



# Federal Budget 2021

## Briefing note for members of the Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences

**April 22, 2021**

On April 19, the federal government unveiled [the 2021 budget](#), its first since the global pandemic began.

When the Honourable Chrystia Freeland began [her address](#) to the House of Commons, she was making history as Canada's first woman to present a federal budget. Though long overdue, it was an important moment and one worth celebrating.

She described a budget designed to help Canadians recover from COVID-19, and to help those who have been disproportionately affected, including, in the government's words, "low-wage workers, young people, women, and racialized Canadians."

The budget has been built around [five major themes](#): Job Creation; Small Business and Growth; Women, Early Learning and Childcare; Climate Action and a Green Economy; and Young Canadians. Among the government's most notable commitments is to "build a Canada-wide early learning and child care system." If successfully implemented, this promise could lead to badly-needed reforms that will not only strengthen the economy but will make life better for children and working parents, and for women in particular whose lives and careers are disproportionately affected by inadequate childcare options.

The budget's various commitments to support social and racial justice includes funding for more representative data collection by Statistics Canada, and a modest \$12 million over the next three years for "the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council to fund academic research into systemic barriers facing diverse groups."

As a community of scholars, we can be encouraged by the government's new commitments to support Indigenous post-secondary education; enhance financial assistance for university and college students; and to help "make high-quality, post-secondary minority-language education available across Canada."

However, despite its many important commitments, it remains to be seen how this budget relates to the broader research agenda the government [announced in Budget 2018](#). With a potential federal election on the horizon, it will be important for the government, and all political parties, to discuss their vision for how Ottawa should support the essential contributions of post secondary research and education, and of the social sciences and humanities in particular.