



September 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 strong, secure communities by improving access to affordable housing, safe spaces, and second-stage housing for Inuit women fleeing violence.**
- 2. Leave no one behind – Invest in culturally grounded, health and well-being systems and services that reflect the rights, realities and distinct needs of Inuit women, girls, and gender-diverse Inuit.**
- 3. Support Inuit women-led economic development in urban centres and across Inuit Nunangat.**
- 4. Recognize and resource Pauktuutit's Inuit-Specific Gender-Based Analysis Plus (ISGBA+) framework as a mandatory, results-tracked tool applied 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 is a key partner in advancing the economic participation, safety, and self-determination of Inuit women, girls, and gender-diverse Inuit across Inuit Nunangat and urban centres throughout Canada. Through policy development, distinctions-based research, and community development projects, Pauktuutit's work strengthens Inuit communities from coast to coast to coast, contributing directly to a more united and resilient Canada.

Inuit women, girls, and gender-diverse Inuit are essential to closing significant socio-economic gaps and to building a strong, secure Canada, 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 strong, secure communities 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 and intersecting factors that shape their experiences of housing insecurity and homelessness. With 52.9% of Inuit across Inuit Nunangat living in overcrowded housing, and 32.7% in homes requiring major repairs, housing insecurity poses a direct threat to the health, safety and well-being of Inuit women, girls, and gender-diverse Inuit. Inuit women are also six times more likely than non-Indigenous women to live in unsuitable housing. 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 Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Calls for Justice (Recommendation 16.9).

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Safe, adequate housing is foundational to Canada's Arctic sovereignty and northern security agenda. This can be achieved by addressing the housing and shelter crisis facing Inuit women, girls, and gender-diverse Inuit, both across Inuit Nunangat and in urban centres throughout Canada. Pauktuutit calls on the federal government to:

- Ensure the Inuit share of the Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy includes a dedicated, gender-specific allocation for Inuit women's housing and shelter initiatives, co-developed with Pauktuutit and other Inuit women's organizations.
- Direct a defined portion of this distinctions-based Inuit housing fund toward additional shelters, safe houses, transition houses, and second-stage housing for Inuit women, girls, and gender-diverse Inuit fleeing violence.
- Fast-track housing access for those fleeing domestic violence and expand gender-responsive emergency supports; and
- Ensure program design under this Strategy reflects the realities of Inuit communities, including northern construction costs, Inuit Data Sovereignty, and community-identified housing priorities.

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– Invest in culturally grounded, health and well-being systems and services that reflect the rights, realities and distinct needs of 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 often encounter anti-Indigenous racism, violence, and discrimination.

The Federal Government must urgently address systemic failures, including coerced sterilization and regulatory limitations that are neither trauma-informed nor culturally appropriate. Prior to settler contact, Inuit health care was holistic, rooted in cultural, social, and spiritual practices

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that recognized the interconnection of mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being. Federal investments must support Inuit women, girls, and gender-diverse Inuit in reclaiming, leading, and expanding these approaches within mainstream healthcare.

Access to equitable, culturally safe, gendered health services is paramount. Health services must be gender-specific and respond to the full continuum of care for Inuit women, girls, and gender-diverse Inuit, including sexual and reproductive health, mental health, and substance use support.

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.
- Restore accessible Inuit Midwifery education pathways in Inuit Nunangat, including recognized degree programs in post-secondary institutions in Inuit Nunangat and selected provincial learning institutes, ensuring the next generation of Inuit midwives can be trained, practice and lead care on their own lands and terms.
- Uphold the right of all Inuit communities and expectant mothers to choose where and how they give birth, including the right to access culturally safe supports close to home whenever possible
- Fund culturally-specific, gender-responsive health services and healing programs for Inuit women, girls, and gender-diverse Inuit— including traditional healing practices, sexual and reproductive health, 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, gender-specific health solutions improve outcomes, creates meaningful employment in Inuit Nunangat, and advances Inuit self-determination and 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

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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.

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: Recognize and Resource Pauktuutit's Inuit-Specific Gender-Based Analysis Plus (ISGBA+) Framework as a Mandatory, Results-Tracked Tool applied to all Legislation, Policies and Programs affecting Inuit Women, Girls, and Gender-Diverse Inuit.

To ensure federal policies, programs, and major investments, including nation-building projects, deliver measurable results for all Canadians, 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*.

As the government accelerates nation-building projects across Inuit Nunangat, applying ISGBA+ early reduces downstream legal, consultation, and delivery risk, and ensures major investments do not inadvertently deepen the barriers that keep Inuit women out of the skilled trades and resource economy.

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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.

Dedicated, results-tracked, 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. There must be clear accountability measures and public reporting to demonstrate impact.

Investing in Indigenous-specific GBA+ Frameworks strengthens accountable, effective governance and ensures federal investments deliver results for all Canadians.

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 continue to experience disproportionate rates of violence. In Nunavut, Inuit women experience violent crime, including sexual assault, at roughly 12–13 times the rate of women in Canada, while 60% of communities across Inuit Nunangat lack shelters for women and children experiencing violence.

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. These inequalities are rooted in colonial disruption and are perpetuated by chronic underinvestment in Inuit-specific services, infrastructure, prevention and justice responses.

Reconciliation requires accountability, and accountability requires investment.

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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. This should be complemented by strengthened federal accountability for implementation of the *Indigenous Justice Strategy* and the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, as well as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's *Calls to Action*.
- Recognize and support Inuit-led justice and violence prevention as essential to Inuit self-determination, including restorative alternatives to incarceration, with sustained, flexible, multi-year funding for Inuit-designed programs tied to measurable outcomes — focused on reducing incarceration and recidivism and improving community well-being.
- Embed an ISGBA+ lens across all Gender-Based Violence 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 2020 report, *Addressing Gendered Violence Against Inuit Women*, including recruiting more 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.

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 questions.



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