

# Born To Be Bold ///

## gainful employment

» We need to focus on shifting the conversation from 'access to a job' to 'accessing gainful employment.'

### what do we mean by gainful employment?

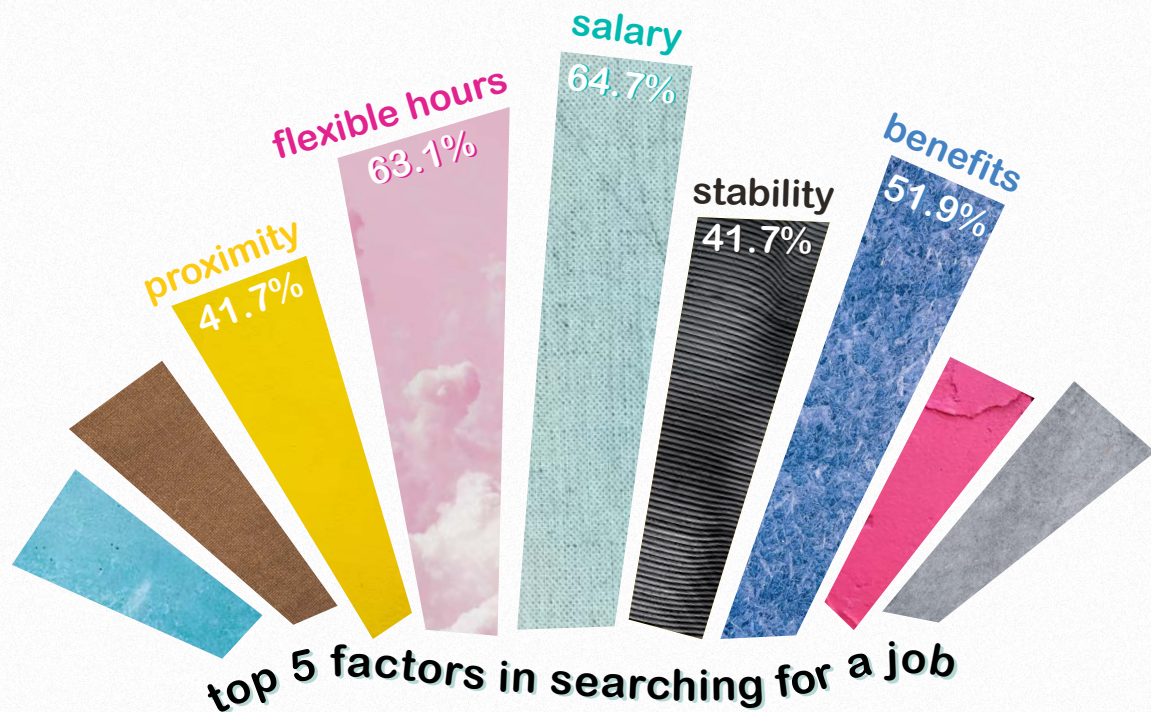
"Employment that offers **consistent** work, **job security**, work that is **free from all forms of violence** and discrimination, **safe** working conditions and payment to sustain **a meaningful living**."

Not only must women's access to jobs be increased, but employers must also create safe, accessible, and meaningful work environments where women can thrive.



### we asked: "what does your ideal job look like?"

Participants most commonly included: an alignment of values, a comfortable living wage and benefits, opportunities for learning and growth, and a safe working environment.





# Born To Be Bold /// Promising Practice

## flexible schedules & work locations

the top recommendation?  
flexible work, hours, schedules, and locations

This practice is very relevant for:

- » Women with experiences of trauma;
- » Women with children (especially single mothers);
- » Mothers with children with disabilities;
- » Women living further from city centers in order to afford rent; and
- » Women without access to a vehicle or driver's license

It gives many women the ability to work, be available for dependents' needs, and reduces transportation costs or barriers.

**"Life doesn't fit into a 9-5 box"**  
(Focus group participant, Vancouver)



### putting it into practice

**1/** Flexible program scheduling, **programs on weekends**, or **during school hours** to increase accessibility for women with children

**2/** Programming available **online** (with computer and Internet access provided), **by phone**, or **brought to their location**

**3/** Giving women **the choice to work remotely** or in office, flexible schedules and time off as needed, while providing necessary material and training for successful remote work

**"Women want you to acknowledge their reality."**  
(Program staff, Vancouver)



# Born To Be Bold /// Promising Practice

## child care + transportation

### child care options

- » Child care was the **top employment barrier** according to **77%** of participants
- » Free, accessible, non-discriminatory and safe childcare options, and childcare with extended hours

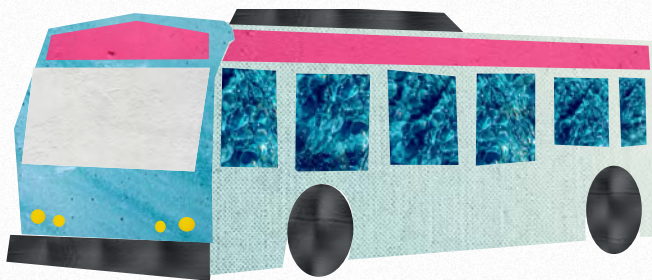
### transportation options

- » Free, or more affordable transportation is necessary for women to better access jobs, childcare, programming, as well as basic needs (food and clothing)
- » Necessary for low-income women who live further from city centers
- » Transportation options **must be made for and designed by women**, to aid in picking up children, accessing jobs, interviews, and be available beyond work hours
- » Transportation means should be **family-friendly** (space for car seats and strollers) and **accessible** for women with differing abilities



### putting it into practice

- 1/** Ensure part of the **funding/grants to programs is allocated to** providing child minding and transportation
- 2/** Offer childcare subsidies, flexible work schedules, childcare on site or a family-friendly work environment, and equal parental leave
- 3/** Provide transportation subsidies, or a transportation service with a trusted driver (pickups and dropoffs)
- 4/** Organizations providing programming should incorporate transportation and childminding **at core of program design**





# Born To Be Bold /// Promising Practice

## peer programming, community + 1:1 support



**“Organizations always have [...] people who speak about us, but they’re always people who don’t understand us”**

(Focus group participant, Moncton)

When someone with a **shared experience** leads programming or provides support, it impacts participants’ perception of, and success in the program. They have access to necessary resources and networks, and have **greater empathy** of the participants’ experiences.

When hiring program staff, ensure the call is made specifically for peers. **Decision makers** should also have relevant lived experience.

To mitigate discrimination and further isolation, all programs, staff and employers should operate from **Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression** and **trauma-informed** frameworks.

### **cohort-based models, community, and follow up**

Cohort-based programming leads to **building communities of care** between program participants, and extends networks. Participants frequently mention their connection with classmates as one of the most important program outcomes.

### **1:1 support and resource navigation**

To address the overwhelming amount of information, resources, and steps in accessing available supports, **one-on-one support, check-ins, and follow up** (post graduation) is a promising practice.

**“The most supportive program I’ve been in...[the other participants] just get it”**

(Focus group participant, Vancouver)



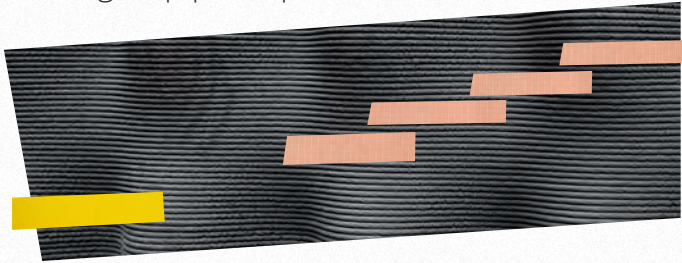


# Born To Be Bold /// Promising Practice

## education + skills-building

**“[Newcomer women] are expected to start at the bottom and be satisfied with any work opportunity”**

(Focus group participant, Montreal)



### **acknowledging lived, different, abroad experiences as expertise**

- » Each individual is the expert in their lived experiences, including the unpaid labour they often undertake
- » Evaluate **lived expertise and experience outside of Canada** in recruitment to increase various women's access to roles they have traditionally been kept out of
- » Support newcomers in accessing **accreditation**, equivalencies, and presenting foreign work experiences in job applications
- » Creating safe environments with clear policies and accountability where individual contexts can be discussed **without fear of losing employment**

### **paid training + learning opportunities**

- » A **perceived gap in applicable skills** and education is a barrier mentioned in **98%** of interviews and in all focus group discussions
- » Employers and women's programming should offer **paid** training, placement, and learning opportunities
- » Women **wouldn't have to choose** between education and training, and their survival
- » Address the desire for the opportunities to grow and advance<sup>1</sup>
- » Provide **employment-specific** skills training and access to free professional certifications



**“I want to get a start somewhere”**

(Focus group participant, Calgary)

<sup>1</sup> 31.7% of survey participants indicated “Training and Learning opportunities” as one of the top 5 important factors when searching for employment



# Born to Be Bold ///

## interim report findings

### did you know?

- » **82% of women** participate in the labour market (versus 91% of men).
- » Only **76 % of racialized women** participate in the labour force, but are **10% more likely** to hold a university degree

### enter: Born to Be Bold

A cross-country research project to identify promising practices for increasing vulnerable women's access to **gainful employment**.\*

- » **196** women engaged in **23** focus groups and **48** interviews
- » **211** survey responses



### **\*gainful employment is more than “just a job”...**

It's employment that offers **consistent work, job security**, work that is **free from violence** and discrimination, **safe** working conditions and **payment** to sustain a meaningful living.

### our promising practices, summed up:

#### **1/ Flexible work arrangements**

- Flexible work schedules and locations
- Provide employees with necessary tools for remote work
- Ex: Remote work policies, flex hours

#### **2/ Child care + transportation**

- Free or low-cost, accessible, safe childcare and child minding
- Accessible, affordable, and safe transportation options
- Ex: On-site childcare, childcare subsidies, transportation subsidies

#### **3/ Education, experience + skills**

- Acknowledge lived, diverse, and non-Canadian experience as job expertise
- Provide paid training, placement, and learning opportunities
- Provide access to free professional certifications

#### **4/ Peer programming + 1:1 support**

- Hire peers with shared experiences to lead or direct programming
- Cohort-based programming to build communities of care and networks
- Provide one-on-one support, check-ins, and post-graduation follow up