

Equitable Net-Zero

Recommendations for advancing gender equity in Alberta's shift to net-zero

Calyssa Burke, Sarah Winstanley, Jaymes MacKinnon, Laura Hughes
September 2022



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About the Pembina Institute

The Pembina Institute is a national non-partisan think tank that advocates for strong, effective policies to support Canada's clean energy transition. We employ multi-faceted and highly collaborative approaches to change. Producing credible, evidence-based research and analysis, we consult directly with organizations to design and implement clean energy solutions and convene diverse sets of stakeholders to identify and move toward common solutions.

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Executive summary

Alberta's economy is experiencing a period of immense change and opportunity. With billions of dollars in investment pouring into renewable energy projects and a growing consensus on moving the oil and gas industry to net-zero emissions, an energy transition is underway. Currently and historically, women and gender-diverse people face a variety of barriers to participation in the energy sector. These inequities will persist through Alberta's energy transition if they are not actively addressed today by leaders across government, industry, and education.

This report builds on the Pembina Institute's 2021 publication *Women in Alberta's Energy Transition*, which identified five key barriers to women benefiting from and succeeding within the energy sector. These five key barriers were:

- Lack of access to opportunity
- Lack of good jobs
- Inability to advance
- Income gap
- Industry culture

In response to these findings, analysts from the Pembina Institute convened a series of conversations with hundreds of women representing dozens of organizations — both in the traditional oil and gas sector as well as in the burgeoning renewables field — in Alberta. From those conversations, the Pembina Institute gleaned ten actions to dismantle existing obstacles to participation.

These recommendations provide leaders and decision-makers with tangible strategies to ensure women and gender-diverse people can participate and lead in Alberta's energy transition. (Please see page 5 for definitions of key words used in this report.) The concerns expressed by participants, as well as the recommendations they put forward for dismantling the barriers, are not specific to the energy sector. Indeed, they reflect broad recommendations for promoting gender equity in all sectors of the economy. However, this moment of transition for Alberta offers a unique and dynamic opportunity to initiate a change that is long overdue and so these recommendations should be acted on immediately.

Key observations

- **Government, industry and educational institutions all have a role to play.** The barriers faced by women and gender-diverse people are interconnected and compounding. As the energy sector continues to change, opportunity and responsibility for addressing inequity requires a coordinated approach between private industry, public governing bodies and educational institutions.
- **Everyone benefits from a more equitable future.** Creating an economy and work environment that includes many people and is safe both physically and psychologically for women and other marginalized people will increase the quality of life and economic prosperity of all workers connected to the energy sector. In addition to improving wellbeing, prioritizing gender equity in the energy transition has clear economic benefits. Organizations with gender-diverse teams and equitable policies have stronger organizational capacity, increased shareholder investment and a trustworthy reputation, both internally and externally.
- **The energy transition must centre the needs of those who have been currently and historically excluded.** The differential impacts of climate change on women and gender diverse people demands gender-sensitive climate action and strategy. Efforts to dismantle inequity within the energy sector must respond to how Indigeneity, race, disability and other social positions intersect with gender to create unique barriers to participation.
- **We need to know more to do more.** In order to make effective, evidence-based decisions concerning Alberta's energy future, we need more access to disaggregated, region-specific data about the energy sector and those who work within it. Once accessed, this data must be used for the explicit purpose of addressing the inequities it reveals.

Policy areas and recommendations

Net-zero education and training

1. **Improve access to net-zero related training, certification and education for women.** Tangible actions identified by participants in the research include increased funding to gender-inclusive programs and financial aid schemes, improving the accreditation process and forming partnerships between non-profits that specialize in supporting women in accessing training and clean energy companies.

2. **Invest in a range of mechanisms to enable women to access jobs and opportunities at all stages of their careers in the energy sector.** This begins in early career development, with key stakeholders investing in paid opportunities for women to develop net-zero skills through internships and apprenticeships. As their careers progress, women benefit from formal and informal mentorship relationships, inexpensive networking opportunities, and an expanded scope of what is considered net-zero work experience beyond STEM fields.

Supportive energy sector workplaces

3. **Provide part-time, virtual and/or flexible work arrangements in the energy sector that offer access to benefits and do not impede the ability to advance.** Standardizing flexible working patterns allows workers with caregiving responsibilities to balance their paid and unpaid work, without risking lower compensation or lack of benefits for doing so. The perks of flexibility extend beyond gender equity, providing mental health benefits for *all* employees.
4. **Invest in affordable, accessible childcare that responds to the needs of parents in the energy sector.** Cutting down on the significant cost of childcare helps alleviate the burden of unpaid care work that is disproportionately carried by women. Comprehensive childcare programs allow parents to accept greater responsibility in the workplace, increase women's economic participation and have been proven to raise provincial GDPs.
5. **Invest in, support and promote gender-neutral parental leave policies and supports in energy sector workplaces.** Implementing gender-neutral policies like wage top-ups, mentorship programs for new parents, staggered returns and prorated bonuses destigmatizes parental leave for workers who fear that starting a family will hinder their career development. By making these programs available to all new parents, care work can be more evenly distributed across genders.

Culture and leadership development in energy sector environments

6. **Set quotas or targets to increase representation of women and gender-diverse people in the energy sector, especially in leadership – a 30% target is the minimum; 50% is the goal.** Women – particularly those who are racialized, Indigenous, and/or disabled – remain vastly underrepresented in the energy sector. Organizations that prioritize building diverse teams outperform

- their competitors in sales and attracting investment and tend to consider environmental and social outcomes over short-term financial gains.
7. **Provide holistic, intersectional, and gender-transformative leadership development for men who lead within the energy sector.** Equipping male leaders with the skills and training to participate in gender-inclusive work environments is critical to creating safer workplaces for women and gender diverse people.
 8. **Create trauma-informed processes for reporting, responding to and preventing violence and harassment on energy sector worksites and in office environments.** Implementing anti-harassment training and survivor-centric, culturally safe policies for addressing workplace violence are starting points to prioritize the safety of marginalized employees. Particular consideration should be paid to the experiences of Indigenous women, who experience high rates of violence within and as a result of the energy sector.

Data transparency and use within the energy sector

9. **Increase data collection and improve data transparency within the energy sector.** Evidence-informed policy decisions regarding the energy transition require greater access to disaggregated data on compensation, representation and other critical metrics of equity.
10. **Ensure data collection and use within the energy sector are ethical.** Data on the experiences of marginalized workers must be put to meaningful use through frameworks like The Grandmother Perspective, in order to better understand and dismantle barriers to participation.

The disruption of the energy transition is a powerful chance to address the energy sector's systemic exclusion of women and other marginalized groups. Implemented together, these recommendations will help ensure Alberta's new energy industry is able to both reflect and benefit from the province's rich diversity of thought, identity and experiences.

Definitions

Throughout the report, the following language will be used:

Term	Definition
<i>Women and gender diverse people</i>	<i>Women and gender diverse people</i> is a phrase we use to be inclusive of all marginalized gender identities (e.g., women, non-binary, two-spirit, and femme-identifying people) and gender expressions to ensure their inclusion in this work. ¹ However, we will use the term “women” where we refer to literature that specifically focuses on this group alone.
<i>Gender equity</i>	<i>Gender equity</i> builds on the term Gender Equality by stating that all people must be treated equitably corresponding to their specific and diverse needs including, but not limited to, race and class.
<i>Marginalization</i>	<i>Marginalization</i> is “a social process by which individuals or groups are (intentionally or unintentionally) distanced from access to power and resources and constructed as insignificant, peripheral, or less valuable/privileged to a community or ‘mainstream’ society.” ²
<i>Equitable transition</i>	Equitable transition refers to an energy transition in which marginalized people and communities, specifically those who have been historically marginalized from the energy industry, are actively and continuously integrated and supported equally to dominant cultural groups both socially and economically.
<i>Inclusion</i>	<i>Inclusion</i> is the intentional and active process of creating equal opportunities and safe spaces for those who have been historically marginalized, especially in workplace settings.
<i>Intersectionality</i>	Kimberle Crenshaw coined the term <i>intersectionality</i> , which refers to the fact that a person can experience multiple layers of discrimination based on their identities (e.g., race, physical ability, sex, class, and sexual orientation). For example, a Black woman could face both racial and gender-based discrimination.
<i>Net-zero</i>	<i>Net-zero</i> is an environmental target that aims to reduce GHG emissions from operations to as close to zero as possible, while balancing out any remaining emissions with an equivalent amount of permanent, verifiable carbon removal.

¹ Penn State Student Affairs: Centre for Sexual and Gender Diversity, “Gender Diversity Terminology.” <https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/csgd/explore-lgbtq-resources/identity-based/gender-terms>

² British Columbia Office of the Human Rights Commissioner, *Disaggregated Demographic Data Collection in British Columbia: The Grandmother Perspective* (2020), 8. https://bchumanrights.ca/wp-content/uploads/BCOHR Sept2020_Disaggregated-Data-Report_FINAL.pdf

Note to readers

The Pembina Institute is currently undergoing a learning journey in our work on gender equity. While the language and definitions we have used, and the recommendations we have highlighted, are intentional in including various intersections of people and experiences, gender equity remains an under-examined aspect of Canada's energy sector.

We are open to receiving your comments, queries, and/or concerns regarding the language used in this report to ensure that we are continually carving spaces for diverse voices, stories and backgrounds to be amplified in our work at the Pembina Institute.

1. Introduction

The process of creating a net-zero-aligned energy system presents a unique set of challenges and opportunities for Alberta's economy. As Canada and the rest of the world work towards a net-zero economy by 2050, Alberta has the chance to make key investments in its people to ensure that they are prepared for the next phase of the energy transition. In the last two years alone, \$2 billion has been invested into renewable energy projects and the majority of Alberta's biggest oil and gas producers have committed to net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. Key policy and investment decisions will be made in the next few years. New organizations will be created, and new corporate entities will be building their workforce. This period in Alberta's story is key to designing the future in a way that builds an equitable workforce. The energy transition would benefit from the ideas, experiences and voices of a diverse range of people. However, women and gender diverse people have not had equitable opportunity to thrive in the energy sector because of current and historical harm.³

The energy transition requires a rapid and systemic technological shift, presenting a major opportunity for sustainable socio-economic and environmental development.⁴ Building on their acknowledgment that climate change is an immediate and pressing challenge, the Government of Canada is in the process of developing a roadmap for a 'just transition' that includes gender equity. They have published a discussion paper that stresses the importance of creating a Canadian labour market that leads on integrating and promoting clean energy industries. They emphasize that this plan must be people-centred, stating that, "the just transition must be inclusive by design, addressing barriers and creating opportunities for groups including gender, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples, Black and other racialized individuals, 2SLGBTQIA+ and other marginalized people."⁵

³ Genevieve Doiron, Emma Severson-Baker, Laura Hughes, *Women in Alberta's Energy Transition: A Review of Barriers to Participation and Leadership*, (Pembina Institute, 2021). <https://www.pembina.org/reports/2021-10-14-womeninalbertasenergytransition-pembina.pdf>

⁴ Phil Johnstone et al., "Waves of disruption in clean energy transitions: Sociotechnical dimensions of system disruption in Germany and the United Kingdom," *Energy Research & Social Science*, 2020), 1. <https://reader.elsevier.com/reader/sd/pii/S2214629619303536>

⁵ Government of Canada, *People-Centred Just Transition: Discussion Paper* (2022), 5. https://www.rncanengagenrcan.ca/sites/default/files/pictures/home/just_transition_discussion_paper_-_en_-_july_15.pdf

While Alberta’s 2022 budget highlights \$15 million to diversify data collection regarding the labour market, as well as \$171 million to close labour gaps related to skill shortages in STEM, including the energy industry,⁶ the government has not shared a provincial plan for its energy transition at the time this report was published. At the same time, the renewable energy industry is growing quickly,⁷ which presents an opportunity to create a culturally informed, sustainable, and inclusive energy plan to mitigate the current energy crisis as we strive to achieve a net-zero economy.

1.1 Context and background

This document is a follow-up to the *Women in Alberta’s Energy Transition* report, published by the Pembina Institute in 2021.⁸ That report explored the systemic issues that are currently holding women back in Alberta’s energy industry (both the established fossil-fuel based energy sector and the emerging renewables sector), and detailed how they currently and will continue to negatively impact women, their livelihoods, and their communities as the province transitions to net-zero unless intentional, specific and measurable action is taken.

Women in Alberta’s Energy Transition identified five barriers:

- Lack of access to opportunity
- Lack of good jobs
- Inability to advance
- Income gap
- Industry culture⁹

These five key hurdles compound to disempower women in the energy industry, and often keep them from entering it in the first place. The barriers both explain and perpetuate the underrepresentation of women in the energy industry.¹⁰

These gendered barriers are not unique to the energy industry, but they need to be addressed for Alberta’s transition to avoid replicating the historical exclusion of women

⁶ Government of Alberta, “Budget 2022.” <https://www.alberta.ca/budget-highlights.aspx>

⁷ Business Renewables Centre Canada, “Unprecedented growth in Alberta’s renewables market smashes business community targets,” June 8, 2022. <https://businessrenewables.ca/news/unprecedented-growth-albertas-renewables-market-smashes-business-community-targets>

⁸ *Women in Alberta’s Energy Transition*, 1-27.

⁹ *Women in Alberta’s Energy Transition*, 20.

¹⁰ *Women in Alberta’s Energy Transition*, 1.

and other marginalized groups. Fortunately, many women's groups and leaders across Alberta and Canada have been developing solutions to these issues for decades, and the energy industry can benefit from those learnings.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide tangible actions that governments, industry leaders, and educational institutions can take to remove the barriers for women and gender-diverse people in Alberta's energy transition, especially considering Indigenous communities who have been historically marginalized and exploited by the energy industry. These recommendations have been co-developed by staff with gender equity expertise at the Pembina Institute and women in Alberta.

Because the five barriers are often entangled with each other, the recommendations that follow also overlap and may address multiple barriers at the same time.

The following section lays out four categories of recommendations (Figure 1):

- Education and training
- Supportive workplaces
- Culture and leadership development
- Data transparency and use

There are several recommendations presented in each category, and each includes the level of government or corporate entity that would implement the recommendations. The categories themselves are laid out along the pathway of a potential energy career trajectory, from initial supportive learning experiences to gender-sensitive retention practices, to supporting women and gender diverse people to advance into leadership. Finally, the data transparency and use category is one that will enhance the other three areas.



Figure 1. Pathway of a potential energy career trajectory

Alberta is shifting towards a new outlook on energy as a result of volatile prices, societal change, and global commitments towards a net-zero economy. This work is unprecedented, and Alberta has a unique opportunity to pave its own way towards an equitable future and workforce that benefits everyone.

1.3 Methodology and engagement

The policy recommendations presented in this report were informed by data from community engagement sessions, plus a review of the relevant literature and examples to validate the suggestions that arose during engagement sessions. The recommendations were then reviewed and validated by experts in gender justice and worker's rights issues, as well as representatives from the energy industry and academia working on aligned issues in Alberta. Finally, the recommendations and their framing were reviewed by consultants at tâtaga Inc, an Indigenous-led consulting firm who gave input into the outline of this report and reviewed it at several different points in the writing process.

Our community engagement sessions were conducted in partnership with other organizations focused on building gender equity, both in Alberta and nationally (e.g., Women’s Centre of Calgary, Young Women in Energy). With five partners we ran four sessions in which we engaged with 330 community members, the majority of whom were women, to explore the solutions that would support them to lead and participate in Alberta’s energy transition.

The groups involved included:

- Women currently employed in Alberta’s energy industry in a range of roles
- Women not currently involved in Alberta’s energy industry
- Women students in university science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM)-related programs
- A mixed-gender group from across the country connected to a range of clean energy, policy, advocacy and gender equity roles and projects

Each session began with a presentation of the five main barriers for women in Alberta’s energy transition,¹¹ followed by breakout rooms focused on each barrier to develop recommendations. The final workshop with women in the energy industry invited participants to prioritize the recommendations that had come out of the three previous sessions, and then continue to refine those priorities in small groups.

1.4 Lack of data and other limitations

As reported in *Women in Alberta’s Energy Transition*, a key limitation in this work continues to be a lack of disaggregated and region-specific data.¹² While these gaps are partly addressed with feedback and direction from women living and working in Alberta, there is still a need for more research on the diverse experiences of women with marginalized identities and what solutions would work for them in Alberta’s net-zero transition. However, our conversations in the engagement sessions validated the five barriers identified in the first report, despite the lack of region-specific data to inform that report. Participants overwhelmingly confirmed the literature with their own experiences.

In the engagement sessions, there were significant gaps in representation of women who are further marginalized by factors that intersect with gender. In particular, the voices of Indigenous women, women with disabilities, and transgender people were not

¹¹ *Women in Alberta’s Energy Transition*, 1.

¹² *Women in Alberta’s Energy Transition*, 6.

adequately included. For example, based on data from an optional self-reported identity survey, in the engagement sessions we saw attendance of approximately 1% non-binary or gender fluid people, 2% Indigenous participants and 3% people with disabilities. To attempt to address this gap, we prioritized the experiences of these marginalized groups in our desktop research. We also hired an Indigenous consulting group, tatâga inc., to review this document and have integrated their feedback. At the same time, we recognize that research to explore the experiences of a group as broadly defined as “women” can never capture all nuances and perspectives. The intersections between gender and other forms of identity create experiences that deserve their own deep and specific attention, and our plan moving forward is to partner with groups that are led by and represent the identities that were underrepresented.

This report is a starting place for more research on how gender and other forms of identity impact workers in Alberta’s energy industry and development recommendations that further support the needs of women and gender diverse people.

Finally, this report is focused primarily on jobs in the energy industry as they relate to the net-zero transition. There is a whole other rich conversation to be had about the role of industries where women are overrepresented and severely underpaid, such as childcare, education and service jobs, in the net-zero transition. While this paper just barely scratches that surface, we recognize that these low-carbon industries indirectly related to the energy industry are key to a successful transition and must be included in broader conversations surrounding gender equity and an equitable energy transition.

2. Net-zero education and training

Creating the conditions for women and gender diverse people to pursue net-zero aligned occupations early in their careers is a key first step in opening the energy sector up to those who have been historically excluded.

As established in *Women in Alberta's Energy Transition*, the cultural and social norms associated with career choices have fostered a system where women and gender diverse people are significantly underrepresented in postsecondary level STEM fields. They are rarely presented with STEM-related career information through formal information channels and lack access to the informal networks of personal relationships that tend to accelerate career advancement.¹³ The individuals we spoke to confirmed this research, expressing that Alberta's energy sector remains an environment where women 'stumble' into their careers, rather than being actively encouraged to participate. Education and training are an integral policy area through which to respond to this cycle of career exclusion.

Table 1. Education and training: Summary of recommendations

Responsible Body	Sub-recommendations
Recommendation 1: Improve access to net-zero related training, certification and education for women	
Provincial and federal government	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Direct funding towards net-zero training and certification programs that meet the needs of a range of women. Focus on women living in geographically isolated and rural communities, women who are newcomers to the country, and women facing income barriers.• Alleviate costs for women living on low incomes by creating or increasing funding to grant, scholarships and bursary streams specifically for women, in particular those women who are most excluded from the energy sector• Redirect public funds from the fossil fuel industry towards women's economic advancement through access to training• Apply a Gender-Based Analysis (GBA) Plus lens to all gender-neutral funding streams for training and education

¹³ *Women in Alberta's Energy Transition*, 7, 8.

Federal government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore improvements to the Foreign Credential Recognition program as well as the Canadian Work Experience Project
Educational institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the development of partnerships with non-profit organizations that specialize in supporting women and gender-diverse people to access training and clean energy companies
<p>Recommendation 2: Invest in a range of mechanisms to enable women to access jobs and opportunities at all stages of their careers in the energy sector</p>	
Provincial and federal government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand funding for well-paid, hands-on net-zero skill development for women through internships and apprenticeships, like the federal Apprenticeship Grant for Women and the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program • Create specific funding opportunities for network development
Industry leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create informal opportunities for mentorship, such as events where junior and senior staff can meet each other, as well as workshops on being a mentor or a mentee • Create formalized mentorship and sponsorship programs that intentionally match mentors and mentees • Develop or support industry-wide or workplace-specific networks for women and engage with these networks to recruit candidates for jobs • Set living wage policies for all internship positions
Gender-specific industry networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waive fees for students and un- or under-employed network members or offer a sliding-fee scale
Educational institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand fields of study with hands-on net-zero work experience components beyond STEM (e.g., offering internships for finance and human resources students specifically within renewable energy companies)

2.1 Training

Recommendation 1: Improve access to training, certification and education for women

Barriers addressed: Lack of access to opportunity

Even when women develop an interest in STEM and decide to pursue related opportunities, they face barriers in accessing training, certification, and education

opportunities.¹⁴ As part of its Gender Results Framework,¹⁵ the Government of Canada has set “equal opportunities and diversified paths in education and skills development” as a goal.¹⁶

Participants in the engagement sessions run by the Pembina Institute identified the need for federal and provincial governments to direct funding towards net-zero training and certification programs that meet the needs of a range of women and gender diverse people. One person in a student-focused session commented, “If we aren’t given the same opportunities, how can we expect the same outcomes?” Another person highlighted the ways girls are often steered away from an interest in STEM early on in their lives. Those who have been historically excluded from the energy industry in the most severe ways — including women living in geographically isolated and rural communities, women who are newcomers to the country, and women facing income barriers — were identified as a priority focus for investment.

Investing in training programs for women living in rural and geographically isolated communities, many of whom are Indigenous, would support women deeply impacted by the effects of climate change in Canada¹⁷ to get involved in climate solutions.¹⁸ For example, Indigenous Clean Energy runs Indigenous-specific clean energy capacity-building programs through their 20/20 Catalysts and Generation Power programs, which are designed to support participants in culturally informed ways to build skills they can use to lead in their unique communities.¹⁹ Expanding access to virtual training opportunities, alongside adequate investment in wireless infrastructure in geographically isolated communities, could also support women to access net-zero skills while they remain in their homes.

When hiring and supporting staff, employers should look beyond formalized western credentials and recognize the ancestral knowledge and experience many Indigenous

¹⁴ *Women in Alberta’s Energy Transition*, 7.

¹⁵ Government of Canada, “Gender Results Framework.” <https://women-gender-equality.canada.ca/en/gender-results-framework.html>

¹⁶ Government of Canada, “Education and Skills Development.” <https://women-gender-equality.canada.ca/en/gender-results-framework/education-skills-development.html>

¹⁷ Amber Fletcher et al., *Women and Climate Change Impacts and Action in Canada: Feminist, Indigenous, and Intersectional Perspectives* (Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women and the Alliance for Intergenerational Resilience, 2018), 14, 20-23. https://www.criaw-icref.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Women-and-Climate-Change_FINAL.pdf

¹⁸ Indigenous Clean Energy, “The Indigenous Clean Energy Social Enterprise...Catalyzing Collaboration.” <https://indigenoucleanenergy.com/about/>

¹⁹ *Women in Alberta’s Energy Transition*, 7.

women/gender-diverse people hold. For centuries, Indigenous people and nations have practiced important skills such as engaging in reciprocity with their lands,²⁰ systems-level thinking,²¹ and holistic resilience practices,²² which are key as we transition towards cleaner energy systems. Case studies recently published by four Indigenous women researchers and knowledge-keepers through the Canadian Climate Institute detail specific ways that ancestral knowledge can be applied to energy transition challenges.²³ Employers should also reflect on any reluctance to hire Indigenous women with criminal records related to land defense activities, as they are more likely to be targeted by law enforcement for arrest.²⁴

Participants also identified the cost and difficulty associated with transferring and validating credentials from other countries to the Canadian energy workforce as a specific barrier (e.g., engineer). An evaluation of the federal Foreign Credential Recognition program revealed the following barriers for internationally trained individuals:

- “long and complex processes to receive accreditation
- lack of a Canadian-obtained educational credential
- lack of professional connections
- financial barriers
- language skills and inconsistent language expectations for foreign credential recognition
- employers’ attitudes result in not accepting qualifications and experience
- lack of co-ordination between Canada’s immigration system and foreign credential recognition processes and
- access to sufficient, relevant, and quality information and pre-arrival support”²⁵

²⁰ Kaniela Ing, “The Only Moral Path,” in *Required Reading: Climate Justice, Adaptation and Investing in Indigenous Power* (NDN Collective Climate Justice Campaign 2021), 12.

²¹ Jade Begay, “An Indigenous Systems Approach to the Climate Crisis,” in *Required Reading: Climate Justice, Adaptation and Investing in Indigenous Power*, 94.

²² Janna Wale, “Gitxsan Rez-ilience: Understanding climate resilience as Naadahahlhakwhlinhl (interconnectedness),” *Canadian Climate Institute*, June 6, 2022. <https://climateinstitute.ca/publications/gitxsan-rez-ilience/>

²³ Shianne McKay and David Mitchell, “Indigenous Knowledge Points the Way: Showcasing four powerful new contributions to Canadian climate research,” *Canadian Climate Institute*, June 20, 2022. <https://climateinstitute.ca/indigenous-knowledge-points-the-way/>

²⁴ Shivangi Misra, Ashley Major, Pamela Palmater and Shelagh Day, *The Toxic Culture of the RCMP: Misogyny, Racism and Violence Against Women in Canada’s National Police Force* (The Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action, 2022), 17. <https://fafia-afai.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/FAFIA RCMP REPORT.pdf>

²⁵ Government of Canada, *Evaluation of the Foreign Credential Recognition Program* (2020), 16.

- lack of licensure in Canada
- resume or cover writing skills
- lack of demand for skills.²⁶

The evaluation also highlighted that women and racialized groups face specific barriers to their foreign credential recognition and participation in the workforce. For professional women, these barriers include traditional gender expectations around work and the absence of social networks that can connect women to training.²⁷ Single women with children face challenges around balancing family care with job-searching or pursuing the credentialing process.

To address the costs associated with re-credentialing, the federal government offers a Foreign Credential Recognition Loans program.²⁸ They have also piloted a Canadian Work Experience project.²⁹ Following the advice of the evaluation mentioned above, the federal government should explore how to build on both programs, thus indirectly supporting newcomer women with foreign credentials relevant to the energy industry. This would enable highly qualified newcomers to enter the workforce to advance.³⁰

Governments could also explore alleviating costs for women living on low incomes by creating or increasing funding to grant, scholarships and bursary streams specifically for women, in particular those women who are most excluded from the energy industry. The Alberta government, for example, funds a Women in STEM scholarship, and has committed money to bursary programs at several colleges in Calgary and Edmonton for women in STEM, including at one Indigenous-focused institution.³¹ Increasing funding to these programs and creating similar programs would support women facing class barriers to accessing training. It's important that identity-specific bursary programs meant to support Indigenous peoples result in support for those “overwhelmed by real

²⁶ Government of Canada, *Evaluation of the Foreign Credential Recognition Program* (2020), 16. <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/reports/evaluations/foreign-credential-recognition-program.html>

²⁷ *Evaluation of the Foreign Credential Recognition Program*, 18.

²⁸ *Evaluation of the Foreign Credential Recognition Program*, 17.

²⁹ Audrey Appiah et al., *Evaluation of the Canadian Work Experience Pilot Projects: Final Report* (Social Research and Demonstration Corporation, 2020), 10. <https://www.srdc.org/media/553107/cwe-pilot-projects-final-report.pdf>

³⁰ *Evaluation of the Foreign Credential Recognition Program*, 16, 17.

³¹ Lisa Johnson, “Alberta government announces \$1 million to support women studying in STEM fields.” *Edmonton Journal*, March 8, 2022. <https://edmontonjournal.com/news/politics/alberta-government-announces-1-million-to-support-women-studying-in-stem-fields>

barriers.”³² Although the methods verifying Indigeneity are colonial in terms of the proof required, requiring them may be of use in ensuring that money is being directed to the intended recipients.

In addition to these identity-specific funding streams, training could be made more accessible for women by providing additional financial support to students who care for dependents. This is of particular relevance to the energy transition as many people seeking to retrain for net-zero aligned work will be undertaking a job transition mid-career while supporting their families. Flexibility will also be key to supporting people with a range of responsibilities. One emerging training format is microcredentials. Recent research on microcredentials shows that this style of intensive, shorter and specific training could benefit people who desire a new skill and/or career change but desire or require flexibility in their learning process.³³

To increase access to training opportunities, potential partnerships could be made between post-secondary institutions, non-profit organizations who specialize in supporting women to access training, and clean energy companies (see text box).

Wind turbine technician readiness program for women

Women Building Futures, Vestas, and Lethbridge College have partnered to offer a wind turbine technician readiness program for women. The four-week program prepares women to begin a career working in the renewable energy industry as an entry-level wind turbine technician, after which they can interview for a job with Vestas.³⁴ “We’re thrilled to expand our program offerings to include employment training in renewable energy,” says Jess Thomson, Director of Stakeholder and Government Relations for WBF. “This program will create a great opportunity for women in Canada who are looking to explore a career in an ever-growing industry with plenty of room for career growth.”

There will be a need for more workers with net-zero skills to fill roles in net-zero industries.³⁵ Provincial, territorial and federal governments have the chance to address this gap by investing in different modes of training for good jobs (i.e., jobs that offer

³² Andre Bear, “Many people claiming to be Indigenous do not share our collective Experience,” *CBC*, July 27, 2021. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/opinion-too-easy-claim-indigeneity-1.6114558>

³³ Future Skills Centre, “Focus on Microcredentials.” <https://fsc-ccf.ca/engage/focus-on-microcredentials/>

³⁴ Women Building Futures, “Vestas Wind Turbine Technician Readiness.” <https://womenbuildingfutures.ca/programs/vestas-wind-turbine-technician-readiness/>

³⁵ Cedric Smith and Sarah Winstanley, *Net-Zero Skills: What will Canada need for the coming energy transition?* (Pembina Institute, 2022). <https://www.pembina.org/pub/net-zero-skills>

adequate incomes, good benefits and flexibility) in a net-zero economy, some of which may be offered in less traditional formats than in university STEM programs to meet the needs of a range of women. This money could be redirected from government subsidies to the fossil fuel industry (e.g., federal tax breaks like flow-through shares and provincial subsidies like crown royalty reductions in Alberta³⁶), and instead fund expanded access to net-zero education and training for those who have traditionally been excluded from the energy sector.³⁷ In addition to funding training and education specific to women, governments are also encouraged to apply a Gender-Based Analysis (GBA) Plus lens to all other gender-neutral funding streams for training for Canada's net-zero future.³⁸

2.2 Career stages

Recommendation 2: Invest in a range of mechanisms to enable women to access jobs and opportunities at all career stages

Barriers addressed: Lack of access to opportunity, Inability to advance

The Pembina Institute's *Women in Alberta's Energy Transition* report identified a lack of access to mentorship, networking, internships, and other hands-on work opportunities as barriers to both accessing opportunities early on in women's energy careers and their ability to advance into more senior roles over time.³⁹

In order to support women to access opportunities in a net-zero economy, we recommend that support is generated for formal and informal mentorship; networking; and internships and co-op programs. These mechanisms are expanded below.

³⁶ International Institute for Sustainable Development, "Unpacking Canada's Fossil Fuel Subsidies." December 11, 2020. <https://www.iisd.org/articles/unpacking-canadas-fossil-fuel-subsidies-faq#howmuch>

³⁷ Oxfam Canada, *Feminist Scorecard* (2022), 28. <https://42kgab3z3i7s3rm1xf48rq44-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Oxfam-Canada-2022-Feminist-Scorecard-Report-Final.pdf>

³⁸ Women and Gender Equality Canada, "Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus)," 2022. <https://women-gender-equality.canada.ca/en/gender-based-analysis-plus.html>

³⁹ *Women in Alberta's Energy Transition*, 7-8.

Formal and informal mentorship

While women often connect with at least one mentor in their academic experiences, mentoring in STEM-related workplaces is often “elusive” for women.⁴⁰ This lack of access to mentorship may be due not to lack of mentors as originally believed, but rather barriers that prevent relationships from turning into full mentorship opportunities. A successful match requires alignment between communication styles and personalities, trust in capability on both sides of the relationship, a strong commitment from the mentor to the relationship, and strong mentee trust in the mentor. Additionally, women often value emotional safety and intimacy more than men do in their interpersonal relationships, and a relationship with a mentor is no different.⁴¹

There is some research showing that informal mentorships (as opposed to formalized mentorship programs) are the most impactful for the person being mentored, and for creating work and academic cultures where people can connect with each other in a supportive way. Organizations could host events where junior and senior employees can meet each other and run workshops for those interested in both being a mentor and mentee. Leaders in energy workplaces and educational institutions should also consider developing more formalized mentorship programming that matches mentors and mentees, as research demonstrates this is also beneficial for women.⁴²

While mentorship is crucial, for women to excel in the energy sector they also need sponsors. Mentors become sponsors when their relationship advances from offering private advice towards providing public advocacy on behalf of their mentee. Without public support, marginalized people can continue to fall through the cracks, resulting in a phenomenon of women being “over-mentored and under-sponsored” in the workplace.⁴³ While the progression from mentor to sponsor can happen naturally, organizations that seek to accelerate the number of women in high-level positions can establish formal sponsorship arrangements. For example, after one media group created a company-wide sponsorship program pairing women with senior figures in their

⁴⁰ Ma. Carolina Saffie-Robertson, “It’s Not You, It’s Me: An Exploration of Mentoring Experiences for Women in STEM,” *Sex Roles* 83 (2020), 576. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-020-01129-x>

⁴¹ “It’s Not You, It’s Me,” 577.

⁴² “It’s Not You, It’s Me,” 567.

⁴³ Herminia Ibarra, “A Lack of Sponsorship Is Keeping Women from Advancing into Leadership,” *Harvard Business Review*, August 19, 2019. <https://hbr.org/2019/08/a-lack-of-sponsorship-is-keeping-women-from-advancing-into-leadership>

department, the proportion of women in the C-Suite was boosted from one-third to half.⁴⁴

Networking

Another way to create the conditions for informal mentoring relationships to arise and create access to career opportunities is through the development of gender-specific networking groups.⁴⁵ In one study, three key reasons emerged for why women join professional women’s networks: to find mentors and sponsors; to find employment, build skills and access professional development; and to advocate for gender-sensitive policies.⁴⁶ These types of groups can be profession-wide, such as Young Women in Energy⁴⁷ or Women in Renewable Energy,⁴⁸ or they can be established within individual organizational settings.

In addition to providing benefits for individual women’s careers, professional networks have the potential to impact the larger working culture, but “only if the women have a space to be heard,” and where there is not stigma attached to joining a gender-specific group instead of one that is more technically focused.⁴⁹ Many women feel that networks have been key to their success in renewable energy.⁵⁰ Energy industry leaders could engage with these professional networks throughout their hiring processes and onwards, “from recruitment to interviewing to retention and the development of more inclusive company cultures.”⁵¹ One barrier to networking that came up in our engagement sessions was inaccessible fees for networking events, especially for students or women who have been out of the paid workforce for an extended period. Networking groups could provide sliding fee scales to ensure accessibility or remove the fees altogether. Governments could also make funding available for network development, recognizing that much of this work is done by volunteers who are women.

⁴⁴ Emily Cadman, “The secret to success is to be sponsored, not over-mentored,” *Financial Times*, September 15, 2015. <https://www.ft.com/content/2728fe36-4a7c-11e5-b558-8a9722977189>

⁴⁵ “It’s Not You, It’s Me,” 577.

⁴⁶ Alicia Dawn Bjarnason, “‘A Space of their Own?’ Professional Women’s Groups in the Alberta Resource Sector.” *International Journal of Gender, Science and Technology* 13 no.2 (2021), 173.

⁴⁷ Young Women in Energy. <https://www.youngwomeninenergy.com/>

⁴⁸ Women in Renewable Energy, “The WiRE Mission.” <https://www.womeninrenewableenergy.ca/>

⁴⁹ “‘A Space of their Own?’” 174.

⁵⁰ Juliann Emmons Allison, Kirin McCrory and Ian Oxnevad. “Closing the renewable energy gender gap in the United States and Canada: The role of women’s professional networking,” *Energy Research & Social Science* 55 (2019). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2019.03.011>

⁵¹ “Closing the renewable energy gender gap in the United States and Canada,” 41.

Internships and co-op programs

Co-op programs and internships during STEM degree programs can be a place where women learn about careers in the energy sector, illustrating another way in which low enrollment in STEM fields is a barrier for women’s participation in the energy transition.⁵² These types of work experience are both “important vehicles for enabling young workers to gain experience” while at the same time being aware that “such programmes are often abused by employers who may recycle interns or use them as a source of cheap or free labour.”⁵³ Unpaid or underpaid internships perpetuate issues of class and privilege, particularly for women with caregiving responsibilities who are less able to work for free or for very low wages. Industry leaders should consider setting living wage policies for all internship positions to ensure those workers can gain valuable experience while being able to pay their bills at the same time.

There is also an opportunity for post-secondary institutions to expand their fields of study with net-zero work experience components beyond STEM, so that more students have the chance to see how their studies could align with a career in renewable energy. For example, this could include practical opportunities for human resources, finance and accounting, or business students to gain experience in renewable energy by completing a co-op at a company in the sector. This is also an opportunity for post-secondary institutions to deliberately incorporate content about gender gaps in the workplace and normalize these conversations for students of all genders in addition to their technical learning needs.⁵⁴ Industry leaders and educational institutions should be incentivized to “combat sexism and gender discrimination to create an inclusive working environment” for women in fields that are dominated by men.⁵⁵ An example of this type of incentivization would be for educational institutions to require companies to report on their gender-inclusive practices before connecting them to student interns.

There is a need for policies aimed at creating paid apprenticeship and internship opportunities to ensure fair and equitable access for women.⁵⁶ Women often occupy

⁵² *Women in Alberta’s Energy Transition*, 8.

⁵³ Bipasha Baruah and Sandra Biskupski-Mujanovic, “Navigating sticky floors and glass ceilings: Barriers and opportunities for women’s employment in natural resources industries in Canada,” *Natural Resources Forum* 45 (2021), 191. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1477-8947.12216>

⁵⁴ Elena Makarova, Belinda Aeschlimann and Walter Herzog, “Why is the pipeline leaking? Experiences of young women in STEM vocational education and training and their adjustment strategies.” *Empirical Research in Vocational Education and Training* 8, no.2 (2016), 15. <https://ervet-journal.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s40461-016-0027-y>

⁵⁵ “Why is the pipeline leaking?” 16.

⁵⁶ “Navigating sticky floors and glass ceilings,” 192.

insecure roles in the energy sector and it's critical to look at the ways un- and underpaid internships perpetuate this inequity.⁵⁷ Provincial and federal governments should expand funding for hands-on net-zero skill development for women through internships and apprenticeships, like the Apprenticeship Grant for Women,⁵⁸ as well as Indigenous-specific jobs training through increased funding to the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program.⁵⁹ While designing equitable training programs and certification processes, organizations must consider how the time constraints of care work impact the capacity of women to fully take advantage of net-zero skill building opportunities. For more information on the benefits of flexible working arrangements, please see the section below.

⁵⁷ *Women in Alberta's Energy Transition*, 12.

⁵⁸ Government of Canada, "Funding: Apprenticeship Incentive Grant for Women – What this Grant Offers." <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/funding/apprenticeship-incentive-women-overview.html>

⁵⁹ Government of Canada, "About the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program." <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/indigenous-skills-employment-training.html>

3. Supportive energy sector workplaces

Reforming the workplace based upon principles of flexibility and equal access is a clear pathway to recruiting, retaining and advancing women and gender diverse people in net-zero careers.

In the energy sector, what qualifies as a “good job” is deeply gendered. Women who seek to enter the workforce may be discouraged by the persistent income gap between men and women who hold similar positions, as well as the lower pay for feminized non-STEM work.⁶⁰ Those who secure roles within Alberta’s energy industry often find they need to accept part-time work with fewer opportunities for advancement, because of unpaid domestic duties that are incompatible with a fixed schedule.⁶¹ In our dialogues with community members, women expressed that the fieldwork requirements associated with on-site careers in oil and gas are frequently in conflict with their childcare responsibilities. Disrupting these existing barriers to success within the workplace is vital to ensuring that women can prosper in every stage of their careers.

Table 2. Supportive workplaces: Summary of recommendations

Responsible Body	Sub-recommendations
Recommendation 3: Provide part-time, virtual and/or flexible work arrangements in energy sector workplaces that offer access to benefits and do not impede the ability to advance	
Industry leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standardize flexible working patterns across the organization, such as shorter working weeks and core working hours set around times children are in school
Recommendation 4: Invest in affordable, accessible childcare that responds to the needs of parents in the energy sector	
Federal government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow through with 2021 and 2022 budget promises and continue to increase investment in a comprehensive early learning and childcare system for the country
Provincial government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further investment in worker wages, subsidies, and culturally relevant childcare spaces

⁶⁰ *Women in Alberta’s Energy Transition*, 20-21.

⁶¹ *Women in Alberta’s Energy Transition*, 11.

Industry leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support flexible working hours and schedule important events during a core set of working hours that take into consideration these regular times • Consider offering on-site childcare and providing childcare subsidies as part of benefits packages
<p>Recommendation 5: Invest in, support and promote gender-neutral parental leave policies and supports in energy sector workplaces</p>	
Federal government	<p>Improve federal parental leave policy by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing flexibility in when and for how long leaves can be taken throughout a child's early years • Ensuring workers can access parental leave benefits regardless of the time they have worked in the prior year • Directing greater amounts of funding towards parental leave to ensure the income that parents can access is more supportive, especially where employers do not offer top-ups
Industry leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop innovative, family-friendly policies that will allow companies to attract the best talent and stay competitive • Communicate parental leave policies in a gender-neutral manner • Undertake review of current family policies to ensure particular employees are not disadvantaged, and that they are not contributing to a gendered use of leave

3.1 Flexible work

Recommendation 3: Employers provide part-time, virtual and/or flexible work arrangements in energy sector workplaces that offer access to benefits and do not impede the ability to advance

Barriers addressed: Lack of access to opportunity, Lack of good jobs, Inability to advance, Income gap, Industry culture

There are gender differences in what is considered a “good” job in the energy industry. Roles that require a lot of travel and long hours do not align with the caregiving and domestic responsibilities that many women hold outside of work.⁶² This unpaid labour often includes coordinating the lives of children, handling the logistics of running a

⁶² *Women in Alberta's Energy Transition*, 11.

household, providing emotional support, and keeping in touch with relatives and community.⁶³ Single mothers often carry an even greater share of this unpaid labour. Due to these caregiving and domestic responsibilities, many women find flexible and part-time hours more accommodating.⁶⁴ While many energy industry employers offer flexible and part-time work arrangements, when women take advantage of these perks, women's ability to advance into roles with more leadership and better pay is negatively impacted, and they often lose access to benefits (e.g., healthcare) that can hold more significance when caring for family.⁶⁵

To address these domestic and care-taking pressures that disproportionately impact women, industry leaders should examine who they see as the “ideal employee” at their organization and explore how their internal practices and expectations are designed as a result. Do these biases centre around the idea of a breadwinner, who is more likely to be a man with a full-time partner at home tending to most of the caregiving and domestic responsibilities, thus enabling him to work long hours and participate in after-hour networking opportunities?⁶⁶ Such biases may result in limited support for employees around childcare and parental leave over time, or working hours that do not fit the needs of a family. Forming a new vision for who the ideal employee is – for example, centring the needs of racialized, Indigenous, disabled, and/or parenting people – can help create a more inclusive orientation to designing workplace policies. As another example, when considering employees for advancement, employers can emphasize performance over number of hours worked to reframe who the ideal worker is.⁶⁷

In addition to allowing women to balance paid and unpaid work, flexible working models (e.g., hybrid work, working from home) have specific benefits for more marginalized women, with a particular focus on hearing the needs of Indigenous women, on and off-reserve (e.g. considering no or low internet access, transportation etc.). In one recent study of U.S. workers, the desire for flexibility was the strongest among racialized groups, with 88% of Asian, 83% of Black and 81% of Hispanic/Latinx respondents expressing a preference for a hybrid or completely remote work

⁶³ Melissa Moyser and Amanda Burlock, “Time Use: Total Work Burden, Unpaid Work, and Leisure,” Statistics Canada, July 30, 2018. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-503-x/2015001/article/54931-eng.htm>

⁶⁴ *Women in Alberta's Energy Transition*, 12.

⁶⁵ *Women in Alberta's Energy Transition*, 12.

⁶⁶ Global Women's Network for the Energy Transition, *Status Report on Gender Equality in the Energy Sector* (2019), 14. <https://www.globalwomensnet.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/c3e-data-report-en-1.pdf>

⁶⁷ “Closing the renewable energy gender gap in the United States and Canada,” 41.

arrangement.⁶⁸ Emerging experiences of Black and other racialized women working at home during the Covid-19 pandemic illustrate the relief many felt at not having to deal with daily microaggressions, such as comments about their hair or being touched without permission.⁶⁹ After a large percentage of workers shifted to working from home or hybrid patterns during the pandemic, one study showed 50% of Black workers reported an increase in their sense of belonging at their workplace, 64% said that they were better able to manage their stress while working from home than in the office, and 25% reported an improvement in work-life balance.⁷⁰ Workers with disabilities are also able to work safely and with the support they need at home,⁷¹ and those who have daily prayer or other spiritual practices are better able to accommodate their own needs. As hybrid and at-home work continues to be normalized, it will be key for employers to ensure these workers are not overlooked for advancement opportunities simply because they are not as visible as those in the office.

There is also research around the positive impact that shorter working weeks have on gender equity outcomes. One study from the U.K. suggests:

A shorter working week would potentially make employment more accessible, encouraging the creation of more jobs for people (in particular women) who might otherwise have to work part-time or not at all as a result of their caring responsibilities. It would enable those with caring responsibilities to progress in their careers and take up jobs appropriate for their level of qualification and could serve to redistribute unpaid labour more equally across genders.⁷²

Industry leaders should consider standardizing flexible working patterns across their organizations, such as shorter working weeks and core working hours set around times children are in school. An example of this type of adjustment would be prohibiting

⁶⁸ Future Forum, *Future Forum Pulse Summer Snapshot: Desire for flexibility intensifies among knowledge workers — and they're willing to walk to get it* (2022), 6. <https://futureforum.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Future-Forum-Pulse-Report-Summer-2022.pdf>

⁶⁹ Ruchika Tulshyan, “Return to Office? Some Women of Color Aren’t Ready,” *New York Times*, June 23, 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/23/us/return-to-office-anxiety.html>

⁷⁰ Sheela Subramanian, “A new era of workplace inclusion: moving from retrofit to redesign,” *Future Forum*, March 11, 2021. <https://futureforum.com/2021/03/11/dismantling-the-office-moving-from-retrofit-to-redesign/>

⁷¹ Catalyst, *COVID-19: Women, Equity, and Inclusion in the Future of Work* (2020), 23. https://www.catalyst.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Covid_19_Women_Equity_Inclusion_Future_of_Work.pdf

⁷² Matt Cole et al., *The Shorter Working Week: A Radical And Pragmatic Proposal* (Autonomy, 2019), 55. <https://autonomy.work/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Shorter-working-week-docV6.pdf>

mandatory meetings during regular drop-off and pick-up times and/or during dinner time. Other employee standards can include paid sick leave and family leave for all, regardless of part-time or full-time status. Ultimately, employees should not face negative consequences for expressing a need for flexibility and utilizing these benefits.

Centring the needs of those with the highest levels of care and domestic responsibility outside of work not only creates a workplace they can fully participate in, but also means other workers experience the benefits of a more flexible working environment (e.g., improved mental health or more time for male employees to spend with family to balance the gender gap in domestic and care labour).

Much of corporate culture is modelled around a colonial concept of time where the number of hours an employee works is equal to ability and/or productivity, which does not include tangible ways to honour and decolonize the workplace. In practice, employers can implement tools such as 'Out of Office' emails for mental health days and the creation of a personalized document detailing the work expectations each employee has for their organization. For example, Future Ancestors Services Inc.,⁷³ which is a Black and Indigenous owned social enterprise focusing on climate justice and anti-racism, follow a 'tayhkay di miyootootow' or Shared Expectation agreement that discusses work boundaries and working styles, and ultimately outlines how best to respect a work-life balance.⁷⁴ This document would be personalized by each employee and respected throughout the company to value the work done rather than the time spent.

Flexible working patterns have been thrust into conversations about how we structure our workplaces since the Covid-19 pandemic began in 2020. Flexible workplaces allow more people to have their needs met in the ways that work for them — one-size-fits-all approaches can mean employees are forced to fit into the dominant culture of a workplace, and many passionate employees with distinct living situations may not be able to participate in such a culture.

As Alberta's energy economy transforms, there is also an opportunity for leaders to transform the way women use flexible working options and advance in their energy careers in a net-zero future. The importance of leaders communicating in gender-neutral terms (for example, using the word "parent" rather than "mother" as a general

⁷³ Future Ancestors Services, "We are All Future Ancestors." <https://www.futureancestors.ca/>

⁷⁴ Future Ancestors Services, "Statement on Decolonized Time: Shared Expectations." https://drive.google.com/file/d/1iZ_tFZj4zKh39aJ854siOE8GCTKed3nW/view

term) and modelling the use of flexible work practices is also key in ensuring workers feel they can also use them without repercussion.

3.2 Childcare

Recommendation 4: Invest in affordable, accessible childcare specific to the needs of parents in the energy sector

Barriers addressed: Lack of good jobs

Investing in the care work that women often do makes economic sense. Funding a comprehensive childcare system and offering support from within organizations also aligns with many Indigenous ways of knowing, doing and being, and makes room for traditional matriarchal values and more communal ways of caring for family.

The Pembina Institute’s *Women in Alberta’s Energy Transition* report indicates that access to affordable, accessible childcare supports women to be able to work full time and accept more responsibility at work, and generally has a positive impact on their careers.⁷⁵ Access to childcare in other provinces has been shown to increase women’s economic participation and provincial GDP.⁷⁶ While data specific to the energy sector is not available, childcare repeatedly came up as an issue in our engagement sessions. In particular, the difficulties in accessing care during Covid-19 and the need for culturally appropriate settings that reflect the values and languages spoken by a diverse range of families were highlighted.

Childcare is a significant expense in Alberta, with median monthly childcare fees for a toddler in 2020 being \$900/month in Lethbridge, \$950/month in Edmonton and \$1,250 in Calgary.⁷⁷ Costs of childcare are more likely to affect women in lower-paid roles with a lack of advancement opportunities, as well as single parents.

⁷⁵ *Women in Alberta’s Energy Transition*, 12.

⁷⁶ <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/news/2021/04/budget-2021-a-canada-wide-early-learning-and-child-care-plan.html> Pierre Fortin, *What Have Been the Effects of Quebec’s Universal Childcare System on Women’s Economic Security?: Brief Submitted to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women (FEWO) of the House of Commons, Ottawa* (2017), 9-10. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/content/Committee/421/FEWO/Brief/BR8806290/br-external/FortinPierre-e.pdf>

⁷⁷ “About the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program.”

In 2021, the federal government announced that they were committing \$8.3 billion ongoing for Early Learning and Child Care. In combination with previous investments, this means the federal government is set to invest \$9.2 billion annually in childcare initiatives by 2025.⁷⁸ This funding will go towards:

- “A 50 per cent reduction in average fees for regulated early learning and childcare in all provinces outside of Quebec, to be delivered before or by the end of 2022.”
- “An average of \$10 a day by 2025-26 for all regulated childcare spaces in Canada.”
- “Ongoing annual growth in quality affordable childcare spaces across the country, building on the approximately 40,000 new spaces already created through previous federal investments.”
- “Meaningful progress in improving and expanding before- and after-school care in order to provide more flexibility for working parents.”⁷⁹
- In the 2022 federal budget committed to providing an additional \$625 million dollars for an Early Learning and Childcare Infrastructure fund.⁸⁰

We encourage the government to follow through on these promises and continue to increase investment in a comprehensive early learning and childcare system for the country.

To access this funding, the Alberta government signed an Early Learning and Childcare agreement with the federal government in November 2021. In the 2022 budget, the provincial government committed to creating 42,500 additional childcare spaces, as well as \$666 million in operating expense funding for 2022-23, for a total of \$2.6 billion dollars by 2025. While the funding is already providing relief for Alberta families,⁸¹ it only applies to families with children who are newborn to kindergarten age,⁸² and there

⁷⁸ Department of Finance Canada, “Budget 2021: A Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Plan.” <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/news/2021/04/budget-2021-a-canada-wide-early-learning-and-child-care-plan.html>

⁷⁹ “Budget 2021: A Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Plan.”

⁸⁰ “Budget 2021: A Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Plan.”

⁸¹ Kyle Bakx, “Affordable child-care program providing relief for families amid rising cost of living,” *CBC*, March 3, 2022. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/business/bakx-priced-out-child-care-1.6369402>

⁸² Government of Alberta, “Federal-Provincial Child Care Agreement.” <https://www.alberta.ca/federal-provincial-child-care-agreement.aspx>

is a predicted shortage of early childcare educators to meet the \$10/day goal.⁸³ Further investment from the province in worker wages, subsidies, and culturally relevant childcare spaces is needed.

Child-related time demands that conflict with work commitments is an issue that came up frequently in our engagement sessions as well. Participants spoke about not being able to participate in important career events because they conflicted with childcare or school pick-up or drop-off, thus impacting the way they were perceived at work. Flexible working hours may help to address this, in addition to scheduling important events during a core set of working hours that take into consideration the regular time demands that come with taking care of school-aged children. Industry leaders could also consider offering on-site childcare and providing childcare subsidies as part of their benefits package.^{84 85}

Investing in childcare has the potential to create a double benefit for women in the energy transition. Approximately 96% of childcare workers are women, and 30% of the childcare workforce are racialized.⁸⁶ While 71% of childcare workers have post-secondary education, the average annual income of a childcare worker is \$24,000, compared to \$53,800 for all other workers with a post-secondary education, and in Alberta this gap is even larger, with childcare workers making 65% less than all other workers on average (\$23,400/year compared to \$67,400/year).⁸⁷ To ensure a gender-just energy transition, the province should “develop a competitive provincial wage scale for

⁸³ Jenna Hamilton, “Local child-care centres ready to accept more children, but problems hiring staff preventing growth,” Fort McMurray Today, February 15th, 2022. <https://www.fortmcmurraytoday.com/news/local-child-care-centres-ready-to-accept-more-children-but-problems-hiring-staff-preventing-growth>

⁸⁴ Hannah Alberga, “These Toronto-based companies are letting their employees expense daycare,” *CTV News: Toronto*, February 10, 2022. <https://toronto.ctvnews.ca/these-toronto-based-companies-are-letting-their-employees-expense-daycare-1.5776109>

⁸⁵ Jacqueline Hunter, *Workplace Childcare: Discovering what Really Works for Vancouver Children, Families and Employers* (City of Vancouver, University of British Columbia, 2018), 9. https://sustain.ubc.ca/sites/default/files/2018-61%20Workplace%20Childcare%20-%20What%20works%20for%20Vancouver%20children%2C%20families%2C%20and%20employers_Hunter.pdf

⁸⁶ Sharanjit Uppal and Katherine Savage, “Insights on Canadian Society: Childcare Workers in Canada,” *Statistics Canada*, June 25, 2021. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/75-006-x/2021001/article/00005-eng.htm>

⁸⁷ “Insights on Canadian Society: Childcare Workers in Canada.”

all early learning and childcare staff that reflects education, experience and role description, and includes a common benefit package and pension plan.”⁸⁸

Extending supportive policies beyond childcare to encompass eldercare and other forms of family caregiving is also critical to unlocking women’s potential in net-zero careers. In 2016, the number of seniors in Canada surpassed that of children under the age of 14.⁸⁹ Over the next twenty years the population of Canadians over the age of 65 is expected to grow by 68%.⁹⁰ As Canada’s aging population continues to grow, employers must seriously consider how to support the “sandwich generation” — middle-aged adults who simultaneously care for aging parents and children.⁹¹

3.3 Parental leave

Recommendation 5: Invest in, support and promote gender-neutral parental leave policies and supports in energy sector workplaces

Barriers addressed: Lack of good jobs

Providing support for parental leave values the important care work being done in the home, as well as any cultural rituals around birth that are important to a family, during the early days of a child’s life and a family’s new structure.

Approximately 90% of those who take parental in Canada leave are women.⁹² Negative perceptions of men taking leave within a company, both by colleagues and managers, may prevent men from using parental leave supports even when adequate solutions are

⁸⁸ Jane Beach, *Roadmap to a Quality Early Learning and Child Care System in Alberta* (Child Care Now, 2021), 28. <https://timeforchildcare.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/AB-ELCC-policy-road-map-FINAL-VERSION.pdf>

⁸⁹ Statistics Canada, “Canada’s population estimates: Age and sex, July 1, 2018,” January 25, 2019. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/190125/dq190125a-eng.htm>

⁹⁰ Canadian Institute for Health Information. “Infographic: Canada’s seniors population outlook: Uncharted territory,” 2017. <https://www.cihi.ca/en/infographic-canadas-seniors-population-outlook-uncharted-territory>

⁹¹ Kim Parker and Eileen Patten. *The Sandwich Generation: Rising Financial Burdens for Middle-Aged Americans* (Pew Research Centre, 2013), 1. <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2013/01/30/the-sandwich-generation/>

⁹² Rachael N. Pettigrew and Karen A. Duncan, “Fathers’ Use of Parental Leave in a Canadian Law Enforcement Organization,” *Journal of Family Issues* (2020), 3. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X20976733>

available. For example, at a large male-dominated workplace in Manitoba with robust top-up policies, researchers found that 65% of male managers had negative attitudes toward men taking parental leave. Some male colleagues also reported perceptions that men were taking leave in order to take a holiday, or to take up a new hobby.⁹³

Our initial report highlighted the “negative consequences for women’s career development” that taking parental leave can have, including women being taken less seriously in the workplace, overlooked for promotions due to their perceived lack of commitment to their job, as well as facing judgements around being less competent or competitive in their roles.⁹⁴ This topic also came up repeatedly in engagement sessions, where participants highlighted the above issues as well as the difference in perception when women versus men took parental leave. Participants noted that parental leave was seen as inevitable for women in a certain age bracket, whereas they felt that when their male colleagues took parental leave it was seen as exceptional and to be celebrated. They emphasized the need for companies to communicate about parental leave in a gender-neutral way.

Employers trying to compete in a net-zero economy need to consider how they support all employees to take parental leave, regardless of gender. To ensure workers of all genders are empowered to use parental leave, we recommend that employers undertake a robust policy review to “ensure their family-friendly policies and practices are neither contributing to the gendered use of leave or disadvantaging particular employees.”⁹⁵ Myth-busting about the care work parents engage in while on parental leave, as well as open discussion about parental leave policies and the support available from an employer, may help to address misconceptions and the gender imbalance around taking leave, and help distribute the impact of parental leave on careers across genders.

Robust family support practices will help employers to attract and retain a diverse workforce, which will be especially crucial in a net-zero economy that will be facing skills shortages. Specific training for managers around supporting those going on parental leave and offering backup childcare have been cited as family-friendly approaches.⁹⁶ Additionally, there is the option to continue to cover health and dental

⁹³ “Fathers’ Use of Parental Leave in a Canadian Law Enforcement Organization,” 20-21.

⁹⁴ *Women in Alberta’s Energy Transition*, 17.

⁹⁵ “Fathers’ Use of Parental Leave in a Canadian Law Enforcement Organization,” 3.

⁹⁶ Rachael N. Pettigrew, “Canadian Employers’ Reaction and Policy Adaptation to the Extended, 61-Week Parental Leave,” *Canadian Studies in Population* 47, no. 1-2 (2020).
<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s42650-0c-00030-y>

benefits for the duration of parental leave.⁹⁷ In one study, only four of the 46 employers included in the study offered robust, progressive parental leave policies and support,⁹⁸ revealing a large opportunity for employers in the energy sector to examine and adjust their policies to better support families, while investing in a competitive edge over their competitors.

A review of employers' perceptions of a new federal policy that extends parental leave states that "employers should be proactive in developing strategic, innovative, family-friendly policies to stay competitive in attracting the best talent and cultivating a culture of wellness."⁹⁹ Employers who choose not to develop these policies are at risk of missing out on the benefits — including increased employee engagement and improved recruitment and retention.¹⁰⁰ One way that industry leaders can improve their support of parents to take parental leave is by offering wage top-ups, in which the employer pays the difference between the percentage of salary the federal government pays and the total salary. A 2021 survey of 46 Canadian employers found only 20% offered wage top-ups.¹⁰¹ Employers should be aware that providing top-ups for maternity leave, but not parental leave, may unintentionally prevent fathers and second parents from taking leave due to income loss.¹⁰²

Other supportive policies employers should consider include:

- On-boarding/off boarding programs, including exit and return to work interviews¹⁰³
- Mentorship programs for the transition to parenthood, such as PWC's "Parents @ Work" employee resource network¹⁰⁴
- Staggered return to work programs
- Prorated bonuses
- The option of maintaining company cell phone or computer

⁹⁷ "Canadian Employers' Reaction and Policy Adaptation to the Extended, 61-Week Parental Leave," 2.

⁹⁸ "Canadian Employers' Reaction and Policy Adaptation to the Extended, 61-Week Parental Leave," 3.

⁹⁹ "Canadian Employers' Reaction and Policy Adaptation to the Extended, 61-Week Parental Leave," 3.

¹⁰⁰ "Canadian Employers' Reaction and Policy Adaptation to the Extended, 61-Week Parental Leave," 3.

¹⁰¹ "Canadian Employers' Reaction and Policy Adaptation to the Extended, 61-Week Parental Leave," 1.

¹⁰² "Fathers' Use of Parental Leave in a Canadian Law Enforcement Organization," 3.

¹⁰³ Avra Davidoff et al., *Making it Work! How to effectively manage maternity leave career transitions: An Employer's Guide* (CERIC, 2016), 5-7. <https://ceric.ca/publications/making-it-work-how-to-effectively-manage-maternity-leave-career-transitions-an-employers-guide/>

¹⁰⁴ PWC, "Inclusion Networks." <https://www.pwc.com/ca/en/about-us/diversity-inclusion/inclusion-networks.html>

- Practices around access to company information for staying up to date on new project and company developments if desired
- Substantial financial support for those who expand their families in ways that involve atypical costs, including fertility treatment, surrogacy, or adoption. Families that include children with disabilities should also be considered.¹⁰⁵

While the federal government expanded the option to take parental leave (in addition to maternity leave) for 35 weeks to 61 weeks in December 2017, no new funding has been added — parents can access the same amount of money as the 35-week option but divided over an increased number of weeks.¹⁰⁶ The intention of the federal extension was to give both parents more opportunity to take leave, but men do not appear to be taking leave more often as a result.¹⁰⁷ Federal parental leave policy can be improved by increasing flexibility in when and for how long leaves can be taken throughout a child's early years, ensuring workers can access parental leave benefits regardless of the time they have worked in the prior year, and directing greater amounts of funding towards parental leave to ensure the income that parents can access is more adequate, especially where employers do not offer top-ups.¹⁰⁸

The goal of implementing accessible parental policies is not only to accommodate and support women who take leave, but to further incentivize men to partake in parental leave.

¹⁰⁵ “Canadian Employers’ Reaction and Policy Adaptation to the Extended, 61-Week Parental Leave,” 2

¹⁰⁶ Government of Canada, “EI Maternity and Parental Benefits: What these benefits offer,” June 1, 2022. <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/ei-maternity-parental.html>

¹⁰⁷ “Fathers’ Use of Parental Leave in a Canadian Law Enforcement Organization,” 3.

¹⁰⁸ Andrea Doucet, Sophie Mathieu and Lindsey McKay, “Redesign parental leave system to enhance gender equality,” *Policy Options*, October 27, 2020. <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/october-2020/redesign-parental-leave-system-to-enhance-gender-equality/>

4. Culture and leadership development in energy sector environments

Leaders in the workplace, particularly male allies, have an important role to play in creating safer environments for women and gender diverse people to thrive in the energy transition.

Industry cultural norms, lack of representation and experiences of harassment and violence can make the workplace a hostile environment for women. Women we engaged with described their workplaces as spaces where enduring harassment is tolerated as “part of the job.” They spoke of primarily male leadership teams that fail to address injustice, daily experiences of microaggressions and a culture that drives them to question their self-worth and belonging. Cultivating inclusive and diverse environments is fundamental to assuring that the energy sector is a safe place for women and gender-diverse people to pursue lifelong careers.

Table 3. Culture and leadership development: Summary of recommendations

Responsible Body	Sub-recommendations
Recommendation 6: Set quotas or targets to increase representation of women and gender diverse people in the energy sector, especially in leadership	
Industry leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set targets for 50% representation of women and gender-diverse people on boards and in senior leadership by a specific date, broken down into smaller, measurable goals. Representation should include people with a wide range of intersecting identities (e.g., race, Indigeneity, ability, etc). • Include qualitative measures in these targets to understand how leaders from marginalized groups are being supported, and what can be done to improve support • Implement clear monitoring, evaluation and reporting frameworks to ensure goals are being met • Participate in certifications, awards and initiatives like Equal by 30 that create networks of organizations aiming to advance similar goals
Federal government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the applicability in Canada of legislation that enforces equal representation on executive leadership teams and on boards

<p>Recommendation 7: Provide holistic, intersectional and gender-transformative leadership development for men who lead within the energy sector</p>	
<p>Provincial and federal governments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund leadership and capacity-building initiatives that support energy sector workplaces to offer training and embark on organizational change processes
<p>Industry leaders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in and support employees to attend gender-transformative learning for men in their organizations as part of their professional development goals • Integrate issues like racial equity, reconciliation and decolonization into leadership training, and offer on a regular basis for employees at all levels, facilitated by skilled educators • Model healthy masculinity in their leadership by exploring their own privilege and leadership style, and using their own power to advance inclusion
<p>Recommendation 8: Create safer, trauma-informed processes for reporting, responding to and preventing violence and harassment on energy sector worksites and in office environments</p>	
<p>Provincial and federal governments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement government-specific Calls to Justice in Section 13 of Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, Volume 1b
<p>Industry leaders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement industry-specific Calls to Justice in Section 13 of Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, Volume 1b • Develop trauma-informed, survivor-centred and culturally safe reporting processes • Offer anti-harassment training that relies on best practices, incorporates bystander training, and is facilitated by a skilled educator on a regular basis for all staff • Embed policy and practice change within wider culture change efforts • Develop codes of conduct for employees to deal with potential harm to host communities resulting from post-work activities taking place off-site • Ensure employees have access to physical and mental health services • Work with local service providers to direct corporate investment towards initiatives that support Indigenous women and girls

4.1 Quotas

Recommendation 6: Set quotas or targets to increase representation of women and gender-diverse people, especially in leadership

Barriers addressed: Inability to advance

Across industries, few roles with significant decision-making power and responsibility are held by women, and even fewer by those who are racialized, Indigenous and/or disabled.¹⁰⁹ In Canada, only 18.1% of corporate board positions were held by women in 2017, and in the oil and gas sector globally, women held only 25% of mid-level positions, and 17% of leadership positions.¹¹⁰

The benefits of having diverse women’s leadership have been proven, including increased economic success. In 2015, Women in Mining determined that “companies with more women board members, on average, outperform those with fewer women by 53% on return on investment, 42% on return on sales, and 66% on return on invested capital,” with similar results for companies with women executives.¹¹¹ A 2018 global report entitled *Delivering through Diversity* also demonstrated the positive correlation between diverse leadership and increased financial performance when compared to companies led by mostly white men.¹¹² Women leaders also tend to prioritize environmental and social outcomes over short-term financial gain.¹¹³ A 2012 study indicated that companies with a higher representation of women on their boards tended to proactively invest in renewable power generation and implement measures to measure and reduce carbon emissions, among other pro-environmental actions. These

¹⁰⁹ Andrew MacDougall, John Valley and Jennifer Jeffrey, *Diversity Disclosure Practices* (Osler, 2020), 44. <https://www.osler.com/osler/media/Osler/reports/corporate-governance/Diversity-and-Leadership-inCorporate-Canada-2020.pdf>

¹¹⁰ Katharina Rick, Ivan Marten and Ulrike Von Lonski, *Untapped Reserves: Promoting Gender Balance in Oil and Gas* (The Boston Consulting Groups, 2017), 8. <https://www.bcg.com/publications/2017/energyenvironment-people-organization-untapped-reserves>

¹¹¹ “Navigating Sticky Floors and Glass Ceilings,” 200.

¹¹² Vivian Hunt, Sara Prince, Sundiatu Dixon-Fyle and Lareina Yee, *Delivering Through Diversity* (McKinsey & Company, 2018), 1. https://www.immigrationresearch.org/system/files/Delivering-through-diversity_full-report.compressed-min.pdf

¹¹³ Kellie A. McElhaney and Sanaz Mobasseri, *Women Create a Sustainable Future* (Center for Responsible Business, 2012), 4. https://www.eticanews.it/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Report-Women_Create_Sustainable_Value.pdf

companies also tended to have more supportive employee benefits packages and performance incentives and to prioritize employee engagement and development.¹¹⁴

Renewable energy experts have also expressed that the lack of diverse leadership in the energy industry is holding the industry back from making real progress in the transition.¹¹⁵ For the benefits of diverse leadership to be realized, organizations must aim for at least 30% of their workforce to be made up of a diverse range of women.¹¹⁶ This critical mass reduces the minority effect and mitigates instances of tokenism by providing meaningful representation. However, to fully take advantage of the benefits that a diversity of women’s leadership can bring, industry leaders should set targets for 50% representation on boards and in senior leadership by a specific date, broken down into smaller, measurable goals that demonstrate how they will work towards.

Equal by 30, a joint initiative of Clean Energy Ministerial and the International Energy Agency, is one framework both public and private industry organizations can sign onto to advance “equal pay, equal leadership and equal opportunities for women in the clean energy industry by 2030.”¹¹⁷ These targets should not just rest on the number of women but include qualitative employee satisfaction measures as well. This prevents tokenizing leaders, by reporting on their actual experiences within companies. The proactive leadership of the most senior leader in a company in implementing these initiatives is key to real change.¹¹⁸

To ensure companies can stay competitive in a changing energy industry, leaders could go one step further than solely aiming for gender parity by implementing additional diversity metrics and ensuring the workers and leaders they recruit represent different ages, abilities, racial identities, ethnicities, and other diverse identities.

In 2020, the federal government passed an Act to amend the Canada Business Corporations Act, the Canada Corporations Act, the Canada Cooperatives Act, the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act, and the Competition Act, which require

¹¹⁴ *Women Create a Sustainable Future*, 4.

¹¹⁵ Adam Vaughan, “Lack of Women in energy ‘holding back fight against climate change,’” *The Guardian*, February 11, 2018. https://www.theguardian.com/business/2018/feb/11/the-energy-industrys-power-problem-too-few-women#_=_

¹¹⁶ “Navigating Sticky Floors and Glass Ceilings,” 197.

¹¹⁷ Equal by 30, “Equal by 30,” <https://www.equalby30.org/en>

¹¹⁸ “Navigating Sticky Floors and Glass Ceilings,” 202.

reporting based on a “comply or explain” approach.¹¹⁹ Previously, Alberta was one of four provinces that did not have a reporting requirement on gender diversity policies and the number of women in senior leadership positions.¹²⁰ However, comply or explain measures only require companies to explain why they have few women on their boards but does not require that they set out goals for improving those numbers, so even where mandatory reporting exists, without actual targets for representation, progress is often slow.¹²¹ Along with targets for representation, companies must have clear monitoring and evaluation plans for implementation, and industry organizations as well as governments should use tactics such as certifications and initiatives like Equal by 30 to incentivize representation.

Another way to support the work of setting targets are reviewing policies for implicit bias. The resources available to do this often include resources on how to target and mitigate structural and everyday instances of unconscious bias with hopes of creating gender-sensitive policies that create equity within the workplace.¹²²

Having women in positions of power must be supported by changes at the cultural level to ensure women are given adequate space and support to lead in a way that is authentic to them. In fact, in one study, many women scored higher than men when rated on leadership qualities, including “taking initiative, acting with resilience, practicing self-development, driving for results, and displaying high integrity and honesty,”¹²³ giving insight into the issue as a structural one rather than individual. Despite this data, men are perceived by their peers to be more competent than women to take on leadership roles.¹²⁴

¹¹⁹ Jennifer Jeffrey, Andrew MacDougall and John M. Valley, “Canada is first jurisdiction worldwide to require diversity disclosure beyond gender; Diversity disclosure rules will apply to federally incorporated public companies effective Jan. 1, 2020,” *Osler*, June 30, 2019. <https://www.osler.com/en/resources/regulations/2019/canada-is-first-jurisdiction-worldwide-to-require-diversity-disclosure-beyond-gender-diversity-disc>

¹²⁰ *Women in Alberta’s Energy Transition*, 15.

¹²¹ “Navigating Sticky Floors and Glass Ceilings,” 202.

¹²² Society for Human Resource Management, “Implicit Bias Resource Guide.” <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/hr-qa/pages/resources-articles-workplace-bias.aspx>

¹²³ Joseph Folkman and Jack Zenger, “Research: Women Score Higher Than Men in Most Leadership Skills,” *Harvard Business Review*, June 25, 2019. <https://hbr.org/2019/06/research-women-score-higher-than-men-in-most-leadership-skills>

¹²⁴ “Research: Women Score Higher Than Men in Most Leadership Skills.”

The federal government could explore the applicability in Canada of quota legislation like what exists in France and Germany, as there is some evidence that shows creating hard quota legislation works to increase the number of women on boards even when there is resistance to the policy.¹²⁵ However, if companies want to experience the benefits of a diverse workforce and leadership teams, they should fast-track the creation and implementation of their own internal quotas that are “specific, challenging, aligned with the company’s strategy for gender diversity, and elevated to the same levels as business targets for budgets and performance.”¹²⁶

4.2 Leadership for men

Recommendation 7: Provide holistic, intersectional and gender-transformative leadership development for men in the energy sector

Barriers addressed: Industry culture, Inability to advance

Throughout our engagement sessions, women identified traditional masculine notions of leadership as a barrier both when they were in positions of leadership (e.g., the expectation that they conform to patriarchal standards of stoic and unemotional leadership), and when they were interacting with leaders (e.g., technical skills being prioritized as a management skill instead of emotional and social intelligence, empathy, etc.). Expanding ideas of what leadership is, and advancing people based on a broader range of leadership qualities, could help to address these barriers.

While many leadership trainings are focused on helping women develop leadership skills, and this is still needed, there is ample evidence that women perform well in leadership positions when given the chance to fill them.¹²⁷ Men have an important role to play in supporting women’s ability to lead and participate in the energy transition, in part because the energy industry is still led by a disproportionate number of men. One study found that men who are committed to dismantling sexism, confident in their ability to stop oppressive behaviour (including among men), aware of the positive

¹²⁵ Heike Mensi-Klarbach and Cathrine Seierstad, “Gender Quotas on Corporate Boards: Similarities and Differences in Quota Scenarios,” *European management review* 17, no. 3 (2020).

<https://doi.org/10.1111/emre.12374>

¹²⁶ “Navigating Sticky Floors and Glass Ceilings,” 201-202.

¹²⁷ “Research: Women Score Higher Than Men in Most Leadership Skills.”

benefits of stepping forward, and invested in the impact on the common good are more likely to directly interrupt sexism.¹²⁸ These skills are not innate, so creating opportunities to reflect on leadership approaches, exploring how identity shapes access to power and privilege, and learning how to create inclusive environments for people of all identities benefits both men in leadership and the people they work with.

One example that has shown promising results is a gender-inclusive leadership training course developed by YWCA Halifax that is focused on building the capacity of male supervisors in the skilled trades to create inclusive work environments for women.¹²⁹ The training uses a dialogue-based approach and includes concepts such as “understanding and awareness of gender in the workplace, gender differences and identities, power and privilege, communication, gender-based violence, conflict resolution, leadership and action planning.”¹³⁰ Another example is Next Gen Men, a non-profit that is focused on exploring and promoting healthy masculinity.¹³¹ They offer a selection of workplace learning services catered specifically towards men through their social enterprise, Equity Leaders.¹³² Industry leaders could lead by example, and both participate in and support other male employees to attend this type of learning as part of their professional development goals.

Leadership training should also recognize the ways that race, class, Indigeneity, ability, language, and other aspects of identity overlap to create barriers for people in the workplace and beyond. Issues like racial equity, reconciliation, and decolonization should also be integrated into leadership training and offered on a regular basis for employees at all levels by skilled educators. Because of the breadth of issues that intersect with leadership, and the time for introspection required to learn about them, those organizing learning opportunities should expect to offer trainings at different levels of depth over a significant period time, and not expect short-term or one-time learning opportunities to have a significant impact.

¹²⁸ Negin Sattari, Emily Shaffer, Sarah DiMuccio and Dnika J. Travis, *Interrupting Sexism at Work: What Drives Men to Respond Directly or Do Nothing?* (Catalyst, 2020) <https://www.catalyst.org/reports/interrupting-sexism-workplace-men/>

¹²⁹ YWCA Halifax, Shift Change, and Horizons Community Development Associates Inc., *Evaluation Report: Gender Inclusive Leadership Training for Male Supervisors in Skilled Trades* (2021). <https://www.ywcahalifax.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/SC-Evaluation-Report-Final-1.pdf>

¹³⁰ YWCA Halifax, “Shift Change,” 2021. <https://www.ywcahalifax.com/advocacy/economic-security-and-equity/shift-change/>

¹³¹ Next Gen Men, “About us.” <https://www.nextgenmen.ca/about>

¹³² Equity Leaders, “Working with You.” <https://www.equityleaders.org/consulting>

Training for individuals also requires an organizational commitment to culture change for men to fully advocate for and benefit from gender equity. Catalyst is a global non-profit whose mission is to create safe workplaces for women at all organizational levels. They have identified three types of work cultures that create psychologically unsafe workplaces that inhibit men from feeling able to speak up when they see oppression happening, and often result in them staying silent even when they want to speak:

- Cultures of silence, where employees feel “restrained from constructively speaking up about organizational or work-related problems, concerns or challenges.”
- Combative cultures, where “value is attributed to a quest to dominate others and compete over power, authority, and status.”
- A climate of futility, where employees do not feel that their efforts to make a change or intervene will have any impact.¹³³

Provincial and federal governments could support this area of work by funding leadership and capacity-building initiatives that support energy industry workplaces to offer training and embark on organizational change processes. One example of a funding stream that supports organizational training is the Canada-Alberta Job Grant.¹³⁴

4.3 Safety

Recommendation 8: Create safer, trauma-informed processes for reporting, responding to and preventing violence and harassment on energy sector worksites and in office environments

Barriers addressed: Industry culture

The Pembina Institute’s report on barriers for women in the energy transition affirmed that women are made more vulnerable to violence and harassment in the workplace than their male colleagues and are also less likely to report these experiences, especially sexual harassment.¹³⁵ Women who experience further marginalization (e.g., Indigenous,

¹³³ *Interrupting Sexism at Work: What Drives Men to Respond Directly or Do Nothing?*

¹³⁴ Government of Alberta, “Canada-Alberta Job Grant.” <https://www.alberta.ca/canada-alberta-job-grant.aspx>

¹³⁵ *Women in Alberta’s Energy Transition*, 22.

Black, and queer women) often face more barriers to reporting.¹³⁶ One challenge for the renewables industry specifically is the prevalence of smaller, newer companies that often have small or shared human resources teams.¹³⁷ While our research is mainly focused on addressing the root causes in cultures that permit violence and harassment, improvements are also needed in the ways women and gender-diverse people are supported when they report violence and harassment.

Reasons harassment goes unreported include fear of retaliation, worry about negative impact on career advancement, fear about coming forward, concerns about the process (e.g., confidentiality, length of time), fear of losing their job, and uncertainty whether what they experienced would be considered harassment or violence.¹³⁸ Unclear processes for reporting harassment from outside of an organization — for example, from someone in a partner organization or investor — is also a barrier. However, even when workers do make a report, they are frequently left unsatisfied with the outcomes. In one Statistics Canada report, 41% of workers who had made a formal report about their experience of violence or harassment said that no action was taken.¹³⁹ Other barriers after reporting included the complaint not being taken seriously, the supervisor or manager’s refusal to initiate an investigation, and/or the employee experiencing retaliation from those in leadership roles.¹⁴⁰

To address the reporting gap, energy workplaces could look developing a “reporting culture,” where employees feel capable of reporting incidents in an honest, open way, as well as promoting a “just culture,” where mistakes are shared without fear of ramification with the goal of learning from them. Just cultures should distinguish between actions that create intentional harm to others (e.g., sexual assault), and those that may be corrected with learning and support (e.g., someone accidentally using a derogatory word when they were not aware of its meaning or significance).¹⁴¹

¹³⁶ Misha Dhillon and Ninu Kang, “Gender based harassment and violence in the workplace,” *HeretoHelp*, 2020. <https://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/visions/workplace-bullying-and-harassment-vol15/gender-based-violence-and-harassment-in-the-workplace>

¹³⁷ “Navigating Sticky Floors and Glass Ceilings,” 201-202.

¹³⁸ Employment and Social Development Canada, *Harassment and Sexual Violence in the Workplace Public Consultations: What We Heard* (2017), 3. <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/canada/employment-social-development/services/health-safety/reports/workplace-harassment-sexual-violence-EN.pdf>

¹³⁹ *Harassment and Sexual Violence in the Workplace Public Consultations*, 20.

¹⁴⁰ *Harassment and Sexual Violence in the Workplace Public Consultations*, 21.

¹⁴¹ Tap Into Safety, “How Do You Develop Your Organisation’s Reporting Culture?” <https://tapintosafety.com.au/how-do-you-develop-your-organisations-reporting-culture/>

A reporting culture would include trauma-informed, survivor-centred and culturally safe reporting processes. Those receiving reports should seek to do no harm, not rush to judgment, consider their legal obligations, seek appropriate advice, and respond proportionately.¹⁴² The person who has experienced harm should be made aware of all their options once they have disclosed the harassment.¹⁴³ Appropriate communications with other staff should be engaged in, and the risk should also be mitigated to the person who caused harm.¹⁴⁴ Enhancing a survivor’s safety with specific short-term and longer-term safety plans is important, as well as investigating in a way that recognizes the impact of trauma on the survivor, any witnesses, and the organization.¹⁴⁵

Anti-harassment training is another way leaders can support employees to develop the skills to identify what harassment and violence is, examine their own behavior, and intervene when they see it happening.¹⁴⁶ To ensure effectiveness, leaders should visibly support and participate in training, and sessions should be done in-person whenever possible (or online in a way that encourages dialogue and interaction), and content should involve real-life, relevant scenarios for the specific workplace.¹⁴⁷ For example, after the #MeToo movement started by community organizer Tarana Burke exploded into public consciousness in 2017, the Me Too Mining Association was launched. They have developed an evidence-based bystander training program called DIGGER that presents different workplace scenarios to participants where gender-based violence has occurred and has the group unpack the scenarios together, and then equips them with specific skills on how to be an effective and active bystander by reporting the incident and supporting the victim.¹⁴⁸

The onus should not be placed solely on women to come forward to report their experiences. One study found that the rate at which women in an organization experience sexual harassment is strongly correlated with measurable elements of workplace climates, including “a permissiveness of sexual harassment and sexist views,

¹⁴² Ending Violence Association of BC, *Gender-Based Violence, Harassment, and Bullying: Workplace Policy Guidelines for Response and Prevention*, (2019) 28. https://endingviolence.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/EVABC_CreatingSaferWorkplacesAndCommunitiesPolicyGuidelines_vF.pdf

¹⁴³ *Gender-Based Violence, Harassment, and Bullying*, 33.

¹⁴⁴ *Gender-Based Violence, Harassment, and Bullying*, 37-39.

¹⁴⁵ *Gender-Based Violence, Harassment, and Bullying*, 41-46.

¹⁴⁶ *Harassment and Sexual Violence in the Workplace Public Consultations*, 5.

¹⁴⁷ *Gender-Based Violence, Harassment, and Bullying*, 47-51.

¹⁴⁸ Alexandra Lopez-Pacheco, “Digging into Discrimination,” *CIM Magazine*, November 11, 2021. <https://magazine.cim.org/en/management/digging-into-discrimination-en/>

environments where men outnumber women or leadership is male dominated, perceived risk to the targets for reporting harassment, lack of sanctions against offenders, and perceptions that complaints will not be taken seriously.”¹⁴⁹ Policies and practices aimed at addressing harassment and violence specifically must be embedded in broader culture change,¹⁵⁰ including a change in the face and approach of leadership, and the ways that employees can enact the values of the organization in their interactions with each other.

Indigenous women in particular experience high rates of violence within and as a result of the energy sector. The final report of the national inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls has an entire section (13) of the Calls to Justice that details action for the energy industry to address these harms.¹⁵¹ For sake of completeness, Article 13 is reported in full below, detailing actions that both industry leaders and governments should prioritize:

13.1 We call upon all resource-extraction and development industries to consider the safety and security of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people, as well as their equitable benefit from development, at all stages of project planning, assessment, implementation, management, and monitoring.

13.2 We call upon all governments and bodies mandated to evaluate, approve, and/or monitor development projects to complete gender-based socio-economic impact assessments on all proposed projects as part of their decision making and ongoing monitoring of projects. Project proposals must include provisions and plans to mitigate risks and impacts identified in the impact assessments prior to being approved.

13.3 We call upon all parties involved in the negotiations of impact-benefit agreements related to resource-extraction and development projects to include provisions that address the impacts of projects on the safety and security of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people. Provisions must also be included to ensure that Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQQIA people equitably benefit from the projects.

¹⁴⁹ Hannah A. Valentine, Charlene E. Le Fauve, Kathryn A. Morris and William T. Riley, “Ending Sexual Harassment in Science: Designing and Administering a Survey That Can Lead to an Improved Organizational Climate,” *Academic Medicine*, 97, no. 3 (2022). <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34709202/>

¹⁵⁰ *Gender-Based Violence, Harassment, and Bullying*, 52.

¹⁵¹ National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, *Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report 1b* (2019), 196. https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Final_Report_Vol_1b.pdf

13.4 We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments to fund further inquiries and studies in order to better understand the relationship between resource extraction and other development projects and violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people. At a minimum, we support the call of Indigenous women and leaders for a public inquiry into the sexual violence and racism at hydroelectric projects in northern Manitoba.

13.5 We call upon resource-extraction and development industries and all governments and service providers to anticipate and recognize increased demand on social infrastructure because of development projects and resource extraction, and for mitigation measures to be identified as part of the planning and approval process. Social infrastructure must be expanded, and service capacity built to meet the anticipated needs of the host communities in advance of the start of projects. This includes but is not limited to ensuring that policing, social services, and health services are adequately staffed and resourced.¹⁵²

Additionally, a report on the impact of resource development in British Columbia on Indigenous women recommended to industry leaders that they develop codes of conduct for employees to deal with potential harm to host communities from post-work activities that take place off-site. They also recommend ensuring employees have access to physical and mental health services, diversifying the workforce to include more women and Indigenous people, and working with local service providers to direct corporate investment in the host community towards initiatives that support Indigenous women and girls.¹⁵³

¹⁵² *Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report 1b*, 196.

¹⁵³ Amnesty International, *Out of Sight, Out of Mind: Gender, Indigenous Rights and Energy Development in Northeast British Columbia (Executive Summary)* (2016), 10.
<https://www.amnesty.ca/sites/amnesty/files/Out%20of%20Sight%20Out%20of%20Mind%20ES%20FINAL%20EN%20CDA.pdf>

5. Data transparency and use within the energy sector

Collecting disaggregated data and using it to meaningfully address existing inequities is an imperative next step for decision-makers who hope to lead in the energy transition.

There is currently a significant dearth of data about the people who work in Alberta’s energy sector. Quantitative information on compensation rates and demographic representation, as well as qualitative records documenting the experiences of marginalized workers, are not available on an industry-wide scale for public access. Collecting this data and using it for the explicit purpose of addressing the inequities it reveals will ensure that the decisions made around Alberta’s energy future are evidence-based and effective.

Table 4. Data transparency and use: Summary of recommendations

Responsible Body	Sub-recommendations
Recommendation 9: Increase data collection and improve data transparency within the energy sector	
Industry leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on gender equity outcomes through industry-wide dashboards and participate in data transparency challenges • Ensure internal data on representation and the experiences of marginalized employees is available for all staff • Make promotion and advancement pathways clear by developing and sharing pay bands with all employees • Develop GBA Plus competencies among all relevant staff
Provincial and federal government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use and report publicly on GBA Plus tools in all energy, net-zero and just-transition focused initiatives • Establish disclosure requirements by mandating ESG reporting in published annual reports that include gender equity reporting requirements • Legislate salary disclosure in all job postings
Recommendation 10: Ensure data collection and use within the energy sector are ethical	
Provincial and federal government Industry leaders	Apply the principles of a “Grandmother Approach” to data collection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand and communicate the purpose of collecting the data. Avoid asking for information that will not be used in decision-making. • Create meaningful relationships with group members

- Collect and disaggregate data with broader goals for the data in mind
- Ensure confidentiality
- Report results back to those who participated

5.1 Data collection

Recommendation 9: Increase disaggregated data collection and improve data transparency

Barriers addressed: Lack of access to opportunity, Income gap, Inability to advance, Industry culture

Throughout our team’s desktop research, and in all four engagement sessions, data availability and transparency in the energy industry came up repeatedly as a barrier to fully understanding the issues women face in Alberta’s energy transition and their solutions.¹⁵⁴ For example, there is little publicly available data about the wage gap in the industry, rates of representation in senior leadership and board-level positions, and experiences of violence and harassment in energy workplaces.¹⁵⁵ A lack of current data, especially on the experiences of more marginalized women, means that progress on gender equity in the energy industry is slow: governments, industry and educational institutions lack the information needed to make evidence-based decisions towards inclusion.

The Pembina Institute barriers report highlights inadequate data representation as a limitation, specifically stating that the lived realities and experiences of marginalized groups of women are not adequately and thoughtfully represented.¹⁵⁶

In our engagement sessions, the data that participants wanted to see publicly communicated included standardized pay scales and wages, standards for decision-making on new hires, performance metrics for advancement and clarity around how promotions and raises are given, the numbers of women and other marginalized identities on boards and in leadership positions, and regular updates on how companies are doing on gender equity goals and targets when they have set them. Participants also stated that in addition to enabling industry and government to make informed

¹⁵⁴ *Women in Alberta’s Energy Transition*, 1.

¹⁵⁵ *Gender-Based Violence, Harassment, and Bullying*, 28.

¹⁵⁶ *Women in Alberta’s Energy Transition*, 1.

decisions, having access to this data can help women advocate for themselves. For example, transparency in salary bands can help a woman understand if she is being under-paid or under-valued compared to her colleagues and initiate a process to advocate for her own advancement.

There are several economic benefits for companies that come from investing in diverse reporting. Millennial investors are 65% more likely than older investors to consider a company’s environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors, including diversity and inclusion efforts, when making investment decisions”, and “... companies that report on gender equality and score above a certain threshold can increase shareholder investment and boost their reputation when listed on gender equality or diversity and inclusion indices”.¹⁵⁷ One of the main factors of success for reporting is for data to be benchmarked and transparent for both internal and external audiences.

British Columbia’s Office of the Human Rights Commissioner declares that “powerful statements are made possible by disaggregated data.” Disaggregated data is defined as data that is separated by different characteristics to reveal deeper patterns in a system.¹⁵⁸ For example, the right questions could bring out a more specific understanding of the barriers that exist for Indigenous women workers with disabilities in energy-related trades jobs, enabling the creation of solutions that specifically support their needs, rather than a more general focus on all women in the energy sector as a whole. The energy industry has an opportunity to collect various kinds of data to enact a culture of inclusivity and transparency. For example, many women feel as though they were treated differently once they came back from maternity leave and were taken less seriously by colleagues and superiors.¹⁵⁹ By collecting disaggregated data with a focus on gender and other identity factors, the energy industry would be able to gain more insight into questions such as who is taking parental leave and what the impact is on their careers post-leave.

Industries have a key part to play in data transparency and disaggregation. Industry associations and companies should be proactive in their reporting to make data available to employees and prospective employers and not merely to HR professionals. Data could be added to disaggregated data dashboards like Gallup and the Mercer

¹⁵⁷ United Nations Global Compact, *Blueprint for Gender Equality: Leadership in the Canadian Private Sector* (2020). <https://unglobalcompact.ca/genderequalityca/>

¹⁵⁸ British Columbia Office of the Human Rights Commissioner, *Disaggregated Demographic Data Collection in British Columbia: The Grandmother Perspective* (2020), 8. https://bchumanrights.ca/wp-content/uploads/BCOHR Sept2020_Disaggregated-Data-Report_FINAL.pdf

¹⁵⁹ “Navigating sticky floors and glass ceilings,” 14.

Internal Labour Market Analysis tool, which show different company and/or industry-related data including salary information, pay increases, employee retention and more. These are impactful tools for industry because they also show a benchmarked analysis of all employees within industries, including the energy industry.¹⁶⁰ As another example, the Canadian Green Building Council created an initiative entitled the Disclosure Challenge, noting that data transparency and industry benchmarking are imperative to mitigating emissions and boosting energy efficiency.¹⁶¹ This could offer a blueprint for a similar challenge focused on improving gender equity in the energy industry.

It is recommended that governments and industries utilize a Gender-Based Analysis (GBA) Plus analytical tool that the federal government has expressed their commitment to using to promote diversity and inclusion.¹⁶² It is important for governments to use tools like GBA Plus to develop meaningful, tangible, specific, and realistic KPIs to not only encourage diverse workplaces and decision-making bodies but also promote the collection of disaggregated data. Companies should use GBA Plus-informed evaluation tools to create KPIs and indicators that consider power imbalances, diversity in stakeholder engagement, pre-existing data gaps and more.¹⁶³ All private and public organizations working on energy and net-zero aligned initiatives should invest in developing GBA Plus competency within their workforce.

Government could also establish disclosure requirements by mandating ESG and sustainability reporting in published annual reports. For example, the federal government recently made a budget announcement regarding net-zero funding that will require federal companies to report on ESG metrics by 2024, with consequences including legal risks if companies do not comply.¹⁶⁴ This new reporting requirement is also an opportunity for governments to include mandatory reporting for various intersections and streams of data related to climate change using a GBA Plus lens.

¹⁶⁰ Mercer, “Canada MBD: Mercer Benchmark Database: Access the Data you Need to Win the War for Talent.” <https://www.imercer.com/ca/products/canadian-mbd>

¹⁶¹ Canada Green Building Council, “Disclosure Challenge: Championing Building Data Transparency.” <https://www.cagbc.org/our-work/initiatives/disclosure-challenge/>

¹⁶² Canada School of Public Service, “Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus).” <https://www.cspsefpc.gc.ca/gbap-acsp-eng.aspx>

¹⁶³ Government of Canada, “Integrating Gender-Based Analysis Plus into Evaluation: A Primer.” <https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/services/audit-evaluation/evaluation-government-canada/gba-primer.html>

¹⁶⁴ Conor Chell, Samina Ullah and Laura Roberts, “It’s Official: Mandatory ESG Disclosure is Coming to Canada,” *MLT Aikins*, April 8, 2022. <https://www.mltaikins.com/esg/its-official-mandatory-esg-disclosure-is-coming-to-canada>

Another way for the government to encourage data transparency would be to legislate salary publishing for job postings. Income gap is one of the major barriers that women and gender diverse people experience in the Albertan energy industry. “Canada’s mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction sectors were among the largest drivers behind the national wage gap, responsible for 6.7% of the discrepancy between men and women.”¹⁶⁵ Not only is this helpful for job seekers, but this suggestion has the potential to close the growing pay gap. For example, in 2016 the Colorado government announced an Equal Pay for Equal Work Act that prohibits wage discrimination based on gender, stating that employers must disclose wage rates and/or wage ranges in job openings and risks facing sanctions of up to \$10,000.¹⁶⁶

5.2 Ethical data

Recommendation 10: Ensure data collection and use are ethical

Barriers addressed: Lack of access to opportunity, Income gap, Inability to advance, Industry culture

As government and industry leaders increase data collection and reporting, they also have a unique opportunity to pave the way for ethical data use in the energy industry.

The B.C. Office of the Human Rights Commissioner recommends data and disaggregated data should be thought of through a “Grandmother Perspective,” which essentially involves caring for the data in a thoughtful way, as a grandmother might. This framework is a proactive approach whereby governments, industries, and policymakers alike do not use this data to further police and/or discriminate against historically marginalized communities. This means understanding the purpose of the data, creating meaningful relationships with community members, and then creating disaggregated data with hopes of accomplishing a greater purpose with it.¹⁶⁷

An example is helpful to illustrate the potential of data to harm. In the 1950s to 1970s the Royal Canadian Mounted Police pursued security checks of members of the Canadian public service that included investigations of sexuality considered “defects of

¹⁶⁵ *Women in Alberta’s Energy Transition*, 20.

¹⁶⁶ Colorado General Assembly, “Equal Pay for Equal Work Act: Concerning the Creation of the ‘Equal Pay for Equal Work Act’ in order to Implement Measures to Prevent Pay Disparities.” <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb19-085>

¹⁶⁷ *Disaggregated Demographic Data Collection in British Columbia: The Grandmother Perspective*, 12.

character” that might cause an employee to be vulnerable to blackmail. Thousands of staffers were investigated; many were dismissed.¹⁶⁸ However, if data is collected with care and from a grandmother’s perspective, it can be used to create meaningful diversity rather than perpetuate harm to marginalized people and communities. The Grandmother Perspective can also help to bring out the unique supports people may need, articulate a solid explanation of what the data will be used for (e.g., to inform the kind of support employees need, and/or for diversity and inclusion), and ensure confidentiality.

Another key aspect of ethical data collection and use involves returning data back to the people who provided it and allowing them to use the information in the ways they see fit. This can help to rebalance the inherent power difference between those who research and those who are subjects of the research. Reciprocity, respect for self-determination and consent are key principles in this element of decolonizing data collection.¹⁶⁹ An example of this in practice could be sharing back the anonymous results of an employee survey on experiences of equity within the workplace and inviting staff to direct the next steps in response to what was found based on how they would interpret the information.

If disaggregated data collection paired with ethical data use and transparency were adopted in Alberta’s energy industry, the impact on gender equity could be profound. There would be an increased understanding of gendered barriers and how to address them, an increased ability to address a range of women and gender diverse people’s experiences, and an increased ability to make evidence-based decisions, effectively informing further advocacy work.

¹⁶⁸ Ron Levy, “Canada’s Cold War Purge of LGBTQ from Public Service,” *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, October 3, 2018. <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/lgbtq-purge-in-canada>

¹⁶⁹ Vivetha Thambinathan and Elizabeth Anne Kinsella, “Decolonizing Methodologies in Qualitative Research: Creating Spaces for Transformative Praxis,” *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 20 (2021), 4. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069211014766>.

6. Conclusion

This report recommends actionable next steps for provincial and federal governments, industry leaders and educational institutions to be proactive on gender equity as we transition our energy systems. While these recommendations are targeted at decision-makers, they must be implemented in meaningful partnership with the people and groups that are currently excluded from the energy sector.

This report has been intentional in using the term ‘women and gender diverse people’ to represent a broad scope and include the various intersections of women, most notably those who have been historically and currently harmed by the energy sector, namely Indigenous women. However, the limitations of this report include the lack of specific, disaggregated data within the energy sector which limits the scope of a significant portion of this research and oftentimes excludes 2SLGBTQI+ people, racialized people, and people with disabilities. Ultimately, by undertaking the work outlined in this report, governments and industry leaders can close this significant gap to establish concrete steps towards an equitable transition.

While this report focuses on providing safe and equitable opportunities for women within the workplace, there is also much to be done about the physical and emotional violence that Indigenous and other gender diverse people face when energy projects enter and disrupt communities without consent and who is accountable for this harm, as touched on briefly in the Culture and Leadership section.

Our recommendations focus on four key areas:

- Tackling inequitable access to mentorship, networking and training opportunities by investing in net-zero related learning and development initiatives that target women and gender diverse people.
- Understanding and implementing thoughtful policies and practices for a range of employee situations, including providing flexibility for women and families, flexible working hours and investing in affordable, accessible childcare. This also involves challenging gender norms in the workplace through normalizing gender-neutral parental leave policies.
- Creating workplaces that do not tolerate gender-based violence, by strengthening the processes for reporting, responding to and preventing harassment, and emphasizing the need for male-allyship in the workplace by providing skills and training opportunities for men to acquire tools to participate in shaping gender-inclusive work environments. This also includes setting

- meaningful targets for gender and other kinds of diversity at all levels of the organization, especially in leadership and/or decision-making positions.
- Increasing the data available in the energy sector by focusing on disaggregated data collection through ethical means, namely the Grandmother Approach, to be identify workplace and industry diversity gaps through a variety of organizational tools. One proven tool is Gender Based Analysis Plus, developed by the federal government to be used across its departments and beyond.

This report also encourages industry and governments to begin to challenge colonial approaches to work by offering decolonial practices such as ethical data collection, enabling reciprocal workplace boundaries, honouring care work and recognizing ancestral knowledge alongside mainstream educational credentials. It also emphasizes the importance of taking action on violence against Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQIA+ people by implementing the Calls to Justice from Reclaiming Power and Place.

Alberta is facing unprecedented social, environmental, and economic opportunities to build an energy plan that is culturally informed and includes equity-based best practices that are pertinent to Alberta's journey to renewables.

By implementing these recommendations, the energy sector can move towards becoming an expansive, innovative space for diverse thinking and leadership that benefits not only women and gender diverse people, but everyone.