

NEWS RELEASE

CPRA Welcomes Federal Budget 2025 and Stands Ready to Partner on Youth Jobs, Community Health, and Resilience

(November 5, 2025) – The Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) welcomes the 2025 Federal Budget and the government’s renewed focus on youth employment, community health, emergency preparedness, and infrastructure renewal. CPRA looks forward to working with the federal government to translate these priorities into measurable results in communities across Canada.

Budget 2025 sets a collaborative path forward for the federal government and Canada’s recreation and parks sector. The measures outlined align with CPRA’s long-standing priorities—helping young people access meaningful jobs, improving public and mental health, and building safer, more resilient communities.

“Parks and recreation professionals and the communities they serve are facing steep challenges—from aging infrastructure and youth unemployment to limited mental-health supports and rising climate-related emergencies,” said Martin Sampson, CEO, Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA). “Concrete results are possible when the federal government and our sector work together to deliver local solutions that improve public health, create meaningful jobs for youth, and build more vibrant, resilient communities.”

Youth Employment and Skills Development

CPRA is encouraged by significant investments that will help young Canadians build skills and careers while supporting community programs, including:

- “\$307.9 million over two years, starting in 2026–27, for the Youth Employment and Skills Strategy (YESS) to support training, mentorship, and wraparound supports for approximately 20,000 youth facing barriers annually.”
- “\$594.7 million over two years, starting in 2026–27, for Canada Summer Jobs, supporting roughly 100,000 summer positions for youth.”
- “\$40 million over two years, starting in 2026–27, to launch a Youth Climate Corps, offering paid training to help young Canadians respond to climate emergencies and strengthen community resilience.”

These commitments align with CPRA’s recommendation that the federal government position CPRA as a national delivery partner within YESS—expanding employment and mentorship opportunities in recreation and parks to address local staffing shortages while advancing equity and well-being.

Public and Mental Health

Recreation is preventive health care. While Budget 2025 does not include any new funding for mental health supports, particularly for youth and marginalized populations, CPRA urges the federal government to embed community recreation within the national mental-health and

wellness approach—especially for youth and marginalized populations—to reduce pressure on health systems and improve quality of life.

Emergency Preparedness and Community Resilience

CPRA supports the Budget’s focus on safety and readiness—including investments to modernize public alerting systems, expand aerial firefighting capacity, and launch a Youth Climate Corps—which align with CPRA’s vision of recreation facilities as vital resilience hubs.

Recreation centres, arenas, and parks routinely serve as evacuation shelters, cooling and warming centres, and coordination hubs during natural disasters. CPRA’s proposed Crisis Preparedness Fund—a \$2 million annual initiative—would train recreation professionals and equip facilities to respond more effectively in emergencies.

Recreation Infrastructure Renewal

While Budget 2025 does not yet include a dedicated stream for recreation infrastructure, CPRA is encouraged by the government’s plan to launch the Build Communities Strong Fund—ongoing funding to support community infrastructure through Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada.

CPRA continues to recommend a dedicated Recreation Infrastructure Renewal Program—\$100 million per year—to modernize arenas, pools, community centres, and parks that are essential to health, safety, inclusion, and local economies.

Our Recommendations to Advance Budget Priorities

1. Designate CPRA as a national delivery partner within the Youth Employment and Skills Strategy (YESS) to expand high-quality jobs and mentorships in recreation and parks.
2. Embed recreation as preventive health within Canada’s mental-health and wellness approach, with targeted supports for youth and marginalized populations.
3. Establish CPRA’s Crisis Preparedness Fund of \$2 million annually to train staff and equip recreation facilities as resilience hubs.
4. Create a dedicated Recreation Infrastructure Renewal Program of \$100 million annually to modernize aging facilities and reduce emissions.
5. Ensure the forthcoming Build Communities Strong Fund includes a stream for recreation and parks projects to accelerate renewal nationwide.

“This Budget lays the groundwork for progress built on partnership,” added Sampson. “CPRA welcomes the government’s priorities and stands ready to work hand-in-hand to deliver measurable outcomes that strengthen health, opportunity, and community resilience nationwide.”

CPRA welcomes the Budget and looks forward to collaborating with the federal government to implement its priorities—helping more youth access meaningful jobs, improving public and mental health, and ensuring communities are equipped for the challenges ahead.

About CPRA

The Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) is dedicated to building healthy, safe, and resilient communities through the power of parks and recreation. CPRA champions the work of professionals who deliver essential services—from supporting public and mental health to creating youth employment opportunities and leading emergency preparedness. Representing 13 provincial and territorial associations serving over 90 per cent of communities nationwide, CPRA advances well-being, inclusion, and sustainability through advocacy, research, and capacity-building.

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