



Women in Production Action Plan – Annual Report
January 31, 2024

Introduction

On March 6, 2019, a Joint Statement was issued by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) and Canada's largest public- and private-sector broadcasters. This Statement resulted from their discussions on the need to develop lasting solutions to address gender parity in Canada's production industry during the 2018 CRTC Women in Production Summit. It includes Rogers Sports & Media's (RSM) commitment to developing a voluntary action plan aimed at ensuring that more women are in decision-making capacities and play leading roles in the Canadian film and television production industry. On a practical level, the commitment reflects RSM's ongoing support of industry efforts to ensure greater representation of women and people from other underrepresented groups and speaks to our role in influencing independent producers we work with to achieve gender parity in Rogers-supported productions.

RSM's 2019 Action Plan focuses on programming and productions where we can make the biggest impact, that is, on content that we own and control. With the majority of RSM's programming investments being devoted to in-house productions such as sports, news, and lifestyle & entertainment programming, we looked to the editorial and creative output of our television programming and production teams to develop this Plan. This entailed identifying roles that we considered to be equivalent in creative input, decision-making responsibility, and editorial control to the CRTC's key creative roles for independent productions.

Independent production represents a very small portion of our overall programming investment. Within those productions, 42% of the key creative roles were held by women in the 2022-2023 broadcast year.¹ RSM is pleased to report that this represents a 4% increase from last year and a 15% increase since our first report was published in 2020.² The efforts to achieve gender parity within Canada's independent production community are clearly bearing fruit and having the desired effect.

¹ See attached Women in Production detailed report.

² 27% in the 2018/2019 broadcast year.

Achieving Gender Parity

Key Decision-Making Roles at Rogers Sports & Media

RSM identified the following key categories of decision-making roles for inclusion in our Action Plan for in-house productions:

1. Managerial roles in production and news
2. Programming and planning roles
3. On-air performers/journalists

In the 2022-2023 broadcast year, 51% of key creative, editorial, and decision-making roles in Rogers in-house programming were held by women:

Category	Total Employees	Total Female	Percentage
Managerial roles in production and news	69	28	41%
Programming and planning	6	4	67%
On-air (journalists)	75	44	59%
Total	150	76	51%

RSM has maintained over 50% representation of women in these key roles for the last four reporting years (2020-2023), an increase from the 48% we reported in our original Action Plan.

As articulated in our Action Plan, RSM works towards achieving gender parity, particularly in leadership roles, through:

- Recruitment and Retention
- Development and Advancement
- Organizational Partnerships

Our work in these areas in 2023 is detailed further in this report.

Commissioned and Affiliated/In-House Programming

RSM supports gender parity in the key creative roles of producers, showrunners, writers, directors, cinematographers, editors, and first- and second-lead performers in the television and film productions we commission from independent producers and broadcaster affiliated productions.

As initially reported in 2020, RSM's program licence agreements were updated to contractually require that all independent original productions we commission meet a minimum target of 50% women in the key creative roles identified above, and do not fall below the 40% threshold for producer, writer, and director roles.

In 2023, **OMNI Television** commissioned filmmaker Adhel Arop's *Katiba Banat: Sisters in Arms*. This original five-part docuseries on Canadian women who served as child soldiers in South Sudan's Second Civil War uncovers the previously hidden stories of a group of Canadian/Sudanese women who helped liberate South Sudan.

All IN 2023

Rogers Sports & Media is fully committed to inclusion and diversity, and to creating a workplace environment where employees, regardless of their gender, have equal status and opportunity based on meritocracy. Inclusion and diversity are embedded in our culture and values, and we continuously work to promote and cultivate an inclusive environment driven by action.

In 2020, [Rogers Sports & Media launched All IN](#), an Inclusion & Diversity strategy that encompasses all areas of the media business and complements the wider diversity strategies implemented by Rogers Communications Inc. (the parent company of Rogers Sports & Media).

The **All IN** plan has five key pillars:

- **Business:** Give \$5 million over 5 years in free advertising and creative services to support local businesses owned by BIPOC, LGBTQ2S+, PWD, or **women**
- **Community:** Give \$5 million over 5 years in free advertising and creative services to charities that support all equity-seeking communities
- **Content:** With input from RSM's Content Advisory Council, comprised of diverse employees, increase diversity of thought and focus in our content and programming
- **Mentorship & Sponsorship:** Give young people from equity-seeking communities (both from inside and outside of Rogers) the tools, support, and resources to successfully enter and advance in the sports and media industry
- **Hiring and Career Advancement Practices:** Develop Rogers Sports & Media-specific programs and recruitment strategies to improve diversity at all levels of the organization, including leadership positions

Pillar 1: Business

In June 2022, RSM announced its two-year partnership with eight organizations through our ALL IN initiative. From 2022 to 2024, RSM is providing our partners, Raven Reads, A Dollar A Day Foundation, Révolutionnaire, Egale Canada, UnitedWeCurl, Breakfast Club of Canada, POV, and Women's Para Hockey of Canada, with a tailored advertising campaign supported by our creative services to showcase their invaluable work across RSM's national media assets.

Among these organizations, we wish to highlight the contributions of Women's Para Hockey of Canada to the advancement of women in sports:

Women's Para Hockey of Canada's mission is to contribute to the health and well-being of girls and women with disabilities by developing, promoting, and providing opportunities to participate in the sport of para hockey from grassroots development to an elite level throughout Canada.

"Women's Para Hockey of Canada is grateful and thrilled to have been selected as one of Rogers Sports & Media's All IN partners. We know that sport and recreation opportunities for girls and women+ with disabilities have been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Rogers Sports & Media's support will have a major and lasting impact on improving accessible and inclusive sporting opportunities for girls and women+. We are so thankful for this chance to advance the sport and make a difference in communities across Canada." – Janice Coulter, President, Women's Para Hockey of Canada

RSM's ALL IN partner, **Révolutionnaire**, also made significant contributions to the advancement of women and girls in 2023. Founded in 2021 by sisters Nia Faith Betty and Justice Faith Betty, the Révolutionnaire social network gives youth an entry point to changemaking with information, community, and tools, to make a difference. The platform is a destination for young people to learn, connect, and take action on the causes they care about.

In February 2023, Révolutionnaire launched its campaign under the theme, *Be Revolutionary*, which aims to celebrate dreams that fuel revolutions. The campaign features inspiring and uplifting interviews with icons in Canada who are propelling impact in their communities, such as:

- **Shawnee Kish**, a Mohawk singer-songwriter who was nominated for Contemporary Indigenous Artist of the Year at the 2022 Juno Awards for her self-titled debut EP.
- **Taylor Lindsay-Noel**, a former aspiring Olympic gymnast who suffered a devastating training accident that left her paralyzed from the neck down. Taylor is now a disability advocate and the owner of Cup of Té, an online retailer of

looseleaf organic teas and tea ware that made Oprah's Favorite Things List in 2020.

This campaign encourages Canadians to visit Révolutionnaire's social network to learn more about the causes and organizations featured and to take action to become changemakers in their communities.

Pillar 3: Content

In addition, RSM used its sports and media assets to amplify voices that historically have not been heard with equal measure, including those of women.

Sportsnet

On December 29, 2023, RSM's mainstream sports service, **Sportsnet**, announced its partnership with the Professional Women's Hockey League (PWHL) to broadcast select games from the league's inaugural season. In addition to broadcasting the season opener on New Year's Day 2024, which **attracted 2.9 million Canadian viewers**, Sportsnet is scheduled to broadcast 16 games from January to March, with additional ones to be determined at a later date.

Various other women's sports events that were broadcast by Sportsnet in 2023 that are noteworthy include:

- the **Grand Slam of Curling**: five events with each event representing 20+ hours of women's curling coverage.
- the **Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA)**: games each week during the regular season from May to September, and marquee playoff games in September and October.
- the **Women's Super League (Soccer)**: two to three games per week during the season, which runs from September through May.
- the **Women's National Rugby League**: three games per week from June to October.
- the **National Bank Open**: Sportsnet airs and produces 60+ hours of women's coverage of Canada's national open tennis tournament.
- the **Billie Jean King Cup**: the top international team competition in women's tennis.
- **GLOBL JAM** (amateur sport): Sportsnet partnered with Canada Basketball on a tournament which highlights some of the best young basketball players from across Canada and around the world. We produced and aired in July a total of 10 games from this tournament, highlighting both Canadian men and **women**.

Citytv

Cityline's award-winning host, Tracy Moore, and her team of experts, cover a wide range of women-related issues, from health and wellness, to aging and body image. For example:

- On Wednesday October 4, Cityline produced a special episode called [What Women Need to Know About Their Health](#). The episode featured female medical practitioners.
- On Wednesday January 25, Cityline produced a special episode for [Moms-to-Be](#) featuring women talking to women about pregnancy.
- On Tuesday April 11, Cityline produced a special episode called [All About Hair](#) which featured Joy Blenman talking about living with Alopecia, Allison Hill talking about extensions to match your texture and Ladies Love Units stylists talking about picking the perfect wig.
- On Wednesday September 20, fashion icon Jeanne Beker stopped by to discuss the new Cityline series [The New Age](#) which examines what it means for women to get older in today's society.

CityNews Calgary aired multiple stories during black History Month, notably [Honouring the legacy of trailblazing Black Calgarian](#), a story about Violet King Henry, a pioneer in breaking down racial barriers for Black Canadians and Albertans. CityNews' Shilpa Downtown spoke with Violet's daughter Jo-Anne about her mother's remarkable journey.

CityNews partnered with **Sportsnet** throughout 2023 to air stories that highlighted various diversity groups, some of which focused specifically on women in sports:

Natteal Battiste Profile: The story of boxer Natteal Battiste, an Afro-Indigenous, Acadia First Nation councillor and sexual assault survivor who discovered boxing as a tool for healing, not just from her own adversities, but those of the ancestors who make up her identity.

Mallory Tolcher: Profile on Mallory Tolcher, who is a Canadian interdisciplinary artist whose work explores traditionally feminine materials and practices within the arena of sport, drawing inspiration from fashion and basketball culture. Tolcher, a former athlete, has used her art to reimagine her relationship with sports culture, a space that traditionally has not been inclusive for female youth.

Christine Sinclair: In a one-on-one interview, Christine Sinclair discusses her journey from the grassroots level to being the all-time leading goal scorer, the change in the state of women's sports in North America over the course of her career and why she wants her legacy to be tied to gender equity.

In honour of *International Women's Day*:

- All six JACK radio stations across RSM (Victoria, Vancouver, Calgary, Medicine Hat, London and Halifax) switched to JILL for 24 hours.
- All of RSM's **CHR/HOT AC** stations turned up the volume on female artists.
- **KiSS 91.7/Edmonton** played all female artists during the Pepper and Dylan show and the rest of the KiSS stations went All Female Artists All Day Long.

- **SONiC** celebrated the women of Alternative on Resurrection Radio where for two hours it played music from all the women who have been instrumental to developing this format.

Breakfast Television hosts also marked this special day. For example:

- Tammie Sutherland was joined by Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Marci Ien, to discuss the [importance of mentoring young women](#).
- Sid Saxeiro and Dawn Chubai began their celebration of International Women's Day by talking about [women who inspire them](#).
- In the days leading up to International Women's Day, fashion expert Natalie Sexton joined Dawn Chubai to talk about [fashion brands designed and owned by women](#).

In addition, **Sportsnet** used its digital properties to provide extensive additional coverage of important stories related to **International Women's Day**, including [Progressing women's hockey and encouraging young girls to chase their dreams](#), a roundtable discussion between Caroline Cameron and former Team Canada teammates, Jennifer Botterill and Jayna Hefford, around motherhood and progressing the sport for the next generation of young women.

Canadian Content Development

Through our radio Canadian Content Development (CCD) funding, we continue to support emerging female artists including through our ongoing support of Honey Jam, an annual concert featuring Canadian women from underrepresented groups. In 2023, we also supported The Vanguard, an annual fashion, art, and musical event in support of the Rainbow Railroad, a global non-profit organization dedicated to assisting LGBTQI+ individuals who face persecution to find safety through emergency relocation and other forms of aid. Our support paid for the performances of Ottawa-based French-language artist Samantha Neves and Toronto-based Black artist Nadia Stone, among others.

Corporate Accountability

RSM is part of Rogers Communications Inc. (Rogers Communications), and as such benefits from industry-leading HR practices aimed at enhancing diversity and inclusion. Our success in this area was recognized for the second consecutive year on the **Globe and Mail's 2023 Report on Business Magazine's Women Lead Here list**, which evaluates some of the largest publicly traded companies in Canada to measure the ratio of roles held by women and men within the top three tiers of executive leadership.

The following are some of the initiatives that contributed to us earning a place on this list:

- An inclusive recruitment process that leverages diverse job boards, presenting diverse candidate slates (goal of 50% equity-deserving groups, **including women**), and ensuring a diverse interview panel. We also work with organizations like Women in Communications and Technology and Catalyst to help attract top, diverse talent.
- An Accelerated Development Program for Women to drive gender diversity at the executive levels. Through coaching, networking, and development opportunities, we are reinforcing a strong pipeline of women directors and senior managers at Rogers. Of women who have completed the program, 33% identify with an additional equity-deserving group, and 40% have advanced their careers at Rogers.
- A company-wide, self-directed mentoring program helps women – and all employees – drive their development and gain allies and sponsors. Employees can self-identify and request a mentor with a similar lived experience. More than 500 women have been part of the program since it began in 2018.
- Workshops, and speed networking coordinated by employee-led Rogers Diversity Groups RISE, Rogers Women in Technology, and Rogers Women of Colour to support career growth through relationship building.
- Parental and adoptive leave top-ups, phased return to work, and family planning support services – all designed to help women who wish to have a family do so while continuing to advance their career at Rogers.

In 2020, Rogers Communications launched the 2025 Inclusion & Diversity Strategy, which is guided by four pathways to action:

- Embed inclusion into our employee experience.
- Broaden the talent pipeline and increase leadership diversity.
- Partner with communities to foster inclusion and address inequalities.
- Create a customer experience that is reflective of, and supports, the diverse needs of all Canadians.

These four pathways each have specific and measurable action items and are key components of our commitment to increase representation across the board at Rogers by 2025.

In order to align with our organization's strategy, our Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) council, spanning the entire business, advocates for equity deserving groups (i.e., *Black, Indigenous peoples, people of colour, persons with disabilities, 2SLGBTQ+, **and women***), emphasizing Business Unit specific DEIB plans. With collective team support, we aim to realize the benefits of inclusion for our people, customers, and communities, fulfilling our organizational purpose and enhancing Rogers as a workplace.

Rogers Communications' long-standing commitment to inclusion and diversity is the backbone of the Rogers Sports & Media Women in Production Action Plan, which builds on the important work that has already been done to promote and advance women within the entire Rogers organization.

Recruitment and Retention

Recruiting women to work at RSM, and retaining their talent, is crucial as we work towards gender parity in our programming and production teams. Key to that success is increasing representation of women in the talent pipeline, particularly in sports media where representation of women has historically been low.

In 2023, Rogers Sports & Media continued to implement the best practices from our 2021 ALL IN hiring campaign to ensure that our hiring practices are more inclusive. As part of that campaign, we revamped the way we attract, recruit, and select talent. For example, job descriptions are constructed using gender-neutral language, and our recruitment teams amplify job postings to job boards such as: HireBIPOC, LimeConnect, Indigenous link and others. The interview process was also updated to ensure that job interviews consist of a diverse hiring panel and that structured interview guides are used to reduce bias.

Sportsnet BIPOC Sports Media Onboarding

The sports media industry lacks diversity both in-front and behind the camera, partially due to barriers to entry that face equity-seeking communities, including women. To address these barriers, Sportsnet developed an intensive training/development opportunity for young BIPOC persons looking to enter the sports media industry.

Sportsnet hosts an annual series of skill-building and networking workshops for a select group of 14-16 young male and female BIPOC professionals and students from across Canada. The workshops consist of 60–90-minute weekly information sessions over 8-10 weeks, in which industry leaders and key internal talent provided specific lessons and insights into their careers and core areas of expertise. At the end of the workshops, participants are connected with key hiring managers to develop ongoing relationships and mentorship to assist in career placement.

As part of the program, mentees are also provided the opportunity to apply for paid summer internships in their mentorship year with the hopes of securing long-term employment in their chosen career path.

OMNI Scholarships

In 2020, OMNI Regional launched the OMNI Regional Scholarship Program. We committed to offering \$60,000 in scholarships over three years to support post-secondary journalism students interested in pursuing a career in ethnic and third-language journalism. In this final year of the program, OMNI Regional awarded ten \$2,000 scholarships to students from diverse ethnocultural backgrounds, six of which were granted to women. Our hope is that these scholarships will increase representation of women from underrepresented backgrounds in Canadian ethnic and third-language newsrooms.

Corporately, in 2023 Rogers Communications:

- Committed to provide a 50% diverse candidate slate to hiring managers for all open positions. Our Inclusive Hiring Training equipped recruiters and hiring managers with tools to identify and eliminate bias in the hiring process and we partner with external groups including BNI Connect, Pride at Work, Indigenous Works, IndigenousLink, Lime Connect and **Women in Communications and Technology (WCT)**, to reach talent from various communities.
- Started the Women in Retail project, which is aimed at increasing the number of women not only working in retail but also in leadership positions.
- Continued to hold space for open conversation through Safe Talk & Listening sessions for corporate and frontline team members, specifically as a response to crises happening all around the world.

Development and Advancement

One of the key findings of the CRTC Women in Production Summit was that women continue to face barriers to career advancement. RSM is committed to providing opportunities to advance and grow the careers of women who are part of our talent pool. The following are some of the initiatives that we designed to promote and advance women into senior leadership positions:

Accelerated Development Program (ADP)

A highly targeted sponsorship program aimed at supporting women Directors with a variety of customized development activities based on assessment and feedback of their individual performance. At the end of the program, participants have stronger strategic leadership skills and are ready to take on expanded roles and assignments. The program also helps to build a gender-diverse executive pipeline.

RISE for Women (includes Rogers Women of Colour and Rogers Women in Technology)

RISE for Women supports women at Rogers with a focus on networking and personal and professional development to foster leadership potential, with a mandate to increase the representation of women across all levels at Rogers.

Notable initiatives undertaken in 2023 include the following:

- **International Women’s Day Celebration:** Hosted a panel discussion featuring panellists who shared their lived experiences and insights on building a more equitable workplace. The event included an opening performance by the indigenous drumming group “Strong Water” and special guest panellists Rabia Khedr (National Director – Disability without Poverty), Justice Faith Betty and Nia Faith Betty (Co-Founders – Révolutionnaire, All In Partner), and Sarah Midanik (President and CEO – Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund).
- **RISE Speaker Series and Networking Events:** Provided diverse learning opportunities through the RISE Speaker Series and RISE Networking events.
- **Movers and Shakers Campaign:** Honoured and recognized influential women at Rogers throughout the year with the Movers and Shakers campaign on a company-wide platform.
- **SafeTalk and Listening Sessions:** Hosted these sessions for women in Network Engineering, fostering discussions, connections, and empowerment.
- **Women of Colour Event:** Rogers Women of Colour organized an in-person event in Toronto called “Hack Your Brand,” where the Corporate Learning and Development team guided employees through powerful strategies, including mastering first impressions to empower and enhance personal branding.

Partnerships with Organizations

Rogers continues to partner with the two following organizations that provide expertise and resources for advancing women in the workplace:

Women in Communications and Technology (WCT) is a Canadian non-profit organization that inspires and supports women to achieve their highest career potential in Canada’s digital economy through professional development, mentorship, advocacy and research. Through our partnership with WCT, women at Rogers Communications have access to conferences, virtual learning, research and tools, in-person and virtual networking events, webinars and more.

Catalyst is a global non-profit organization that works with companies to build inclusive workplaces and to accelerate women's progress. Our partnership with this organization continued in 2022, with Catalyst providing educational resources, research, and support with the goal of advancing women into leadership positions.

Recognized and Rewarded

In 2023, Tracy Moore, host of Citytv's Cityline was honoured by the Canadian Academy of Cinema and Television with the [Changemaker award](#) for her work in denouncing systemic racism and promoting values of equity and inclusion.

Marisa Wyse, Chief Legal Officer at Rogers received the [2023 Canadian General Counsel of the Year](#) award. The annual awards recognize top Canadian lawyers representing the very best in the profession.

Summary

Rogers Sports & Media appreciates the opportunity to provide an update on the progress that we were able to make in 2023 in achieving and maintaining gender parity in key creative, editorial, and decision-making roles by 2025. Our focus continues to be on increasing representation of women in key decision-making roles. As demonstrated in the present report, the many successful initiatives undertaken attest to the commitments we made in 2019 and bring us closer to the objectives we set out to reach within the next two years. In addition, some of our most compelling content featured women telling their stories in underrepresented spaces. Our media platforms were also used to elevate women's organizations and businesses, connecting them with our audiences and promoting their efforts locally and nationally. We have also continued to improve upon our recruitment and hiring practices, coupled with ALL IN, our significant business investment to support equity-seeking communities including women.