



30Forward: Shifting Culture, Inspiring Future Leaders

Inspector Valarie (Val) Gates | Barrie Police Service

October 2025

> Research Indicates- Women Officers:



Use force less
often & less excessive.



Use discretion
to make fewer arrests for non-
violent, low-level offenses.



See better outcomes
for crime victims.
Especially of sexual assault.



Conduct fewer searches
during traffic stops & more
likely to find contraband
when they do.



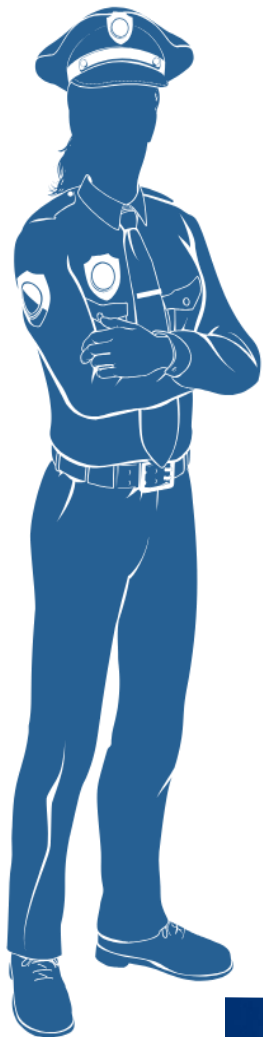
Perceived as being
more **honest &**
compassionate



Named less often in
complaints &
lawsuits.

Some research suggesting they
cost between 2.5x – 5.5x less
than male officers

> Of All Police Officer in Canada..



22.87%

Identify as Women



> What Ranks do Women Hold in Canada



71.7%

Constables



24.5%

Non-Commissioned Officers



3.8%

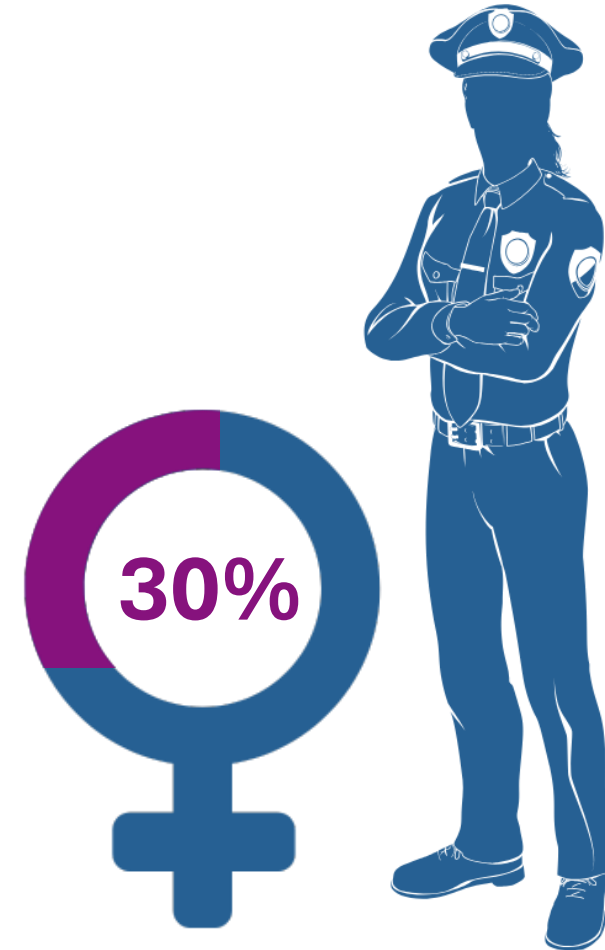
Commissioned Officers



> Critical Mass Theory

“A critical mass is required for heterogeneity to have a productive effect and to make room for the diversity of different perspectives. In the literature, a proportion of **at least 30%** is often cited for achieving a critical mass, sometimes supplemented by a lower limit of three people in order to make a substantial difference in the representation of previously underrepresented groups.”

(Dahlerup, 2006; Binder, 2014; Bohnet, 2016).





Representation Isn't About Optics- it's the Tipping Point

Relative number of people in a group can impact how people interact - often applied to gender equity in politics & academia.



**Systemic
Cultural Change**



**Workplace
Dynamics**



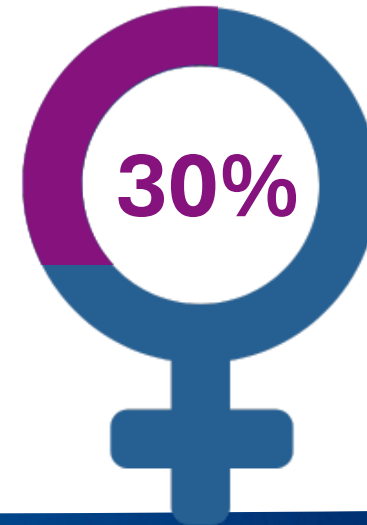
**Beyond
Tokenism**



**Strong
Mentorship Networks**

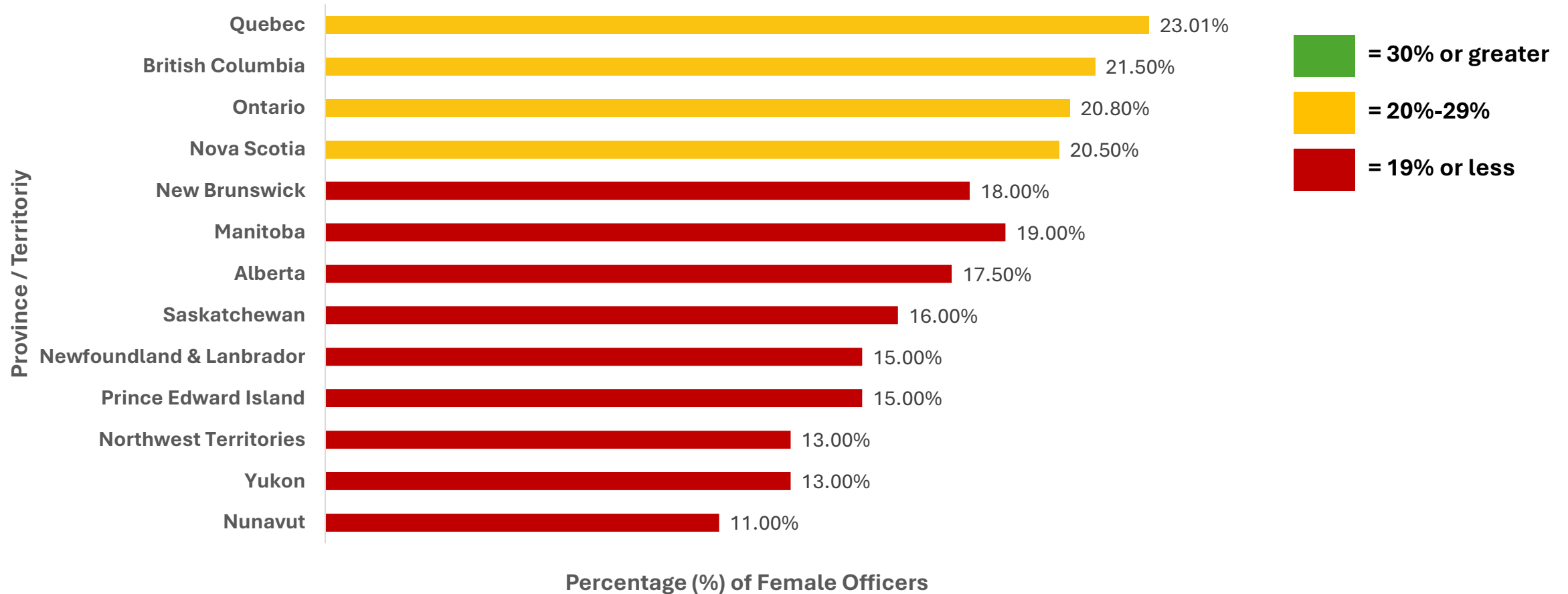


Policy & Reform





Female Representation in Policing Across Canada (By Province)





Building a Canada Specific Response



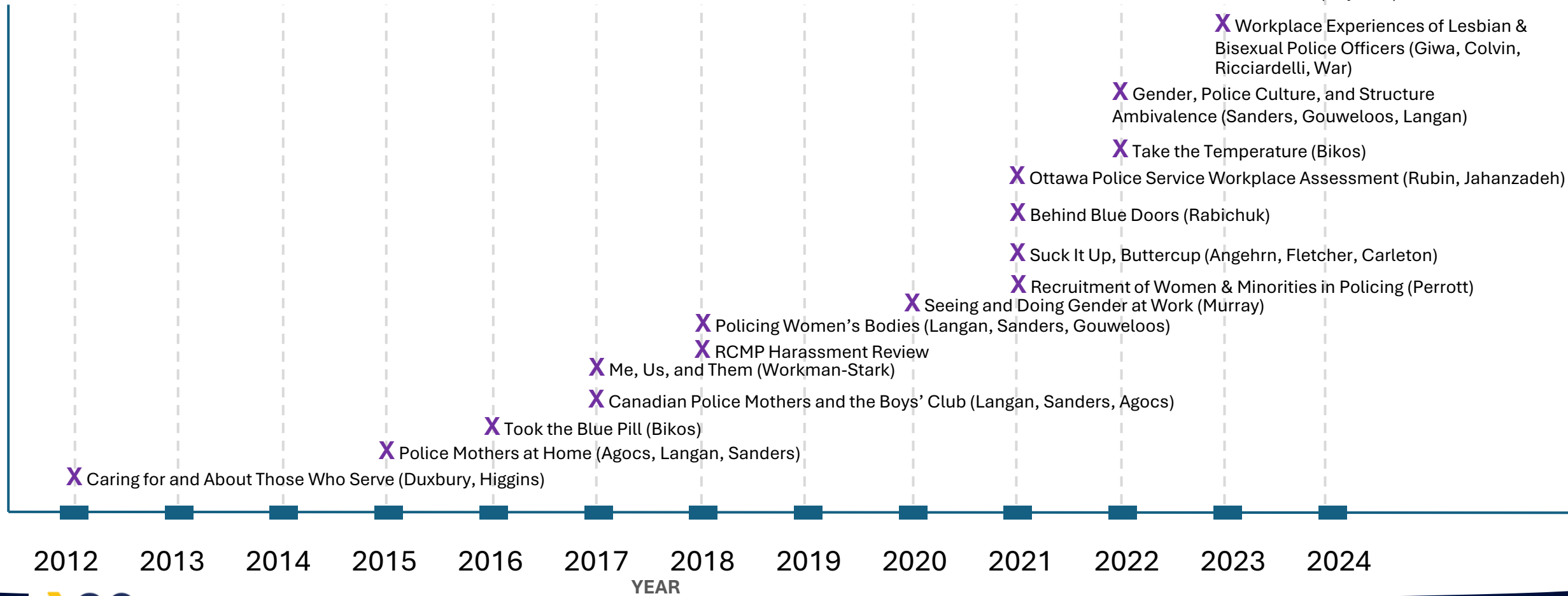
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What Does the Canadian Research Say?



What We've Learned From 12 Years of Canadian Research



- › Persistent barriers to promotion and return-to-work
- › Gendered performance expectations
- › Retention challenges linked to culture
- › Lack of mentorship



OUR COMMITMENTS



Recruitment & Hiring

- Implement targeted outreach to increase the number of female applicants.
- Ensure bias-free hiring practices and diverse hiring panels.
- Track and report progress in hiring women at all levels.



Retention & Family Support

- Establish flexible work policies, including shift options for caregivers.
- Provide access to parental leave and return-to-work programs.
- Expand childcare support and track its impact on retention.



Mentorship & Leadership Development

- Set measurable goals for increasing women in leadership roles (Sgts. & above).
- Provide career coaching and leadership development opportunities.
- Conduct gender equity audits in promotion processes.
- Establish structured mentorship programs for female officers, addressing a key gap identified in research.



Allyship & Inclusive Culture

- Train all supervisors and leaders on gender-inclusive leadership and allyship.
- Implement mandatory bias and harassment training.
- Establish confidential reporting systems for workplace concerns.
- Expand mental health and wellness support tailored to women in policing.



Building National Resource Hub

- 30Forward is developing an online platform to serve as a national hub for research-backed recommendations, mentorship resources, and best practices.
- The platform will provide police services with tangible, evidence-based strategies to implement the pledge commitments and foster an inclusive culture.
- It will also facilitate mentorship networks, connecting women officers with experienced mentors across the country.

>30+
Focus Groups

REPORTS

Literature Review



Inside the Service: Gendered Realities for Women in Canadian Police Services

2025



Molly Phillips,
MA, Carrie B. Sanders, PhD,
Wilfrid Laurier University

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INSIDE THE SERVICE: GENDERED REALITIES
FOR WOMEN IN CANADIAN POLICE

Table of Contents

_Toc208731456Executive Summary	3
Introduction	5
30Forward	5
Value of Gender Diversity	6
Scoping Review Methodology	7
Pillar 1: Recruitment and Hiring.....	9
Barriers to Increasing Representation	9
Opportunities For Change in Diversity Hiring and Recruiting.....	11
Pillar 2: Retention and Family Support.....	13
Factors Affecting Retention	13
Opportunities for Change: Addressing Work-Life Balance	16
Pillar 3: Mentorship and Leadership	18
Development Barriers to Leadership and Mentorship for Women in Policing	18
Opportunities for Change in Mentorship and Leadership Development.....	20
Pillar 4: Allyship & Inclusive Culture	22
Barriers to Inclusion	22
Opportunities for Change: Leadership, Allyship & Inclusivity	24
Conclusion	26
30Forward	28
References	29

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REPORTS

Research Brief

Inside the Service: Gendered Realities for Women in Canadian Police Services

Research Brief – 2025



Molly Phillips,
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INSIDE THE SERVICE: GENDERED REALITIES
FOR WOMEN IN CANADIAN POLICE

30 Forward: Research Brief

Historically, Canadian police services have been predominantly male, with female-identifying officers significantly underrepresented (Duxbury et al., 2021). This underrepresentation negatively affects female officers' safety, acceptance, and well-being, compounded by a masculine-dominated culture in many services (Bikos, 2021). Scholars suggest that when underrepresented groups reach at least 30% of the workforce, they can influence culture and decision-making, driving positive structural changes (30x30 Initiative, 2025). Those below 30% often face tokenism and isolation (30x30 Initiative, 2025). While global research on women in policing exists, there is a gap in understanding the unique challenges faced by women in Canadian law enforcement. This scoping review aims to fill that gap, providing an in-depth look at these challenges within the Canadian context, and offering actionable recommendations for police departments. The findings within this report inform the 30Forward initiative, which seeks to increase female representation to at least 30% in Canadian police services. These findings will guide 30Forward's efforts to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for women in Canadian law enforcement, addressing barriers to their full participation and leadership across the country.

Methodology

This scoping review synthesizes literature on the representation, recruitment, promotion, retention, and inclusion of women in Canadian policing, focusing on barriers and evidence-based strategies. The research process included a comprehensive literature search, abstract screening, and an AI-powered platform to assess relevance to the 30Forward pillars. The final analysis identified themes in recruitment and hiring, retention and family support, mentorship and leadership development, and allyship and inclusive culture, highlighting challenges faced by women in Canadian police services and opportunities to address and / or overcome these challenges.

Pillar 1: Recruitment and Hiring Barriers to Increasing Representation

Increasing women's representation in police services remains a significant challenge. In Canada, women make up just 22% of the police workforce, with men at 78% (Government of Canada, Statistics Canada, 2024). This disparity reflects barriers such as exclusion, marginalization, and discrimination, which discourage women and other underrepresented groups from pursuing law enforcement careers (Workman-Stark, 2015a). Traditional recruitment efforts, often relying on male-dominated materials, have not advanced gender diversity in policing (Workman-Stark, 2015a; Couto, 2018). Recruitment practices, particularly informal and exclusionary ones within specialized units, reinforce a masculine culture that excludes underrepresented groups (Manitoba

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National Focus Group Findings Report



National Focus Group Findings Report 2025

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NATIONAL FOCUS GROUP
FINDINGS REPORT

Report Contents

Part 1: Executive Overview.....	2
Why It Matters The Case for Advancing Women in Policing.....	2
Why 30: Understanding the Tipping Point.....	2
Message from the 30Forward Initiative Leads.....	3
Purpose of the Report.....	4
Part 2: National Focus Group Summary.....	5
What 30Forward Means (Women's Voices).....	5
Ally Reflections.....	6
Experiences in Policing: Barriers and Cultures (Women's Voices).....	7
Reflections on Representation (Ally Observations).....	8
Part 3: Mentorship and Leadership Development.....	9
Access and Gaps (Women).....	9
Self-Awareness and Reflection: Learning to Lead Differently - (Allies).....	10
Recommendations:.....	11
Part 4: Retention & Family Support.....	12
Recommendations:.....	14
Part 5: Allyship and Inclusive Culture.....	15
Women's Views on Allyship and Inclusive Culture.....	15
How Allies Describe Their Roles and Barriers in Policing.....	16
Recommendations:.....	17
Part 6: Recruitment.....	19
Strategic Recruitment from Both Women only and Ally Lenses.....	19
Recommendations:.....	20
Part 7: Accountability and Transparency.....	21
Recommendations:.....	22
Part 8: The Way Forward: A National Commitment.....	23
Recommendation:.....	23



30Forward National Pledge



National Pledge for Cultural and Systemic Change in Policing

This pledge is rooted in the lived experiences of over 100 members across Canadian Police Services and is supported by emerging research. It responds directly to what women and allies told us they need to stay, lead, and thrive. This is more than a commitment to inclusion, it is a framework for building a stronger, more sustainable, and more accountable future for Canadian policing.

30Forward National Pledge for Cultural and Systemic Change in Policing

We, the undersigned, commit to building a modern, inclusive, and accountable policing profession in Canada. We acknowledge that while progress has been made, under-represented groups continue to face barriers to entry, retention, advancement, and belonging. These challenges are not only about numbers, but also about systems and culture.

30Forward is a national framework for meaningful change, anchored in lived experience, supported by evidence, and driven by measurable action. Through inclusive recruitment, intentional retention, transparent accountability, and a shared commitment to organizational health, we pledge to advance this transformation.

This is more than a statement of values. It is a daily, action-oriented commitment to a policing profession where every member, at every rank, role, and life stage, can thrive.

Page 1 of 3



WE COMMIT TO IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES AS OUTLINED

Recruitment & Hiring - We will:

- Track and share annual demographic data on gender and intersectional identity across all ranks and units with 30Forward network.
- Measure and report on recruitment, specialty assignments, and promotion outcomes (e.g., track who is applying, who is being hired, and what outreach is working); demonstrate actionable steps to address disparities.
- Include diverse women from across roles and ranks in outreach efforts.
- Highlight investigative and community-based policing career paths and supportive policies in recruitment messaging.

Retention & Family Support - We will:

- Conduct workplace culture and psychological safety assessments to identify gaps and guide actions.
- Offer reintegration supports following parental leave, medical leave, or life-stage transitions.
- Provide equitable access to flexible schedules, wellness programs, and modified duties.
- Recognize and accommodate women's health and wellness needs (e.g., menopause, fertility, caregiving).

Mentorship & Leadership Development - We will:

- Build peer mentorship networks that support members through different life and career stages.
- Contribute to or establish structured, cross-service mentorship networks.
- Include diverse formats: peer, lateral, reverse, and identity-based mentorship.
- Train mentors and mentees to ensure mutual accountability and alignment.
- Track and evaluate mentorship program outcomes.
- Ensure both sworn and civilian members have equitable access to leadership development.

Allyship & Inclusive Culture - We will:

- Embed allyship, cultural humility, and inclusion in all leadership training and promotion criteria.
- Recognize and understand informal allyship and share best practices across services.
- Surface and address internalized competition or gatekeeping through dialogue and development.
- Empower frontline supervisors to model inclusion and create psychologically safe teams.

Policy & System Reform - We will:

- Review HR policies annually for equity impact, including recruitment, discipline, promotion, and training opportunities.
- Incorporate lived experience and subject matter expertise into all policy reform efforts.
- Share policies and templates for progressive supports (e.g., return-to-work, menopause) via the 30Forward Hub.
- Engage external partners in evaluating and improving the cultural health.

Accountability & Measurement - We will:

- Submit an anonymized annual progress data to 30Forward for national benchmarking.
- Use both quantitative (e.g., demographics, specialized units or promotions) and qualitative (e.g., survey insights, exit data) metrics to identify areas for improvement regarding equity and inclusion.
- Involve police boards and associations in oversight and strategic review.
- Measure engagement in 30Forward programs (e.g., mentorship, resource hub, training) as indicators of commitment.
- Publicly share progress and key learnings as part of a national reporting framework.

Page 2 of 3



IN ACCORDANCE WITH 30 FORWARD WE COMMIT TO:

- RECRUIT**
a more diverse and representative workforce.
- RETAIN AND SUPPORT**
members through key life and career transitions.
- ADVANCE**
inclusive leadership, succession planning, and professional development at all levels.
- FOSTER A CULTURE OF**
mentorship, allyship, wellness, and psychological safety.
- MEASURE OUR PROGRESS**
transparently, share what we learn, and remain accountable to our people and communities.

This document is regarded as the 30Forward Pledge and outlines the commitments each service is expected to make and uphold annually. A broad commitment to data sharing is part of the pledge, and 30Forward data guidelines and templates will follow upon signing the pledge to enable standardized and comparable data collection across the nation.

SIGNED ON BEHALF OF OUR POLICE SERVICE,

Chief or Commissioner Name: _____

Title: _____

Police Service Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: DD/MM/YYYY

Page 3 of 3



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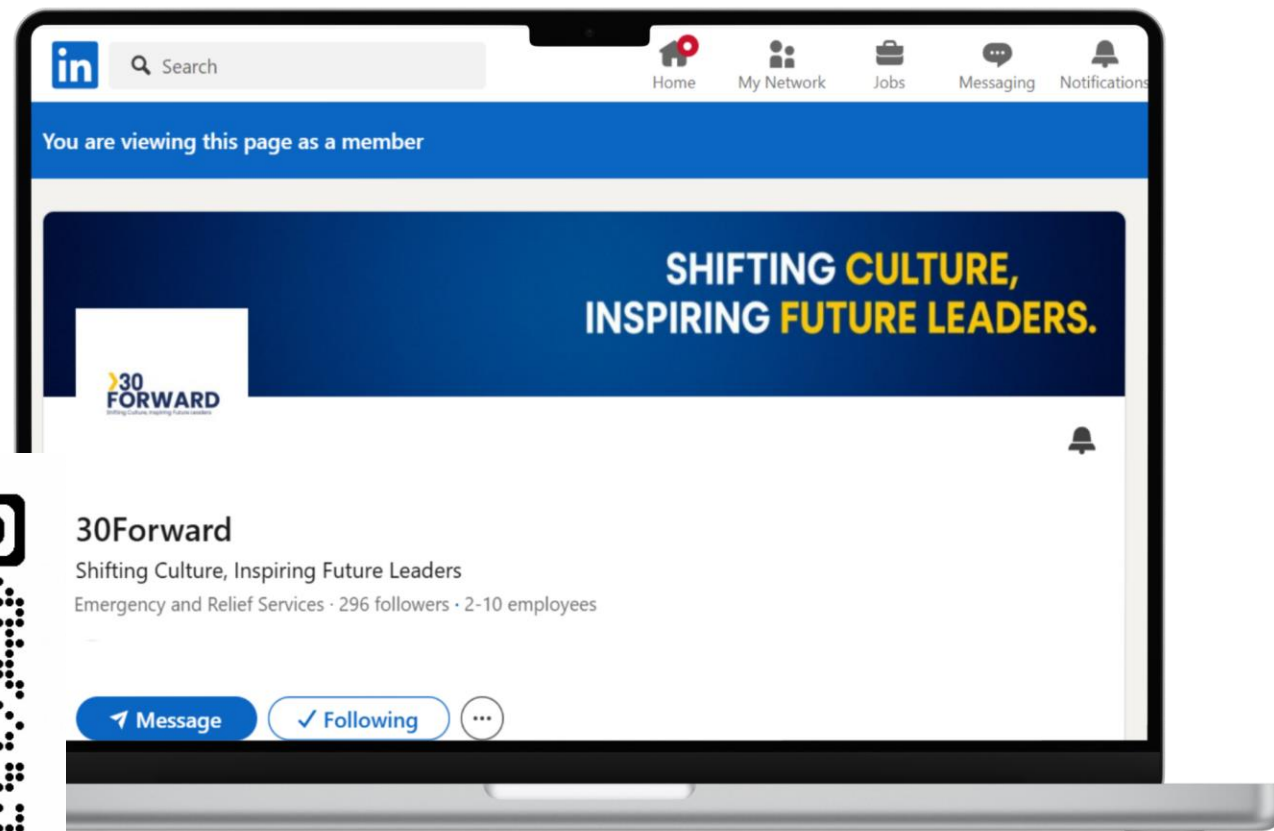
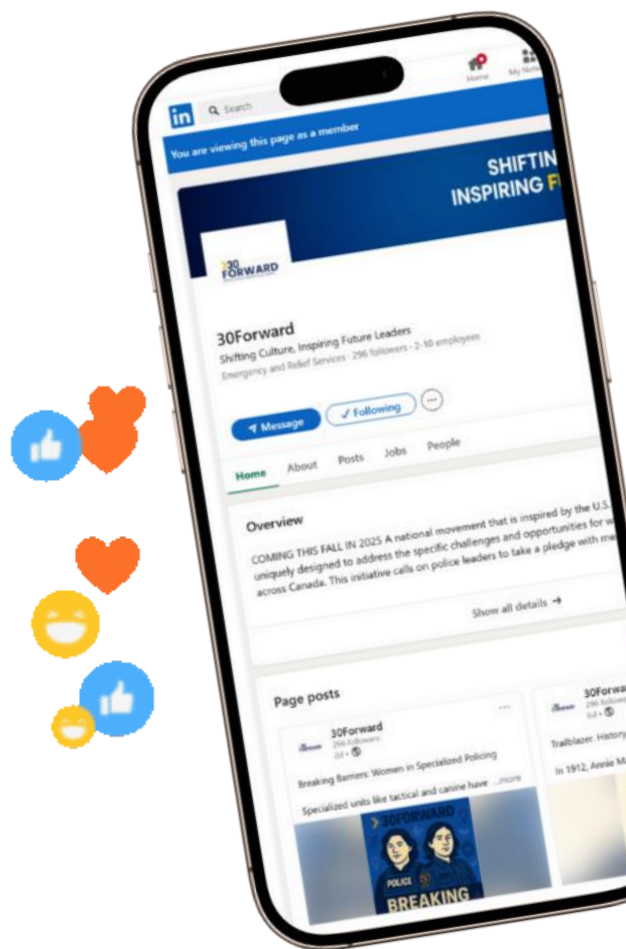
Policing Insight & research WLU as partner



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Early Supporters



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Next Steps



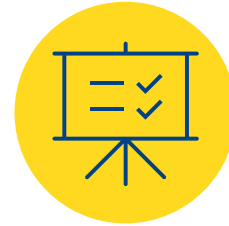
Pledge Launch

Building Bridges
EBP Conference
Oct 9, 2025



Online Data Dashboard

Baseline Metrics
6-7 months from Launch



Training Mentorship & Allyship



Mentorship Network



Building Bridges

Evidence-Based Policing Conference

October 9-10, 2025

@Blue



David Cowan
Keynote Speaker



Dr. Tamara D. Herold, Ph.D
Keynote Speaker



Neil Ralph
Keynote Speaker



Maurine "Mo" McGough
Keynote Speaker



2-Day Event
Oct. 9-10, 2025



Blue Mountain Resort
Exclusive Group Rate Available



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+HST



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How can Police Service Boards Assist?

