



Marking a Century of Women's Suffrage
Commémorer un siècle du droit de vote des femmes

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Women, Paid Work, and Leadership

This toolkit has **three main objectives**:

1. To **engage and educate** women on issues of gendered employment and leadership abilities that affect their daily lives in work and in day-to-day
2. To **enable** women across Canada to explore different pathways to seeking leadership roles, entering traditionally gendered fields of study and employment, and overcoming the barriers to employment and pay equity, or become a strong voice for such issues
3. To **provide** policy options, strategies for engagement, and tools of empowerment to allow women to be aware of solutions for equalizing leadership roles and employment paths in Canada



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This toolkit is a way for women to collaborate and bridge the barriers that have been established between these two communities due to colonialism. Canadian women are still facing discrimination in the workplace and enormous barriers to attaining leadership positions across all sectors, including politics.

Thank you!

The development of this toolkit was led by delegates **Elinor McNamee** and **Sarah Toole**, but is the collective effort of dozens of Daughters with the encouragement dozens more.

A sincere thank you to all of the Daughters of the Vote who contributed and supported this project with their commentions, questions, suggestions, personal and professional experience, expertise, and encouragement. Thank you to **Sabrina Andrews, Zafreen Jaffer, Mary Go,** and **Jessica Jahn.**

***The Daughters of the Vote** are a diverse and dynamic group of passionate and engaged young women from across Canada. As an initiative aimed at marking the expansion of the franchise to a small minority of women, the issue of women in professional and paid work and in leadership positions is central to the objective of Daughters of the Vote. During the historic sitting in the House of Common, Daughters heard from Rona Ambrose and Kim Campbell, delegates also rose to speak about women's leadership, including in the Conservative party and as young women with political ambition. Other delegates spoke to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women about their own leadership, the importance of women in politics, women in STEM and more.*



Overview

Regardless of the reasons you believe these problems are occurring or the policy solutions you think best address them, it's undeniable that Canadian women are still facing discrimination in the workplace and enormous barriers to attaining leadership positions across all sectors, including politics. The reasons are vast, but here are some of the facts:

- **Canadian women still face a gendered pay gap:** Statistics Canada reports that, on average, women make 87 cents for every dollar earned by a man¹. The gendered wage gap is even larger when other factors, including race and ability, are taken into consideration.
- **Canadian women are underrepresented in politics and leadership positions:** Canada is currently ranked 64th in the world for gender representation in federal parliament, with only 26.3% of seats occupied by women². Women still continue to face enormous discrimination when pursuing leadership positions.
- **Women are underrepresented in several fields of employment:** including, but certainly not limited to; Sciences, Technologies, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM), Agriculture, and various Trades. While there is an underrepresentation of women in this field, there is not a lack of female interest or capability in these positions.

The following sections in this toolkit will help you begin to understand a few of these issues, why they matter, and give you some tips on getting engaged to make change in your community..

Scope

Drawing on the opinion and expertise of Daughters of the Votes delegates, we narrowed the scope of this broad topic to three focus areas:

- 1) Gendered discrepancies in the workplace: issues of pay gaps and social barriers to employment
- 2) Challenges to leadership: in politics, businesses and boards, and tackling the glass ceiling
- 3) Fields in which women are underrepresented: STEM, trades, and agriculture

As the chosen focus areas are still quite complex, it is important to think of this toolkit as a starting place for those interested in learning about these issues as opposed to an in depth

¹ Moyser, M. (2017). [Women and Paid Work](#). Statistics Canada.

² The Inter-Parliamentary Union. (2017). Women in National Parliaments.



analysis. If you want to learn more about women, paid work, and leadership, check out the the “Resource and Key Contacts” section.

Approach

The compiling of these toolkits has been an inclusive process, with Daughters of the Vote delegates providing direction and feedback at every phase of its development. Focus area ideas were initially sourced from delegates, and the the top three focus areas were chosen by vote. Throughout the development of the toolkit, input was sought from delegates, including the vetting of completed toolkits by self-identified “experts”. The result is a toolkit that is representative of the diverse opinions and perspectives of young women from across Canada.

An intersectional approach was put at the centre of this toolkit (see the definition bubble to learn more about intersectionality). This means that we tried to avoid speaking about these issues in general terms, but rather focus on how different women and communities are impacted and engage with the issues covered in this toolkit. There will understandably be gaps that we don't cover, but when you work through the toolkits, try to remember how identity, equality and power effect how different people experience the issues addressed in the toolkits. One way to develop your own understanding of intersectionality is to value a ‘bottom-up’ approach to research, analysis and planning that begins by considering how people actually live their lives.

DEFINITION

Intersectional lens:

An intersectional lens, or intersectionality, refers to the ways in which gender intersects with other identities and how these intersections contribute to unique experiences of oppression and privilege.

(Symington, A. (2004). [Intersectionality: a tool for gender and economic justice.](#))

This toolkit also uses a multi-partisan approach to political party positions, government strategy, and policy options and innovations. We have done our best to integrate a diverse understanding of Canadian politics and policy, with the basis of the relevant work being pulled from the major federal and provincial political parties in Canada. While this toolkit does not extensively cover all party positions and multi-partisan policy options, tools have been provided throughout to help support you in doing further research into the different partisan political and policy options about women, paid work, and leadership.



Affected Groups

Women in Canada face barriers to working in certain fields and industries such as STEM, agriculture, and trades, in addition to facing social barriers to employment such as childcare and the wage gap, and in seeking leadership opportunities. However, some groups of women are differentially negatively impacted within such endeavors. Such groups include Indigenous women, immigrant, refugee, LBGTQ2, minority women, women with disabilities and women of low socioeconomic status. Below we cover a few ways in which different women are impacted by issues of paid work and leadership to help you think through an intersectional approach to understanding affected groups.

Due to historic federal and provincial policies such as residential schooling, the Indian Act, and the “60’s Scoop”, Indigenous women are affected in the workplace and have been suppressed from leadership opportunities and entering underrepresented fields. The intergenerational trauma of residential school and the “60’s Scoop” have left Indigenous women undereducated, unemployed, and suppressed due to family violence, substance abuse, and loss of cultural and spiritual ties. The Indian Act created systemic racism toward Indigenous women and systemically oppressed Indigenous women by denying them status rights through marriage, basic personhood, voting rights, and the right to run for public office. Such policies also dismantled the traditional matriarchal structure of Indigenous societies and denied women from holding the leadership roles.

Immigrant and refugee women face barriers such as systemic racism, differences in credential requirements and denial of credentials between their home nation and Canada, and cultural and language barriers when integrating into the realm of Canadian employment. Often, international credentials are not recognized by Canadian employers, so women entering Canada are often denied employment in their trained fields and are forced to accept underemployment or to retrain at a Canadian institution, which is costly. Minority women similarly face barriers to employment and leadership through systemic racism and underrepresentation.

Women from low socioeconomic backgrounds differentially face precarious employment, undereducation, and social barriers to employment. Socioeconomic status can make it difficult to secure safe and stable work. For example, women may be forced, due to disproportionate barriers such as access to education, to accept precarious positions to financially provide for themselves and their families. Women from low socioeconomic backgrounds may also experience struggles in finding adequate and affordable child care, the affordability of professional attire, and availability of transportation.



Decision Makers

Prime Minister of Canada

As the head of government, the Prime Minister of Canada has the role and responsibility to set the priorities for his government. He directs his ministers, including the ministers responsible Status of Women, Minister for Labour and others whose portfolio can impact women in paid work and leadership.

Federal Ministers: A cabinet minister is responsible for a government department. They receive information and advice from the public service and are held accountable for their decisions in Parliament and the country. You can learn more from the [Privy Council Office](#) or at this site from [ThoughtCo](#). The number of ministers and what exactly they are responsible varies over time and depends on the Prime Minister of the day.

Here are some of the key Ministers of this issue. To see who is currently in this role, check out the Parliament of [Canada Website](#).

Minister for the Status of Women: the Minister's responsibility is to "ensure government policy, legislation, and regulations are sensitive to the different impacts that decisions can have on men and women".³ Many issues related to paid work and leadership are included in her responsibilities: the wage gap, inequality in leadership and board positions, and the under-representation of women in certain fields.

Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour: the Minister's primary goal is "to help Canadians get the skills they need for good quality jobs"⁴. Included in this is increasing the workforce participation of women and other underrepresented groups.

Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities: This minister is responsible for "ensure greater accessibility and opportunities for Canadians with disabilities". This Minister is a key decision maker for this issue area, because women with disabilities have unique and addition barriers to paid work and leadership.

³ <https://pm.gc.ca/eng/minister-status-women-mandate-letter>

⁴ <https://pm.gc.ca/eng/minister-employment-workforce-development-and-labour-mandate-letter>



Minister of Indigenous services & Indigenous affairs minister: Indigenous women face unique and additional barriers and to workforce participation and equality and are disproportionately underrepresented in leadership.

Ministers who are responsible for an area where women are underrepresented:

- Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development
- Minister of Natural Resources
- Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard
- Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food
- Minister of Science

Provincial Cabinet ministers and premiers

The number of ministers and their exact portfolios varies across the country.

For example, while Alberta has a Status of Women minister, British Columbia does not. In other provinces and territories (like Saskatchewan and the Northwest Territories), responsibility is grouped under another Minister. In New Brunswick, the Premier currently has the portfolio under his list of responsibilities.

Other ministers who are involved in important decisions or have responsibilities that do, or should, consider women, paid work, and leadership include:

- Ministers of labour
- Ministers of education
- Ministers of agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, or natural resources

Leader of the official opposition, other political party leaders.

In the Canadian political system, leaders of parties, especially the official opposition (the party with the **second** most seats), play a critical role in holding the government accountable. Through Question Period, debates on legislation, debates on bills, and by speaking to the media, party leaders and other Members of Parliament hold the government to their promises or raise concerns about policy decisions.

Members of Parliament.



House of Commons Committees

A committee of the House of Commons is a group of Members of Parliament from all parties who work on a specific policy area, they can examine bills, budget estimates, and or look into other matters that relate to its specific mandate. They hear from witnesses, including experts and individuals affected by an issue, review tabled documents, write reports to the government, and make recommendations to the House. The Senate of Canada also has committees.

There are several committees in the House of Commons and the Senate who review legislation and study issues related to women, paid work, and leadership:

- House of Commons Standing Committee on the [Status of Women Committee](#)
- House of Commons [Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities](#)
- Senate [Subcommittee on Diversity](#) (note: it does not seem active at this time)



Other Key Players:

Think Tanks and Universities

Action to combat the gender wage gap and underrepresentation of women in leadership should be driven by accurate data. Think tanks and universities play a crucial role in producing accurate research on these issues.

[UN Women](#)

UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.

[Inter-Parliamentary Union](#)

An organization made up of national parliaments from around the world, who protect and build global democracy through political dialogue and concrete action.

[Queen's University graduate poli sci program in gender and politics](#)

Queen's University Political Science department offers a graduate school concentration in gender and politics. The department produces relevant and interesting research on issues relating to women in leadership and politics.

[Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives](#)

The CCPA is an independent, non-partisan research institute concerned with issues of social, economic and environmental justice. The CCPA produces the research and analysis necessary for policymakers, activists, and everyday Canadians to make informed decisions and press for social change.



Grassroots organizations and Civil Society

Grassroots organizations and civil society are often the drivers behind social change and political action. Non-profit organizations like Equal Voice and Samara Canada play a critical role in advocacy and the normalization of women in positions of power. Grassroots movements like the Women's March act as another form of advocacy, and can be vehicle for marginalized voices to be heard.

[Samara Canada](#)

Samara Canada is dedicated to reconnecting citizens to politics. Their research and educational programming shines new light on Canada's democratic system and encourages greater political participation across the country to build better politics, and a better Canada, for everyone.

[Canadian Women's Foundation](#)

The Canadian Women's Foundation focuses on the most critical challenges facing women and girls, and invests in the most effective solutions for long-term change.

[PEI Coalition for Women in Government](#)

The PEI Coalition for Women in Government is a multi-partisan coalition of individuals and organizations, dedicated to increasing opportunities for women to be elected to all levels of government in PEI.

*These are just a few examples of many universities, think tanks, and grassroots organizations that make up a robust Canadian civil society. For more suggestions on organizations to follow, check out the "Twitter Accounts" section at the back of this toolkit.



Party Positions and Platforms

Understanding party positions are important for political engagement. First, they can help you to think about which party might be best aligned with your values and interests. Better understanding party positions can help you choose who to vote for or if you want to go further and become a party member. You can check out party positions in their platforms; issued during elections, platforms outline priorities and plans for government. Parties also hold policy conventions where members can propose and vote on policies and positions.

The four major political parties in Canada (Liberal Party of Canada, Conservative Party of Canada, New Democratic Party, and Green Party) create a policy platform during each federal and provincial/territorial election campaign which preside over their particular policy interests for the upcoming term (4 years). However, each party also holds a national policy convention every two years to determine new and updated policy preferences. All platforms are made public once complete via party websites (listed below).

Turning to the election platforms of all major federal parties provides us with insight to the mandate of each party for the current term. While all parties proposed various policy approaches to addressing the social barrier of family and child assistance, in changing the child tax benefit or changing work conditions to better suit the needs of the family, not all parties put forth innovative policy for increasing the position of women in paid work and leadership. The Liberal, Green, and NDP parties all included policies for increasing gender parity in politics and/or other leadership roles, and the Liberal and Green parties included policy prioritization on decreasing the gendered wage gap and supporting more healthy working conditions for women and parents.

2015 Election Platforms:

[Liberal Party of Canada](#)

[Conservative Party of Canada](#)

[New Democratic Party](#)

[Green Party of Canada](#)

2016 Policy Convention Resolutions:

[Liberal Party of Canada](#)

[Conservative Party of Canada](#)

[New Democratic Party](#)

[Green Party of Canada](#)



Current Policies and Government Strategies

Policies and government strategies can often seem like far-off processes that only exist in Ottawa. But the truth is that policies and government strategies shape the lives of everyday Canadians from coast to coast to coast, and have the potential to create substantive change on issues such as gender equality. Policies and government strategies can stay static over long periods, or change quickly to keep up with our changing society and political environment. Since policies and government strategies can be fluid, but have great impact on creating change, when tackling issues of women, paid work, and leadership, it will be helpful for you to know how to navigate the sometimes-complex work of policy and government strategy. This section will provide you with some helpful tools on how to stay informed with current policies and government strategies.

There are three levels of policy and government strategy that exist in Canada: federal, provincial, and municipal. All politicians and political groups have their own strategies, which are transformed into government policies when they are elected and given a mandate by the electorate. These policies are often formed during party conventions. To discover more about how party positions and platforms are formed, check out the “Party Positions and Platforms” section above.

Another helpful place to learn more about current government policies and strategies at the federal level are ministerial mandate letters written by the Prime Minister of Canada to each Minister in their cabinet. These letters outline the policy priorities for each Minister and the federal department that they oversee. For example, Prime Minister Trudeau in his mandate letter to Status of Women Minister Maryam Monsef on October 4, 2017, stated that Minister Monsef is responsible for working with her federal colleagues to introduce proactive pay equity legislation by 2018 for federally-regulated workers^[1]. To find out how this mandate is turned into policy, you can look at the Minister's corresponding federal department website to see current policies and priorities. For example, to see how Minister Monsef's mandate is being implemented, visit the [Status of Women Canada webpage](#). The full list of current cabinet mandate letters can be found at: <https://pm.gc.ca/eng/mandate-letters>.

The sections below will outline current policies and government strategies as they stand right now relevant to the issues selected for this toolkit. However, remember that it's very likely these policies and government strategies have already changed! Try using the tools above and the suggestions throughout this toolkit to conduct your own research on current policies and government strategies - it's a great place to start when trying to address issues of women, paid work and leadership!



Issue 1: Gendered Discrepancies in the Work Place Pay Gap and Social Barriers to Employment

Overview

Gendered inequalities in the workplace persist in Canada, and according to [McKinsey & Company](#), these inequalities are costing Canada \$150 billion annually. You can also check out this report from [Stats Can](#).

Gendered discrepancies in the workplace can take many forms and are both subtle and overt: diminished responsibilities, perceived suitability for roles, the glass ceiling, hiring bias, maternity leave, and sexual harassment are all persistent issues that are impacting women's economic empowerment and sometimes even keeping them out of the workplace all together.

One of the most prominent and well recognized examples of workplace inequalities is the gender wage gap. The gender wage gap refers to the difference in earnings between women and men in the workplace⁵. The gender wage gap exists in every country around the world, but is especially prominent in Canada. This section will explain what the gender wage gap is, what explains it, why it matters, and engage with some of the complexities in understanding gender discrepancies in the workplace. Remember, this is just one of the many ways women face inequality in the workplace, and often these issues intersect. When you read this section try thinking about how pay inequality can impact other aspects of women's lives.

Interested in learning about other ways gender inequality exists in the workplace? Try taking one of the issues listed here and copy the format of this section to learn more. A great way to start is by trying to answer the following questions: What is the issue? What explains it? And why does it matter?

⁵ <https://www.canadianwomen.org/the-facts/the-wage-gap/>



What is the gender wage gap?

DEFINITION

Gender wage gap:

the difference in earnings between women and men in the workplace.

Across Canada, women are consistently earning less money than men in the workplace. Although the size of the gender wage gap varies depending on how it is measured, the wage gap exists across the country at all ages and levels of education. Recent Statistics Canada data shows that, on average, women make 88 cents for every dollar earned by a man. The gender wage gap is a problem around the world, but Canada is not keeping up. The wage gap in Canada ranks well above the average among countries in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), an international organization which promotes policies that improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world⁶. As a result, Canada has fallen from 19th to 39th in the World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap ranking in just two years⁷. At this rate, the **pay gap won't be closed for another 170 years.**

When you look at these numbers in more detail, the complexity of the gender wage gap becomes evident. Difference in pay is compounded by differences in working hours, with women much more likely than men to work part-time (think about how this might be influenced by other forms of gender inequality, such as the gendered division of labour in domestic spheres). Taking this into consideration, the gender wage gap increases, with women making 74.2 cents per male dollar. Another way to understand the gender wage gap is to look at average annual earnings; women ages 25-54 make on average \$52 000, compared to \$70 700 for men. This disparity is most evident at the very top of income earners. Although the number of women earning over \$250 000/ year has increased by 49%, women are still outnumbered in this income category by greater than a 4:1 ratio.

⁶ <http://www.oecd.org/about/>

⁷ <https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-gender-gap-report-2017>



It's also important to recognize that income is affected by more than just gender. For example, minority and Indigenous women face even larger wage gaps⁸. That is why it is important to look at pay inequality through an intersectional lens. Here are some facts that will help highlight how the gender wage gap distinctly impacts different demographics of women:

- On average an Indigenous woman working full time makes 26% less than non-Indigenous men
- Racialized women earn 21% less than racialized men and 32% less than Caucasian men
- Immigrant women earn 25% less than their male counterparts and 28% less than Canadian-born men⁹
- Working age adults living with disabilities earn 73 cents on the dollar and women with disabilities earn on average just half of what working age men with disabilities earn¹⁰
- Women with disabilities tend to be concentrated in low-range salary jobs (less than \$50k per year), while working men with disabilities were more likely to be concentrated in higher range salary jobs (over \$ 60k per year)¹¹

These data are just a snapshot to show that the gender pay gap is not static, and different women are impacted disproportionately. If you want to keep thinking about the wage gap from an intersectional perspective, consider what barriers LGBTQ+ women, or women from a low socio-economic background may face in the workplace. It is also very important to note that this data only refers to women who are employed, and that often inequalities keep women from the workplace all together (refer to the "One step further: social barriers" section).

While the gender wage gap impacts women differently, it's clear that it is still a persistent problem in Canada. The next section will consider the root causes of this inequality.

⁸ [United Nations Convention on Political and Civil Rights](#) (2015).

⁹ Oxfam. (2016). [Making Women Count](#).

¹⁰ Human Resources Canada. [Disability in Canada: a 2006 profile](#).

¹¹ Employment Equity Act Annual Report 2015, supra note 21 (see also Disability in Canada, supra note 20 at 11). From Women with Disabilities in Canada Report to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on the Occasion of the Committee's Initial Review of Canada. (2017). Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action (FAFIA) and DisAbled Women's Action Network - Réseau D'Action des Femmes Handicapées du Canada (DAWN Canada).



What explains it?

The gender wage gap has resulted from a long history of women's exclusion from the workforce, outdated perceptions of gender roles, and persisting social barriers to employment. As we learned from the previous section, just as the gender wage gap can impact women differently, its causes can arise from various factors depending on the lived experiences and barriers that different women face. Below are some general explanations as to why the gender wage gap still exists today:

1) **Undervaluing of women's work**

Recent [research at Cornell University](#) shows that work that is perceived to be "women's work" is considered to be less valuable than men's labour. This is a result of unconscious gender bias, where perceptions of work and roles are determined by gender.

2) **Gendered perceptions of industries**

Higher paying industries such as STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) and trades are traditionally male-dominated. Girls are less likely to be encouraged into these industries from a young age. There is also an over-representation of women in lower paying industries such as retail and service jobs.

3) **Gendered perceptions of women in the workplace**

Not only is there a social expectation about which jobs are suitable for women, but in the workplace social norms and gendered perceptions of behaviour can constrict how women behave. For example, when advocating for themselves or negotiating a salary, women are viewed negatively whereas this behaviour is reflected positively on men. Without the opportunity to advocate for higher wages, women are consistently paid less for equal work.

4) **Division of labour in domestic spheres**

Disproportionate unpaid labour outside of the workplace and the perception of women's roles as caretakers can limit their capacity to pursue educational and professional opportunities. This is one of the reasons why there is an over-representation of women working part-time.



Why does it matter?

The gender pay gap can make women more vulnerable to economic disempowerment, which touches almost every aspect of her life. The [United Nations reports](#) that women's economic empowerment is directly tied to gender equality, poverty eradication and inclusive economic growth. Unequal financial resources make women more vulnerable to **poverty**, which becomes especially exacerbated in old age. Poverty rates among senior women are nearly double that of men (6.4% are considered low income compared to 3.8% of men) and poverty rates are even higher for single women of 65 (16%)¹². Poverty rates are also higher among demographics of women who are more significantly impacted by the gender wage gap; for example Indigenous women (especially those living on reserve), single mothers, racialized women, and women with disabilities are much more likely to live in poverty.

Women's lower earning power can also reduce their capacity to leave **violent** or dangerous domestic situations. Three quarters of violence against women occur in the domestic sphere and are perpetrated by partners. A study in 2010 showed that decreases in the wage gap directly results in reductions of violence against women¹³. Income disparity can also impact women's **capacity to participate** in politics and policy making spaces on equal footing. The lack of equal representation has significant impact on gender equality in Canada, which will be covered more in *Issue 2*. With the pay gap impacting almost every aspect of Canadian women's lives, gender equality will not be achieved until we bridge the divide.

One step further: Social barriers

As we've discovered, the gender pay gap has its roots in societal gender perceptions and historical exclusion of women from the workforce. We've also learned that the pay gap can impact women differently, depending on their own positionality in society. To further our intersectional understanding of the gender pay gap, it's important to consider that the discussion above largely relates to women who are wage-earners, or are able to be employed. Social barriers can keep women out of the workplace completely, which also has significant impact on gender equality and women's economic empowerment.

¹² Stats Canada (2011). [Persons in low income after tax](#).

¹³ Aizer, A. (2010). The gender wage gap and domestic violence. *American Economic Review*, 100(4), 1847-59..



Some of the **social barriers** to employment for women are:

- Lack of affordable childcare
- Unpaid work and domestic responsibilities
- Urban planning – accessibility and affordability of transportation
- Social perceptions of gendered jobs and their associated pay
- Educational attainment
- Gender bias in the workplace, promotion and hiring bias, stereotypes
- Backlash for women negotiating employment terms
- Physical accessibility of workplaces for women with disabilities
- Lack of sexual harassment policy in the workplace
- Maternity and parental leave policies

These are just a few examples of social barriers that prevent women from employment.
Can you think of some other social barriers?

Thinking about the wage gap

Equal pay for equal work or wage equality: Requires that people who perform the same job are paid the same, no matter their race, gender, religion etc.

Equal pay for work of equal value or pay equity: Requires that people who perform a comparable job - in terms of experience, education requirements, responsibility, working conditions, for example, are paid comparable wages, regardless of race, gender religion etc.

The current federal government has said that [equal pay for work of equal value is a human right](#).



Key Decision Makers

All levels of government are needed to address the gender pay gap; the table below provides a brief overview of who the government decision makers are related to this issue.

Who to engage with	When to engage	How to engage
Premier/PM	When you would like to submit your perspective on issues, with little requirement for a response or dialogue	Letters, social media, and campaigns
Cabinet Minister	When you have an issue that is specific to their portfolio and would like to raise it	Look at the mandate letters of the ministry (found in the links below) to determine if the issue is relevant to their portfolio Write a letter or email, request a meeting, or use social media to contact the appropriate minister(s)
Mayors and City Council	When you have an issue in your local community that you feel can be best addressed by local government.	Attend a city council meeting; this is a benefit that isn't available working with provincial or federal governments. You can also call your city councilor office, as local politicians can be much more accessible than MLAs/MPPs/ MPs.



Ministries of Interest	
Federal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Employment, Workforce, and Labour • Ministry of Democratic Institutions • Ministry of Status of Women • Ministry of Innovation, Science and Economic Development • Ministry of Finance • Ministry of Families, Children and Social Development
Provincial/Territorial NFLD PEI NS NB QC ON MB SK AB BC YK NWT NU	Provincial and territorial ministries vary; below are a sample of these ministries, you can use the links on the left to find ministries specific to your region. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills, and Labour • Ministry of Women's Equality • Ministry of the Status of Women • Ministry of Children and Family Development • Ministry of Jobs, Trade and Technology
Committees of Interest	
Federal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standing Committee on Pay Equity • Standing Committee on the Status of Women • Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities
Provincial/Territorial NFLD PEI NS NB QC ON MB SK AB BC YK NWT NU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standing Committee on the Status of Women • Standing Committee on Human Resources • Standing Committee on Economic Development



Other Key Players

While all levels of government are vital in addressing the pay gap, civil society, the public service, and private sectors are also important key players in this issue. Below is a list of organizations and key players who can also be important stakeholders in addressing pay inequality:

- **Business boards** are responsible for setting the overall direction and strategy of organizations
- **Upper management** can directly address hiring bias and ensure there is inclusive gender policy in the workplace
- **Unions** can advocate on behalf of their members and hold employers accountable
- Lots of civil society organizations in Canada are actively working on addressing the gender pay gap. Some of these organizations include:
 - [Canadian Women's Foundation](#)
 - [The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development](#)
 - [National Council of Women Canada](#)
 - [Native Women's Association of Canada](#)



Party Platforms and Positions

In 2016, NDP MP and Status of Women Critic Sheila Malcolmson presented a motion in parliament calling for a special parliamentary committee to study the issue of the gender wage gap. This vote was successful, and largely representative of the current federal NDP policy platform, which calls for the establishment of a proactive pay equity regime, guaranteeing equal pay for work of equal value, and promoting women's economic equality by ensuring pay equity, encouraging unionization, improving access to EI, and setting a minimum salary for employees under federal jurisdiction¹⁴.

The current Liberal government has taken steps to address pay inequality, most notably by promising proactive pay equity legislation to close the wage gap. While this legislation has not yet been passed by parliament, a parliamentary committee was established to study the issue. The Liberal Party Platform from the 2015 federal election does not explicitly address the gender wage gap, it discusses many influential factors, including elderly women in poverty, including a gender lens to policy analysis, implementing comprehensive federal gender violence action plan to address domestic violence, and relaxing immigration rules to allow for financial independence for spouses¹⁵.

The Bloc Québécois promised to reverse funding cuts to women's groups and to enact federal pay equity policy. The federal Green Party platform acknowledges that pay inequity is still prominent in Canada, and make policy suggestions such as passing pay equity legislation, tax incentives for companies to meet pay equity, and establish job re-entry programs for women returning to the workforce after raising kids.

Many Conservative MPs are on record acknowledging the pay gap exists and recognizing pay equity as a right. Although many Conservative MPs voted against MP Malcolmson's motion to create the parliamentary committee on the gender wage gap, this was explained as a jurisdictional issue; many Conservative MPs believed that while issues of pay inequality should be addressed by parliament, this already existed under the mandate of the Status of Women Committee. The 2015 Conservative Platform did not mention pay inequality, but did discuss tax breaks from women on EI, including mothers on leave, and financial investment for combating domestic violence¹⁶.

¹⁴ http://xfer.ndp.ca/2017/Documents/2016_POLICY-EN.pdf

¹⁵ <https://www.liberal.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/New-plan-for-a-strong-middle-class.pdf>

¹⁶ <http://www.conservative.ca/media/plan/conservative-platform-en.pdf>



Current Policies, Government Strategies

Almost all provinces and territories, as well as the federal government, have some form of pay equity legislation, though most apply only to the *public sector*, that is government organizations like municipalities, universities, health care professions and more. Only Quebec and Ontario have legislation that includes the private sector and has a *positive* requirement for all companies over 10 people, that is they must establish and maintain pay equity. You can see more about current laws [here](#) or see other government efforts, as well as international practices in this [report, both](#) compiled by the Coalition for the Pay Equity.

Alberta is the only jurisdiction with no pay equity legislation on the books and the province has a very significant gendered wage gap, higher than any OECD country. Anti-discrimination legislation does require **equal work for equal pay**, but there is no legislation requiring **pay equity**. If you want to read more on the Alberta situation, the Parkland Institute wrote a [report](#) on designing pay equity legislation for the province. However, recent changes to the Alberta Labour laws allow for unpaid leave of absence in the case of domestic violence, critical illness, or death of a child. Although unpaid, these changes may allow women facing these critical life events to remain in the workforce¹⁷.

[Special Committee on Pay Equity](#)

Mandate: The Special Committee on Pay Equity is focused on closing the gap in wages between genders, recognize pay equity as a right, and to call on the House to implement recommendations made by the 2004 Pay Equity Task Force and restore the right to equal pay in the public service that was eliminated in 2009.

¹⁷ <https://www.alberta.ca/employment-standards-changes.aspx>



Progress: The Committee submitted a report to the House on June 9th, 2016. The report proposed proactive pay equity legislation. This recommended legislation included;

- The Government of Canada draft proactive pay legislation within 18 months (after the release of the report);
- The Government of Canada adopt the majority of recommendations put forth by the 2004 Pay Equity Task Force;
- The proposed proactive pay equity legislation apply to the federal public service, Crown corporations, all federally regulated companies with 15 employees or more and companies participating in the Federal Contractors Program;
- Government of Canada include provisions in the proposed proactive pay equity legislation making it applicable to all unionized, non-unionized, full-time, part-time, casual, seasonal and temporary employees;
- The Government of Canada provide short-term bridge funding, if required, to the Canadian Human Rights Commission to enable the Commission to assume responsibility for federal public service pay equity complaints until a new pay equity commission and tribunal are established;
- The Government of Canada establish a legal fund that can be accessed by unrepresented complainants in pay equity disputes in exceptional circumstances, on the recommendation of the proposed Pay Equity Commission.

On 3 February 2016, the House of Commons adopted the following motion:

That the House

- (a) recognize that the government must take action to close the unacceptable gap in pay between men and women which contributes to income inequality and discriminates against women;
- (b) recognize pay equity as a right;
- (c) call on the government to implement the recommendations of the 2004 Pay Equity Task Force Report and restore the right to pay equity in the public service which was eliminated by the previous Conservative government in 2009;
- (d) appoint a special committee with the mandate to conduct hearings on the matter of pay equity and to propose a plan to adopt a proactive federal pay equity regime, both legislative and otherwise; and
- (e) table a final report to Parliament by June 10, 2016



Issue 2: Leadership: Political, Business and Boards, Glass Ceiling

Overview

In a 2016 study by [Osler](#), women made up 12.6% of board representatives in businesses and nonprofits in an analysis of board composition data provided by 750 organizations in Canada. In almost half of these (46%) these organizations had no female directors at all, and only 24% had more than one. These figures were similar in the proportion of female executives in businesses, with 41% of organizations analyzed reporting no female executives. In addition to the low number of women in these leadership positions, little is being done about it. Nearly two-in-three organizations surveyed had failed to adopt a board diversity policy, almost 90% did not have a target rate for the percentage of female directors, and nearly all had failed to adopt target rates for female executives. These numbers indicate the vast majority of organizations have do not have goals of increasing their traditionally low rates of female representation in leadership roles.

Catalyst, an organization working toward bettering professional workspaces for women created [The Catalyst Accord 2022](#), which calls on Canadian Boards of Directors and CEOs to “pledge to accelerate the advancement of women in business” by “increasing the percentage of women on boards and in executive positions to 30% or greater by 2022”.

According to the [Inter-Parliamentary Union](#), Canada ranks 64th in female legislative representation in the world, with only 26% of members of parliament identifying as female. The gender influence of decision making is vastly decreased as more women are added to political spheres, boards, and court benches. It is often argued as a case against gender parity that gender plays a role in how decisions are made. However, research shows that these differences decrease if not disappear when at least 30% of decision makers are women. For example, a study by [Belleau and Johnson](#) in 2008 interrogated patterns of decision making of both male and female Supreme Court justices. The authors found as more women were added to the Supreme Court of Canada, levels of dissent were more evenly dispersed among colleagues. This proves that increasing the number of women on the bench decreases any gendered differences in decision that may occur. In addition, [Belleau and Johnson](#) (2008) also found that while female justices did dissent and write concurring opinions more often than their male colleagues, they did not vote in the same ways or concur for the same reasons as their female colleagues. This shows an individual rather than gendered difference in opinion. Additionally, female representation in judicial decision making serves to provide the most just interpretation of the law as possible, as a consensus made from a difference in opinion brings together the varying opinions of judges of various dynamics and perspectives (i.e. gender, political, regional, age differences).



When women represent a [minimum of 30%](#) of decision making roles, the gender influence of decision making essentially disappears for both men and women involved. We see that the more equity in the number of women we elect and appoint to such positions, the more decisions are made based on fact and the best possible outcome for all, and more frequently reach consensus in decision making. Women's representation in all spheres of leadership is important to increasing a diversity of experience, perspectives, and opinions, and accurately representing constituents. [Canada ranks 62nd](#) in women's representation in politics and still has not achieved a critical mass (30%) in gender parity in its federal and most of its provincial governments.

Equal representation in the political sphere and in other decision making roles serves as a role model for not only young women aspiring to be leaders, but also do other organizations and institutions. If gender parity is a priority of the Governments and of constituents, this will influence the gender parity in all spectrums, including board of directors representatives, businesses, educational institutions, and beyond. A dedication to gender parity in Government and the Judiciary will have a positive impact on future policies related to gendered issues. The representation of all genders in the decision making process will impact other areas of policy by adequately addressing the needs and wants of all Canadians, regardless of gender, creating a more equitable policy system.

The adverse effects of entering public life represent one of the greatest barriers to women entering politics. Women are often scrutinized on the campaign trail in ways in which their male counterparts are not. Their private and personal histories are often placed at the forefront of their campaigns, their ability to parent or care for children while in office is challenged, their physical appearance is put under fire, and their ability to perform leadership tasks and roles is questioned in the most basic sense. This continues even after earning their seat; an analysis of heckling in the House of Commons in 2017 indicated four out of the six most heckled members of parliament were women (as reported by MP Marc Miller). In a [survey conducted by Samara Canada](#), 20% of MPs reported heckling in the House of Commons reduced their willingness to participate in the HoC at all due to fear of being heckled, almost all of whom were women. Women MPs also indicated being the target of heckling based on gender, age, language, religion, and appearance. Female MPs, MLAs, MPPs, and Counsellors and their families are often the target of violent and/or sexual attacks in person, through postal mail, and online. Many women report refraining from or retiring from politics for these reasons.

Women remain underrepresented in leadership positions in politics, business, and on boards.



Women remain underrepresented in politics across most of the world. The Inter-Parliamentary Union reports that less than 24% of elected officials across the world women. Check out their to date tracking by [country](#) and [overall](#), as well as their 2017 [map](#) of women's political representation. Canada is no exception ranking 63rd internationally in terms of women's political representation. At the federal level, just 27% of MPs are women. Women's representation in politics varies significantly across the country.

Representation in politics matters. It sends a signal about the value of individuals and groups and their capacity to make a difference in their country and community. The underrepresentation of women in politics also raises questions about the quality of our democracy and opportunities for equality in our society. While women in and out of politics are diverse, the researcher has shown that the presence of women in politics is associated with more attention to policy areas that disproportionately affect the lives of women. Politics is often more consensus based and collaborative when more women enter politics.

	Last Election	Candidates	Legislators	Cabinet	City Councillors	Mayors
House of Commons	Oct-15	33%	26%	50%		
British Columbia	May-17	43%	39%	50%	36%	28%
Alberta	May-15	36%	33%	53%	28%	23%
Saskatchewan	Apr-16	33%	26%	24%	18%	13%
Manitoba	Apr-16	35%	23%	31%	18%	10%
Ontario	Jun-14	34%	35%	41%	27%	17%
Quebec	Apr-14	34%	30%	41%	32%	17%
Nova Scotia	May-17	34%	33%	35%	26%	13%
New Brunswick	Sep-14	27%	16%	19%	32%	21%
Prince Edward Island	May-15	30%	19%	20%	31%	28%
Newfoundland & Labrador	Nov-15	27%	25%	23%	39%	21%
Yukon	Nov-16	41%	37%	43%	40%	25%
Northwest Territories	Oct-15	17%	11%	14%		10%
Nunavut	Oct-17	23%	27%	13%		20%
Total		32%	28%	36%	28%	18%



Approximately 45% of all corporate boards in Canada do not have any female members or representation. Of 677 companies listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange, only 12% of all board seats were held by women. In 2016, 521 board seats became open, with only 76 filled by women (14.6%).¹⁸ These numbers represent large proportions of companies in Canada lacking female leadership on their board of directors. This is coupled by a lack of investment in recruiting female directors for available positions, which negates the possible argument of historical appointments. Some may argue the many corporations do not have female representation because seats originally held by men have not become available, however with a 14.6% female appointment rate to open seats, we see this is not the case.

Indigenous women face different barriers and political structures than other women in Canada. In 2015 a record number of Indigenous Canadians were elected to the House of Commons (10 were elected, including three women). Underrepresentation remains a significant problem at all levels of government. Traditional Indigenous communities were based on a matriarchal structure. This was reversed under the Indian Act through the implementation of an elected Chief and Band Council which included the colonial ideology of male dominated power structures and excluded women from political positions. In 1951, Indigenous women were awarded the privilege and right to run for positions on Band Councils. Still today, [Equal Voice reports](#) that female leadership on Band and Treaty Councils is very low. However, Band Councils are not an equal-power level of government to municipal, provincial, and federal governments. “Most First Nation laws derive their authority from the Indian Act and not from the First Nation and therefore sometimes lack legitimacy in the eyes of the general population and First Nations people in general.”¹⁹

Minority and immigrant women in Canada face several barriers to achieving leadership positions in Canada. [Diversity Leads](#), a project headed by Ryerson University reports that “Although women account for 51.7% of the population of selected areas in Greater Montreal, only 31.2% of senior leaders were women” and additionally, “the gap in representation is even greater for female visible minorities, who account for 11.5% in the general population but only represent 1.9% of the leaders analyzed in this study”.

¹⁸ The Toronto Star. September 28, 2016. [Virtually no change in getting women on boards in Canada, stats show.](#)

¹⁹ National Centre for First Nations Governance. [Reclaiming Our Identity Band Membership, Citizenship and the Inherent Right.](#)



Glass Ceiling:

A barrier to advancement within a profession that goes unacknowledged, which particularly affects women and minorities

Glass Elevator Theory:

Settler men will receive professional recognition, pay raises, and promotions more quickly and more often than women and racialized minorities with the same education, work

Glass Cliff:

Women are more likely than men to achieve leadership roles during periods of crisis, when the chance of failure is the highest.

Decision Makers

Who to engage with	When to engage	How to engage
Premier/PM	When you would like to submit your perspective on issues, with little requirement for a response or dialogue	Letters, social media, and campaigns
Cabinet Minister	When you have an issue that is specific to their portfolio and would like to raise it	Look at the mandate letters of the ministry (found in the links below) to determine if the issue is relevant to their portfolio Write a letter or email, request a meeting, or use social media to contact the appropriate minister(s)



Ministries of Interest	
Federal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Employment, Workforce, and Labour • Ministry of Small Business and Tourism • Ministry of Democratic Institutions
Provincial/Territorial NFLD PEI NS NB QC ON MB SK AB BC YK NWT NU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills, and Labour • Ministry of Women's Equality • Ministry of the Status of Women
Committees of Interest	
Federal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standing Committee on Electoral Reform • Standing Committee on Pay Equity • Standing Committee on the Status of Women • Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities
Provincial/Territorial NFLD PEI NS NB QC ON MB SK AB BC YK NWT NU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standing Committee on the Status of Women • Standing Committee on Human Resources • Standing Committee on Economic Development



Other Key Players

Human Resources Representatives: Human Resources agents are responsible for coordinating staffing including; hiring, promoting, changes in pay, employee benefits, and addressing employee complaints. Human Resources personnel have direct input in the pay distribution of employees and promotion of employees. Human Resources personnel should therefore be mindful of the competencies of all employees, male and female, in addition to being mindful of the ratio of promotions between all genders.

Unions: Unions are responsible for representing the best interests of their members. Unions advocate on behalf of employees to management to ensure management is meeting their minimum contractual requirements and to resolve workplace issues. Unions are also responsible for responding to issues including discrimination laws. Unions play a crucial role in observing the promotion and pay patterns within the organizations they represent to ensure there is no gendered or ethnic discrimination in the hiring, firing, promotion, or pay practices of the organization.

Political Parties: Political parties are responsible for ensuring candidates are representative of their constituents by encouraging women and ethnic and cultural minorities to seek candidacy in their area.

Party Platforms and Positions

In their 2015 campaign platform, the New Democratic Party of Canada promised to “move forward with women’s equality”, stating they hoped to mandate half of all appointments to government boards, crown corporations, and government agencies be women, and 40% of all members of boards of federally regulated corporations be women. In the 2015 federal election platform, the Liberal Party of Canada dedicated itself to creating flexible working conditions, including increasing parental leave benefits from twelve-months per family per child to eighteen months per family per child.

During the biennial Liberal Party of Canada policy convention 2016, a [resolution](#) passed on encouraging gender parity on boards. This resolution proposes implementing Bill S-207 “*An Act to modernize the composition of the boards of directors of certain corporations, financial institutions and parent Crown corporations, and in particular to ensure the balanced representation of women and men on those boards*”.



Enacting such legislation would mandate that 50% of board members of crown corporations and other institutions governed by the Government of Canada would be women. While this resolution has become a priority policy of the Liberal Party of Canada, there has not been action on enacting such legislation in the House of Commons to date.

In 2016, The Liberal Party of Canada has also accepted a policy [resolution](#) to research, consult, and enact electoral reform. The current “first past the post” electoral system makes it difficult for women to become the elected candidate. A study conducted by the Inter-parliamentary Union in 2012 found that women won 14% of contested seats on average in first-past-the-post elections. It is argued that constituents voting for individuals rather than parties, as seen in this system, most often vote for the “safe” or “mainstream” candidate. Additionally, gender quotas are difficult to maintain by parties in such a system. A change to a mixed-representation or proportional representation system has been shown to increase the percentage of female legislators in other nations including Sweden, Finland, Norway and Germany. To read more about electoral systems and representation, you can read this [publication](#) by the Library of Parliament.

In British Columbia, the provincial NDP has a policy of reserving vacant held seats for women or other equity seeking groups. In the 2013 election, five of the six candidates running for the NDP in vacant-held seats were women. In similar seats, the B.C. Liberals ran four women and 15 men. In 2017, women were nominated in five of seven NDP vacant held seats, while the same was true of three of 11 Liberal vacant held seats.

The [Canada's Action Plan Against Racism](#) was introduced in 2005 under leadership of the Prime Minister at the time, The Right Honourable Paul Martin. This publication included a six-point action plan to combat racism and discrimination in Canada, as well as a timeline of Canada's legislative and policy framework. To learn more check out the toolkit on Decolonization and Indigenous Rights.



Reports and Background Information from the Parliament of Canada

The House of Commons Procedural Committee

Government Committees are multi-partisan committees appointed to address specific issues in greater depth than is possible in the House of Commons, and report their findings, results, and proposed solutions to the House in relation to the mandate of the committee. Each committee is chaired by a member of the governing party and vice-chaired by two members of opposition parties. Each committee is comprised of members of multiple parties.

Mandate: The House of Commons Procedural Committee is focused on reviewing and reporting on the standing orders, procedure and practice in the House of Commons, the election of members of the House of Commons, the code of conduct for Members of the House of Commons, and the administration of House and the provisions and services offered to its members.

Progress: The committee released a mandate letter in 2016 which outlined dedication to making parliament more family friendly. This committee recommended that House Leaders refrained from holding recorded divisions any later than post-question period on Thursday afternoons and early preparation of the House calendar so families could better plan around weekend and school-break time off to be with their families in their home jurisdictions.

Library of Parliament (LOP): non-partisan body which provides Parliamentarians with research and analysis services and delivers public education programs on the role and traditions of Parliament. The LOP has produced several research papers and background guides regarding a variety of political issues. Several LOP resources on the representation of women in Canadian politics, business, and STEM fields are listed below.

Further LOP resources can be found here:

Gender Sensitive Parliaments 1: Advancements in the Workplace.

This paper describes recent advancements in making Parliament a more gender-sensitive workplace. The paper also details a number of additional recommendations.

Girls and Women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

This is a background guide from the Library of Parliament covering the continued underrepresentation of women and girls in STEM fields. It covers the factors behind this gender gap and outlines recent government initiatives to address it. The guide also offers a list of resources for further reading.



Women's Representation on Corporate Boards in Canada

This background guide examines why women tend to be under-represented on corporate boards in Canada, the advantages of achieving gender-balanced corporate boards, and government initiatives at the federal level and the provincial/territorial level related to this issue.

Current Policies, Government Strategies

Released in 2014 under the previous government, [A Plan to Promote More Women on Canadian Boards](#) set a goal to increase women's representation on boards to 30% by 2019.

On January 1, 2015, the so-called "comply or exchange" regulations came into effect, requiring companies listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange to disclose the number of women both on their boards and holding executive positions. This included any related policies related to recruiting and maintaining female leadership on their boards and information about how gender is considered when seeking and selecting directors.²⁰ Initially adopted in Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Northwest Territories, Nova Scotia, Nunavut, Ontario, Québec, Saskatchewan and Yukon, the rules have now also been adopted in Alberta. has been adopted by most provincial security commissions.

In Alberta, the government set out to proactively achieve equality on the boards, commissions, and agencies it appoints. They report that parity was achieved in the fall in 2017.²¹

The [Government of New Brunswick](#) is committed to achieving gender parity by appointing more women to executive positions in provincial agencies, boards, and commissions. Between October 2014 and February 2017, 57% of such appointments were of female candidates, indicating progress is being made.

The [Government of New Brunswick has also legislated changes](#), including additional funding allocation for the per-vote funding parties receive when running women. Parties will see 50% more funding per-vote for female candidates, which will encourage parties to run female candidates and to run them in winnable ridings.

²⁰ CBC News. January 13, 2015. [Gender equality on corporate boards: Study puts Canada in middle of the pack.](#)

²¹ Global News. September 26, 2017. ["Women reaching parity on appointments to boards, agencies: Alberta government"](#).



Issue 3 : Fields in which Women are Underrepresented STEM, Trades, Agriculture

Overview

Women are vastly underrepresented in many fields of employment, including, but certainly not limited to; Sciences, Technologies, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM), Agriculture, and various Trades. While there is an underrepresentation of women in these fields, there is not a lack of female interest or capability in these positions. [Statistics Canada](#) reports that not only do men in STEM have lower unemployment rates than women, 39% of men scoring in the lowest three categories of the Programme for International Student Assessment mathematics scores at the age of 15 entered STEM education, only 23% of women scoring within the highest three categories of the same test entered STEM education fields. Women trained in STEM fields face a 7% unemployment rate, while men with similar education face a 4.7% unemployment rate post graduation. In the last session of parliament, there were no women representatives on the science and technology committee.

In the 2017 study of women in leadership in companies listed on the TSX study by [Osler](#) mentioned in the (mentioned first in the overview of **Issue 2**), showed that female representation varies in surveyed organizations varied across industries, with trades companies involved in industry, such as mining, paper and forestry, oil, and technology companies reporting less than 10% female board and executive representation. Female role models in leadership positions in these industries is integral to the motivation of young women to enter such fields. These low rates of leadership attainment in such fields also indicates a bias in hiring, employee acquisition, and promotion of women in these industries.

In 2015, Status of Women Canada released a report called *The Competitive Advantage: A Business Case for Hiring Women in the Skilled Trades and Technical Professions*. You can review it [here](#).

Additional issues of women in STEM are further discussed in the Energy and Environment Network Toolkit [here](#).



Decision Makers and Responsibilities

Who to engage with	When to engage	How to engage
Premier/PM	When you would like to submit your perspective on issues, with little requirement for a response or dialogue	Letters, social media, and campaigns
Cabinet Minister	When you have an issue that is specific to their portfolio and would like to raise it	Look at the mandate letters of the ministry (found in the links below) to determine if the issue is relevant to their portfolio Write a letter or email, request a meeting, or use social media to contact the appropriate minister(s)
Ministries of Interest		
Federal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Innovation, Science, and Economic Development • Ministry of Employment, Workforce, and Labour • Ministry of Science • Ministry of Agriculture and Agrifood 	
Provincial/Territorial NFLD PEI NS NB QC ON MB SK AB BC YK NWT NU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills, and Labour • Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation • Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries • Ministry of Women's Equality • Ministry of the Status of Women • Ministry of Science, Economy and Innovation 	



Committees of Interest	
Federal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agrifood • Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans • Standing Committee on Natural Resources
Provincial/Territorial NFLD PEI NS NB QC ON MB SK AB BC YK NWT NU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standing Committee on Agriculture and Fisheries • Standing Committee on Labour and Economy

Other Key Players

- **High School Career Guidance Counsellors:** Guidance counsellors do more than guide the career paths of youth, they also heavily influence what young women study and have the knowledge and power to lead young women towards career options they may not have previously considered. These actors hold significant power in leading young women towards underrepresented fields and leadership positions, and in counter, can adversely discourage women from seeking such career paths.
- **Women in Science and Engineering (WISE)** works to balance the ratio of women in STEM jobs by advocating for women trained in these disciplines and encouraging women to enter such fields. WISE provides assistance for women seeking positions in STEM through online databases of available positions and advisory work
- **Additional Non-Governmental Organizations:** The Society for Women in Science in Technology do similar work, advocating for and promoting of women in STEM. 500 Women Scientists are a grassroots organization who work toward increasing inclusivity for minorities in the sciences and create international networks of diverse women to work together on scientific projects and advocacy work. Similarly, The Canadian Coalition of Women in Sciences, Trade, and Technology is a non-profit organization which provides advocacy for diversity and inclusivity of women in the sciences, trades and technology and facilitates collaboration between their members.



- **Educational institutions** including Agricultural Colleges and Trades Colleges have a responsibility to ensure their recruiting processes are gender equitable, that they encourage women to enter male dominated fields, and that they provide opportunities for equitable female engagement in these areas.
- **Employers** in STEM and Trades should commit to becoming equal opportunity employers, providing ongoing learning opportunities for employees, and hiring more qualified women. These places of employment should seek female talent, the input of female employees and provide opportunities for advancement within the company to female employees.

Party Platforms and Positions

The Liberal Party of Canada dedicated in their 2015 federal election platform to provide \$40MM annually to help employers create co-op placements in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and business (*not specific to women, but indicates the importance of the field*). The Conservative Party of Canada, New Democratic Party of Canada, and Green Party of Canada did not mention any policy related to elevating the position of women in STEM, trades, or agriculture in their 2015 campaign policies.

Current Policies, Government Strategies

The Minister for Status of Women's mandate letter includes this:

Work with the President of the Treasury Board and the Clerk of the Privy Council to increase the number of women in senior decision-making positions across government, particularly in central agencies and in our security services, and with the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, to advance gender equity in Canadian companies.

In February 2017, the federal government announced plans to encourage young women to "[choose science](#)".

Provinces are also engaged on this issue. For example - through the PEI Women's Network, the Prince Edward Island government has funded a program called [Women's Economic Empowerment Project](#) to promote careers in technology and trade. Similar programs exist for women to participate in apprenticeships in [British Columbia](#) (also [here](#))



Sexual Harassment & Women's Leadership

With the proliferation of the social media campaigns like #metoo, #yesallwomen, #timeisup and exposure of high profile cases in the media, hollywood, and politics, the issue of sexual harassment and assault in the workplace have begun to receive much needed attention.

A survey by [Abacus data](#) from November 2017 showed that more than half of women in Canada have experienced some form of sexual harassment at work and 70% said that the harassers faced no consequences.

In 2017, Federal Minister for Employment, Workforce Development, and Labour conducted a public consultation on violence and harassment in the workplace and found this behaviour remains common. Those who participated in the consultation process also encouraged the government to look at harassment as a form of gender-based violence and from the perspective of other forms of discrimination. Nearly all (94%) who reported experiencing sexual harassment were women, and women with disabilities and members of visible minorities were more likely to experience harassment than others. You can read their whole report [here](#).

The United Nations' *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women*, which complements and strengthens the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* specifically recognizes "sexual harassment and intimidation [of women] at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere" as a form of violence against women.

The Supreme Court of Canada has ruled unanimously that sexual harassment is discrimination based on sex: *Janzen v. Platy Enterprises*, [1989] 1 S.C.R. 1252.

The positive impact on women in the workplace is significant. Those who face harassment risk losing their job or chance at promotion if they raise concerns about the conduct of a superior or refuse sexual advances. Harassment makes the workplace hostile and can result in lost work time, a loss of wages, and can put pressure on women to leave a job.



Current government strategies

Canada is one of the few countries that has a policy in the House of Commons targeting sexual harassment. A Code of Conduct for Members of the House of Commons: Sexual Assault is contained in Standing Orders - the rules governing the House of Commons.

In May 2016, [Nova Scotia](#) adopted a Policy on the Prevention and Resolution of Harassment in the Workplace. The Policy applies to Members, political staff and volunteers and in all places where the business of the House of Assembly work is conducted.

In November 2017, the Labour Minister introduced a bill to toughen labour laws for the protection against sexual harassment and will cover Parliament Hill staff, including interns and aides. You can read more about Bill C-65 [here](#).

Key Decision Makers

Provincial and federal ministers responsible for labour, ministers responsible for the status of women.



Policy Options and Innovations

Option 1 - Robust Sexual harassment policies

Goal: Sexual harassment can have a serious impact on women's leadership, their ability to participate in paid work, and to contribute their much needed expertise and skills to our communities. A robust harassment policy may help change this culture, prevent harassment, and protect those who have experienced it.

Evidence and Arguments:

A survey by [Abacus data](#) from November 2017 showed that more than half of women in Canada have experienced some form of sexual harassment at work and 70% said that the harassers faced no consequences.

According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), women in politics face harassment and threats of violence and that it impedes their ability to do their job. More than eight-in-ten women parliamentarians say they have experienced physical or psychological violence. In part in response to the prevalence and its impact, the IPU recommends a harassment policy with an independent body to take and investigate politics. You can read more from the [IPU](#) [here](#) and [here](#).

Currently, policies vary across sectors, business, and even across different governments and legislatures.

Key decision-makers:

Key decision-makers include governments, business and community leaders.

Challenges:

Policies should enable confidentiality, while providing accountability and appropriate consequences. Policies and procedures should also be survivor centric and trauma informed.



Option 2 - Mentoring programs for women entering the workforce

Goal: The goal of mentorship programs is to have experienced professionals work closely with women who have recently entered the workforce to support them in their careers and navigating workplaces. By mentoring women from early on in their careers, workplaces become more accessible as women have support in facing many of the barriers that have been discussed throughout this toolkit. Mentors can share their knowledge and best practices, act as an advocate and champion, and create inclusive practices in the workplace that will hopefully work toward eradicating the barriers that women face. Mentorship programs can be used across industries to help promote and support women in the workplace, build networks inside and outside the workplace, and creates an environment of championing and supporting women.

Evidence and Arguments:

Research shows that women in leadership positions helps create diversity across organizations. Mentorship programs can help women attain leadership positions faster and to a higher level. In male-dominated industries, it can be difficult for women to attain “insider-knowledge”, which puts them at a disadvantage. Mentors can support women in navigating the barriers that are in place due to their historical exclusion from the workplace.

Mentorship programs have also been shown to have a significant benefit for mentees in developing skills needed to excel in many workplaces across industries. These include increasing their self-confidence, how to advocate for themselves, improves their interpersonal skills, builds networks, and helps orient them to the organizational culture and “unspoken rules” of the workplace. These skills can help women in achieving equality in the workplace; through mentoring women and creating an environment of support women are more likely to be successful in male-dominated industries, bridge the pay gap, and attain leadership positions.

Key decision-makers:

To establish a mentorship program in a workplace requires champions within the organization to consider it a worthwhile investment. This requires organizational leadership and upper management to be behind the project. Direction could also come from the board of directions or HR department, as mentorship programs can create significant benefit for the organization. The mentorship program will also require experienced professional who are willing to give their time to work with a mentee.



Stakeholders and allies with shared interests:

Many civil society groups are starting mentorship programs for women to fill a void left by workplaces who may not have the resources, willingness, or capacity to have in-house mentorship programs. Important stakeholders are also experienced professionals who are willing to give their time to act as mentors, and see the value in mentorship programs.

Resources required:

While the resources required to run a mentorship program are dependent on the organization and the program itself, the benefit of mentorship programs is that there is very high reward for low overhead; most mentorship programs just require human capital. One of the biggest resources required are the experienced professionals acting as mentors. Formal mentorship programs may have a process of applications, pairing mentors with mentees, and providing participants with guides for the program along with additional resources. However, mentorship programs can also be very informal with mentors and mentees meeting as needed.

Challenges:

One of the challenge with mentorship programs is that it is often women who step into mentorship roles for other women. While it's true that women experienced in their given industry can offer invaluable guidance to younger women about the unique barriers they face, there is often an expectation that women will step into this role. This creates a double-burden on women, whose male counterparts may not be expected to take on such additional responsibilities. That's why it's important that men also act as mentors to young women in the workplace, as male allyship is vital in supporting women in the workplace.

Another challenge is relying solely on mentorship to eradicate gender inequalities in the workplace. While mentorship programs can go along way in supporting women, there are many other solutions needed including sexual harassment policy, parental leave policy, and diversity in leadership.



Option 3 - Secondary and Post-Secondary institutions increasing proportion of women to non-traditional fields of study through recruitment and career counselling.

Goal: Increase proportion of women entering study and employment in nontraditional fields such as STEM, business, trades, and agriculture by increasing gender targeted recruitment and strengthening career planning strategies.

Evidence and Arguments:

Queen's University is among a few others in Canada whom have implemented the creation and availability of "[major maps](#)" which outline skills gained in each major offered at their institution. Such maps also include tools for career planning based on individual career goals and information available in the "major map" and suggestions of career development to pursue each year for the duration of the degree.

The [University of Laverne](#) reports that more than 50% of university students pursue majors unrelated to their careers. Introducing career maps early on will better equip students to match their field of study to desired career and develop the skills needed to pursue such a career.

Changing fields of study after beginning a bachelor program is expensive and often prolongs the length of pursuing a bachelor's degree, however many students do change majors during their pursuit of an undergraduate degree. The [University of Laverne reports](#) between 50%-70% of students change their major at least once. This may be caused by lack of adequate career counselling prior to applying to post-secondary institutions. A review of studies by the [Western Kentucky University](#) showed changing majors is one of the top contributors to a delayed degree completion. Students should be equipped with all necessary information of career paths, job availability in each field, and the breadth of interest areas in each program before beginning postsecondary studies.

Women are often systematically steered away from careers in STEM, trades, business, and agriculture through education and socialization. As such, many women are not given ample information or space to consider careers in such fields regardless of their interests in these subjects in their younger years. A [study commissioned by Microsoft](#) found that girls often become interested in STEM related fields around the age of 11, however this interest quickly declines at age 15. The socialization process of young people toward certain career paths begins during the first few years of attending secondary schooling.



To continue to engage the interest of young women in non-traditional fields, they must be given the opportunity and encouraged to adequately explore educational and career options and opportunities during their secondary education. This can be facilitated through targeted program recruitment by post-secondary institutions and the accessibility of career information. Such targeted program recruitment could be facilitated by recruitment officers talking about education and career opportunities in nontraditional fields at seminars and fair booths and engaging young women in conversations about their interests, skills, and matching those to such programs.

Key Decision Makers:

Provincial Ministers of Labour and Advanced Education, Post-Secondary Education Executives

Stakeholders and allies with shared interests:

Universities, Colleges, Employers, Provincial Ministers of Labour and Advanced Education, Career Services and Counsellors(secondary and post-secondary institutions),

Resources required:

Secondary and Post-Secondary institutions should develop career maps for all programs offered. Such maps should include how certain courses offered will direct careers along various different paths. Maps should also include skills gained in each program and career prospects in each field. These tools should be made available at recruitment sessions for potential students and should be offered to all students regardless of intended field of study. The Department of Labour and Advanced Education in each province could develop a program evaluation to be conducted each August regarding enrollment statistics in each program at each institution, rates of employment of recent graduates in targeted fields, and demographics of employment in targeted fields.

Challenges:

Conducting annual research as to graduate hiring rates and career availability is time consuming and would require additional staffing at institutions dedicated to such research. Additionally, young women typically stray away from non-traditional fields by seventh grade, therefore implementing such recruitment processes will have a delayed effect, as encouraging young women will need to begin at the grade six or seven year to ensure young women continue interest in such fields and leadership roles.



Counter-arguments:

Such research should be conducted by post-secondary institutions and shared with secondary institutions, therefore a research staffing increase would not be necessary at the secondary level. Thus, there would be no added cost to provincial governments (for conducting such research), as the additional research and staffing costs would be born by post-secondary institutions.

Option 4 - Subsidized Child Care

Goal: Costs of child care can be prohibitive for women accessing the workplace or (re)entering the workforce. By subsidizing child care costs and making access to child care affordable, women and families are empowered to make the best decisions for their families and are not limited solely by economic necessity. An intersectional approach to understanding the benefits of subsidized child care is warranted as access to affordable child care is especially difficult for low-income families and other demographics of women disproportionately disadvantaged by our economic system.

Evidence and Arguments:

Policies and social programs help make the workplace more accessible for women. Issues of workplace access and economic equality are strongly embedded in issues of race, class, and gender; accessible child care is no different. According to the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), universal child care is associated with higher employment rates among women. Countries that have higher maternal employment rates (such as the Scandinavian countries) tend to have affordable and high-quality child care provisions in place, along with comprehensive parental leave policies. Benefits of boosting maternal employment rates include increased family income, maintaining women's connection to the labour market, and increasing the population tax base²². Overall, affordable access to child care has a positive outcome on economic growth²³. Accessible child care has also had demonstrable positive long-term impacts for children of divergent economic backgrounds²⁴.

²² https://www.ippr.org/files/images/media/files/publication/2011/12/making-the-case-for-universal-childcare_Dec2011_8382.pdf

²³ <http://www.ecorys.com/sites/default/files/files/Pillar%204%20CD17500%20-%20childcare-gender%20equality-economic%20growth.pdf>

²⁴ <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-k-12/reports/2013/05/08/62519/the-importance-of-preschool-and-child-care-for-working-mothers/>



Child care is closely tied to labour force patterns, family structure, and household income. In Canada, parents belonging to higher income households are more likely to use child care²⁵, which could point to entrenched socio-economic barriers. Cost of child care varies distinctly across provinces, with the lowest median cost per month in Quebec at \$152, and the highest in Ontario at \$677 per month²⁶. This is a direct result of Quebec's universal child care policy, which has also resulted in the highest national rates of child care usage in the country.

Not only is subsidized child care an economic benefit for Canada, but it also empowers women to make the best choices for themselves and their families. By ensuring that affordable child care is accessible to all, social policy can counteract structural and intersectional inequalities that may impact a mother's ability to participate in the paid labour force.

Key decision-makers:

In Canada, provincial governments have primary responsibility for child care policy. As a result, current policies range by province, with Quebec being the only province to currently offer universal child care. Businesses and employers can also play a role by including child care subsidies or on-site child care as part of employee benefits.

Challenges and alternate opinions:

Subsidized child care, especially universal child care, can be a contentious policy issue. Many believe that universal child care should not be part of a fiscal government's agenda, and that the cost of providing child care should not fall to government or business. Instead, many people advocate that by focusing on building the job market and providing access to good-paying jobs, families and women will be able to afford quality child care.

²⁵ <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-652-x/89-652-x2014005-eng.htm#n1>

²⁶ <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-652-x/89-652-x2014005-eng.htm#n1>



Get involved, stay engaged, and make change

We've got a great list of guides for different ways to get engaged on this and other issues - they've got great thoughts on joining a party (or not), writing a petition, meeting with political representatives and more.

Stay up to date by following some of these incredible organizations:

[@hEr VOLUTION](#)

Based in Toronto, Canada, hEr VOLUTION is the go to place for youth, particularly young women from underserved communities to come to in order to advance in 21st Century Skills. We exist to create opportunities for the next generation of women in STEM connecting them with leaders in the industry for career support.”

[@SCWIST](#)

A non-profit association that promotes, encourages and empowers women and girls in science, engineering and technology.

[@TechGirlsCan](#)

A hub for Canadian women in Science, Technology, Engineering, & Math (STEM). Proudly supporting Women of Colour, LBTTQ, and Aboriginal Trailblazers, TGC is committed to fostering collaboration in designing solutions to address the barriers for diversity and equity in the technology sector. TGC works to advocate for resources, funding, private and public sector partnership opportunities, and catalyze joint programs.”

[@EqualVoiceCA](#)

A multi-partisan organization dedicated to electing women to all levels of government in Canada.



Marking a Century of Women's Suffrage
Commémorer un siècle du droit de vote des femmes

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The Canadian Women's Foundation is Canada's national foundation dedicated to improving the lives of women and girls.

You can also follow political parties, your city councillors, provincial or territorial MLA, MPP, or MNA, and your federal MP. Check out what they're talking about and reach out to them!

You might also want to check out these great resources from our very own Daughters of the Vote

[Books](#) by Daughter of the Vote Erinne Paisley

[Helping Hands](#) by Daughter of the Vote Janelle Hinds