

Betterwayalliance.caTW: [@betterwayCAN](#)IG/FB/LI: [@betterwayalliance](#)**March 31, 2023****Re: Canada's 2023 Federal Budget****Dear Minister Freeland and Prime Minister Trudeau,**

The Better Way Alliance, Canada's Ethical Employer Network, is glad to provide insights from our Members on the 2023 Federal Budget.

Since launching in 2017, the Better Way Alliance has attracted Canadian businesses that take a holistic approach to employment and Canada's economy. Employees are the greatest assets of any business - when they do well, our whole country succeeds.

In 2023 we're facing unique challenges that require measured response. Governments create the conditions for job creation and small business success. With the global economy in turmoil, shoring up Canada's business resilience is critical. **Our members highlight continued challenges with:**

- **Quickly rising rent**
- **Heavy CEBA Loan repayments**
- **Cost of goods**

Below are three ideas that will help us all do well. We know this government aspires to stay in touch with Canada's small businesses and support their needs during this difficult time. These are evidence-based recommendations from experienced business owners in our network. We're focused on the future at the BWA and these recommendations will make it much easier for businesses to fill their labour and space requirements with success.

Best Wishes,

Aaron Binder
Liliana Camacho

Directors,
Better Way Alliance

Better Way Alliance Recommendations

1. Create a dynamic environment for both workers and businesses by focusing on high-quality jobs supported by strong employment standards

We understand the importance of increased immigration to address labour shortages, especially to fill in population gaps. However, to rely on immigration to solve labour shortage issues that are rooted in poor employment standards is short-sighted and unfair.

We know that in sectors like foodservice, healthcare and retail, labour shortages are at least partially due to poor wages and working conditions.

It is important that any initiative to address labour shortages through increased immigration also simultaneously strengthens and addresses employment standards.

Otherwise, we are simply asking a population to work under poor conditions because those jobs are considered unsuitable for Canadians.

Strengthening vulnerable industries and sectors has to include a plan for good, stable employment, regardless of whether those jobs are being filled by Canadians or by newcomers. Jobs that pay well, offer Paid Sick Days & Stable Scheduling support a better economy and spread the wealth to Canada's locally owned businesses.

The Federal government has already taken steps to achieve better employment for Federally regulated employees. The recent Federal minimum wage increase & adoption of 10 Paid Sick Days will ensure economic and health prosperity for workers and businesses after a brief adjustment period.

Canada is [one of the few OECD](#) or G20 countries without any form of short-term legislated Paid Sick Days. This continues to dampen the buying power of workers and reduce the productivity of Canada's businesses. We also know it's often women and racialized workers without this benefit. We hope that as your government eyes future investments in provinces that legislated Paid Sick Days become part of the conversation. A minimum amount of Paid Sick Days for all workers in Canada will help unlock the power of our shared economy and benefit everyone.

2. Ensure that immigrants have a clear pathway to permanent employment and citizenship.

The economic benefits of regularizing migrant and immigrant workers are [well known](#). Whether workers are placed for a season or multiple years, there are economic and cultural benefits to regularizing these participants in Canada's economy.

Without regularization, these workers that feed Canadian families cannot access healthcare even though they pay income and consumption taxes in our country. **Through Regularization, migrant workers become even more of a net positive contributor to Canada's economy.** With an ongoing labour shortage, regularization will increase access to a productive, engaged workforce that is able to use time off and insurance when they need it.

For decades, Migrant and Immigrant workers have contributed to Canada's growing and diverse entrepreneur community as both workers and business owners. Unlocking regularization will continue to create better employment pathways and standards while assisting businesses that need quality workers now.

3. Create an accessible pathway for more small and medium sized business owners to acquire commercial property.

Commercial rent has been going up at unprecedented rates across Canada. This is leaving many businesses making the difficult decision to either leave communities or shutter their operation.

Provincial and Municipal governments are beginning to explore legislative options to regulate this wild-west industry. In 2022, the Better Way Alliance launched [CommercialRent.ca](#) to bring attention to this growing issue.

Business Owners purchasing property is one way to increase agency and control over their own businesses. However, there are still many barriers for businesses that desire a property purchase. Even qualified businesses with decades-long histories of perfect rent payments are often deemed too risky to qualify for mortgages by banks.

The out-of-reach pathway to purchasing property is stifling qualified businesses and putting them under unnecessary risk due to exposure to uncontrolled rents and unregulated landlord relationships.

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A government pilot program specifically designed for businesses with successful track records to purchase their commercial spaces would increase longevity of brick and mortar businesses within their communities and allow them to plan ahead with more certainty.

Conclusion

Better Way Alliance members are resilient businesses building company cultures that our employees thrive in. This often comes with an increased quality of living for our people compared to peer workplaces - but rising costs are making it harder for us to create great local jobs.

Our network of businesses hail from diverse backgrounds and touch every part of Canadian's lives. We're real people that want to build a fairer world. We firmly believe that when workers do well, our businesses do well - and that benefits everyone in Canada.

We look forward to continuing our discussion with you and the Canadian Government over the coming months. Locally owned businesses are the backbone of Canada - let's work together and get back to thriving communities.