

Why Employment Insurance (EI) reform matters

For gender-based violence work



CANADIAN CENTER
FOR WOMEN'S
EMPOWERMENT

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POUR L'AUTONOMISATION
DES FEMMES



EI is designed to provide financial support to people during periods of job loss, transition, or recovery by providing temporary income support. While EI is intended to function as a safety net, its current design does not account for the complex barriers faced by individuals experiencing GBV and economic abuse.

EI is a critical tool in responding to gender-based violence (GBV) and economic abuse as it can:

Center Safety: For survivors of economic abuse and GBV, access to timely and adequate income is often the deciding factor in whether they can leave an unsafe situation.

Build Economic Stability: For survivors, EI can reduce financial vulnerability and create space to rebuild stability, heal from trauma, and pursue sustainable employment opportunities.

How EI organizations can support EI reforms

EI reform is Gender-Based Violence prevention. By acting as trusted intermediaries in the administration of EI-related supports where appropriate, the GBV sector can help reduce the barriers to EI access for people experiencing GBV and economic abuse. This includes:

1. Work with the Canada Employment Insurance Commission (CEIC) to support more flexible identification and documentation requirements

Shelters, social workers, or community organizations could help with identification and confirmation of documentation. People experiencing GBV and economic abuse may not have access to identification documents, as these are often controlled by the person causing harm or because they have left in a hurry. Without proper identification, opening a bank account or receiving benefits can be impossible. Without safe access to banking, identification, and private financial tools, even survivors who qualify for EI may not be able to receive, protect, or use that support safely.

2. Partner with EI-related support systems

Formal partnerships between EI-related supports and shelters, community organizations, legal aid services, and settlement agencies could facilitate application support and allow trusted intermediaries to verify circumstances where appropriate. Embedding EI access within existing survivor support pathways would create more seamless and trauma-informed entry points to income supports.

For more on EI reform and the full policy recommendations, visit <https://ccfwe.org/employment-insurance-and-economic-abuse/>