

The Women & Diversity

EXCLerator Project

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

About the Project

The Women & Diversity EXCLerator Project is the first of its kind to present a comprehensive overview of women’s representation in senior leadership positions in Hamilton and Halton’s most prominent organizations. This report analyzes women in leadership across nine sectors, and provides an essential first benchmark against which future progress may be measured.

Why Women in Leadership?

Ensuring women are proportionately represented at the decision-making table makes sense from a social and business perspective. Fair representation of women in top positions impacts organizations’ policy choices, improves their ability to serve communities, increases innovation and creativity in problem solving, and advances perceptions of institutional legitimacy.

However, women remain underrepresented in all forms of leadership. For our communities to make progress in gender equity, we must first recognize that women still face substantive barriers to achieving leadership positions, and then set goals, devise purposive strategies, and measure changes in inclusivity over time.

By drawing on a proven methodology used in similar studies in Toronto and Montreal (Cukier et al., 2012, 2013, 2014), the Women & Diversity EXCLerator Project provides results that can be measured against our communities’ own populations, as well in relation to other Canadian cities.

This report is the first in the EXCLerator Project series. The Project will continue to collect and analyze data on women in Hamilton and Halton’s top organizational and leadership positions.

STUDY RESULTS

Women are underrepresented in senior leadership positions across all sectors in both Hamilton and Halton.

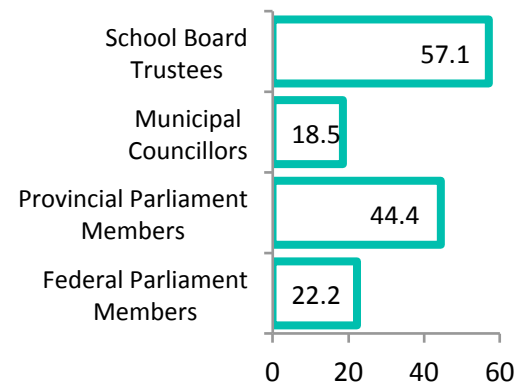
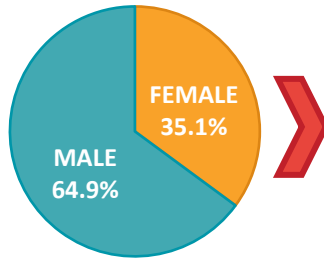
Table 1: Representation of Women in Senior Leadership Positions by Sector, 2014.

SECTOR (2014)	OVERALL AVERAGE	HAMILTON AVERAGE	HALTON AVERAGE
Elected officials	35.1%	33.3%	36.4%
Agencies, Boards and Commissions (ABCs)	37.1%	28.7%	40.8%
Education boards and executives	36.1%	38.6%	29.8%
Health boards and executives	37.7%	35.9%	40.0%
Public sector executives	36.2%	34.8%	37.3%
Corporate boards and executives	17.8%	19.0%	17.2%
Voluntary boards and executives	51.0%	46.1%	53.4%
Union leaders	35.7	31.3%	N/A
Legal sector leaders	28.0%	28.6%	25.0%
TOTAL	36.1%	34.9%	38.6%

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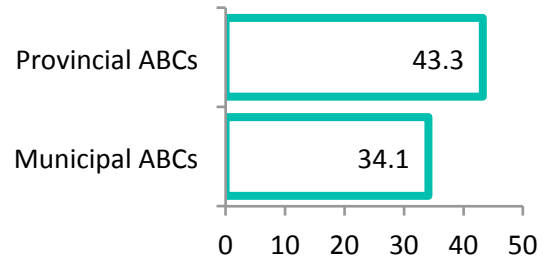
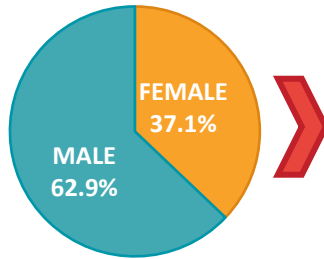
Elected

- ▶ Women are the least represented at the level of municipal and regional councils, comprising just 18.5% of elected members across all communities.
- ▶ While women comprised 44.4% of provincial elects, just 22.2% of federal parliamentarians were women.



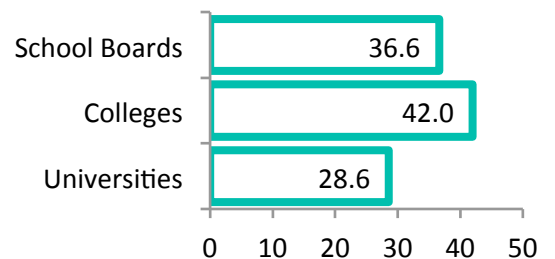
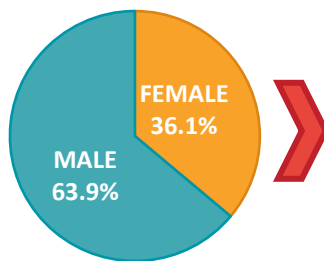
Agencies, Boards, & Commissions (ABCs)

- ▶ Across Hamilton and Halton-based ABCs, an average of 34.1% of municipal appointments were women, compared to 43.3% of provincial appointees.



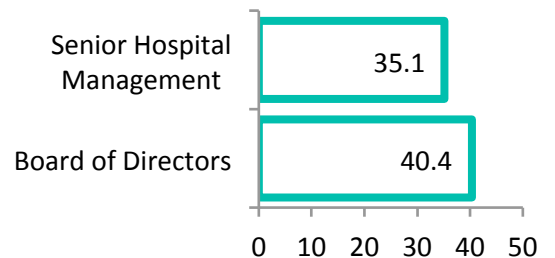
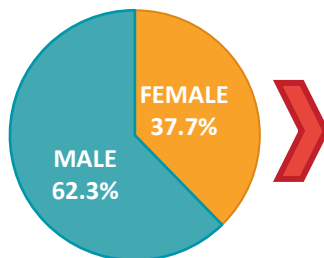
Education

- ▶ Women comprised 36.6% of school board administrators, 42.0% of college level leaders, and just 28.6% of university leaders.
- ▶ While 56.3% of Hamilton's school board administrators were women, just 24.0% of Halton administrators were female.



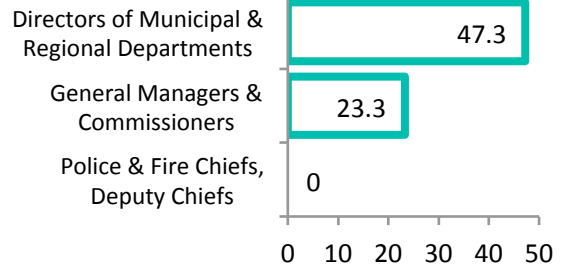
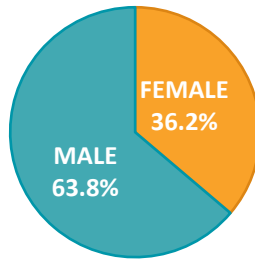
Health

- ▶ Women are making strides on hospital boards, holding 40.4% of positions analyzed, while just over one third (35.1%) of healthcare senior management titles were held by women.



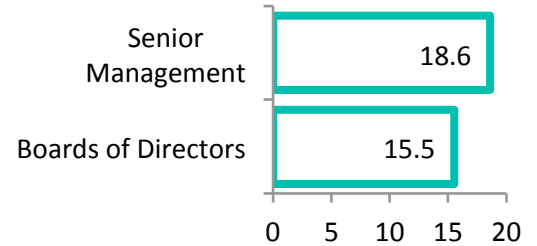
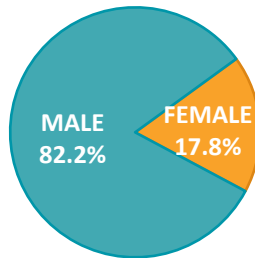
Public

- ▶ There were no women in deputy or chiefs of police/fire positions in analyzed municipalities.
- ▶ Women hold 39.2% of all other senior public sector leadership positions.



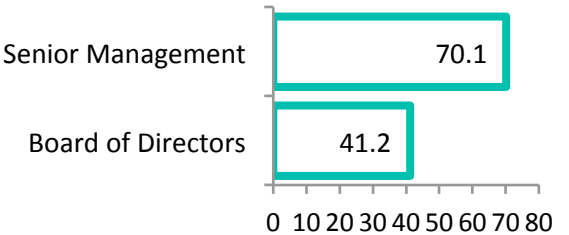
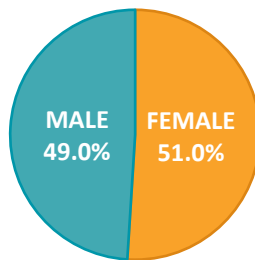
Corporate

- ▶ Women were the least represented among corporate positions, holding an average of 17.8% of organizations' top board and executive seats.



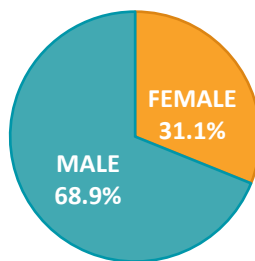
Voluntary

- ▶ Nonprofit organizations constitute the only sector that achieved proportional representation in senior leadership, with an average of 51% being female.



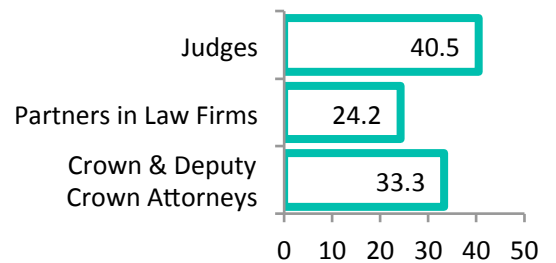
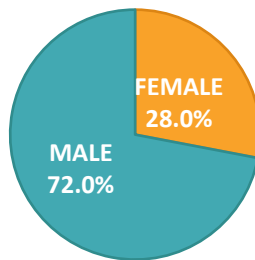
Unions

- ▶ While 54% of union members nationally are women, they represented 31.3% of analyzed Hamilton Local presidents.



Legal

- ▶ While the judiciary is nearing equitable representation with 40.5% female representation, women hold just 33.3% of Crown and Deputy Crown positions and make up only 24.2% of private sector partners.



CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

What we have learned

- ▶ Women are underrepresented across all but one of the sectors analyzed in Hamilton and Halton.
- ▶ On average, Hamilton sectors are less equitable for women, though Halton's lead is minimal.
- ▶ Overall, some sectors are more representative than others:
 - ▷ The voluntary sector is the only sector with fair and proportionate female representation on boards and senior management teams.
 - ▷ The corporate sector is where women are the least represented.
- ▶ Women are more likely to achieve representation on boards than on senior management teams, and frequently excluded from the most senior leadership positions.
- ▶ Continued dedication on part of organizations and government is needed to maintain gains in leadership.

Where to go from here?

- ▶ Acknowledge that we need feminism – women are still not fairly represented and still face profound barriers to fully advancing in senior leadership.
- ▶ Women's advancement requires more than just efforts from individuals – explicit commitment on part of organizations and government is necessary to achieving parity.

- ▶ “Women can't be what they don't see” – we must celebrate women who have achieved leadership positions and understand that this can shape other women's aspirations. However, organizations must avoid tokenism and the ‘recycling’ of women's stories and images of advancement. Instead, we must focus on continually recruiting and advancing women to top leadership positions.
- ▶ Organizations need to set goals and maintain their own statistics. Ensure numbers are ‘honest’ and transparent by distinguishing between women's representation at very senior management levels and in mid- or entry-level positions.
- ▶ Inclusiveness must be sought across ALL levels and ALL sectors – women's achievements in voluntary and social service organizations should be celebrated as motivation to continue, not reason to be complacent.
- ▶ We must commit to developing the women's leadership pipeline by mentoring and coaching highly talented women, and communicating the importance of equity and women in leadership to persons of all ages.
- ▶ Organizations should adapt and employ toolkits available online by EDGE, Catalyst, the Maytree Foundation, and the Conference Board of Canada to become a gender friendly workplace. Leaders must be reflective in analyzing their organization's recruiting and advancement practices internally and externally, and ask, are we doing enough?

The EXCLerator Project: Moving forward

This report will be the first in a series to benchmark and understand organizational progress over time. We will continue to collect, track, and analyze the representation of women in Hamilton and Halton's largest sectors. We must now examine how organizations in top-performing sectors are recruiting and retaining women leaders and why. Research is needed to understand how intersectionality and the role of race and disability impact women's representation.

This report was made possible through support from YWCA Hamilton, the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce Women's Leadership Group, and McMaster University.