

10 Things the Federal Government Can Do to Fully Engage Women in the Workforce

Canada's economic recovery from COVID-19 will only happen if women can fully participate in the workforce. Canada's women business leaders, via the *Canadian Chamber's Council for Women's Advocacy*, have put together a list of 10 items that the federal government should action to support women and facilitate their full participation in the workforce as employers and employees.

The CWA has outlined 10 things the federal government needs to do now, grouped under three areas of focus:

Ensuring safe, reliable and affordable childcare and back to school:

1. Provide funding to provinces and territories to help ensure kids across the country can go back to school safely (note: this funding was provided August 26, 2020)
2. Establish a National Secretariat for Childcare, which includes business and parent representatives, to consider and develop recommendations for tax incentives that benefit parents, guardians and daycare owners.
3. Ensure there is an ample and diverse workforce of childcare providers across the country by enabling remote learning for potential childcare provider certification in rural areas, providing more money to increase access to early childhood education programs and facilitating labour mobility and certification recognition across domestic and international borders.

Tailoring supports for women business owners and entrepreneurs.

4. Provide emergency support for childcare costs by extending eligibility for the Canadian Emergency Wage Subsidy to include hiring in-home childcare so business owners can return to work.
5. Track and break down data for federal funding and programming for female-owned business and entrepreneurs.
6. Address the tax code to support women-owned businesses. For example, allow business owners to claim childcare as a business expense.
7. Provide enhanced opportunities for women-owned businesses to meaningfully access public procurement contracts.

Facilitating upskilling, reskilling and job pivots for women.

8. Earmark recovery funding for upskilling and reskilling, specifically for women.
9. Prioritize funding and programming that supports women's access to traditionally male-dominated jobs and sectors where there is high growth potential, such as the trades, IT and manufacturing.
10. Reinforce a focus on women in leadership, including women on boards and in executive positions, in order to build support for female talent all along their professional journeys.