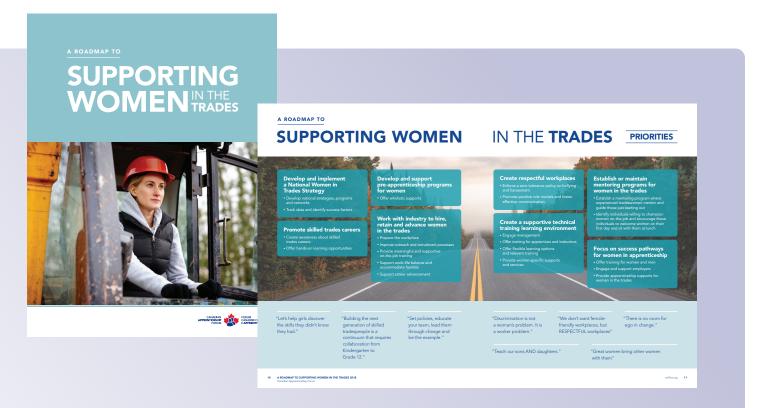


## **Strategy Development**

## The Road to a Tangible Action Plan

In November 2018, the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum (CAF-FCA) held its inaugural **Supporting Women in Trades Conference** in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Over 350 female apprentices, tradespeople and apprenticeship stakeholders came together to identify national priorities to inform the development of a road map for women in trades in Canada. Conference participants agreed that accurate career information, a supportive, safe and respectful work environment, high-quality teaching and mentoring all help women as they pursue careers in the skilled trades. Stereotypes and unwelcoming workplaces were flagged the biggest barriers women experience. Following this event, CAF-FCA published a *Road Map to Supporting Women in Trades* report and one-pager outlining identified priorities.

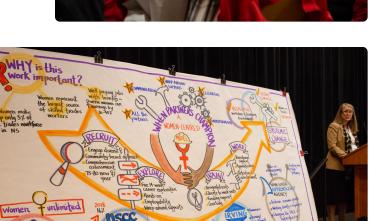
The publication of this road map created enthusiasm and support among stakeholders as well as a call for concrete action to be taken across the country. In 2019, the second **Supporting Women in Trades** event was held in Vancouver. Again, more than 300 delegates gathered to share ideas and engage in a conversation on how to remove the barriers women encounter as they pursue careers in which, traditionally, they are underrepresented. A specific call to action was made and CAF-FCA committed to continue to provide change-making leadership. The conference culminated in a CAF-FCA pledge to lead the development of a national strategy.



Accurate career information, a supportive, safe and respectful work environment, high-quality teaching and mentoring all help women as they pursue careers in the skilled trades.

## Tradeswomen and their Allies from Across Canada









## **Community Action Strategy**

## A Collaboration of Skilled Trades Stakeholders

In August 2019, CAF-FCA struck a task force of over 60 stakeholders from across the trades and country to work together to develop a national strategy. The task force, comprised of apprentices, tradeswomen, representatives from women's organizations, labour groups, employers, educators and jurisdictional apprenticeship authorities worked together over many months to identify the specific tactics for a national strategy. The work of the task force, as identified by them, focused on respectful workplaces and establishing a national target to increase participation and retention of females in skilled trades careers. Under the guidance of established leaders in the skilled trades communities, two co-chairs and two team-leaders worked with entire task force membership to develop the **National Supporting Women in Trades Strategy**.





# Melissa Young Executive Director, National Electrical Trade Council (NETCO)

**Mediaplanet:** Why did you want to participate and lead this task force?

Melissa Young: I believe that as a woman that has been in the industry for nearly 30 years it is my responsibility to give back. There have been some very significant changes over the years for women in non-traditional skilled trades, however there is still a significant amount of work to be done. The culture in the workplace and stigma attached to having women working in the skilled trades is still there and I do believe that we will continue to see it disappear over time. To do this, we must continue to push for strategic changes that will impact policy and reflect positive outcomes for women.



# Lisa Stevens Chief Strategy Officer, British Columbia Construction Association

**Mediaplanet:** What is the role of this taskforce?

Lisa Stevens: The task force has one goal: to build a national strategy that will truly change the game for Canadian women who want to work in the skilled trades. Canadian Apprenticeship Forum members have a monumental amount of experience and knowledge, but even more impressive than what they know is how engaged and passionate they are about getting it done. This is a commitment to putting Canadian industry firmly on the road to diversity: no more excuses, just action.



### Joann Greeley

Engagement and Events Coordinator, Office to Advance Women Apprentices

**Mediaplanet:** How will this project impact women working in the trades?

Joann Greeley: It's my hope that this task force will influence the federal and provincial governments by having policy written around targets for women's participation in skilled building trades. If we can get industry to adopt this strategy, we'll be opening doors for women working in skilled trades. Most women face discrimination in trying to secure employment. This strategy should mitigate this discrimination. Having industry buy into structural changes supported by policies will make all worksites better places for all workers.



## Nour Hachem-Fawaz President and Founder, Build a Dream

**Mediaplanet:** What's your hope for this task force?

Nour Hachem-Fawaz: My hope for this task force is to launch a national strategy reflective of a collective voice to present diverse experts who have worked tirelessly for years to move the needle for women in the skilled trades. CAF-FCA brings together all necessary stakeholders including industry, education, community, and women in the trades, believing that each lens brings great value to the change we need to implement at all levels for all women to succeed. I hope we'll energize a nationwide commitment to advancing women in the industry by prioritizing a united strategy that celebrates progress while addressing the gaps that continue to exist.

## From the Task Force

"There are many groups and organizations across Canada doing the work to recruit and retain tradeswomen to the construction industry: from boots on the ground to national strategies and campaigns. The SWIT national strategy is bringing together these various groups to collaborate and discuss next steps in our overall efforts across the country. We will be much farther ahead by working together."

"This strategy will help maintain a female workforce in the construction industry while promoting a harmonious workplace and provide support for future female recruitment."

#### LORNA HARNUM

International Representative, Canadian Region

International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE)

"A national-level, multi-faceted and action-oriented strategy is needed to address the long-standing barriers for women and other underrepresented groups. The SWiT strategy is a great way to start the journey to sustainably increasing the proportion of women in the trades across Canada."

#### NINA HANSEN (she/her)

**Executive Director**BC Centre for Women in the Trades (BCCWITT)

## LINDSAY AMUNDSEN

Director of Workforce Development





## The **SWiT Strategy** includes the following goals:

- Increase the number of women apprentices, journeypersons and supervisors where they are underrepresented in proportion to the total number in a skilled trades workplace.
- Create respectful and welcoming workplaces through meaningful policy and education. Workplaces should be safe, healthy, inclusive and equitable, free of harassment, bullying and discrimination.

## **Actions 4 Change**



Develop a call-to-action campaign where champions are recognized and tools for change are provided. Create a **national movement** that includes all stakeholders.



Work with all levels of government to implement diversity targets on infrastructure projects. Hold employers and unions accountable by publishing actual hiring numbers. Create pressure for **policy change**.



Develop toolboxes for employers, labour organizations, educators & tradeswomen and their allies where they can access information & tools for creating a respectful workplace. Create an understanding that organizations need to develop and implement a concrete action plan. **No more excuses.** 



Set a measurable target, track & publish results. Create awareness of actual proportion of women in the workplace and outline a plan to increase the representation of women. **Make employers and unions accountable.** 

## **Measuring Impact**

## A Commitment to Tracking Numbers

Developing a strategy involves targets. In its basic form, a target is a numerical value that helps communicate the intended result of a strategy.

The targets are national, but provincial numbers will vary based on regional economic conditions, the number of infrastructure projects underway, the construction and maintenance requirements and the size of the population. The numbers of apprentices will increase and decrease as economic conditions in specific provinces/territories and sectors change.

The baseline figure of 4.5 per cent is based upon the registrations of women apprentices in the trades, but the task force is committed to ensuring there is employment opportunities for both registered apprentices and certified journeypersons. The point is to provide ongoing employment opportunities for women.

The Current Number

4.5%

The Goal

15%

\*More ambitious goals have been promoted by other groups. The Supporting Women in Trades National Strategy task force opted to set a reasonable, attainable target of 15% by 2030. Gender equity in all skilled trades workplaces remains the goal.

The task force is committed to ensuring there is employment opportunities for both registered apprentices and certified journeypersons.

#### The Data

Proportion of total female apprenticeship registrations based on collected data for trades in Statistics Canada's Registered Apprenticeship Information System (RAIS).

YEARS	CONSTRUCTION / MANUFACTURING / TRANSPORTATION
2018	4.5%
2017	4.4%
2016	4.3%
2015	4.1%
2014	3.9%

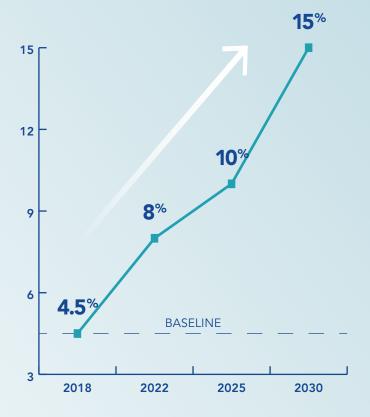
These figures represent trends in the proportion of total registrations of women in construction, manufacturing and transportation trades in Canada, 2014–2018.

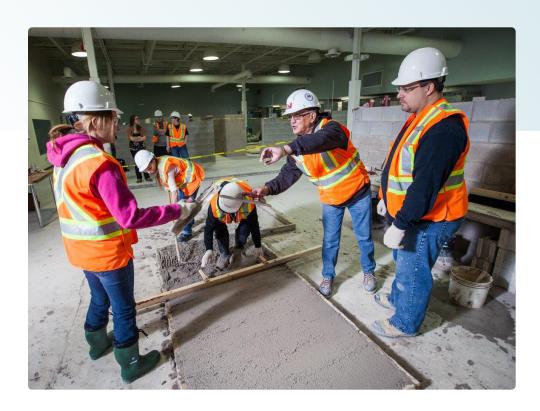
Source: Registered Apprenticeship Information System, Statistics Canada

## **Numbers Matter**

## **Four Progressive Goals**

The **4 SMART Actions** are measurable and have realistic goals. Accordingly, a realistic scaled target was established to create momentum. Looking at similar initiatives that are focusing on women in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) provided a good basis to establish the interim goals and to benchmark current attitudes and levels of engagement.





## **Additional Work Needing Attention**

## Amplifying women's voices—further recommendations made by women working in the skilled trades

Although CAF-FCA and its skilled trades stakeholder community are proud of the work that has been accomplished to develop a tangible and concrete **4 SMART** actions, there is more work to be done. This national strategy identifies action items that can be applied across sectors and which are without provincial or territorial boundaries. Provincial apprenticeship authorities, educators and educational institutions, employers and unions alike need to implement systemic changes where there is provincial and jurisdictional authority that oversees labour and education. Below are additional recommendations captured at the **Supporting Women in Trades** events held in 2018 and 2019.

### For Education Sector & Union Training Centres

- Revise the curriculum
- Review curriculum for gender bias to remove it
- Standardize the curriculum
- · Use gender neutral language
- Have an assignment where apprentices interview a female journeyperson

#### Create Inclusive Classrooms

- Hire women trades instructors
- Require that inclusion is a part of the job description for instructors and mandate that all instructors receive training in inclusive classroom management
- Create transparency around creating more supportive learning environments
- Ensure instructors have the right personality to teach and are role models in the classroom
- Ensure instructors monitor classroom behaviour
- Offer training to apprentices about respectful classrooms
- · Tackle bias against female instructors

#### **Provide Accommodations for Learners**

- Use appropriate evaluation/assessment tools, not just multiple-choice tests
- · Provide accommodations early in the process
- Offer math upgrading
- Connect learners with mental health challenges to counselling.
   Try to have enough counsellors so students do not experience delays when trying to access a counsellor
- Ensure learners understand the student services that are available

#### **Enhance Pre-Apprenticeship Programs**

- Enhance pre-employment programs and pre-apprenticeship to include more role models
- Provide transition programs for those with barriers
- · Remove artificial barriers that are not necessary requirements
- · Outline what is needed for each step of training

### For Employers

#### Implement Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment Initiatives

- Enforce a zero-tolerance policy when it comes to bullying and harassment
- Offer mandatory training about respect and emotional safety in the workplace for management, administrative staff, journeypersons and apprentices
- Sign up, borrow, or take part in the development of a code of conduct for your workplace
- Make it safe to report bullying incidents and inform people where to report; have a contact at your workplace
- Ensure there is a transparent process for investigation and ensure there are consequences
- Implement an anonymous annual survey about bullying and harassment
- Keep track of the numbers and make the numbers public

#### **Hire Women**

- Reach out to diverse communities and groups of women when advertising employment opportunities
- Be transparent about hiring processes and available opportunities
- Develop a high-quality on-boarding process and prepare the team to welcome the new person

#### Prepare the Workplace

- Review all policies and practices using a gender-diversity lens and re-adjust them where necessary to ensure there is equity
- Ensure gender-neutral language is used in policies, collective agreements and in all day-to-day operations and transactions
- Provide uniforms and personal protective equipment that fit women's bodies
- Ensure there are separate, safe, secure and clean washrooms and change rooms for women

#### **Support Career Advancement**

- Support professional development opportunities for women
- Outline the advancement policies to all employees
- · Offer promotions based on skills and seniority
- · Provide women with leadership positions on worksites

## A Word from the Executive Director



I am truly humbled and privileged to be working with such a passionate and committed apprenticeship community. Although I have no personal experience working in the skilled trades, I have great compassion and respect for the women who have forged paths for years working in these careers while fighting for equality, respect and advancement opportunities.

The stories that were shared in the development of this strategy were done so with a belief that change is possible, and with trust that the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum can effect sustained positive change by doing what we do best—bringing people together.

This strategy is simple, perhaps too simple for some. But for those who contributed their time and experience to its development it is a benchmark for Canada as a nation to keep track of the big picture. The 4 SMART actions are ones that can immediately be actioned, measured, and examined. The strategy is driven by numbers and the community must take responsibility for its current and future statistics. The Canadian Apprenticeship Forum does not have the authority to mandate any changes, nor does it desire to. As a member-based organization we aspire to create a platform for the industry and apprenticeship community to drive sustainable and measurable change from within.

I want to thank the National Strategy Co-Chairs and Team Leaders who stepped up and gave their time and passion to lead the way, bringing together ideas, programs and wishes from across the trades and regions of Canada. I am grateful for your insight and partnership. To the task force members, too many to name here, thank you for your dedication and support of this initiative. I look forward to our continued work together.

Trance Danianel

## About the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum The Canadian Apprenticeship Forum – Forum canadian

sur l'apprentissage (CAF-FCA) is a national, not-for-profit organization working with stakeholders in all regions of Canada. We influence pan-Canadian apprenticeship strategies through research, discussion and collaboration. We share insights across trades, across sectors and across the country. We do this to promote apprenticeship as an effective model for training and education. Our Board of Directors is comprised of representatives from business, labour, the jurisdictional apprenticeship authorities, education and equity-seeking groups. Through our work, CAF-FCA has shed light on several key issues affecting apprenticeship, such as the perceived barriers to accessing and completing apprenticeship, and the business case for apprenticeship training.

For more information, visit <u>caf-fca.org</u>.

## Canadian Apprenticeship Forum

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