



# Mentoring Women in Trades Workplaces

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Women in Science, Engineering, Trades and Technology

*Canadian Coalition of Women in Engineering, Science, Trades and Technology*

# Why Women in Trades?

## → Skills Shortages



- Shortage of over 250,000 skilled tradespeople by 2016
- Aging workforce → retirements
- Oil and gas, mining (7.5%) and the construction sector (4.5%) were the fastest growing employment sectors in Canada between 2001-06

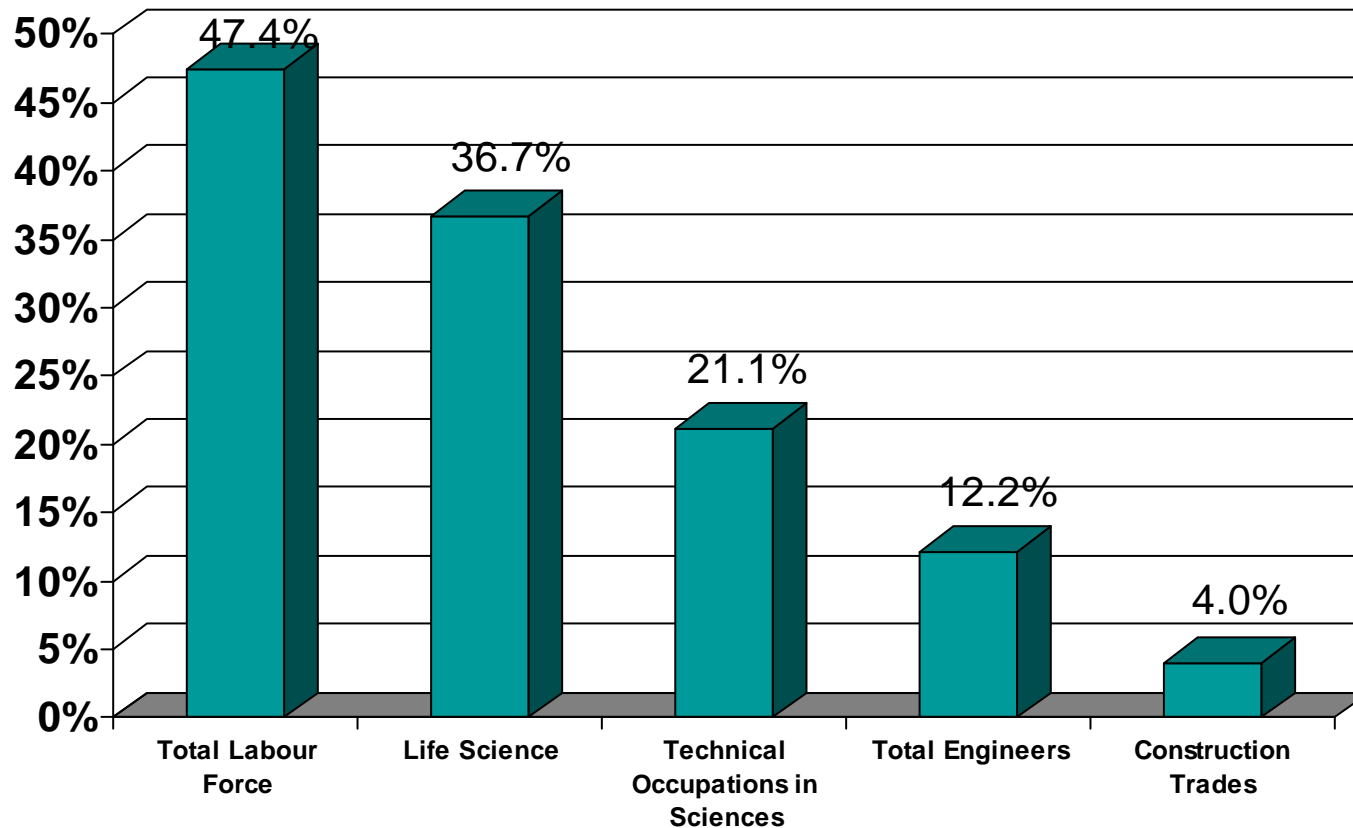
# Why Focus on Mentorship for Women?



- Women are very underrepresented as apprentices and journeypersons

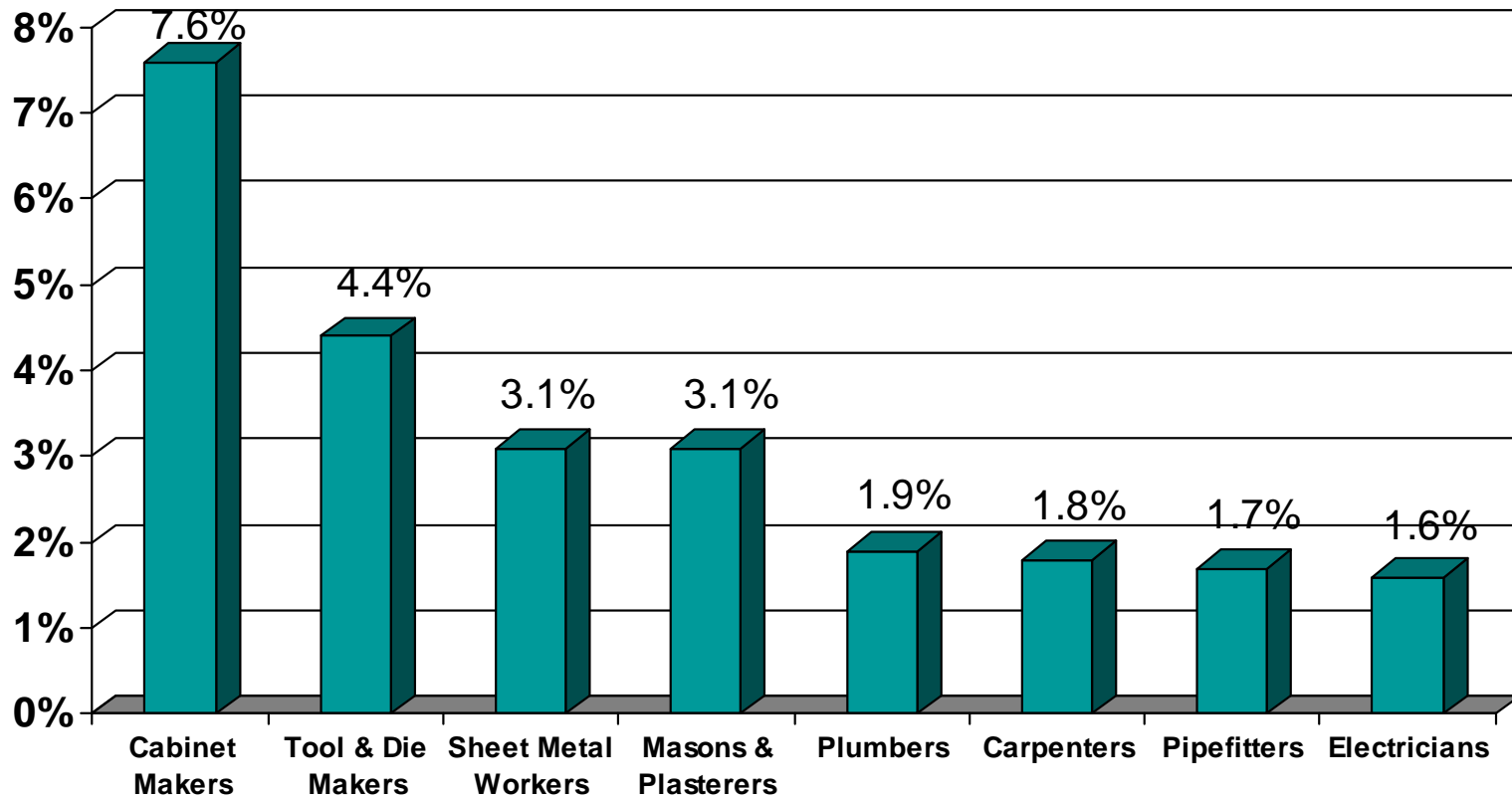
# % Women in Canadian Work Force

(Canadian Census 2006)



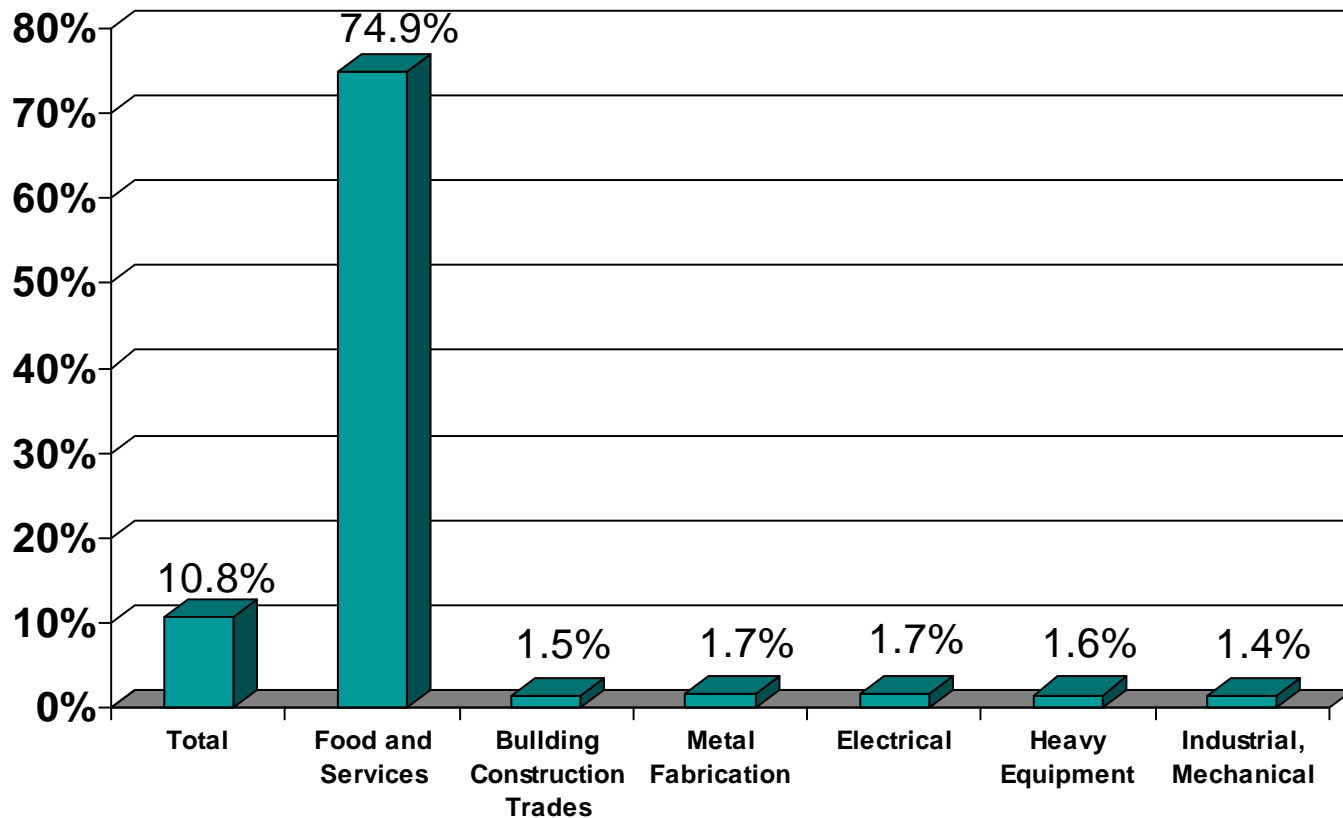
# % Women in Selected Trades

(Canadian Census 2006)



# % Completions by Women in Registered Apprenticeships 2005

(Statistics Canada 2007)



# Mentorship is Particularly Important for Women



- CAF (2004) “Perceptions of Barriers Experienced by Women” (attitudes, role models, access to information, workplace climate, workplace training and mentorship)
- Foundation for experience in workplace
- Key in orientation, integration, satisfaction, career development

# Mentorship Benefits



- Addresses isolation
- Offers moral support
- Builds confidence
- Enhances safety
- Provides role models
- Provides informal information
- Develops skills

# Mentorship



- Not a single strategy
- Effective at many levels
- Value added with female to female mentoring
  - Viewing trades culture through women’s eyes
  - Additional information and strategies on getting the job done

# Who is CCWESTT?



- Pan-Canadian network of 27 groups
- Founded in 1987 with vision to be a national voice for women in SETT
- Award-winning programs in outreach and professional development

# Women in SETT Initiative



- National project by CCWESTT to influence practices to increase participation of women in SETT
- Pilot projects in skilled trades (construction sector)



## A Checklist of Strategies

*Canadian Coalition of Women in Engineering, Science, Trades and Technology*

- Compact and easily administered first step to raise awareness and initiate the process of change
- Grounded in the experience of women, informed by WITT NN resources

# Checklist Content



- **Current research and effective practices**
  - recruitment, selection, orientation, retention, career development, training, and health and safety
- **Sections emphasize importance of mentorship**
- **Questions to help guide employers**

# How to Develop Mentorship for Women?



- Encourage informal arrangements
  - Some have been customized
- Look for women-women pairings
- Provide networking opportunities
- If none, look outside for role models and networking
- Purchase memberships
- SaskWITT, WRDC Techsploration

# Checklist Workshops



- **Saskatchewan Construction Association**
  - Company owners, HR managers of construction firms, reps from the Provincial Apprenticeship Commission, SCA
- **Women in Resource Development Committee**
  - Administrators from construction union training schools

# Workshop Outcomes



- Moved from lack of acknowledgement of gendered experience to recognition of unique challenges faced by women
- Information was useful; plans for implementation of a number of the practices by employers

# Future Development



- Revisions to Checklist, workshop
- Identify other pilots, e.g. Homebuilders Association
- Gain support for enhanced delivery
- Support for WinSETT Centre

# Primary Funders



**Status of Women  
Canada**

**Condition féminine  
Canada**

**Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada  
Conseil de recherches en science naturelles et en génie du Canada**



***NSERC*  
*CRSNG***