

Five Things the Federal Government needs to do now in providing Emergency Support to Women through the Second Waves of the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Women in the workforce, as both employees and business-owners / entrepreneurs, continue to be disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ensuring women have opportunities to fully participate in the recovery is essential for widespread job creation and sustained economic growth. It is also essential for getting our country through this ongoing crisis.

This is not a women's issue; it is an economic issue. And there is urgency. We cannot allow women to drop out of the workforce and close down their businesses.

The Canadian Chamber's Council for Women's Advocacy is calling on the federal government to immediately take action on the five recommendations below to support women through the continued crisis.

Facilitate safe, reliable and affordable childcare:

1. Continue to build on the 'safe restart' transfers to ensure that schools and daycares remain open through the second waves across the country. Work with provinces, territories and stakeholders on rapid testing and turnaround times, alongside with other technology supports including robust tracing.
2. While we welcome the federal government's announcements regarding national leadership and longer investments in childcare, we need action now focused on ensuring childcare capacity. Establish, without delay, an inclusive Task Force to focus on childcare support through the continued crisis. The Task Force can support data-driven and parent-focused decisions on where (provinces, territories, childcare providers, parents) and in what form funding (funding, grants, tax incentives) should flow. Those who receive funds need to be held accountable.



Support women's entrepreneurship:

3. Extend eligibility for the Canadian Emergency Wage Subsidy to include hiring in-home childcare so business owners can return to work.
4. Track and breakdown data for federal funding and programming for business in a way that it has been done for individuals, looking specifically at female-owned businesses and entrepreneurs. Ask questions re: ratios of applications, rates of successful applications, timing for funding received and adapt eligibility, funding and programming accordingly going forward. Consult widely as this is done.

Support job pivots for women:

5. Earmark recovery funding for upskilling and re-skilling women, ensuring there is an intersectional lens and BIPOC focus. Appreciating this is a significant and ground-breaking undertaking with a longer term horizon, it is critically important to start and start now.