



2025 Federal Budget Submission

Building a Stronger Canada for Everyone

August 28, 2025



The National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE) is a family of 13 Component unions. Taken together, we are one of the largest unions in Canada. Most of our 450,000 members work to deliver public services of every kind to the citizens of their home provinces. We also have a large and growing number of members who work for private businesses.

The office of the National Union of Public and General Employees is on the traditional and unceded territory of the Algonquin peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples.

We recognize the crimes that have been committed and the harm that has been done and dedicate ourselves as a union to moving forward in partnership with Indigenous communities in a spirit of reconciliation and striving for justice.

Bert Blundon, President

Jason MacLean, Secretary-Treasurer

Introduction

We are in a critical moment for our country. U.S. President Donald Trump's tariff threats have already caused tens of thousands of job losses and created massive amounts of economic uncertainty. The threat of additional tariffs still looms. The [Canadian Labour Congress](#) estimates that 2.4 million jobs directly and indirectly depend on exports to the U.S. With Canada's labour force participation stagnating and young people facing a [particularly difficult job market](#), the potential of further job loss is worrying.

The tariffs could affect the cost of living, which has already soared in recent years. People are struggling to meet their needs, with high prices for essentials like food and housing. Public services, which have traditionally helped make life more affordable, are experiencing critical staffing shortages; and, too often, people are being directed to expensive private services, as a result.

Income and wealth inequality continue to rise. Workers' wages have not kept pace with the cost of living, while the rich get richer and large corporations rake in record profits. Federal policies and regulations—such as failing to close tax loopholes that largely benefit the wealthy—have enabled this.

At the same time, the price we're paying for ignoring the threat of climate change is growing. Serious weather events that were once very rare now occur regularly. Climate change, which is driven by inequality, is disproportionately affecting marginalized communities.

To withstand the impact of the Trump administration policies and the climate crisis, Canada faces changes on a scale that we have not seen since the Second World War. Both the federal government and provincial governments will need to show leadership. They will also need the capacity and resources to take the action required and to provide Canadians the support they need.

The size of the challenges we face means that now is a time to build, not cut. We need strong public services to support people through economic transitions. Public spending on things like infrastructure to strengthen the economy and address the climate crisis can also be a powerful tool to bolster Canadian industries. [Nearly 80%](#) of what the Canadian economy produces stays here. It is critical to protect our export-reliant industries in the face of tariffs, and public spending can help do that. However, investments in public services (like education and health care), infrastructure, and housing will also be key to a successful transition.

The federal government not only has a responsibility to safeguard Canadian industries and communities during this time, but also an opportunity to rebuild a stronger, more resilient, and more sustainable economy for the future.

This moment requires leadership and ambitious action. It is not the time to back down on steps that would begin to tackle inequality and strengthen the Canadian economy, such as cancelling the digital services tax and the modest capital gains tax increase. Canada must

not be drawn into Donald Trump's agenda—a pro-war, anti-climate, divisive, and hateful agenda that does not align with what Canadians want or voted for.

Increasing spending on U.S. military equipment or projects and pursuing tax cuts to appease the Trump administration could come at the expense of tens of thousands of [jobs lost](#) and reductions in government transfers—funds for other levels of government, non-profit organizations, and businesses. [Analysis](#) shows that the transfers most likely to be cut are those to First Nations, newcomer supports, veteran supports, international aid, and research and science. These cuts will hurt vital areas like health care and social services that people rely on.

Austerity not only weakens public services but also makes inequality worse. In addition to the impact on income and wealth inequality, this is evident in the proposed cuts to the Department for Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) budget. These cuts are deeply concerning, especially in the context of attacks on women's rights and 2SLGBTQIA+ rights globally. NUPGE has joined gender equality advocates in [calling](#) for the cuts to be reversed. Advancing equity is not at odds with nation building, but is integral to it.

Amidst an affordability crisis, persistent inequality, and the climate crisis, Canadians can't afford cuts. And we can't afford to abandon Canada's own priorities and commitment in favour of Trump's agenda. Additionally, in the pursuit of "nation building," it is worrying if the government views climate targets, Indigenous rights and sovereignty, and health and safety as barriers or inconveniences. These are not only obligations—they are critical to building a stronger, fairer economy. Expanding public services like education and care, acting on climate change, and tackling inequities and injustice are key to rebuilding a Canada that works for everyone.

Fund Strong Public Services

Research shows that spending on public services, social supports, and physical and social infrastructure has [economic benefits](#). As NUPGE members know firsthand, public services help to meet people's needs as well as make our economy strong. Public services that are well funded, universally accessible, and of high quality also help to tackle inequality.

The case of child care is illustrative. A recent study by the [Centre for Future Work](#) found that the federal investment in building a Canada-wide child care system has already led to economic gains. As more families are able to access affordable child care, there has been a rise in labour force participation for women, who still disproportionately shoulder child care responsibilities.

Greater investment in the sector has also led to more jobs and improved earnings. The child care workforce is predominantly women. Racialized women and immigrants or non-permanent residents are overrepresented. Improving wages and working conditions helps to address the inequities in our labour market along lines of gender, race, and immigration status. All of these impacts, as well as indirect benefits such as construction of child care centres, have contributed to an overall boost to Canada's GDP.

These goals—economic gains, supporting workers and families, tackling inequality—are crucial in this current moment and can help us withstand major disruptions. And so, it is vital that Budget 2025 focuses on not only maintaining but strengthening and expanding public services.

During the election campaign, Prime Minister Carney promised not to cut funding transfers. Budget 2025 must honour this commitment.

A priority must be addressing the serious staffing shortages in many public services. While staffing shortages in health care have received the most attention, it is by no means the only sector where staffing shortages are a problem. Problems have been reported in various sectors including wildland firefighting, library services, and corrections. We need public investment to improve wages and working conditions to address these labour shortages. This requires that more funding be allocated.

The long-term human and financial costs of underfunding public services are huge and, contrary to what is often claimed, there are alternatives to austerity. Numerous measures have been identified to increase revenues by making the tax system fairer. For example, the use of tax havens by large corporations is costing Canada an estimated \$15 billion a year. These measures would allow governments to adequately fund public services. The barrier has been that, while governments claim to be making tough decisions, they have been too weak to do what is best for Canada.

It also makes no sense to pay companies that will be sending profits out of Canada for services that we could provide domestically. Outsourcing also makes it harder to ensure the economic benefits of public spending are maximized. It is much easier to include requirements for Canadian content when services are publicly delivered than under privatization schemes like P3s. And, as many of the large consulting and accounting firms involved in privatization schemes are headquartered outside of Canada, privatization schemes mean money flowing out of the country that should be going to meeting the needs of people here.

When it comes to investing in a resilient Canadian economy, the care economy has been neglected from much of the public debate surrounding nation building. However, things like universal public health care and education are of vital importance—to meeting people's needs, for Canadian values and identity, and supporting a strong and healthy economy.

1. Health care recommendations

Canada's health care system—and its workers—are in crisis. According to [research conducted by NUPGE and Abacus Data](#), health professionals are facing significant workplace challenges that jeopardize both their well-being, and the quality of care delivered. Staffing shortages, heavy workloads, inadequate wages top their list of concerns. The vast majority (89%) believe their province's health care system is in crisis.

Fixing the health care worker shortages across the country will require a great deal of coordination. This means the federal government must show leadership. The federal government has the ability to bring together all stakeholders, including unions,

professional associations, educational institutions, regulators, employers, and provincial and territorial governments. And the federal government's financial resources are needed to encourage provinces and territories to adopt the long-term solutions we need to end the crisis, instead of expensive Band-Aid solutions that rely on poaching workers from other regions or parts of the health care system.

NUPGE calls on the federal government to develop and implement a pan-Canadian health human resources (HHR) strategy to coordinate retention and recruitment efforts across the country. Federal and provincial governments should work together to create long-term workforce planning initiatives that address immediate shortages while preparing for future health care demands. This includes better funding for public health care positions, investments in workforce training, and policies that prioritize full-time employment over temporary agency staffing.

The absence of a coordinated pan-Canadian strategy has led to inconsistent regulations, continued reliance on agency workers in some jurisdictions, interprovincial competition, and temporary incentives that fail to address the root causes of workforce shortages.

The retention of health care workers is crucial to ensuring the stability and effectiveness of Canada's public health care system. Without effective retention of highly skilled health care workers, it will be impossible to keep recruiting to deal with high turnover. Key to retention is wage increases and pensionable incentives, including targeted incentives in rural and underserved areas. Enhanced mental health supports and flexible work arrangements are also critical.

NUPGE urges the federal government to significantly increase funding for health care worker retention programs, including creating an immediate emergency fund for this purpose in Budget 2025.

The federal government should establish a National Health Workforce Information System to standardize data collection and promote effective planning and policymaking. As part of a HHR strategy, the government should also establish a Public Agency for Mobile Health Workers Staffing to oversee and regulate the use of temporary health care professionals.

The strategy should be consistent with the World Health Organization Global Code of Practice of the International Recruitment of Health Personnel to ensure ethical recruitment from other countries.

Taking a lead in the coordination and planning of the HHR crisis is only one of the areas where action is needed. The federal government has a critical role to play in funding health care that it has been failing to meet. NUPGE calls on the federal government to increase the Canada Health Transfer to reach an immediate rate of 35% of public health care costs, with future increases targeted to reach 50% of expenditures.

Federal transfers must be contingent on concurrently increased provincial and territorial health care investments, while enforcing compliance through an expanded and strengthened *Canada Health Act*.

NUPGE also reiterates its call for the expansion of public health care to include single-payer pharmacare, mental health services, long-term care, dental care, and virtual health care. In particular, we call for bringing long-term care and home care under the *Canada Health Act*, developing a national strategy to reform and support the public system, and investing in public long-term care facilities to address shortages. We also urge the federal government to build on the important foundation laid by the *Pharmacare Act* and create a comprehensive essential medicine list to ensure broad and effective coverage.

For-profit virtual health care is expanding quickly without regulation to ensure it conforms to the principles of the *Canada Health Act*. The federal government must act to ensure compliance. Private virtual health care is one example of the unprecedented expansion for-profit health care delivery in Canada, which represents a direct threat to public health care and must be stopped. An exodus of public health care professionals to for-profit health care undermines our public health care system and federal funding should not be allowed to flow to for-profit health care.

It is also important to address inequities in the health care system.

In addition to the struggles everyone is facing in accessing health care, people with marginalized identities face additional barriers. Women, gender-diverse people, people with disabilities, and Black, Indigenous, and people of colour (BIPOC) report higher instances of medical gaslighting—particularly when reporting pain symptoms—due to biases and systemic discrimination. BIPOC women, especially Black women, often experience misdiagnosis or delayed diagnosis due to health care provider bias. According to a study done by the Canadian Medical Association, Indigenous women report worse physical and mental health and a higher prevalence of diagnosed chronic diseases.

People with disabilities report experiencing barriers related to misconceptions or assumptions about their disability, or having their concerns dismissed. People with disabilities also experience poorer health outcomes and lower life expectancies than those without disabilities. This is largely attributed to systemic ableism and underfunding in the health care system.

Proper funding for health care is key to ensuring that all people can access health care. Governments must also adopt an intersectional lens to help address these disparities.

For example, women's health research receives less than 7% of medical research funding in Canada, according to the Women's Health Collective Canada. NUPGE calls on the federal government to increase funding for programs and research related to the health of women and gender diverse people.

It is important that the government collect disaggregated data in order to help understand and respond to the inequities in our health system and other public services.

2. Post-secondary education recommendations

The federal government's cap on international student study permits and restrictions on the post-graduation work permit (PGWP) program has led to a sudden drop in enrolments, which is having a disruptive impact on our public post-secondary education (PSE) system.

Colleges and universities have implemented hiring freezes and even layoffs, cut services, and suspended or eliminated programs, with colleges being hit the hardest.

This has exposed PSE institutions' growing reliance on student fees, particularly from international students, as a source of revenue. This is because the share of PSE funding that comes from governments has declined over time.

NUPGE has called on the federal government to work with provinces to provide emergency funds to public colleges and universities that are experiencing significant financial hardship to prevent job loss and cuts to programs and services. These funds should be restricted to supporting programs, services, and staff, not capital expenditures or administration.

This must be accompanied by a long-term strategy and funding. Over the past several decades, the federal government has significantly decreased the amount it provides to PSE. The federal government must renew its role in funding PSE.

NUPGE once again calls on the federal government to create a dedicated Canada Education Transfer for PSE and establish national standards for this funding to ensure that PSE is publicly administered, accessible and affordable to all, and of high quality.

3. Child care recommendations

The federal government has made historic investments in building the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care system. This has had a real impact on reducing costs and expanding the number of child care spaces. However, gaps remain. The increase in the number of spaces has not kept pace with demand, and many families still can't access affordable child care.

There continue to be worker shortages. The workforce—predominantly women, many of whom are racialized and newcomers—has long been undervalued, with low wages, lack of benefits, and challenging working conditions.

Investing in high-quality early learning and child care is a win-win: for children, families, and our economy. A [November 2024 study](#) found that the program has led to significant job growth in the child care sector, improved wages, and supported an increase in women's labour force participation, which grew by 110,000 workers from 2019 to 2024.

Budget 2025 must continue to build on the progress made and address the remaining gaps. Specifically, child care advocates have recommended that the federal government increase the Early Learning and Child Care Infrastructure Fund by \$15 billion over the next five years. As NUPGE has advocated in the past, public funding must go towards expanding non-profit and publicly owned and operated child care. Research shows that for-profit child care is less likely to be affordable, accessible, equitable, and high quality.

Advocates also recommend allocating an additional \$10 billion to expanding the child care workforce. Fair compensation and benefits are critical to improving retention and growing the workforce that is so needed to support the expansion of the child care system.

4. Housing recommendations

In their response to the housing crisis, too often the federal government and provincial governments have ignored the role that the financialization of housing has played. Instead of being viewed as a need, housing is increasingly treated as a source of profit for investors. This has pushed up rents and the price of home ownership.

Given the role of financialization, programs that focus on assisting for-profit developers will not make housing more affordable. Instead, to ensure people have homes they can afford, the focus must be on non-market housing.

The recent announcement that the federal government will be setting up a federal entity to build affordable housing (Build Canada Homes) has the potential to play an important role in increasing the supply of affordable housing, but only if the housing that is built remains non-market. The suggestion in the [Market Sounding Guide](#) of partnerships with private investors or for-profit developers sounds suspiciously like the policies of previous governments that have failed to provide homes at prices or rents people can afford.

For that reason, NUPGE is calling for the focus of Build Canada Homes and other federal programs to be on building non-market, affordable social housing including public housing, supportive housing, and co-op housing, as well as providing funding for rehabilitating existing housing. To assist those most in need, transfer payments through the Canada Social Transfer (CST) need to be increased with the requirement that they be directed towards raising social assistance rates. The federal government also needs to increase funding for publicly-delivered social services that prevent people from experiencing homelessness.

Focusing on non-market housing also provides the federal government with an opportunity to do more to build homes that remain affordable in perpetuity. New types of housing are needed to reduce emissions from housing, build housing in ways that are less vulnerable to extreme weather events, and reduce the impact new development has on the cost of municipal services. In the 1970s, the federal government played a key role in getting successful mixed-income neighbourhoods built. Today, with the same willingness to innovate, the housing the federal government builds could be providing models for more resilient neighbourhoods.

5. Justice for Indigenous peoples recommendations

The commitment to reconciliation has been lacking so far in this new government's time in office. The talk of "nation building" without respect for Indigenous rights and sovereignty is not only concerning but also counterproductive. The federal government has legal obligations to respect Indigenous rights and sovereignty, especially meaningful consultation and consent in the development of infrastructure. What's more, respecting Indigenous peoples' sovereignty and leadership will be integral to building a stronger country. Indigenous peoples are leaders in climate action, for example.

Building a stronger country also requires remedying the longstanding injustices facing Indigenous peoples across these lands. The federal government is directly addressed in 76

of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action and addressed in 215 of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls' 231 Calls to Justice. However, only a handful have been implemented and fulfilled. The Calls to Action and Calls to Justice are not checkboxes; they outline the first steps to meaningful reconciliation, which requires urgent action and sustained change.

Long-term drinking water advisories continue to be a problem in First Nations communities on reserves, despite the federal government's promise in 2015 to end all long-term advisories by 2021. This is the result of failing infrastructure, being forced to use systems not designed for the environment, lack of funding, and lack of investment in training and maintenance, leading to unsafe drinking water and a myriad of health problems. If this happened in any Canadian town or city, there would be immediate outcry and resources to fix the problem.

NUPGE calls on the federal government to commit immediate resources in Budget 2025 to fulfill its commitment to providing clean water to First Nations communities on reserves under water advisories. We also urge you to fund Indigenous-led solutions to long-term water issues in First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities, ensuring that Indigenous communities have control over their water resources and decontamination efforts.

Indigenous women, girls, and gender diverse people continue to face disproportionate risk of violence, and are overrepresented in the population of missing, murdered, and abducted persons. The *Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls* underscored the "persistent and deliberate human and Indigenous rights violations and abuses" at the root of Canada's staggering level of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people, and it delivered the 231 Calls for Justice.

NUPGE calls on the federal government to invest the necessary resources to fulfil the Calls for Justice. We urge the government to implement a nationwide Red Dress Alert system when an Indigenous woman, girl, or gender diverse person is missing, abducted, or at a similar risk of harm.

It is also important to address the lack of reliable and consistent services in rural and remote communities that can contribute to this problem. This is illustrated by the ongoing disproportionate victimization of Indigenous women, girls, and gender diverse people which is known to occur along the Highway of Tears in British Columbia. NUPGE calls for funding for reliable digital services (including cellular) and public transportation in rural and northern communities, with priority given to communities most affected by violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender diverse people.

6. Social safety net recommendations

In the face of tariff threats, Canadians are bracing for increased unemployment and a potential recession. The federal government must take this moment to rebuild the social safety net—not just for emergency relief, but for the long term. Foremost, we need to strengthen income supports. As we saw during the COVID-19 pandemic, years of cuts have

meant that the Employment Insurance (EI) system no longer provides the safety net that is needed in difficult times.

NUPGE, again, calls on the federal government to reform EI to strengthen the protection it provides workers, including introducing a universal qualifying rule of 360 hours or 12 weeks, increasing both the benefit rate and duration, and recognizing the employment continuity of seasonal workers in sectors like education.

Changes to EI will help ensure everyone in Canada is treated fairly. Most vulnerable workers—particularly [racialized workers and newcomers](#), and also women, youth, and low-income workers in precarious work—will be affected by an economic downturn triggered by U.S. tariffs. Employed in part-time, casual, sporadic, and misclassified jobs, many of these vulnerable workers will struggle to access EI benefits under existing rules.

People with disabilities experience poverty at disproportionately high rates and have a lower employment rate than people without disabilities. While there is a need for better disaggregated data to better measure the full picture, we know that women with disabilities, Indigenous people with disabilities, and racialized people with disabilities are more likely to face poverty or unemployment. This means that they are more affected by rising cost of living and economic uncertainty, including the threats of recession and cuts.

NUPGE welcomed the introduction of the Canada Disability Benefit (CDB). However, we have echoed the concerns of disability justice organizations and people with disabilities. Primarily, the amount provided by the CDB is too low. The maximum of \$200 per month (or \$2,400 per year) is nowhere near enough to meet basic needs and will not lift people with disabilities out of poverty.

NUPGE calls for Budget 2025 to increase funding in order to raise the CDB amount. The benefit must be livable.

We also call for addressing barriers to applying for disability supports. Instead of using the Disability Tax Credit as part of the eligibility criteria for the CDB, which prevents the people with disabilities who need the CDB most from accessing it, it would make the benefit more accessible (and more cost effective) if the federal government worked with provinces and territories to automatically enroll anyone receiving provincial/territorial disability benefits.

It is also critical that the federal government improve public pension and retirement security programs.

7. Tax fairness recommendations

Whether it's at the grocery store or when making travel plans, Canadians have been looking for ways to support their country. They are trying to buy Canadian. They are avoiding travel to the United States.

Unfortunately, too often the tax system does exactly the opposite. Foreign owned multinationals that make huge profits from Canada through online sales are being let off the hook. Even a relatively minor measure like the digital services tax has been dropped. Loopholes and weak enforcement allow the wealthy to keep funneling more and more

money into tax havens. At the same time, services that working people rely on are being allowed to deteriorate.

Allowing the wealthy and large corporations to avoid paying their share while low- and middle-income Canadians pay the price was never acceptable. But now it should be unthinkable.

With the challenges Canada is facing, any government with even a gram of patriotism would be making the tax system fairer so it no longer allows the wealthy and large corporations to avoid paying their share by moving money out of the country. They would be ensuring that foreign-owned digital multinationals are taxed fairly so that Canadian businesses aren't placed at a disadvantage.

A list of what's needed could fill a dozen budget submissions and will be incomplete, but NUPGE urges the government to prioritize the following measures:

- Close loopholes and reverse income tax cuts that have disproportionately benefited the wealthy and large corporations
- Introduce a wealth tax and a tax on excessive profits
- Commit the resources and make the legislative and regulatory changes necessary to deal with tax avoidance
- Rescind the cancellation of the digital services tax

8. Artificial intelligence recommendation

Like any technology, whether the increased use of artificial intelligence (AI) benefits Canada will depend on how it is used. If AI is used to support workers and make them more productive, it can be a force for good. But we have also seen serious problems with dangerous mistakes occurring when AI is used. These have included people being denied services that they were actually eligible for and people being fired from jobs because of racial biases built into many AI systems.

This means that, when governments are trying to encourage the development of AI in Canada, they need to consider how it will be used. That includes how federal government funding is allocated.

NUPGE calls on the federal government to ensure that the priority for AI funding is encouraging the development of systems that strengthen the capacity of governments in Canada and benefit all residents. To ensure accountability, there needs to be public control and delivery of publicly funded services using AI. This will also help ensure a level playing field and mean that it will be Canadian businesses/organizations rather than U.S.-based multinationals that benefit.

9. Military spending recommendation

Over the last few months, the Trump administration has been continually moving the goal posts for Canada. When it looks like Canada is going to meet Trump's demands, new

demands are made. This means that any attempt to appease the Trump administration by meeting those demands is doomed to failure.

Instead, demands from the Trump administration that involve increased military spending need to be evaluated based on whether they will make Canada safer. In cases where spending would see billions going towards equipment or projects that have the potential to fuel an arm race and make us more dependent on the United States, no new funding should be provided, and existing commitments should be reviewed.

10. Climate action recommendations

While Trump's trade war has been described as existential for the Canadian economy, the climate crisis is an existential threat for the globe. As we experience yet another summer of devastating wildfires, there is no doubt that climate change is here. Its impacts are becoming more severe, and taking action to mitigate climate change and adapt to its effects is more urgent than ever.

Canada has made some important strides towards reducing emissions and supporting a Just Transition, but there is much left to do. While the fossil fuel lobby tries to argue that taking action on climate change is too costly, the reality is [we can't afford](#) inaction or to backslide on the progress that's been made. What's more, a [green industrial strategy](#) will help Canada build a more sustainable and resilient economy for the future by [reducing our dependence](#) on the U.S. and volatile fossil fuels.

We must continue to decarbonize our economy, not only because we have a responsibility to future generations, but also obligations under Canadian law and international treaties. The government must invest in emissions reduction efforts such as supporting a more interconnected energy grid based on renewables, investing in public transit both within and between communities, and green affordable housing.

Shifting to a low-carbon economy through a Just Transition for workers and communities will also help build a stronger and more equitable economy that can better withstand future disruptions. NUPGE urges the government to build on the work done to advance a Just Transition, including allocating the necessary resources to support the Sustainable Jobs Partnership Council and implement the Sustainable Jobs Action Plan due later this year.

Indigenous peoples have long been stewards of the lands and waters, and they are leaders in climate solutions. Respecting Indigenous rights and sovereignty is climate action. The federal government must honour its commitments and obligations to Indigenous peoples and support Indigenous-led climate initiatives, including through funding.

Public services—and the workers who deliver them—have a key role to play in tackling the climate crisis. A strong public sector can help to support decarbonization, such as public transit or publicly owned and operated energy systems. It also helps us adapt to the climate crisis, as many public services support people and communities through the impacts of climate change, from health issues to disaster planning and response. Investing in public services is part of climate action.

Wildland firefighters, for example, are on the front lines of the climate crisis, as they battle longer and more severe wildfire seasons due to climate change. They face increasingly difficult and dangerous conditions and risks to their health and safety while protecting our communities. What's worse, they continue to be undervalued and unrecognized. NUPGE has been calling on the federal government for fair treatment for wildland firefighters. In particular, removing the federal barriers preventing wildland firefighters from receiving the benefits and protections due to all firefighters and public safety personnel, and including wildland firefighters in the "firefighter" category in the National Occupation Classification.

Summary of Recommendations

Health care

1. Develop and implement a pan-Canadian HHR strategy to coordinate retention and recruitment efforts across the country.
2. Significantly increase funding for health care worker retention programs, including creating an immediate emergency fund for this purpose in Budget 2025.
3. Establish a National Health Workforce Information System to standardize data collection and promote effective planning and policymaking.
4. As part of a HHR strategy, establish a Public Agency for Mobile Health Workers Staffing to oversee and regulate the use of temporary health care professionals.
5. Increase the Canada Health Transfer to reach an immediate rate of 35% of public health care costs, with future increases targeted to reach 50% of expenditures.
6. Expand the public health care system to include single-payer pharmacare, mental health services, long-term care, dental care, and virtual health care.
7. Increase funding for programs and research related to the health of women and gender diverse people.

Post secondary education

8. Work with provinces to provide emergency funds to public colleges and universities that are experiencing significant financial hardship to prevent job loss and cuts to programs and services. These funds should be restricted to supporting programs, services, and staff, not capital expenditures or administration.
9. Create a dedicated Canada Education Transfer for PSE and establish national standards for this funding to ensure that PSE is publicly administered, accessible and affordable to all, and of high quality.

Child care

10. Increase the Early Learning and Child Care Infrastructure Fund by \$15 billion over the next five years, ensuring public funding goes towards expanding non-profit and publicly owned and operated child care.
11. Allocate an additional \$10 billion to expanding the child care workforce.

Housing

12. The focus of Build Canada Homes and other federal programs should be on building non-market, affordable social housing including public housing, supportive housing, and co-op housing, as well as providing funding for rehabilitating existing housing.
13. Increase transfer payments through the CST.
14. Increase funding for publicly delivered social services that prevent people from experiencing homelessness.

Justice for Indigenous peoples

15. Commit immediate resources in Budget 2025 to fulfill its commitment to provide clean water to First Nations communities on reserves under water advisories.
16. Fund Indigenous-led solutions to long-term water issues in First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities, ensuring that Indigenous communities have control over their water resources and decontamination efforts.
17. Invest the necessary resources to fulfil the Calls for Justice and the Calls to Action that are federal government responsibilities.
18. Fund a nationwide Red Dress Alert system when an Indigenous woman, girl, or gender diverse person is missing, abducted, or at a similar risk of harm.
19. Funding for reliable digital services (including cellular) and public transportation in rural and northern communities, with priority given to communities most affected by violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender diverse people.

Social safety net

20. Reform EI to strengthen the protection it provides workers, including introducing a universal qualifying rule of 360 hours or 12 weeks, increasing both the benefit rate and duration, and recognizing the employment continuity of seasonal workers in sectors like education.
21. Increase funding in order to raise the CDB amount and work with provinces and territories to make it easier to access.

Tax fairness

22. Close loopholes and reverse income tax cuts that have disproportionately benefited the wealthy and large corporations.
23. Introduce a wealth tax and a tax on excessive profits.
24. Commit the resources and make the legislative and regulatory changes necessary to deal with tax avoidance.
25. Rescind the cancellation of the digital services tax.

Artificial intelligence

26. To ensure that the priority for funding for AI is encouraging the development of systems that strengthen the capacity of governments in Canada and benefit all Canadians.
27. To ensure accountability, there needs to be public control and delivery of publicly funded services using AI.

Military spending

28. Plans for increased military spending need to be evaluated based on whether they will make Canada safer, rather than the level of support for them from the Trump administration.

Climate action

29. Invest in emissions reduction efforts such as supporting a more interconnected energy grid based on renewables, investing in public transit both within and between communities, and green affordable housing.
30. Allocate the necessary resources to support the Sustainable Jobs Partnership Council and implement the Sustainable Jobs Action Plan due later this year.
31. Honour commitments and obligations to support Indigenous-led climate initiatives, including through funding.
32. Remove the federal barriers preventing wildland firefighters from receiving the benefits and protections due to all firefighters and public safety personnel, and include wildland firefighters in the “firefighter” category in the National Occupation Classification.