

Promoting Balance:

Engaging, Supporting and Educating Females about First Nation Mi'kmaw and Municipal Councils



Female Leadership School in Cape Breton/Unama'ki/Strait Regions

Presenters:

Mayor Brenda Chisholm-Beaton & Mayor Laurie Boucher

November 7, 2019 – Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities

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16 Partnering Communities

Districts: Guysborough and St. Mary's

First Nation Communities: Eskasoni, Membertou, Paqtnkek, Poletek, Wagmatcook, and We'koqma'q

Municipal Counties: Antigonish, Inverness, Richmond, and Victoria Counties

Municipal Towns: Antigonish, Mulgrave and Port Hawkesbury

Regional Municipality: Cape Breton Regional Municipality

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Why First Nation/Municipal Female Leader Collaboration?

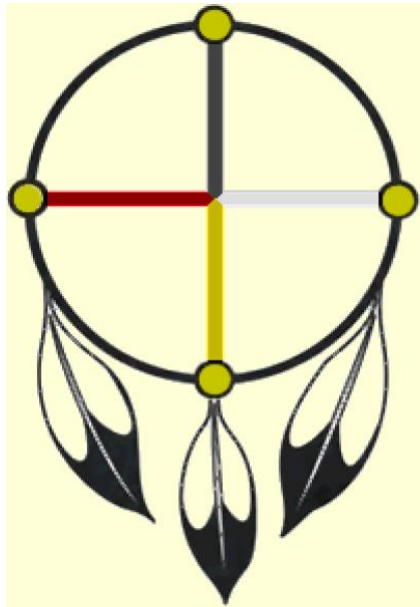
- All 16 communities can benefit from more female engagement and/or representation on local councils and in local government.
- First Nation Mi'kmaq women can run in elections for both First Nation Band Councils and for Municipal Councils.
- Its important to live and act on the principals of Truth and Reconciliation in every regional project.
- Women supporting Women and inclusivity are very important, as we aim to include women from a variety of cultures, ages, and backgrounds to participate.

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Our LOGO



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Present Day Realities: Local Councils

Local Government has the single-most direct impact on the everyday lives of the people who live in every community in our Province of Nova Scotia. In the Strait Region, and in Cape Breton/Unama'ki, most of the Municipal and First Nation Mi'kmaw Councils do not have gender balance when we explore the present realities.



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First Nations Mi'kmaw Communities

Eskasoni

13 Men
0 Women

(13-Person council)

Membertou

10 Men
3 Women

(13-Person council)

Paqtnekek

2 Men
4 Women

(6-Person council)

Potlotek

6 Men
2 Women

(8-Person council)

Wagmatcook

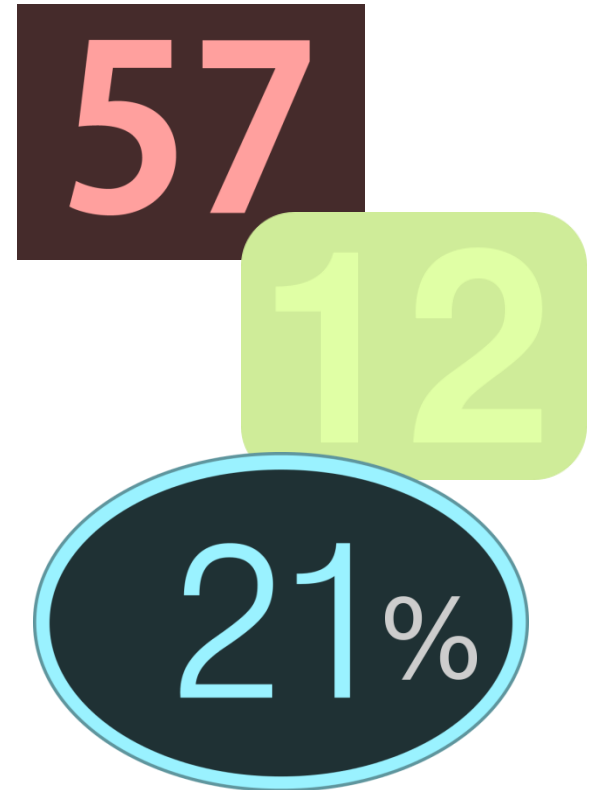
5 Men
2 Women

(7-Person council)

We'koqma'q

9 Men
1 Women

(10-Person council)



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**Chief Charlie Francis
Leonard Paul, Peter Poulette, George Toney, Edward Poulette
Catherine Bernard and Margaret Johnson.**

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Municipal Districts

Guysborough
6 Men (8-Person council)
2 Women

St Mary's
2 Men (8-Person council)
6 Women

Municipal Towns

Antigonish
5 Men (8-Person council)
3 Women

Mulgrave
3 Men (5-Person council)
2 Women

Port Hawkesbury
4 Men (5-Person council)
1 Women

Municipal Counties

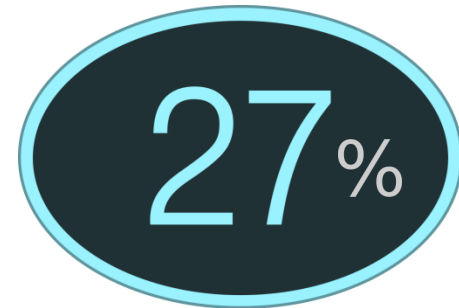
Antigonish
9 Men (10-Person council)
1 Women

Inverness
5 Men (6-Person council)
1 Women

Richmond
5 Men (5-Person council)
0 Women

Victoria
7 Men (8-Person council)
1 Women

Cape Breton Regional Municipality
9 Men (12-Person council)
3 Women

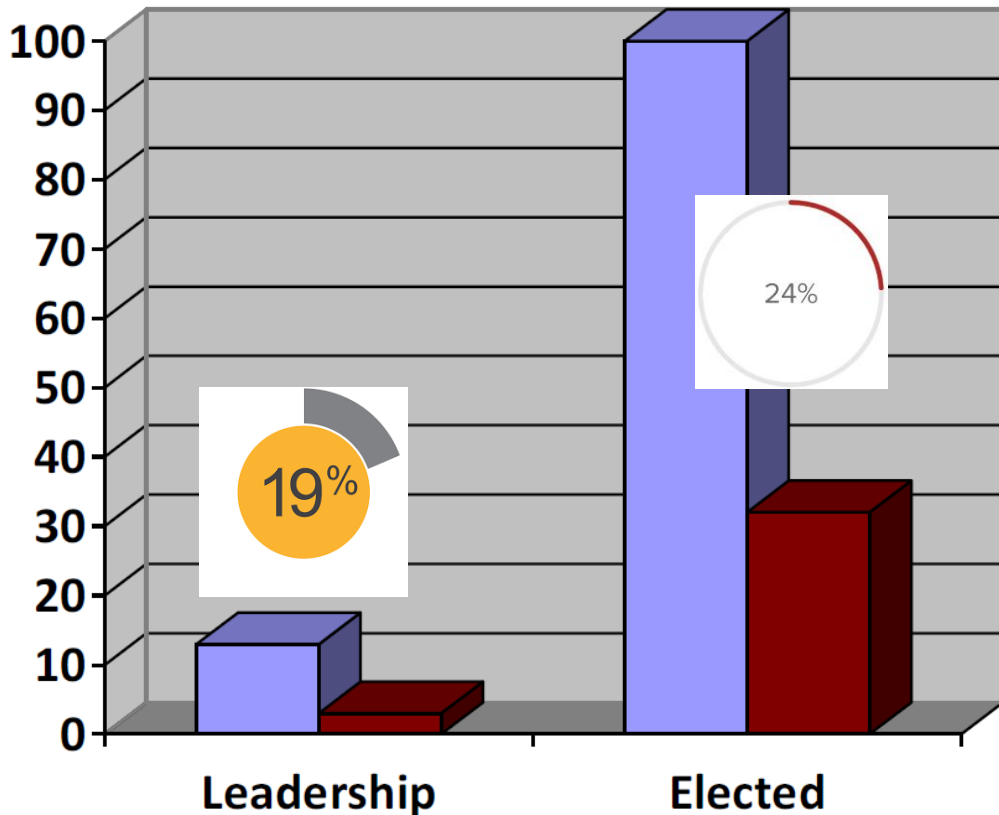


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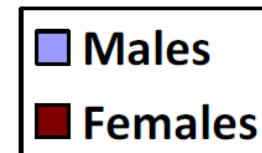


Local Councils Makeup (all 16 communities) – General Numbers for Eastern Nova Scotia



Leadership positions

Males	13	(81%)
Females	3	(19%)



Total Elected positions

Males	100	(76%)
Females	32	(24%)

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Mary Louise Bernard – Former Chief of Wagmatcook
How can we encourage more women to aspire to be
Chiefs Mayors and Wardens? As Councilors?

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We asked women: Why is this our reality?

- Lack of women confident to run.
- Lack of support in general for women to run.
- Lack of resources for women to run (information/financial)
- Women may not “see themselves” as politicians.
- History of Men in these positions/fewer women setting an example.
- Work-life balance is a concern (children, work, household work).
- Issues with childcare.
- Concerns with social media/scrutiny/public criticism.
- Misconception women are too “emotional” or not taken seriously.
- Male-dominated culture in political structures.
- Issues with women not supporting other women.
- Issues with men not supporting women running.

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Pressing for Change/Promoting Balance

- * Mobilize Female Leaders to make a plan for change.
- * Engage Females to grow interest in local government.
- * Research and celebrate past and present female leaders.
- * Research and plan a female leadership school with a focus on local government that is inclusive and barrier-free.
- * Engage First Nation, Educational and Organizational leaders/organizations to assist in program and materials.
- * Access funding (various public and private sources).
- * Evaluate school and track future election results.

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Other Goals for the Leadership School

- * Continue education and support on social media before, during and after the leadership school.
- * Speak with youth about the changing landscape of local politics, and to celebrate female leadership.
- * Offer real-time support for women running in elections.
- * Consider if future schools are beneficial for Unama'ki / Cape Breton and the Strait Regions.
- * Use videos and school materials to promote/educate.
- * Create a report so the school, if successful, can serve as a model for other regions working towards gender balance.

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How do we know we've been successful?

- More women engaged in local politics (all 16 communities) either elected and/or on committees, volunteering, or attending council meeting.
- More women elected to local leadership positions (Chief, Mayor, Warden).
- More women participating/supporting female candidates during local elections.
- Support system for women who want to become involved in local government (mentors, groups, etc).
- More men supporting women in local government.

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Women collaborating and supporting and empowering women from all 16 communities and bringing them together for a local leadership school is a new concept and ultimately an experiment, and a leap of faith.



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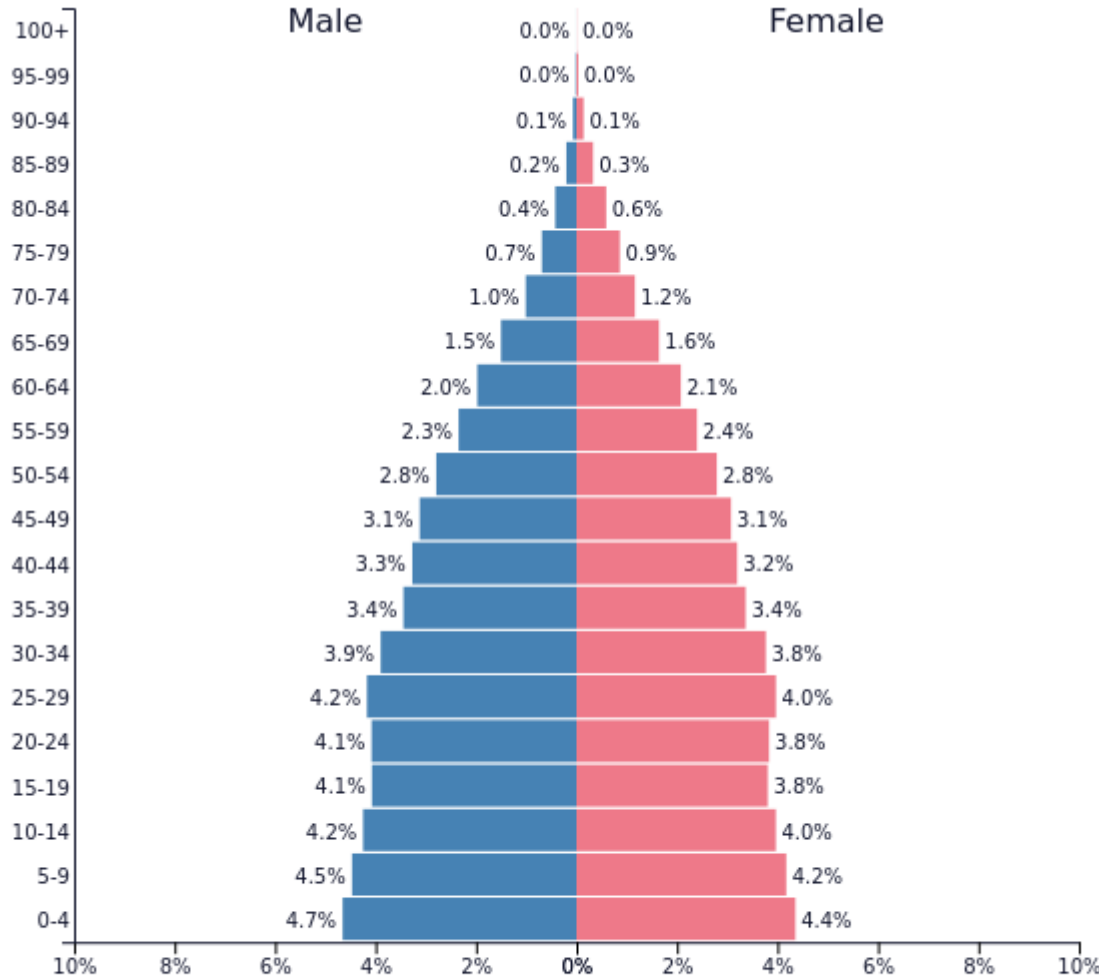
So our **journey** begins with building **relationships** and **partnerships** so we can **collaborate** to create an enabling environment for **female leadership** to reach a better **gender balance** in local government.

We believe it will **move the needle** towards a more **inclusive gender balance** at our local council tables.



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Thank you for listening

We welcome your questions...