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WOMEN'S LEGAL
EDUCATION & ACTION FUND
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JURIDIQUE POUR LES FEMMES

LEAF welcomes Budget 2021's investment in advancing gender equality, ending gender-based violence

Toronto, ON – April 20, 2021

The Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF) welcomes the federal government's budget commitment to advancing gender equality. In particular, LEAF applauds the government's significant investment in supporting women's socioeconomic equality, supporting survivors of sexual violence, and taking action to end gender-based violence entirely.

"We have seen the extent to which the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated women's inequality in Canada," says Pam Hrick, Executive Director & General Counsel of LEAF. "Women have been disproportionately driven out of the labour market and caught in the shadow pandemic of domestic violence. The impact has been felt most severely by women belonging to historically marginalized communities, including Indigenous, trans, and racialized women."

The federal government's historic \$30 billion investment in a national early learning and childcare system responds to significant, sustained feminist advocacy. It holds the potential to realize substantial gains for the economic and social equality of women, who continue to bear the brunt of childcare obligations both within their own families and in the formal and "shadow" economies.

LEAF is particularly pleased to see an important investment of \$600 million over five years to advance a National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence (NAP), which is grounded in the vital work of feminist organizations and advocates. LEAF is proud to have collaborated with partners across Canada, under the leadership of Women's Shelters Canada, to call for the development and implementation of [a fully funded, intersectional NAP](#). The federal government's budget commitment includes a much-needed investment of over \$200 million to support gender-based violence organizations, who are on the front lines supporting survivors, day in and day out. LEAF is also encouraged to see an investment of over \$85 million to support a national program for independent legal advice and representation for survivors of sexual assault, as well as pilot programs for survivors of intimate partner violence.



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“Accessible independent legal advice and representation is crucial to helping survivors of sexual violence understand their options and their legal rights, as well as to navigate the justice system,” says Hrick. “We are pleased that the government is increasing access to justice for survivors while making tangible investments to prevent and eradicate gender-based violence altogether.”

LEAF also welcomes simultaneous investments in legal education and services through a Racialized Communities Legal Support Initiative, and the revival of the Law Commission of Canada, which will once again provide independent expert legal advice to the Government of Canada on matters of public interest.

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About the Women’s Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF)

The Women’s Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF) is a national non-profit organization that works to advance the substantive equality rights of women and girls through litigation, law reform, and public education. Since 1985, it has intervened in landmark cases that have advanced equality in Canada—helping to prevent violence, eliminate discrimination in the workplace, provide better maternity benefits, ensure a right to pay equity, and allow access to reproductive freedoms. For more information, please visit www.leaf.ca.

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