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PAUKTUUTIT

INUIT WOMEN OF CANADA

2026 Pre-Budget Submission

April 2026

2026 Budget Recommendations

Investing in Inuit Women, Girls, and Gender-Diverse Inuit is Investing in One United Canada

Building a strong, united Canada means leaving no one behind. To truly honour and uphold the inherent rights and dignity of Inuit women, girls, gender-diverse Inuit, their families, and their communities, Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada calls on the federal government to move beyond promises and take concrete, sustained action to advance reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples while supporting Inuit-led solutions that strengthen daily lives, protect futures, and build a just and united economy for all Canadians.

Pauktuutit recommends that the federal government:

- 1. Build Communities Strong by improving access to affordable housing, safe spaces, and second-stage housing for Inuit women fleeing violence.**
- 2. Leave no one behind - ensure equitable access to culturally grounded, gender-specific health and healing programs designed for Inuit women, girls, and gender-diverse Inuit.**
- 3. Support Inuit women-led economic development in urban areas and across Inuit Nunangat.**
- 4. Advance Inuit women's leadership and inclusive governance through the application of an Inuit-Specific Gender-Based Analysis Plus (ISGBA+) Framework to all legislation, policies and programs affecting Inuit women, girls, and gender-diverse Inuit.**
- 5. Recognize that true sovereignty begins with the safety of Inuit women, girls, and gender-diverse Inuit — invest in Inuit-led, gender-responsive solutions that address their unique needs.**

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2026 Pre-Budget Submission

Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada is pleased to present its 2026 budget recommendations. As the national representative organization of Inuit women in Canada, Pauktuutit advances the social, cultural, political and economic well-being of Inuit women, girls, and gender-diverse Inuit through advocacy, policy development, and community projects.

Inuit women, girls, and gender-diverse Inuit are essential in closing significant socio-economic gaps, yet their leadership and contributions remain chronically undervalued. Governments must actively invest in Inuit women's leadership as a cornerstone of lasting progress. As the Committee considers measures to strengthen the economy and national unity, Pauktuutit firmly believes that implementing these recommendations is a concrete step toward reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples and toward unlocking the full economic potential of Inuit women, girls, and gender-diverse Inuit.

RECOMMENDATION #1: Build Communities Strong by improving access to affordable housing, safe spaces, and second-stage housing for Inuit women fleeing violence

Inuit women, girls, and gender-diverse Inuit face complex, intersecting factors that affect their experiences with housing and homelessness. With 52.9% of Inuit across Inuit Nunangat living in overcrowded housing, 32.7% in homes requiring major repairs, and Inuit women six times more likely than non-Indigenous women to live in unsuitable housing, housing insecurity poses a direct threat to the health and well-being of Inuit women, girls, and gender-diverse Inuit. Despite Canada's commitments under the National Housing Strategy, the Inuit-Crown Partnership Committee, and the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence, approximately 59% of Inuit communities still lack emergency shelters. Inuit women experience sexual and physical violence at a rate 14 times higher than other women in Canada — yet across Inuit Nunangat, which covers one-third of Canada's landmass, shelter infrastructure remains dangerously insufficient. Safe housing is a fundamental human right and was identified as imperative in the MMIWG Inquiry's Calls for Justice (Recommendation 16.9).

Pauktuutit calls on the federal government to:

- Establish a dedicated, distinctions-based funding stream for Inuit women's housing and shelter initiatives, co-developed with Inuit women's organizations.

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- Funding additional shelters, safe houses, transition houses, and second-stage housing for Inuit women, girls, and gender-diverse Inuit fleeing violence.
- Fast-tracking housing access for those fleeing domestic violence and expanding gender-responsive emergency supports; and
- Ensuring federal program design reflects the realities of northern construction costs, Inuit Data Sovereignty, and community-identified needs.

Safe homes generate meaningful local employment, support skills development, and lay the foundation for strong communities and a resilient Canadian economy. When Inuit leadership in housing increases, community well-being follows. Between 1981 and 2021, well-being scores improved by 21% alongside increased Inuit housing leadership — proof that Inuit-led solutions work.

RECOMMENDATION #2: Leave no one behind – ensure equitable access to culturally grounded, gender -specific health and healing programs designed for Inuit women, girls, and gender-diverse Inuit.

Inuit women, girls, and gender-diverse Inuit face significant and compounding challenges within the Canadian healthcare system. From 2017 to 2020, over 56.5% of Inuit reported no regular healthcare provider. The legacy of colonialism, including the forced dismantling of Inuit midwifery and mandatory maternal evacuation policies, continues today, causing lasting harm. Inuit women, girls, and gender-diverse Inuit who must leave their communities for care to often encounter anti-Indigenous racism, violence, and discrimination.

Systemic failures, including coerced sterilization and regulatory limitations that are neither trauma-informed nor culturally appropriate, must be urgently addressed. Prior to settler contact, Inuit health care was holistic, rooted in cultural, social, and spiritual practices that recognized the interconnection of mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being.

Access to equitable, culturally safe, gendered health services is paramount. Inuit-led health initiatives must be centered, and the voices of Inuit women, girls, and gender-diverse Inuit must be integral to all health policy discussions.

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Pauktuutit calls on the federal government to:

- Formally recognize midwifery as an essential healthcare service with dedicated, sustained funding to Inuit midwifery programs across Inuit Nunangat.
- Midwifery education must be restored and accessible. Midwifery must be reinstated as a recognized degree in post-secondary institutions in Inuit Nunangat and selected provincial learning institutes, ensuring the next generation of Inuit midwives can be trained on their own lands and terms.
- Uphold the right of all Inuit communities and expectant mothers to choose where and how they give birth.
- Fund culturally specific health services and healing programs — including traditional healing practices, mental health supports, and substance use treatment; and
- Increase the Inuit healthcare workforce and formally integrate traditional Inuit healing practices into mainstream healthcare.

Access to equitable, culturally safe healthcare is a right, not a privilege. Investing in Inuit-led health solutions improves outcomes, creates employment in northern communities and advances reconciliation.

RECOMMENDATION #3: Support Inuit women-led economic development in urban centres and across Inuit Nunangat

Poverty disproportionately affects Inuit women, girls, and gender-diverse Inuit. With 8 out of 10 Inuit in Inuit Nunangat experiencing food insecurity, compared to 1 in 10 Canadians, and Inuit women earning less than both Inuit and non-Inuit men and non-Inuit women, the economic exclusion of Inuit women is both a human rights issue and an economic one. Many support households of ten or more on annual household incomes of \$60,000 or less. Limited local job opportunities force many Inuit women to leave their homes and support networks, further compounding social and cultural dislocation. Food sovereignty, and reducing living costs, are fundamental to combatting poverty and promoting sustainable livelihoods.

Pauktuutit calls on the federal government to:

- Support Inuit women-led economic development in urban centres and across Inuit Nunangat, including Inuit-specific income support programs aligned with Inuit societal values.
- Remove systemic barriers — including racism and sexism — that limit Inuit women's full economic participation, while protecting Inuit culture, traditions, and values.

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Empowering Inuit women, girls, and gender-diverse Inuit to shape their own economic futures requires investment across the full continuum: safe and affordable housing, improved food security and infrastructure, access to education and meaningful employment without barriers.

When Inuit women, girls, and gender-diverse Inuit are supported to thrive economically, their families, communities, and the broader Canadian economy benefit.

RECOMMENDATION #4: Advance Inuit women’s leadership and inclusive governance through an Inuit-Specific Gender-Based Analysis Plus (ISGBA+)

To advance reconciliation and inclusive governance, end gender-based violence, and close the gender equality gap, the federal government must recognize and resource Pauktuutit’s ISGBA+ Framework as a distinctions-based tool applied to all legislation, policies and programs affecting Inuit women, girls, and gender-diverse Inuit, including the implementation of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)*, the *Federal Pathway to Address Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG)* and *2SLGBTQIA+ People*, and the *Inuit Action Plan on MMIWG*.

Rooted in Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit beliefs and principles, the ISGBA+ Framework amplifies the perspectives of those historically excluded from policy processes and takes a strengths-based approach grounded in Inuit women’s existing capabilities and knowledge. Applying the ISGBA+ Framework means more than analysis — it means ensuring Inuit women, girls, and gender-diverse Inuit are meaningfully included and equally represented at decision-making tables when governments at all levels and Indigenous rights holders develop, implement, and amend policies that affect program and service delivery to Inuit communities.

Long-term, sustainable federal funding must support Indigenous organizations and governments to implement Indigenous-specific GBA+ frameworks and enable joint work with Canada on its application across government.

Investing in Inuit women's leadership makes policies work better for everyone.

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RECOMMENDATION #5: Recognize that true sovereignty begins with the safety of Inuit women, girls, and gender-diverse Inuit – invest in Inuit-led, gender responsive solutions that address their unique needs

Inuit women, girls, and gender-diverse Inuit experience some of the highest rates of violence in Canada. In Nunavut, Inuit women experience violent crime, including sexual assault, at roughly 12–13 times the rate of women in Canada overall. As of 2025, only two of the 231 Calls for Justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, and 13 of the 94 Calls to Action within the Truth & Reconciliation Commission’s final report have been fully implemented. In 2023/24, Indigenous adults constituted 33.2% of the custodial population in several Canadian jurisdictions, despite comprising only 4.3% of the adult population. Approximately 60% of Inuit Nunangat communities lack shelters for women and children experiencing violence. These realities are rooted in colonial disruption and perpetuated by chronic underinvestment. Reconciliation requires accountability, not just acknowledgement.

Pauktuutit calls on the federal government to:

- Establish a binding federal accountability framework for the MMIWG Calls for Justice, with annual public reporting and independent oversight that includes Indigenous Women's Organizations.
- Recognize and support Inuit-led justice as a restorative alternative to incarceration, with sustained, flexible, multi-year funding for Inuit-designed programs tied to measurable outcomes — including reductions in incarceration rates and tangible improvements in community wellbeing — rather than outputs like program participation or dollars spent.
- Embed an ISGBA+ lens across all GBV policies and programs, and establish long-term, predictable funding for Inuit-led safety infrastructure — including low-barrier shelters, safe spaces, second-stage housing, healing centres, mobile response units, and 24-hour helplines staffed by Inuit service providers.
- Resource culturally safe, Inuit-led health and healing services — including community-based mental health, substance use, and GBV supports led by Inuit practitioners — with intergenerational programming, healing circles, land-based programs, and community wellness gatherings funded as core services.
- Centre Inuit women's leadership in prevention and justice reform by funding mentorship programs, peer-led prevention campaigns in Inuktitut and English, men's healing initiatives, and Inuit Elder-led community justice committees; and
- Begin full implementation of Pauktuutit’s 15 recommendations from its landmark 2020 report, *Addressing Gendered Violence Against Inuit Women*, including recruiting more

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police officers who are Inuit women and gender-diverse Inuit, implementing trauma-informed policing, and funding training for justice system practitioners on Indigenous history, culture, and trauma-informed approaches.

A truly united Canada must include ALL communities. Effective, Inuit-specific, gendered solutions exist. We now require the political will, sustained investment, and genuine accountability to implement them.

Pauktuutit is available to answer any questions Committee members may have.

For further information, please contact:



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