

# Women's representation in municipal elected positions

## Across ten provinces and two territories-representing 99% of Canada's population

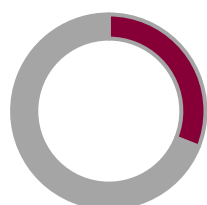
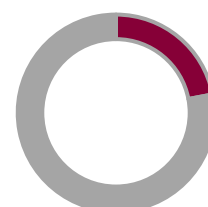
This research was conducted in 2023 by the Canadian Municipal Barometer at the University of Calgary on behalf of FCM's Canadian Women in Local Leadership (CanWILL) project.

### Quick facts



Women represent **31%** of all municipal elected representatives in Canada

Women hold **22%** of municipal mayoral positions



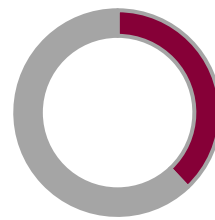
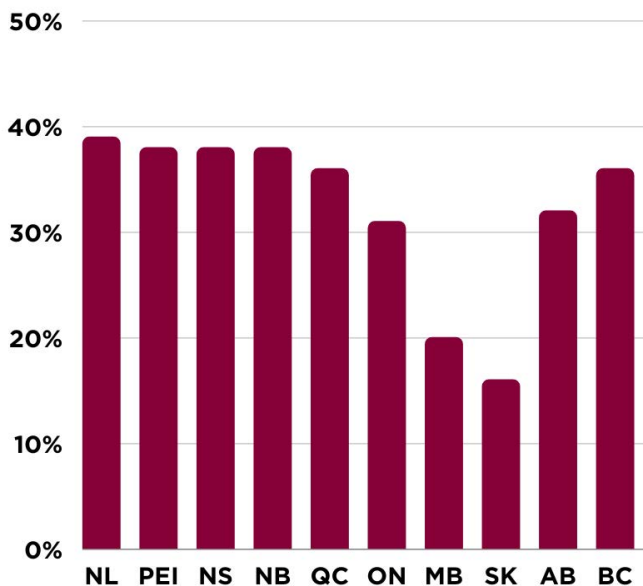
Women hold **33%** of councillor positions

**16%** of communities in the research have **no women** on council

### Progress

- **16%** of municipalities have reached **levels at or above parity** (women representing at least half of the council).
- The percentage of women in **mayoral** positions has increased by **2%** since 2018 and **4%** since 2015.
- The percentage of women in **councillor** positions has increased by **4%** since 2018 and **6%** since 2015.

## Women's representation by province



Women represent **38%** of elected positions in Yukon

And **32%** of elected positions in the Northwest Territories



\*Data is not currently available in a disaggregated format.

CanWILL recognizes the importance of refined data which should show progress for often underrepresented women such as Indigenous, Black, and other racialized women as well as members of the LGBTQ2S+ community in municipal elected positions. This type of data should be available in the next iteration of this research.

In 2015, the United Nations launched the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of which Goal 5 is to achieve gender equality. This is viewed as a precondition for realizing all 17 goals in the 2030 SDG agenda. A key subcomponent is to “ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.”

Indicator 5.5.1 (b): Proportion of seats held by women in local governments. Canada’s current ranking of 33.3% puts Canada at 54th of the 169 countries based on existing data.

In 2010, FCM set 30% women’s representation by 2026 as its objective. In 2023, FCM is proud to see the goal of 30% has been met, but there is still work to do.



## Conditions for women to enter or remain in politics

Women of diverse backgrounds often face systemic barriers to a higher degree or with compounding impacts. These systemic issues include, but are not limited to, biases, systematic discrimination, exclusionary policies or practices, and triple-burden responsibilities.

To address these systemic issues, local governments have a responsibility to create a space in which women feel empowered and supported in their political participation, and in which more women become involved in decision-making and policy development. Gender equity and inclusion municipal strategies are one essential tool to create an inclusive space.

Learn from FCM's resource: [Considerations for developing a gender equity and inclusion municipal strategy](#)

## Fostering parity and more diversity of municipal councils

CanWILL has compiled and curated a collection of articles, reports, guidance, templates and concrete examples from local governments across Canada and the world.

These resources are meant to support and inspire municipal stakeholders, including women and gender-diverse individuals of all identities, as well as male allies as they drive change for more equitable, representative local governments.

[Resource library for inclusive municipal governance](#)

This initiative is supported by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Canadian Women in Local Leadership (CanWILL) Program with funding from Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE).