
CAWIC Research and Action Plan Development Project Outline

Project timeline: January 1, 2014 through December 31, 2016

CAWIC will build and make available to industry employers, trade unions and alternative unions and open shop employers an action plan to increase hiring, retention and advancement of women within the Canadian construction industry. CAWIC will design and test this action plan in collaboration with women and stakeholders over a period of 36 months. Women in the construction industry or seeking to enter the construction industry will be directly involved at all stages of the project.

CAWIC's goal is to provide workplace and career specific tools to guide and support (1) the woman entering/re-entering or transitioning into the construction industry workforce, (2) the woman already in the workforce facing challenges in relation to remaining in the construction workforce or her advancement therein; and (3) the employer to address internal challenges in hiring, retention and advancement of female employees. At the end of the project's 36 months, based on our experience working with local women in 3 provinces, the action plan will be widely promoted and distributed across the Canadian construction industry. CAWIC will also create a permanent targeted committee for hiring women which will be available to actively and cooperatively assist industry stakeholders via targeted forum and discussion groups to discuss these challenges and propose specific solutions.

Phase 1: Develop Partnerships with Leading Construction Industry Stakeholders and Call for Female Participants (4 months)

CAWIC will leverage its extensive network and the media to reach out to the industry and recruit 60 women and a larger group of stakeholders in 3 targeted provinces. CAWIC has already commenced this outreach and has secured a commitment of support from at least ten organizations who have activities in Ontario. We are confident that we will be able to reach and secure commitment from leading industry stakeholders during the first phase of the project.

The 60 participating women will be CAWIC's primary target participant group. They will work closely with CAWIC and our 3rd party Project consultant through each phase of the project. The Project consultant will regularly communicate with the participants by telephone and e-mail throughout the project. Women will be encouraged to form provincial working groups. The Project consultant will meet with each working group at each phase of the Project.

CAWIC will provide regular updates on the progress of the Project to the stakeholder partner group to keep them engaged and provide opportunities to contribute to the Project success. Stakeholders will be invited to work closely with our Project team during the last phase of the project, the implementation phase.

Phase 2: Gender based Research - (12 months)

CAWIC has engaged a 3rd party Project consultant who is an expert in gender-based analysis with experience in large scale projects involving industry participation. This will ensure that gender based analysis is the primary focus area at each stage of the Project.

The Project team with the assistance of the Project consultant will conduct a needs assessment through individual and group interviews with the 60 participating women. This needs assessment will focus on their participant group's needs regarding entering into, remaining within, and progressing within the construction industry. As part of the process, members of the participation group will be invited to reflect on the following themes: (1) women's empowerment and involvement in the process, (2) economic challenges faced by women, (3) respect of women in all their diversity (race, language, age, sexual orientation, etc.) and (4) addressing workplace harassment and/or discrimination. Each provincial participant group will have an opportunity to share local success stories and challenges in the specific construction industry sectors in which they are involved. Our stakeholder partners' group will be asked to share their best practices and/or challenges as well as their knowledge regarding existing support systems across Canada.

Phase 3: Developing the Action Plan to Hire, Retain and Promote Women from Within (8 months)

Based on the needs assessment, the Project team will work with the participant group and the stakeholder partners to build an action plan to hire, retain and promote women into leadership roles within the construction industry. The Project team will assist women in developing a list of key priorities and considerations. Priorities may include, for example, working on recruitment and retention/promotion policies and human resources processes to ensure these are open and flexible to potential and current female employees. It may also include establishing an internal formal mentorship program for women. We will then work with our participant and partner groups to establish timelines and required resources to test the Action Plan to ensure it meets the needs of the industry, is specific, measurable, sustainable and economically viable.

Phase 4: Implementation of the CAWIC Action Plan (12 months)

In collaboration with the industry stakeholders, we will proceed to implement the action plan. From the list of priorities/considerations established in the development of the action plan, partner employers will be asked to choose at least one priority element to implement and/or enhance during the implementation phase. During this phase, we will help stakeholders monitor, review and assess their efforts, identifying challenges and successes, as well as valuable statistical data such as number of women hired, retained and/or promoted. We will collect this data and specific examples along with specific recommendations to be included in the final report to Status of Women Canada and the industry.

We will invite partner stakeholders to adopt the key priorities found in the action plan as part of their organization's short and long term strategic planning. We will also invite partner organizations to promote the action plan within the construction industry and to participate and contribute to CAWIC's Committee to be established for women's entry, retention and promotion in order to effect sustainable, measurable, systemic change within the industry.