



FEDERATION  
OF CANADIAN  
MUNICIPALITIES

FÉDÉRATION  
CANADIENNE DES  
MUNICIPALITÉS

## WOMEN IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT GETTING TO 30%: LESSONS LEARNED



[www.fcm.ca](http://www.fcm.ca)



# Introduction

FCM has a mandate to improve the quality of life in all communities by promoting strong, effective and accountable municipal government. In service of this mandate, FCM's Standing Committee on Increasing Women's Participation in Municipal Government is dedicated to supporting initiatives to increase women's political participation in municipal government. The guiding principle of this work is that when women are involved in governing at the municipal level, communities benefit greatly from their experience and insights. In turn, these communities are stronger, more effective and more accountable.

In March 2010, FCM kicked off a two-year project called *Getting to 30%* aimed at preparing women of all ages to run successful campaigns for municipal government, with an emphasis on women in rural and remote communities. The project focused on capacity building for women candidates by considering their unique needs and strengths. To provide guidance to women candidates on launching and sustaining a successful election campaign, *Getting to 30%* delivered:

- a series of workshops and webinars
- formal and informal mentorship opportunities
- peer-to-peer networking opportunities
- a comprehensive toolkit with resources

With the support of the Community Fund of Status of Women Canada and in-kind contributions from FCM and Equal Voice, *Getting to 30%* held 16 campaign school workshops and 10 webinars across Canada, reaching 346 women. These workshops and webinars focused on developing skills and capacities through a participatory program, covering topics such as:

- campaign fundraising
- media relations
- campaign strategies
- integrating social media in outreach efforts

*Getting to 30%* built on 10 years of work focused on increasing the participation of women in municipal decision making. This document is an overview of the accomplishments of this project and identifies the key lessons learned. It is FCM's hope that the work of the Standing Committee on Increasing Women's Participation in Municipal Government, culminating in the *Getting to 30%* project, will serve as a touchstone for other efforts.

# Why women? Project Context and Background

## The 30% target

The advancement of women is an ongoing pursuit, an important component of which is the participation of women in political life. The active participation of women and the incorporation of women's viewpoints at all levels of decision making are considered fundamental to a healthy, just, and equitable political system. It is for this reason that in 1995, the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations endorsed the target of 30% women in positions at all decision-making levels.<sup>1</sup>

This target is a minimum requirement for women's interests to be truly taken into account. When women are involved in decision-making processes and their interests are advanced, the whole community benefits. To be sure, there are other markers for the advancement of women's interests, but the 30% target is seen as having independent merits and is a widely accepted benchmark.

## Women's participation in decision making in Canada

Women are chronically under-represented in Canadian politics at all levels. Despite making up approximately 52% of the population, women occupy a far lesser proportion of seats in the House of Commons, provincial and territorial legislatures, and city councils and mayoral posts.

Federally, women currently constitute 24.68% of the legislature. This represents an improvement over the 2008 federal election where the percentage stood at 22.08%, and the 2006 election at 20.78%. While the upward trajectory of these numbers is encouraging, they still place Canada well below the levels of

<sup>1</sup> Please see the report of the United Nations' Fourth World Conference on Women: <http://www.un.org/esa/gopher-data/conf/fwcw/off/a--20.en>



women in politics in other countries. At the federal level, Canada's improvement to 24.68% ranks 45<sup>th</sup>—still well behind the top ten countries: Rwanda (56.3%), Sweden (46.4%), South Africa (44.5%), Cuba (43.2%), Iceland (42.9%), Netherlands (42.0%), Finland (40.0%), Norway (39.6%), Mozambique (39.2%), Angola (38.6%) and Costa Rica (38.6%).<sup>2</sup>

At the provincial and territorial level, the breakdown of women members of the legislative assemblies is as follows:

<b>Province/Territory</b>	<b>% of Seats Occupied by Women</b>
<b>Alberta</b>	26.44% <sup>3</sup>
<b>British Columbia</b>	31.76%
<b>Manitoba</b>	28.07%
<b>New Brunswick</b>	12.73%
<b>Newfoundland and Labrador</b>	16.67%
<b>Northwest Territories</b>	10.53%
<b>Nova Scotia</b>	23.08%
<b>Nunavut</b>	15.79%
<b>Ontario</b>	28.04%
<b>Prince Edward Island</b>	22.22%
<b>Quebec</b>	32.80%
<b>Saskatchewan</b>	18.97%
<b>Yukon</b>	31.58%

Current figures are mixed, with British Columbia, Quebec and the Yukon surpassing the 30% benchmark and Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario approaching the benchmark. Other jurisdictions are not performing quite as well. It is worth noting, however, that more Canadians than ever before are currently represented by women premiers.

<sup>2</sup> These figures (including federal figures for Canada) are drawn from the Inter-Parliamentary Union's PARLINE Database on National Parliaments: <http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/parlinesearch.asp>.

<sup>3</sup> Figures on provincial representation of women are drawn from the Library of Parliament website on Party Leaders and Standings: <http://www.parl.gc.ca/Parlinfo/compilations/ProvinceTerritory/PartyStandingsAndLeaders.aspx?Language=E>

At the municipal level, women currently constitute 25% of city councillors and 16% of mayors for an aggregate level of 24%. These figures vary greatly by jurisdiction.<sup>4</sup>

<b>Province/Territory</b>	<b>% of Female Councillors</b>	<b>% of Female Mayors</b>
<b>Alberta</b>	23%	16%
<b>British Columbia</b>	33%	26%
<b>Manitoba</b>	17%	9%
<b>New Brunswick</b>	31%	21%
<b>Newfoundland and Labrador</b>	30%	23%
<b>Northwest Territories</b>	26%	6%
<b>Nova Scotia</b>	43%	25%
<b>Nunavut</b>	36%	24%
<b>Ontario</b>	25%	16%
<b>Prince Edward Island</b>	31%	25%
<b>Quebec</b>	28%	16%
<b>Saskatchewan</b>	16%	11%
<b>Yukon</b>	38%	50%

While we are seeing improvements in the number of women involved in municipal decision making, due in no small part to the work of the standing committee, there is more work to be done to reach the 30% target. The municipal order of government has the closest tie to the day-to-day lives of Canadians. In this sense, it is all the more important that the 30% target is reached, if not surpassed.

<sup>4</sup> For the complete breakdown, please see the FCM 2012 Municipal Statistics sheet: [http://www.fcm.ca/Documents/reports/Women/PUB\\_GenderStats\\_2012\\_08\\_08\\_v1.0FIN\\_eng.doc.pdf](http://www.fcm.ca/Documents/reports/Women/PUB_GenderStats_2012_08_08_v1.0FIN_eng.doc.pdf)

## **FCM's work on increasing women's participation in municipal decision making**

The story of *Getting to 30%* extends farther back than the two years during which the project operated. In fact, the project was one of the most recent phases of nearly 10 years of FCM work on increasing women's participation in municipal decision making. In 2004, FCM carried out a participatory research study and a national survey on women's participation in municipal decision making and why it falls so far below that of men. This study, the subsequent report, and the mobilization tour that followed, all served as a call to action. They brought attention to the democratic deficit that was, and continues to be, pervasive in a progressive and socially responsible country like Canada.

The report that emerged from this study, *Increasing Women's Participation in Municipal Decision Making*, identified a number of explanations for why women are not participating in municipal politics:

- inadequate information about how to get involved
- a lack of connections between municipalities and women's groups
- the perception that volunteer groups offer better opportunities for women to get involved and make a difference
- family responsibilities
- a lack of inclusive policies
- ongoing discrimination

Since 2004, FCM has carried out a great deal of programming to help women overcome these obstacles. In 2005, the newly established Standing Committee on Increasing Women's Participation in Municipal Government set a goal to increase the number of women in municipal government to 30% by 2026. At the time this objective was set, it meant an increase of over 2,100 women, or approximately 100 women per year. The committee's chair, Councillor Pam McConnell, explained that attaining such a goal was only possible through very focused, organized and tightly monitored work, which has been the guiding principle behind the committee's work.

It is clear that *Getting to 30%* was both an endeavour in its own right as well as a stepping stone for the work of the standing committee on the way to achieving the larger goal of increasing women's participation in municipal government.

## Project Objectives

The overall objective of *Getting to 30%* was supporting and strengthening the ability of women to run for elected office and to succeed in municipal politics. In numerical terms, the project sought to prepare 315 women across Canada to run for municipal politics. The project had several specific targets:

- 16–20 workshops, as well as 10 webinars, reach 315 women, with 100 coming from rural or remote communities
- 65 women in the mentoring program gain hands-on experience and guidance to enable them to run and succeed in municipal politics
- 100 women who live in rural communities with upcoming elections run for council positions
- 65 newly elected women from across the country actively participate in municipal politics, particularly in rural and remote areas
- 30 women apply the skills and strategies they acquire in the project in current and future community activities (other than municipal politics)

These objectives and targets were the result of careful consideration of what was achievable in the project period. The targets were set to provide the necessary support for the ultimate goal of increasing the number of women in municipal government to 30% by 2026.



## Project Design

Increasing the number of women in municipal government has certain unique challenges when compared to other orders of government. Federally and provincially, the system of political parties plays a big role in guiding women candidates' campaigns, considerably affecting resources, messaging, and the candidates' support structure. Such assets are not immediately available for women running for municipal office. This dynamic makes the decision to run for municipal government daunting and can lead to feelings of isolation.

Women have unique needs in running a campaign. In designing the *Getting to 30%* project, the project team kept this in mind, especially to ensure women did not feel alone. This section illustrates how the project's design was tailored to the needs of women and the challenges that they face in running for municipal government.

### **Designing a project based on the needs of women**

Whereas earlier stages of FCM's work on increasing the participation of women in municipal government focused on overcoming barriers to becoming involved, the *Getting to 30%* project began at the point where a woman makes the decision to run and sought to support those women to run a successful campaign.

To run a campaign, women face many of the same challenges as men. Campaigns demand significant time and energy and are hugely stressful. *Getting to 30%*'s extensive consultation and research showed women experience more challenges than men while campaigning. These hurdles fall in to five categories: assertiveness, fundraising, support networks, media relations and public speaking. To prepare women candidates for the challenges of running a successful campaign, *Getting to 30%* developed resources and workshop/webinar material specifically tailored to the unique needs of women.

#### **Assertiveness**

Women tend to have difficulty finding an authoritative voice. Where it concerns their achievements, breadth of knowledge and experience, women often downplay their strengths, focusing instead on collaborative accomplishments. In the face of challenges to their positions, many women scale back to avoid being labelled as "wrong".

These tendencies are perhaps rooted in societal expectations of how women ought to behave: demurely, modestly and quietly. When women do assert themselves, it often attracts negative attention; women may be described as aggressive, shrill or unladylike. During a campaign, candidates must demonstrate confidence and decisiveness while clearly asserting their positions. *Getting to 30%* used resources and participatory workshop exercises to help participants take control of the message and become comfortable with being the centre of attention in a competitive environment.

### **Fundraising**

Though it is a challenge for all candidates, women find it particularly difficult to make open appeals for direct contributions from potential donors, due partly to the barriers to assertiveness discussed above. Since appealing for direct financial contributions has been proven to be the most effective way to fundraise, *Getting to 30%* devoted much attention to building women candidates' confidence and their focus on goals. The workshops and webinars detailed specific techniques and strategies to raising funds.

### **Support networks**

Male candidates often have access to networks of support that are less accessible to women—especially in terms of connections to the business community. Though this can be daunting for women candidates, the project encouraged women to make full use of support networks at their disposal, many of which are overlooked—family, friends, neighbours and volunteer groups. *Getting to 30%* demonstrated how to reach out to these networks and understand how different types of networks strengthen a campaign.

### **Media relations**

Attracting positive media attention is essential to a successful campaign. In fact, a candidate's relations with the media can be as important as voter contacts. For women, the challenge is often in keeping the attention on the substance of their political message, rather than on the fact that they are women. *Getting to 30%* workshops and webinars devoted a great deal of attention to communications, including media relations. They focused on navigating challenges by developing a clear and coherent message and remaining on message during an interview. By reviewing why and when to interact with the media and how to influence coverage, candidates had a better sense of how to make media relations a campaign resource and not an impediment.

## **Public speaking**

Many women candidates express concern about public speaking. In truth, not many people—men or women—come by this skill naturally. Yet women can perceive public speaking to be a greater challenge. Again, this relates to the difficulty that women sometimes have with being assertive. *Getting to 30%* addressed this challenge by focusing on preparation, organization, and the importance of practice.

The *Getting to 30%* project benefited greatly from FCM's long-standing involvement in promoting the role of women in local decision making. The project was able to leverage lessons learned by FCM over the years regarding the unique needs of women in order to develop a comprehensive and experience-driven project.

## **Project resources**

Over the past 10 years, FCM has developed resources that were used extensively by the *Getting to 30%* project. *Getting to 30% by 2026; Municipal Elections in Canada: A Guide for Women Candidates*; and the *Election Toolkit for Women: The Candidate's Guide to Municipal Elections* were invaluable resources in both developing the concept of the *Getting to 30%* project as well as informing the material for the campaign school workshops and webinars. These documents formed the core content of the campaign school workshops as well as the webinars. Throughout the course of *Getting to 30%*, the experience of the project team in delivering the material also formed a feedback loop that, in turn, helped to shape resources.

By design, the documents were written in readable, straightforward language. Councillor Pam McConnell explained that in bringing together this material, the goal was not to be writing books on the subject, but rather to be putting out “meaningful plans”—plans that could be picked up by any woman interested in becoming involved and be readily understood. The documents were designed to be useful for women in all parts of Canada. Readers find relevant information about registering one's candidacy and rules and regulations, which can differ significantly from region to region.

## Campaign school workshops

One of the central pillars of the *Getting to 30%* project was the campaign school workshops. These workshops were designed to deliver material developed from the project resources in an interactive and inclusive setting, with the goal to increase the success rate for women launching municipal campaigns. They were targeted at women considering, or who had decided, to run for local government, especially in communities with upcoming elections. The workshops were aimed at providing an opportunity to build skills for women just beginning to develop an interest in local government.

### Structuring the workshop for success

In designing the workshop program, *Getting to 30%* drew on lessons from other organizations with experience in organizing and running campaign schools, such as Equal Voice's online campaign school. The campaign school workshops began with a three-workshop pilot, with workshops held in Edmonton, Winnipeg and Summerside. After the conclusion of these workshops, the team reviewed feedback from participants to further mould the resources, content and structure of the workshops. Most significantly, this review period resulted in the introduction of tailored material for participants from rural and remote areas.

Campaign school workshops generally followed a standard itinerary. Day one began with a round of introductions where participants gave a bit of their background, described their motivations and set out their expectations for the workshop. The program then moved through important logistical elements:

- making the decision to run
- understanding the rules for registering
- campaign offences
- organizing finances and fundraising
- setting up a campaign team and office
- making a campaign plan and canvassing
- getting ready for election day

The second day focused entirely on communications, with a local media specialist often jointly facilitating this session. Participants learned the basics of:

- developing a message and making an overall communication plan
- designing campaign literature

- using the Internet and social media
- managing media relations

The division of topics between the two days evolved over time. For example, the project team introduced the subject of developing a campaign message on the first day, rather than reserving it for the second day, to give participants a chance to think about their messaging before the communications sessions.

While facilitators viewed the standard itinerary as a guideline for the day's structure, the flow of the day was adaptable to the needs and expectations of the group. To maximize the usefulness of the workshop, facilitators gauged the motivations of the group during the introduction and proceeded with the workshop accordingly.

Managing the day's program in this way required an expansive set of resources to serve as the core content. As discussed earlier, *Getting to 30%* benefited specifically from three FCM publications: *Getting to 30% by 2026*; *Municipal Elections in Canada: A Guide for Women Candidates*; and the *Election Toolkit for Women: The Candidate's Guide to Municipal Elections*. Facilitators used these resources and extensive PowerPoint presentations to anticipate questions and discussion topics. All resources were shared with workshop participants and facilitators were available if participants had further questions.

While facilitators prepared structured lectures for the workshops, the goal was to keep the material discussion-based and flexible. Linking to the unique needs of women, *Getting to 30%* was intent on using the workshops to foster confidence in women candidates. Experience with this project shows that discussion-based participatory learning is key to providing the support that women need most. The workshops were not only a platform to deliver high quality, experience-based material, but also an opportunity for women to



test ideas and connect with other women in a safe space. Participants were encouraged to interact during the sessions and build on each other's questions and ideas.

### **Participation of the host municipality and local champions**

The success of *Getting to 30%* workshops was bolstered by the support of the host municipality. To make the best use of this resource, the team liaised with the FCM network of members to arrive at an appropriate support structure. This link to the host municipality was an enormous asset. Host municipalities helped with providing workshop space, assisted with logistics, and coordinated with local media to organize publicity to help raise awareness of the event.

Another element of the success of workshops was the participation of a councillor as a local champion and point of contact. In the planning stages, local councillors consulted with the team to identify focus areas pertinent for the region and connected the project team to local people, women's organizations and resources. This stage was indispensable in keeping *Getting to 30%* malleable and tailored to the requirements of host communities.

Local councillors also participated in the promotion of the workshops. They helped recruit women to the workshops, based on their networks, and acted as media spokespeople. Finally, local councillors often actively participated in the workshops as mentors and resource people. The presence of a woman in the sessions who had been through the campaign process had a positive impact on the discussions.



### **Publicizing the workshops**

The team used a variety of media to spread the word about upcoming workshops: print media, web-based sources, communication mechanisms of different organizations (such as FCM or women's groups), and word of mouth. Through surveys of workshop participants, it was clear that the most effective method of publicizing events was word of mouth. Nearly half of all participants learned of the campaign school workshops through a local councillor, mentor or friend. Once again, this underlines the importance of informal networks and the local champion in making the workshops successful.

### **Registration**

Registration for the campaign school workshops was managed internally through the FCM website. In some cases, it was appropriate to apply a nominal registration fee to help ensure the attendance of those who registered for workshops. The *Getting to 30%* team consulted with local champions on this matter. While this measure was recommended in some communities, in others it may have served as a deterrent to registration.

### **Focusing on rural and remote communities**

One of the mandates of *Getting to 30%* was to reach women in rural and remote communities. As discussed earlier, the early stage of *Getting to 30%* was an important step in refining the material and structure of the workshops for women from rural and remote communities. The necessary strategies in such areas differ from urban centres. For example, in rural and remote areas, campaigns are often smaller in scale, work on fewer resources and may not require a campaign office. It is also more important that voters feel they know the candidate on a personal level. Because of this, the campaign school workshops focused on campaign components such as canvassing and attendance at public events. In rural and remote communities, these person-to-person interfaces are seen as more useful to women candidates than a focus on other areas.

### **Webinars**

When designing the project, consideration was given to the fact that, for various reasons, some women may not be able to attend a two-day workshop. Furthermore, in some areas of the country, there might not be sufficient density of interested participants to justify hosting a campaign school workshop. To

reach as many interested participants as possible, the project team decided to offer webinars in addition to workshops, delivering *Getting to 30%* material through an online forum.

Over the course of the project, *Getting to 30%* held 10 one-and-a-half hour webinars—five in French and five in English. Webinar topics included:

- deciding to run
- media relations
- campaign finances
- social media
- campaign literature

Each webinar covered one topic and webinars for each topic were held in both languages.

### **Using an outside webinar host company**

Running a successful webinar requires having a process for registration, hosting the online event, coordinating the evaluation and producing transcripts of the presentation and moderated online chats. The team considered running the webinars in-house, but based on the time and personnel resources available to them, they decided to hire an outside provider to host the webinars. A variety of companies offer this service and a variety of software platforms exist. The team reviewed the options in terms of price and quality of service.

### **Webinar structure**

In advance of the webinar, the host company conducted the registration process. The general structure of each webinar consisted of a presentation by the facilitator and a period of moderated discussion. The presentation portion combined verbal material with PowerPoint slides for visual content. For the moderated discussion, webinar participants submitted comments and questions through the host website's chat feature. The facilitator responded verbally to the questions. Throughout the process, facilitators were in contact with participants, answering questions, providing additional information about the webinar and the topics, and distributing resources requested or deemed useful.

### **Publicizing the webinars**

To publicize the webinars, the team used many media. FCM put out a national press release announcing events. The project team circulated information about the webinar series through its online social media tools—Facebook and Twitter. Information was circulated through partner networks, particularly organizations with memberships likely to be interested in these events, such as Equal Voice and Women of Colour Sisterhood.

### **The mentoring program**

The third pillar of *Getting to 30%* was the mentoring program. In the design stage of the project, this component was meant to enable the establishment of a continuing network of support for a woman candidate in her community. To facilitate this development, the project team distributed contact information for FCM’s regional champions and suggested that participants contact these resource people for further guidance and support following the campaign school workshop.<sup>5</sup>

While tracking developments after each workshop, the project team found that participants were not using this resource. Sessions probed this question and revealed that participants were hesitant to seek the mentorship of potential competitors. This was particularly the case in smaller communities or where the champion was an incumbent. It is worth noting that even though this particular form of mentorship did not gain traction with workshop participants, survey material for the project shows that informal networking and mentorship is taking place. Participants often contact one another to share experiences and resources. Some contact other women with experience in politics seeking their guidance. The project team integrated these avenues into a “What next?” session, emphasizing them as valuable resources for women candidates.

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<sup>5</sup> FCM’s regional champions are part of the Standing Committee on Increasing Women’s Participation in Local Government’s national network. The role of a regional champion is to recruit local volunteers as well as champions in other communities in order to encourage, support and mentor women interested in getting involved in local government. For more information, please visit FCM’s website: <http://www.fcm.ca/home/programs/women-in-local-government/regional-champions.htm>

## Facilitator's Profile

The workshop facilitator had an important role in ensuring that the project events accomplished the intended goals. Given that the design depended heavily on adaptive programming and management of the agenda, the ideal facilitator had to have a strong subject matter background, experience in the political sphere and the skill to moderate discussions. The program manager and workshop facilitator for *Getting to 30%*, Jennifer Mowbray, brought these key skills and knowledge to the program.

Ms. Mowbray's academic background includes an undergraduate degree in political science and psychology and a graduate degree in public and international affairs, with a focus on governance. This is complemented by her extensive professional experience in elections at all levels of Canadian government over the last 10 years. During her work with political parties and campaigns, she has gained vast experience in coaching and facilitating training programs. She has also developed her experience through specialized training in negotiation, the use of social media in political campaigns and outreach, and public speaking.

## Project Results

To recall, the objectives and targets of the project were:

- 315 women across Canada are prepared to run for municipal politics
- 16-20 workshops, as well as 10 webinars, reach 315 women, with 100 from rural or remote communities
- 65 women in the mentoring program gain hands-on experience and guidance to enable them to run and succeed in municipal politics
- 100 women who live in rural communities with upcoming elections run for council positions
- 65 newly elected women from across the country actively participate in municipal politics, particularly in rural and remote areas
- 30 women apply the skills and strategies they acquire in the project in current and future community activities (other than municipal politics)



In total, there were 346 participants. *Getting to 30%* exceeded its goal of engaging 315 women in workshops and webinars. The campaign school workshops engaged 210 women and the webinars engaged 136 women.

By project end, *Getting to 30%* held 16 workshops, three of which were in French. In order of their occurrence, the workshops took place in Edmonton, AB; Winnipeg, MB; Summerside, PEI; Prince George, BC; Esquimalt, BC; Nelson, BC; Kelowna, BC; Squamish, BC; Halifax, NS; Paquetville, NB; Dieppe, NB; Edmundston, NB; Whitehorse, Yukon; Rothesay, NB; and Fredericton, NB. The project delivered 10 webinars, half of which were in French.

The target of having 65 women engaged in the mentoring program was not achievable because of the challenges discussed above. To ensure that women were still benefiting from this type of program, the team adjusted its approach to encourage activities of informal mentoring and networking so participants could still reap the benefits.

There were 86 women from rural and remote communities who participated in the project workshops. The goal was to engage 100 women. The number of women from rural and remote areas is difficult to state definitively because data was not collected at one workshop. Hence, the number of women who participated from rural and remote communities is likely higher than official tallies indicate.

Of the women who participated in the campaign school workshops, 29 went on to become newly elected officials in their communities. The target for this category was 65. The number that was achieved is particularly impressive because the timing of the workshops coincided with the run-up to municipal elections in only five communities.

The efficacy of the workshops is further underlined when one looks at the figures more closely. *Getting to 30%* ran five workshops in British Columbia: Prince George, Esquimalt, Nelson, Kelowna, and Squamish. There were 82 participants at these workshops. Of those 82 women, 52 submitted their candidacy for municipal elections and 29 of them were successfully elected to office. Based on these figures, women who participated in the campaign school

workshops had an overall success rate of 55.7%. In those same communities, women who ran for office had a success rate of 41.2%.<sup>6</sup> This analysis suggests that women who participated in the workshops stood a better chance of winning than those who did not.

Further, survey feedback and informal comments from participants indicated that women found the workshops very useful in structuring their campaigns. Participants were particularly grateful for the opportunity to hear from and network with successful candidates, to meet other women interested in running for office, and to learn about communication strategies. Several participants reported applying the lessons learned directly to their campaign material. Nearly all participants would recommend this form of workshop to other women interested in running for office. Participants also expressed feelings of excitement at beginning their campaign work. Finally, 187 participants from the workshops and webinars reported that they felt they had gained skills and strategies they could apply to other forms of community involvement.

*Getting to 30%* achieved most of its goals over the course of its two years. Where circumstances made it difficult to achieve the goals set out in the project proposal, the team adjusted its approach to ensure that participants continued to benefit. The project owes its success to the ability of the team to make these types of adjustments.

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<sup>6</sup> These figures are taken from the Civic Info BC website: <http://www.elections.civicinfo.bc.ca/2011/>

## Conclusion

Over the past 10 years, FCM and the Standing Committee on Increasing Women's Participation in Municipal Government have been working tirelessly toward the goal of increasing the representation of women in local government. When the objective was set at 30% representation by the year 2026, it meant an increase of more than 2,100 women over the status quo. It was clear at the time that it would take an intensive, multi-pronged effort to reach this goal. Every year since its work began, the standing committee counts women. And every year, it sees an improvement in the numbers. At present, we are on course to reach the 30% target by 2026.

*Getting to 30%* was a key component of this success. The project built on ever-expanding initiatives coming out of FCM in support of women in local government. Based on identified needs and meeting those needs through a considered, continually adapting program, *Getting to 30%* provided women with resources, training, and the right environment to develop skills to be confident, successful candidates.

This document highlights the background and insights from *Getting to 30%*'s two years of operation. The hope is that these "lessons learned" documents form the basis of a repository of best practices and that other organizations consider similar undertakings. The continuation of such work is paramount to building on existing momentum. Though we are currently on target, there is still a long road ahead. Canada cannot afford to rest on its accomplishments just yet.





