide variance based on location. However, reviewing all of these was beyond the scope of this current project.

This exercise has highlighted how difficult it is to access information that is both up-to-date and accurate. The lack of transparency makes it extremely difficult to know what is in place and where to access information, which is a significant barrier to those attempting to access policies and programs to flee violence. We hope this document can help survivors navigate these challenges and activists advocate for more accountability, protections, and services.

Given the expansiveness of our country and the variance we found across provinces and territories in policies relevant to those fleeing violence, WSC continues to advocate for a bold, intersectional, and well-monitored NAP. While we applaud the government for the launch of the NAP and the signing of provincial and territorial bilateral agreements, we have not yet seen an increase in national consistency or transparency, and those experiencing violence continue to have their safety dictated by their postal code.

¹ United Nations Women. (2012). *Handbook for National Action Plans on Violence Against Women*. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/handbook-for-nap-on-vaw.pdf>.

² Dawson, M., Zecha, A., & Angus, H. (2022). #CallItFemicide: Understanding sex/gender-related killings of women and girls in Canada, 2018-2022. *Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability*. <https://femicideincanada.ca/callitfemicide2018-2022.pdf>.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Statistics Canada. (2023). Trends in police-reported family violence and intimate partner violence in Canada, 2022. *The Daily*. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/231121/dq231121b-eng.htm>.

⁵ Government of Canada. (2021). Snapshot: COVID-19 and gender-based violence. <https://www.canada.ca/en/women-gender-equality/gender-based-violence/snapshot-covid-19-gender-based-violence.html>.

⁶ Trudell, A.L., & Whitmore, E. (2020). Pandemic meets Pandemic: Understanding the Impacts of COVID19 on Gender-Based Violence Services and Survivors in Canada. *Ending Violence Association of Canada & Anova*. <https://endingviolencecanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/FINAL.pdf>.

⁷ Heidinger, L. (2024). Canadian Residential Facilities for Victims of abuse, 2022/2023. *Statistics Canada*. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/85-002-x/2024001/article/00005-eng.pdf?st=kDtJk5mh>.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Women's Shelters Canada (WSC). (2024). *Shelter Voices: Crisis Within Crisis*. <https://endvaw.ca/shelter-voices-2024>.

¹⁰ Canadian Network of Women's Shelters and Transition Houses (CWSTH). (2013). *The Case for a National Action Plan on Violence Against Women*. <http://endvaw.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/The-Case-for-a-National-Action-Plan-on-VAW.pdf>.

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- ¹² Canadian Network of Women’s Shelters and Transition Houses (CWSTH). (2013). *The Case for a National Action Plan on Violence Against Women*. <http://endvaw.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/The-Case-for- a-National-Action-Plan-on-VAW.pdf>.
- ¹³ Government of Canada. (2023). The National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence. *Women and Gender Equality*. <https://www.canada.ca/en/women-gender-equality/gender-based-violence/intergovernmental-collaboration/national-action-plan-end-gender-based-violence.html>.
- ¹⁴ Women’s Shelters Canada. (2023). *Reflections on the First Year of the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence*. <https://endvaw.ca/archives/news/first-year-nap>.
- ¹⁵ Assembly of First Nations. *Ending the Critical Situation of Violence, Disappearance, and Murder of First Nations Women, Girls, and Gender-diverse People*. <https://afn.ca/rights-justice/murdered-missing-indigenous-women-girls>.
- ¹⁶ Ibid.
- ¹⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁸ National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. (2019). *Calls for Justice*. https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Calls_for_Justice.pdf.
- ¹⁹ Ibid.
- ²⁰ Ontario Native Women’s Association. (2024). *Beyond the Inquiry: ONWA’S Journey 5 Years After the National Inquiry Final Report*. https://www.onwa.ca/files/ugd/274c9a_466b36b132cd4c5ca9ccdc0e2267742c.pdf.
- ²¹ Western University Centre for Research & Education on Violence against Women & Children. *Domestic violence- is there a risk of death?* <https://www.makeitourbusiness.ca/warning-signs/dv-risk-of-death.html>.
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