



# Study report

## Portrait of the status of women in Prescott-Russell

Report presented to the Consultation  
*Table Concerté.e.s pour l'égalité*

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Femmes et Égalité  
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Women and Gender  
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# Table of contents

<b>Highlights</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Background</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Methodology</b> .....	<b>3</b>
Intersectional gender analysis .....	3
Data sources and study limitations .....	4
<b>Portrait of the region</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Women's health and well-being</b> .....	<b>6</b>
State of health .....	6
Healthy behaviors.....	9
Living conditions.....	10
Education .....	12
Contents - Women's health and well-being .....	13
<b>Women's justice and safety</b> .....	<b>14</b>
Violence in all its forms.....	14
Trends in violence against women .....	14
Portrait of the victims .....	16
Victim services .....	18
Issues in women's safety and justice.....	19
Contents - Justice and safety for women .....	19
<b>Women's participation in the economy</b> .....	<b>20</b>
Employability .....	20
Inaccessible daycare services .....	20
Wage gap .....	20
Entrepreneurship and job stability.....	23
Contents - Women's participation in the economy.....	23
<b>Women's representation in political bodies</b> .....	<b>25</b>
Political representation .....	25
Representation on governance bodies .....	28
Summary - Representation of women and girls in political bodies.....	29
<b>Systemic barriers</b> .....	<b>30</b>
<b>Conclusions and recommendations</b> .....	<b>32</b>
Avenues for future reflection .....	33
<b>APPENDIX 1: Glossaries</b> .....	<b>34</b>
<b>APPENDIX 2: List of tables</b> .....	<b>35</b>
<b>APPENDIX 3: References</b> .....	<b>36</b>
<b>APPENDIX 4: Deepening the mental models in Prescott-Russell</b> .....	<b>38</b>
Mental models.....	38
Prescott-Russell culture and history influencing or explaining mental models .....	38

## Highlights



### Women's health and well-being

- Mental health issues (stress and mental workload) more prevalent among women
- Very low levels of physical activity among women
- More women heading single-parent families
- Older women more affected by financial insecurity
- Greater need for housing for women with children
- Relatively low levels of education, particularly among men



### Women's justice and safety

- An upward trend in all forms of violence against women, including elderly women and immigrant women in the region.
- Trafficking in women on the rise
- Young women more confident about reporting incidents of violence



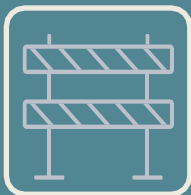
### Women's participation in the economy

- 17% wage gap (compared to 11% in Canada, 16% in Ottawa)
- Greater representation of women in lower salary brackets, lower representation in higher salary brackets
- More women do not work, or work less (part-time), during the year
- Fewer women in better-paid sectors: construction, manufacturing
- Lower proportion of self-employed women



### Representation of women in governance

- Female representation in municipal politics of around 25% since 2014
- Women hold one in eight seats on the United Counties Council since 2018
- Parity or majority representation of women on the boards of 64 out of 89 organizations surveyed - but risk of overload for those involved ("they're often the same ones").
- on the boards of 64 of the 89 listed organizations



### Systemic barriers

- **Mental models:** norms, attitudes, perceptions concerning women and gender equality in Prescott-Russell
- **Relationships and connections:** social and geographical isolation, lack of female political role models
- **Policies, practices and resource flows:** lack of public transportation, lack of support for women in mental health, inaccessibility of childcare, duplicative resources for victim services; difficulties in coordinating data collection on violence against women; lack of disaggregated data.

## Context<sup>1</sup>

Launched in March 2018, Leadership féminin Prescott-Russell (LFPR), the only organization dedicated to women's leadership in French-speaking Ontario, was created by a group of Francophone women from Prescott-Russell committed to nurturing the leadership of women and girls so they can reach their full potential and take their place wherever decisions are made. Focusing on the "*equal participation of women in decision-making*," LFPR also recognizes the need to address systemic barriers in order to bring about lasting change in favor of gender equality.

As part of the "Concerté.e.s pour l'égalité" project, LFPR is seeking to produce a statistical portrait of the status of women and systemic barriers to gender equality in the Prescott-Russell region. This study will be used to support programming decisions, including the action plan for the *Concerté.e.s pour l'égalité* round table, and will also serve as a tool for our partners in their own planning.

The issue table identified four priority ecosystem issues that interact with each other to "create a favorable climate for the development of women and girls", and around which research is organized:

- Promoting women's overall health and achieving social and economic equity;
- Justice, security and protection for women and girls;
- Women's participation in economic prosperity and advancement ;
- Equal participation of women in decision-making bodies.

## Methodology

### Intersectional gender analysis

The methodology used is rooted in a feminist approach to gender plus analysis, the intersectional analysis framework of the Government of Canada and Women and Gender Equality Canada. According to this framework, the intersectional approach recognizes "that various factors intersect in each and every person and shape our points of view, our mentalities, and our experiences", and makes it possible to evaluate initiatives or situations in the light of the identity factors that characterize us<sup>2</sup>.

Thus, the Centre de leadership et d'évaluation inc. (CLÉ) team asked itself about the representativeness at every stage of the project. We tried to ensure that our approach was as inclusive as possible, and that the portrait we drew was representative of people's experiences, according to different identity factors. The team asked itself questions such as:

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<sup>1</sup> Quotations in this section are from [Leadership féminin Prescott-Russell](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Introduction to ACS Plus - sd](#)

- How are different groups of people, including women, represented in the data, in consultations, in barrier identification processes, etc.?
- What assumptions about individuals and groups might underlie the information reviewed and conclusions derived?

CLÉ carried out mixed data collection, supplementing quantitative data with qualitative data to highlight the experiences of women in the region and the barriers they face.

### **Data sources and study limitations**

This study is based mainly on publicly and freely available data, as well as internal data from organizations consulted as part of the study. The list of documents consulted is available in [Appendix 3](#).

Wherever possible, data specific to the United Counties of Prescott Russell was used. Due to the timeframe of this study, data specific to Francophone communities in Prescott-Russell from Statistics Canada could not be analyzed. In some cases, the data available covers a wider region, including communities in the Prescott-Russell area.

The timing of the pandemic could have impacted some of the data in this report, many of which were collected in 2020 or earlier.

Finally, perspectives and data specific to the needs and realities of women with certain intersecting identities (indigenous, visible minority, immigrant, 2SLGBTQI-identifying) who may face additional barriers were not available, and therefore could not be considered in this study.

## Portrait of the region

### History and territory

The United Counties of Prescott-Russell (hereinafter, Prescott-Russell) is a region located near Ottawa in Eastern Ontario, comprising eight local communities: Hawkesbury East, Hawkesbury, Champlain, Alfred and Plantagenet, The Nation, Casselman, Russell and Clarence-Rockland.

The region is categorized by Statistics Canada as both a "mix of sparsely populated urban and rural areas"<sup>3</sup> and an "easily accessible region."<sup>4</sup> Beyond these categorizations, its residents consider it a rural region, with a long agricultural history<sup>5</sup> and a strong francophone identity<sup>6</sup>.

### Socio-demographic profile

As the following table shows, the region is sparsely populated and can be characterized as relatively homogeneous in terms of its identity.

Table 1: Socio-demographic profile of the Prescott-Russell population<sup>7</sup>

Socio-demographic dimension	Women 2021	Men 2021	Average/ total 2021	Average/ total 2016
Total population	50,3 %	49,7 %	95 639	89 333
Average age	42,2	43,7	42,9	42
Proportion of population aged 65 and over	21 %	19 %	20 %	17,3 %
Francophones <sup>8</sup>	61,6 %	59,9 %	60,7 %	64,8 %
Visible minorities	5,3 %	5 %	5,2 %	3,1 %
Indigenous	4,5 %	4,2 %	4,3 %	3,2 %
Immigrants	5,8 %	5,8 %	5,8 %	4,6 %
Religion				
<i>Christianity</i>	78,5 %	75,4 %		
<i>No religion and secular perspectives</i>	19,8 %	23 %		
Sexual orientation / gender identity	<i>Data not available</i>			
People with disabilities	<i>Data not available</i>			

### Intra-regional nuances

There are some variations among Prescott-Russell communities, notably in the proportion of Francophones, income and education<sup>9</sup>, which could have an impact on other factors related to the status of women.

A systematic intra-regional analysis is beyond the scope of this study, but a more refined analysis based on intra-regional data could be explored in the future.

<sup>3</sup> [Groupes de régions sociosanitaires homologues, Document de travail – 2018.](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Élaboration de catégories utiles permettant de distinguer les niveaux d'éloignement au Canada - 2020](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Vision et mission corporative, Prescott-Russell – sd](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Raconter l'histoire franco-ontarienne de Prescott-Russell – avril 2023](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Recensement de la population, Prescott-Russell – 2021](#) et [Recensement de la population, Prescott-Russell – 2016](#)

<sup>8</sup> Correspond à la somme des répondant.e.s dont la première langue parlée est le français, ou le français et l'anglais.

<sup>9</sup> [Prescott and Russell Community Safety and Well-being Plan – 2021](#)

## Women's health and well-being

The assessment of women's health and well-being in Prescott-Russell is based on a consideration of the social determinants of health<sup>10</sup>, contextualized according to local realities. Thus, the following priority issues are considered in the analysis of conditions that may influence the status of women in Prescott-Russell:

- Health status, including workload and mental health;
- Living conditions, including family situation, access to housing and financial insecurity;
- Education;
- Healthy behaviors, including physical activity.

### State of health

#### *Health - general picture*

The following table illustrates the evolution in perceived health status among women and men in Eastern Ontario Health Unit (EOHU)<sup>11</sup>, in Ottawa and Ontario, between 2015-2016 and 2019-2020.

*Table 2: Perception of health in general, evolution between 2015-2016 and 2019-2020<sup>12</sup>*

	EOHU		Ottawa		Ontario	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
<b>Perception of health as very good or excellent, 2015-2016</b>	58,9 %	62,5 %	68,2 %	65,6 %	60,9 %	62,1 %
<b>Perception of health as very good or excellent, 2019-2020</b>	64,6 %	62,7 %	63,8 %	66,9 %	61,6 %	62,8 %

We observe that in 2019-2020, a higher proportion of women in the EOHU feel they are in good or excellent health compared to men in the EOHU, women in Ottawa and the provincial average for women. For women from the EOHU and Ontario, there is an improvement in perceived health between 2015-2016 and 2019-2020.

<sup>10</sup> [Déterminants sociaux de la santé et inégalités en santé - 2023](#)

<sup>11</sup> La CSEO englobe plusieurs régions voisines à Prescott-Russell, et les données de Santé Ontario ne sont pas spécifiques aux francophones de la région, mais il est estimé que les données sont comparables.

<sup>12</sup> [Overall Health Snapshot – 2015-2020](#)



### Workload and mental health

Since the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020-2022, more attention has been paid to mental health in general, and to women's mental health in particular<sup>13</sup>. Several publications<sup>14</sup> have focused on women's mental burden due to unpaid work related to domestic burdens, emotional labor and caring for dependents.

The following table shows the **perception of good or excellent mental health** among women and men in the EOHU, Ottawa and Ontario.

Table 3: Perception of mental health, evolution between 2015-2016 and 2019-2020<sup>15</sup>

	EOHU		Ottawa		Ontario	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Perception of mental health - good or excellent, 2015-2016	65,6 %	73,5 %	70,5 %	74,7 %	69,2 %	73,2 %
Perception of mental health - good or excellent, 2019-2020	65,8 %	69,3 %	56 %	64,8 %	61,4 %	68,1 %

Regardless of time period and territory, the proportion of women rating their mental health as good or excellent is lower than that of men. In 2019-2020, women's perception remains stable in the EOHU, while it declines in Ottawa and Ontario (this decline also applies to men).

In addition to the previous table, the following table shows **the perceived level of life stress** as fairly or extremely stressful.

Table 4: Perceived level of stress, evolution between 2015-2016 and 2019-2020<sup>16</sup>

	EOHU		Ottawa		Ontario	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Perceived level of life stress - somewhat or extremely stressful, 2015-2016	23,4 %	15,7 %	22,1 %	22,5 %	24,1 %	19,6 %
Perceived level of life stress - somewhat or extremely stressful, 2019-2020	28 %	24,7 %	19,9 %	22,7 %	23 %	19,4 %

<sup>13</sup> [Pandémie, santé mentale, résilience et sentiment de solitude – septembre 2022](#) et [Quel est l'état de santé des personnes au Canada? Un tableau de bord des indicateurs – 2023](#)

<sup>14</sup> [Les femmes en temps de pandémie : les faits – sd](#), [La santé mentale des femmes en temps de pandémie – mai 2020](#) et [Les effets de la crise sociosanitaire de Covid-19 sur la charge mentale des femmes – 2022](#)

<sup>15</sup> [Overall Health Snapshot – 2015-2020](#)

<sup>16</sup> [Overall Health Snapshot – 2015-2020](#)



The gap between women and men in the EOHU in 2015-2016 is notable, unlike in Ottawa. There is also an increase in the proportion of women and men who feel quite or extremely stressed, in contrast to the Ottawa and Ontario rates.

When it comes to mental load or life stress, we can also look at the role of women as **caregivers**. Although the proportion of caregivers who are women is comparable to that of men (52%<sup>17</sup> or 54%, according to the data consulted), women are reportedly "more inclined than men to spend more hours per week providing care"<sup>18</sup>.

The following table illustrates the self-reported prevalence of **anxiety and mood disorders** among women and men for the EOHU, for Ottawa and on average for Ontario.

*Table 5: Prevalence of anxiety and mood disorders in men and women, 2019-2020* <sup>19</sup>

	EOHU		Ottawa		Ontario	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
<b>Self-reported prevalence of anxiety disorders</b>	14,5 %	8,8 %	12,2 %	8,8 %	13,3%	7,7 %
<b>Self-reported prevalence of mood disorders</b>	16,4 %	7,9 %	11,9%	7,9 %	11,6 %	7,7 %

There is a marked difference between women and men in all regions for both types of disorder, and a more pronounced gap (8.8%) between men and women in the EOHU for self-reported mood disorders.

An internal report from the Canadian Mental Health Association Champlain East<sup>20</sup> suggests an uneven distribution of clientele, although the data do not allow us to state this with certainty. Among the clientele between April 1<sup>er</sup> 2021 and March 31, 2022, 45.44% of those identified would have been women, compared with 32.05% men.

In one interview, a caregiver indicated that in many cases, mental disorders among women seem to be intergenerational, meaning that the same issues are repeated from one generation to the next, and that they are often linked to relational difficulties within families.

<sup>17</sup> [L'aidance naturelle en pleine troisième année de pandémie – décembre 2022](#)

<sup>18</sup> [Portrait des aidants familiaux, 2012 – septembre 2013](#)

<sup>19</sup> [Chronic Health Problems Snapshot – 2015-2020](#)

<sup>20</sup> Données internes, Association canadienne pour la santé mentale Champlain Est

## Healthy behaviors

### Physical activity

The benefits of physical activity, in terms of both physical and mental health, are numerous and well documented<sup>21</sup>. Indeed, "by teaching women and girls teamwork, self-reliance, resilience and self-confidence, sport is one of the key drivers of gender equality"<sup>22</sup>. Moreover, by challenging certain social norms, girls' and women's participation in sports can also influence boys' and men's perceptions of them<sup>23</sup>.

The following table shows physical activity levels for men and women at the EOHU, Ottawa and Ontario levels for the years 2015-2016 and 2020.

Table 6: Physical activity levels, 2015-2016 and 2020<sup>24</sup>

	EOHU		Ottawa		Ontario	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Physical activity level - no minutes of physical activity (2015-16)	22,9 %	16 %	16,4 %	11 %	21,1 %	18,5 %
Physical activity level - no minutes of physical activity (2020)	34,7 %	35,5 %	20,7 %	20,8 %	25,4 %	22 %
Level of physical activity - meets or exceeds recommended levels (2015-16)	53,5 %	61,4 %	62,6 %	61,3 %	54,8 %	71,5 %
Level of physical activity - meets or exceeds recommended levels (2020)	38,6 %	45,2 %	46,9 %	55,6 %	48,7 %	56,2 %

More than a third of both men and women in the EOHU are sedentary, doing no physical activity at all, with rates higher than either Ottawa or the provincial average. The activity rate in the EOHU is also lower than the rates for Ottawa and the provincial average, and this time there's a difference between men and women. Slightly more than a third of women are at or above the levels of exercise, while this is true for almost half of men. The changes between 2015- 2016 and 2020 are most marked among EOHU men, followed by EOHU women.

<sup>21</sup> [Améliorer sa santé grâce à l'activité physique](#)

<sup>22</sup> [Gros plan : Les femmes et les filles dans le sport](#)

<sup>23</sup> [The role of sport in addressing gender issues](#)

<sup>24</sup> [Physical Activity Snapshot – 2015-2020](#)

## Living conditions

Living conditions are key determinants of individual health and well-being. Among the living conditions that seem to most affect the health and well-being of women in Prescott and Russell, three issues were prioritized for this study: family situation, access to housing and financial insecurity.

### Family situation

The following table shows the percentage of single-parent families among census families in 2021.

Table 7: Rate of single-parent families among census families, 2021<sup>25</sup>

	Prescott-Russell	Ottawa	Ontario
Single-parent family with a female parent	9,5 %	12,7 %	13,6 %
Single-parent family with a male parent	3,6 %	3,4 %	3,5 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,1 %</b>	<b>16,1 %</b>	<b>17,1 %</b>

In Prescott-Russell, more than one in eight census families is a single-parent family (13.1%). Female lone-parent families (9.5% of census families) are more than 2.5 times more numerous than male lone-parent families (3.6% of census families).

The rate of lone-parent families with a female parent is lower than in Ottawa or the average for Ontario, but the rate for those with a male parent is relatively similar. Trends for all regions have been relatively stable since 2016<sup>26</sup>.

### Access to housing

Lack of access to affordable housing was identified in the interviews as one of the biggest challenges facing women in Prescott-Russell. This is a cross-cutting issue for the status of women insofar as, beyond being stressful for a woman, her housing situation has an impact on her safety, her ability to participate in the job market, and her ability and desire to engage in governance roles.

The following table shows the situation in July 2023 regarding the demand for Rent-Indexed-on-Income by individuals in Prescott-Russell.

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<sup>25</sup> [Prescott-Russell Census of Population - 2021](#)

<sup>26</sup> [Census of population, Prescott-Russell - 2016](#)

Table 8: People waiting for rent-geared-to-income housing, Prescott-Russell, 2023<sup>27</sup>

	Number of requests	Rates
Single women	320	43 %
Single women with children	164	22 %
Single men	225	30 %
Single men with children	40	5 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>749</b>	

More than two-thirds of requests were made by women. Four times as many women than men are accompanied by children.

### Roaming

The following table shows the number of homeless people in Prescott-Russell as of July 31, 2023.

Table 9: People experiencing homelessness, Prescott-Russell, 2023<sup>28</sup>

	Homeless people, July 2023	Rates
Single women	7	20%
Single women with children	6	17%
Single men	19	54%
Single men with children	3	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	

As illustrated, almost two-thirds of people experiencing homelessness are men. There are more single men than single women, but there are twice as many single women with children as single men with children. Finding oneself in a situation of homelessness with dependents presents additional challenges to finding housing in terms of space, as well as accessibility in some cases.

### Financial insecurity

The following table shows the incidence of low income in 2021, based on the After-Tax Low-Income Measure, in Prescott-Russell, Ottawa and Ontario.

<sup>27</sup> Internal Data, Social Services, Prescott-Russell

<sup>28</sup> Internal Data, Social Services, Prescott-Russell

Table 10: Frequency of low income, 2021<sup>29</sup>

	Prescott-Russell		Ottawa		Ontario	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
<b>Incidence of low income among 18- to 64-year-olds</b>	6,4 %	6,4 %	8,5 %	8 %	9,4 %	8,9 %
<b>Incidence of low income in the 65+ age group</b>	15 %	10,5 %	10,6 %	8.2 %	13,7 %	10,2 %

In Prescott-Russell, the proportion of low-income women aged 18 to 64 (6.4%) is the same as for men, but lower than for both men and women in Ottawa and the Ontario average.

However, there is a difference for women aged 65 and over. The incidence of low income for women and men aged 65 and over is higher in Prescott-Russell than in Ottawa and Ontario.

### Education

The importance of education in promoting gender equality and the status of women is well known and documented<sup>30</sup>. Post-secondary institutions have a particular role to play in the creation and replication of social norms.

The following table shows the highest study levels reached by the population of Prescott-Russell, Ottawa and Ontario in 2021.

Table 11: Highest level of education, population aged 25 to 64, 2021<sup>31</sup>

	Prescott-Russell		Ottawa		Ontario	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
<b>No certificate, diploma or degree</b>	6,8 %	11,5 %	5,1 %	6,1 %	7,7 %	9,9 %
<b>High school diploma or certificate of equivalence</b>	27 %	30 %	15,8 %	19,6 %	21,4 %	25,3 %
<b>Certificate, diploma or degree post-secondary education</b>	66,2 %	58,5 %	79,2 %	74,4 %	70,8 %	64,7 %

As illustrated in the table above, education levels for women in Prescott-Russell are lower than for Ottawa and the provincial average, but higher than for men in Prescott-Russell.

<sup>29</sup> [Prescott-Russell Census of Population - 2021](#)

<sup>30</sup> [L'éducation pour promouvoir l'égalité des sexes, The Role of Education in Promoting Gender Equality](#)

<sup>31</sup> [Prescott-Russell Census of Population - 2021](#)

## Summary - Women's health and well-being

The following table summarizes the health and well-being of women in Prescott-Russell, as well as the systemic barriers to women's status in the region.

*Table 12: Summary - Women's health and well-being*

Status of women in Prescott-Russell	Systemic barriers identified
<p><b>Health</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good perception of health (general and mental)</li> <li>• Perceived stress, mental workload and anxiety are high in women</li> <li>• Low levels of physical activity</li> <li>• The intergenerational nature of certain mental health disorders</li> </ul> <p><b>Living conditions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater proportions of women than men at the helm of single-parent families</li> <li>• Greater housing needs among women with children</li> <li>• Older women more affected by financial insecurity</li> <li>• Relatively low levels of education, especially among men</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perception that gender equality is not an issue to be addressed in Prescott-Russell</li> <li>• Attitudes and norms towards women and their role(s)</li> <li>• No disaggregated data</li> </ul>

## Women's justice and safety

### Violence in all its forms

The following table lists the types of violence experienced by Maison Interlude House (MIH) clients, in descending order of frequency.

Table 13: Types of violence experienced, in descending order of frequency <sup>32</sup>

Types of violence
Emotional
Verbal
Psychological
Control
Physical
Financial
Harassment

The order of types of violence is more or less the same as what was recorded in 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 as types of violence experienced by MIH clients.<sup>33</sup>

The following table shows the types of violence reported to police in domestic violence in 2011 and 2012.

Table 14: Types of violence reported to the police in cases of domestic violence <sup>34</sup>

Charges against men - domestic violence	2011	2012
Assault and other physical charges	57 %	48 %
Defaults	28 %	27 %
Other charges (bullying, harassment, mischief)	14 %	22 %
Sexual assault - domestic violence	1 %	3 %

Physical violence is more prevalent in cases of violence reported to the police, a phenomenon that could be explained by the nature of the support sought.

### Trends in violence against women

In recent years in Canada, there has been an upward trend in several forms of violence that disproportionately affect women<sup>35</sup> :

<sup>32</sup> Données internes, Maison Interlude

<sup>33</sup> [Une réalité qu'on ne peut ignorer : Portrait régional des violences faites aux femmes des comtés de Prescott-Russell et les services communautaires disponibles pour les femmes et les familles – juin 2014](#)

<sup>34</sup> [Une réalité qu'on ne peut ignorer – juin 2014](#)

<sup>35</sup> [Les victimes de violence familiale et de violence entre partenaires intimes, affaires déclarées par la police, 2021 – 2022](#)



- domestic violence (women and girls account for two-thirds of victims),
- violence between intimate partners (women account for 80% of victims),
- sexual assaults (women and girls account for three-quarters of victims),
- domestic violence against children and young people (six out of ten victims are girls),
- domestic violence against the elderly (nearly six out of ten victims were women).

More locally, a city councilor in Ottawa presented the following facts before calling on the city to declare domestic violence an epidemic: "In 2022 in Ontario, 52 women were murdered, the equivalent of one femicide per week. In 2021, 90 people were killed by an intimate partner, and 75% of these people were women and girls."<sup>36</sup>

Having had to refuse shelter to 86 women in 2022, and in recognition of one femicide in Prescott-Russell (among 52 in Ontario that same year), Maison Interlude aligned itself with the *Prescott-Russell Coalition to Eliminate Violence Against Women* to ask the United Counties of Prescott and Russell Council to make a similar declaration for the region.<sup>37</sup>

Although police data seem to suggest a less alarming situation for women in Prescott-Russell, it's worth remembering that the cases of violence reported to the police are only a fraction of those actually experienced. For example, according to a Statistics Canada study, only 20% of victims of domestic violence reported the violence to the police<sup>38</sup>.

The following table shows the number of incidents reported to the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) in 2008, 2011-2012<sup>39</sup> and in 2022-2023<sup>40</sup>.

*Table 15: Accusations of domestic violence made*

	2011	2012	2022-2023
<b>Domestic violence calls (no charges laid)</b>	271	299	312
<b>Domestic violence charges filed</b>	297	314	88
<b>Total</b>	<b>568</b>	<b>613</b>	<b>400</b>

This table shows a sharp drop in the number of domestic violence charges filed between 2012 (314) and 2022-2023 (88). However, it is important to qualify these results by pointing out that at the time of the Covid-19 pandemic, there was an increase in domestic violence and in the number of women who remained in abusive situations due to confinement<sup>41</sup>.

<sup>36</sup> [La violence conjugale, une épidémie – mars 2023](#)

<sup>37</sup> Lettre au conseil de Prescott-Russell – août 2023

<sup>38</sup> [La violence conjugale au Canada, 2019](#)

<sup>39</sup> [Une réalité qu'on ne peut ignorer – juin 2014](#)

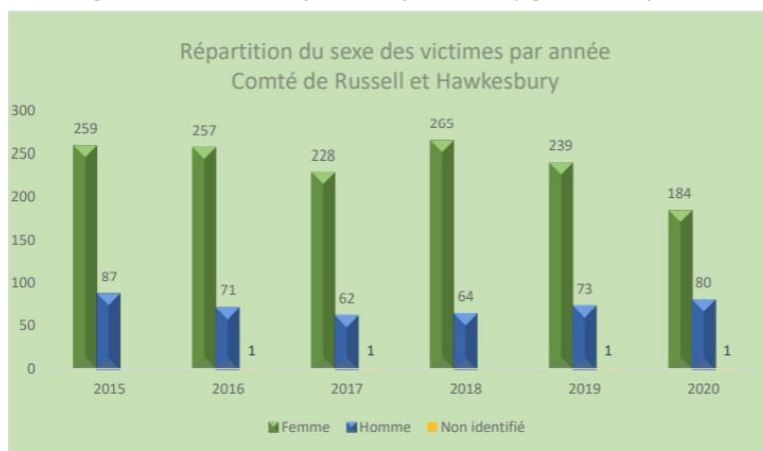
<sup>40</sup> [Plan de sécurité et de bien-être dans les collectivités de Prescott et Russell – avril 2021](#)

<sup>41</sup> [Violence conjugale : hausse de 60% des appels pendant le 2<sup>e</sup> confinement – février 2021](#)

In contrast, in 2022, the OPP would have opened nine more sexual assault files in the Prescott-Russell region than in 2021 (93, compared to 84), and more cases would have led to charges (60, compared to 51).

The following graph illustrates the distribution of victims of domestic incidents and sexual offences by gender and year in Russell County and Hawkesbury.

Figure 16: Breakdown of victims of violence by gender and year <sup>42</sup>



(Ross, 2021)

There is a marked difference between the proportion of male and female victims. There is also a downward trend in female victims between 2015 and 2020. It is important to note, however, that the last year represented in the graph is 2020, the year in which the Covid-19 pandemic began.

### Portrait of the victims

The age distribution of MIH's customer base is shown in the following table.

Table 17: Profile of female service users, MIH <sup>43</sup>

Age of users	2021-2022		2022-2023	
	Number	Rates	Number	Rates
45 and over	177	28 %	184	29 %
36-45 years	157	25 %	172	27 %
26-35 years	216	35 %	216	34 %
20-25 years	59	9 %	50	8 %
Under 20	14	2 %	8	1 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>623</b>		<b>630</b>	

The majority of MIH users are over 25 (88% in 2021-2022 and 90% in 2022-2023).

<sup>42</sup> [Plan de sécurité et de bien-être dans les collectivités de Prescott et Russell – avril 2021](#)

<sup>43</sup> Données internes, Maison Interlude

### **Young people**

According to a 2021 OPP report, girls aged 10-19 who are victims of sexual assault in Russell and Hawkesbury County (310) are almost nine times more numerous than boys in the same age bracket (35). The proportions are the same for victims aged 20-29<sup>44</sup>. This observation has also been made by staff at the Centre Novas<sup>45</sup>.

According to the same report, when it comes to domestic violence, there are almost twice as many girls aged 10-19 as boys in this age bracket. The gap increases for the 20-29 age group: young women (239) are more than four times more numerous than young men (57)<sup>46</sup>. The OPP also shows an increase in the number of child victims of sexual assault<sup>47</sup>.

According to a Centre Novas worker, this trend is not new, although it is more formally observed now. In fact, young girls feel more confident reporting incidents of violence than previous generations.

### **Older women**

Although the rate of elder abuse remains five times lower than among younger people, the General Social Survey on the Safety of Canadians (victimization) reveals an increase in the number of police-reported incidents of elder abuse<sup>48</sup> since 2010. According to the study, the increase is greater among women than men. In an interview, Maison Interlude noted an increase in the number of elderly women among its clientele<sup>49</sup>.

### **Immigrant and/or racialized women (visible minorities) and women with disabilities<sup>50</sup>**

Maison Interlude has also seen an increase in the number of immigrant women among its clientele. And more, the organization reported a lack of resources to support women with disabilities.

### **Trafficked women<sup>51</sup>**

The number of police-reported human trafficking cases increased dramatically between 2011 (less than 100 people) and 2021 (around 550 people). Women (95%) and young people under 25 (72%) are over-represented among victims. According to the Canadian Centre to Stop Human Trafficking, the Prescott-Russell region is close to two major human trafficking corridors, Ontario Highway 401 and the Trans-Canada Highway. These corridors link Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto, where 45% of cases have been reported since 2011.

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<sup>44</sup> [Plan de sécurité et de bien-être dans les collectivités de Prescott et Russell – avril 2021](#)

<sup>45</sup> [Violences sexuelles : des intervenantes à bout de souffle dans l'est ontarien – mai 2023](#)

<sup>46</sup> [Plan de sécurité et de bien-être dans les collectivités de Prescott et Russell – avril 2021](#)

<sup>47</sup> [Violences sexuelles : des intervenantes à bout de souffle dans l'est ontarien – mai 2023](#)

<sup>48</sup> [La violence envers les personnes âgées et les perceptions de ces dernières à l'égard de la sécurité au Canada – juillet 2022](#)

<sup>49</sup> Données internes, Maison Interlude

<sup>50</sup> Données internes, Maison Interlude

<sup>51</sup> [La traite des personnes au Canada, 2021](#), [Les couloirs de la traite des personnes au Canada – 2021](#) et [Quelques statistiques \(Table de concertation sur les agressions à caractère sexuel de Montréal\) – sd](#)

## Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQI+ people

Violence disproportionately experienced by Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQI+ people in Canada has been the subject of several articles and studies in recent years<sup>52</sup>. Data and information concerning the experiences of people with these identities in Prescott-Russell could not be obtained as part of this study.

## Victim services

### Use of community support services

The *Prescott-Russell Coalition to Eliminate Violence Against Women* (hereinafter referred to as the Coalition) brings together stakeholders in the Prescott-Russell region "who share the common goal of eliminating violence against women (VAW) in our community."<sup>53</sup>

The following table lists some of the services offered<sup>54</sup> by Coalition members and illustrates the needs in the community and how they have evolved over a decade.

Table 18: Support offered to victims by Coalition members

	2011-2012	2012-2013 <sup>55</sup>	2018-2019	2019-2020 <sup>56</sup>	2021-2022 <sup>57</sup>	2022-2023 <sup>58</sup>
Support calls (MIH combination, Center novas)	2 316	2 443	6 335	6 206	5 994	5 454
Women and children receiving support <sup>59</sup>	644	692	978	1 000	483	598
Interactions in the as part of the PAS BIEN CHEZ MOI PR program	-	-			2 457	2 820
Women and dependents accommodated by MIH	62	70	76	65	52	58
Transport requests filled (MIH)					98	172

<sup>52</sup> [Issue Analysis: Violence experienced by the LGBTQ2S+ community - 2020](#), and [Aboriginal women are more victims of violence, according to two federal surveys - 2022](#)

<sup>53</sup> [Prescott-Russell Coalition to end violence toward women, About us - sd](#)

<sup>54</sup> Figures for 2022-2023 are not based on the full year, and may be revised upwards. Some data from partner organizations that could not be contacted during the study have not been included.

<sup>55</sup> Data for 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 are taken from the report [A Reality We Can't Ignore](#)

<sup>56</sup> Data for 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 are taken from [the Prescott and Russell Community Safety and Well-Being Plan - April 2021](#).

<sup>57</sup> [Newsletter - Autumn 2022](#), supplemented by Maison Interlude House (MIH) internal data

<sup>58</sup> [Newsletter - Spring 2023](#), supplemented by in-house data from Maison Interlude House

<sup>59</sup> Includes housing, outreach services, advocacy and/or accompaniment services, support groups, individual support and open prevention groups, offered by MIH, Centre NOVAS and Valoris. As the data comes from different sources from one year to the next, there may be inconsistencies in the way they have been collected.

## Issues concerning women's safety and justice

Although the Prescott-Russell region is technically an easily accessible area (see Regional Profile), many characteristics of a rural region pose challenges for women's safety and justice: lack of public transportation, geographic and social isolation, and difficulty accessing financial resources to meet the needs of abused women.

Maison Interlude House has been able to offer a solution to the lack of public transportation, but only for women who are willing to apply for assistance. The difficulty of getting around Prescott Russell remains an issue that cuts across other priorities such as health and well-being (e.g., access to healthcare) and economic participation (e.g., access to the job market).

Women's isolation is another issue, particularly in the communities of Hawkesbury, Casselman and Rockland. Although the region is relatively close to urban areas, this doesn't change the reality for women who may feel physically or socially isolated in this semi-rural region.

Finally, the difficulties encountered by victim service organizations in obtaining adequate funding pose difficulties in meeting the needs of the region's increasingly young women and girls, and in carrying out awareness-raising and prevention activities. For example, local organizations have been lobbying and seeking financial support for a second-stage shelter for years, without success<sup>60</sup>.

## Summary - Justice and safety for women

The following table summarizes the situation of women in Prescott-Russell in terms of justice and safety, as well as the systemic barriers to the status of women in the region.

*Table 19: Summary - Women's justice and safety*

Status of women in Prescott-Russell	Systemic barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An upward trend in all forms of violence against women, including elderly women and immigrant women in the region.</li><li>• Increase in trafficking of women in the region</li><li>• Girls more likely to report incidents of violence in 2023 than previous generations</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No public transport</li><li>• Geographical and social isolation</li><li>• Insufficient resources for women's services</li><li>• Difficulties in coordinating data on violence against women and services</li></ul>

<sup>60</sup> [Refuge pour femmes dans Prescott et Russell : autre refus de la SCHL](#)

## Women's participation in the economy

### Employability

The following table shows the unemployment rate for men and women in Prescott-Russell, Ottawa and Ontario, as of 2016 and 2021.

Table 20: Unemployment rates, 2016 and 2021 <sup>61</sup>

	Prescott-Russell		Ottawa		Ontario	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Unemployment rate - 2016	5 %	5,6 %	6,8 %	7,4 %	7,4 %	7,5 %
Unemployment rate - 2021	7,3 %	5,9 %	11,1 %	9,6 %	13,4 %	11,2 %

Unemployment in Prescott-Russell is higher for women than for men, regardless of the area considered.

Although there is no systematic collection of data on the gender identity of people seeking support at the Prescott-Russell Employment Services Centre (PRESC)<sup>62</sup>, the people we met indicated that the clientele is split more or less equally between women and men, and that in the current labour shortage situation, as is the case in Prescott-Russell, neither women nor men have any difficulty finding employment.

### Inaccessible daycare services

For parents with young children, childcare is essential for returning to work. With the increasing participation of women in the workforce and the growing proportion of single-parent families, the demand for childcare services has risen across Canada<sup>63</sup>. However, with the labour shortage in the Prescott-Russell region also affecting childcare centers, it is often difficult to place a child, which can have a significant impact on women's participation in the labour market.

### Wage gap

In Canada, the wage gap between men and women is 11.1%, and according to an analysis by Statistics Canada<sup>64</sup>, two factors may contribute to this difference: the over-representation of men in high-paying sectors, such as construction and manufacturing; and the over-representation of women in part-time positions, which tend to be lower-paid. The analysis also acknowledges that "nearly two-thirds of the gender wage gap in 2021 could not be explained by variables related to human capital, job characteristics, occupation and industry, as well as the demographic characteristics<sup>64</sup>.

<sup>61</sup> [Population census, Prescott-Russell - 2021](#) and [Population census, Prescott-Russell - 2016](#)

<sup>62</sup> The [CSEPR annual report for 2021-2022](#) mentions that young people, people with disabilities and people from other cultures have benefited from services, but women are not listed as a target population group, even in the diversity and inclusion strategic axis.

<sup>63</sup> [Canada's child care workforce - June 2021](#)

<sup>64</sup> [Wage gap, 1998 to 2021 - May 2022](#)

Other analyses mention the penalties on income caused by maternity and the career interruptions (among other factors) it entails<sup>65</sup>.

The following tables illustrate the wage gap between median incomes in Prescott-Russell, Ottawa and the rest of Canada.

*Table 21: Wage gap - median after-tax income (2020)<sup>67</sup>*

	Median income	Women	Men	Difference (\$)	Difference (%)
<b>Prescott-Russell</b>	42 000 \$	38 000 \$	46 000 \$	(8 000) \$	-17 %
<b>Ottawa</b>	44 000 \$	40 800 \$	48 400 \$	(7 600) \$	-16 %
<b>Ontario</b>	37 200 \$	34 000 \$	41 200 \$	(7 200) \$	-17 %

The income gap between men and women in Prescott-Russell is similar to that in Ottawa and Ontario, but higher than the Canadian average.

*Table 22: Wage gap by income bracket (2020)<sup>68</sup>*

	Prescott-Russell		Ottawa		Ontario	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
<b>Less than \$10,000 (includes losses)</b>	<b>7,8 %</b>	<b>5,7 %</b>	9,5 %	7,7 %	<b>10,1 %</b>	<b>8 %</b>
<b>10 000 \$ à 19 999 \$</b>	<b>13,5 %</b>	<b>9,6 %</b>	11,6 %	9,7 %	<b>14,1 %</b>	<b>11,4 %</b>
<b>20 000 \$ à 29 999 \$</b>	<b>16,8 %</b>	<b>13,3 %</b>	<b>15,1 %</b>	<b>12,9 %</b>	<b>19,1 %</b>	<b>15,7 %</b>
<b>30 000 \$ à 39 999 \$</b>	14,6 %	13,3 %	12,9 %	11,3 %	15,3 %	13,4 %
<b>40 000 \$ à 49 999 \$</b>	13,6 %	13,2 %	11,8 %	10,1 %	12,5 %	11,9 %
<b>50 000 \$ à 59 999 \$</b>	11 %	12,7 %	10,5 %	9,5 %	9,2 %	9,8 %
<b>60 000 \$ à 69 999 \$</b>	<b>7,9 %</b>	<b>9,9 %</b>	8 %	8,4 %	6,2 %	7,7 %
<b>70 000 \$ à 79 999 \$</b>	<b>5,5 %</b>	<b>7,5 %</b>	6,2 %	7,3 %	4,2 %	5,9 %
<b>80 000 \$ à 89 999 \$</b>	4,6 %	5,5 %	5,2 %	6,1 %	3,6 %	4,5 %
<b>90 000 \$ à 99 999 \$</b>	2,1 %	3,5 %	3,3 %	4,8 %	1,9 %	3,1 %
<b>100 000 \$ à 124 999 \$</b>	<b>1,7 %</b>	<b>3,7 %</b>	<b>3,5 %</b>	<b>6,2 %</b>	<b>2,1 %</b>	<b>4,1 %</b>
<b>125,000 and over</b>	0,8 %	2,3 %	<b>2,4 %</b>	<b>5,9 %</b>	<b>1,8 %</b>	<b>4,5 %</b>

<sup>65</sup> [Wage gap, 1998 to 2021 - May 2022](#)

<sup>66</sup> [Wage gap between men and women in Ontario has not changed in 10 years, report finds - 2023](#) and [Gains des femmes avant des enfants et des femmes sans enfant - 2009](#)

<sup>67</sup> [Census of Population: Prescott-Russell, Ottawa and Ontario - 2021](#)

<sup>68</sup> [Census of Population: Prescott-Russell, Ottawa and Ontario - 2021](#)



A closer look at the gaps between men and women in the various income brackets reveals the following trend: women are over-represented in the lower salary brackets, and under-represented in the higher salary brackets, across all regions. The bold boxes in the table above indicate the brackets where the gap is narrowing and changing direction - i.e. the salary brackets where women are becoming less numerous than men. Figures in bold indicate a difference of 2% or more between the proportion of women and the proportion of men.

### Activity status

As the following table illustrates, there are differences between men and women in Prescott Russell in terms of activity status in 2021.

Table 23: Activity situation, 2021 <sup>69</sup>

	Prescott-Russell		Ottawa		Ontario	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
<b>Did not work (during the reference year)</b>	38,5 %	31,1 %	37,6 %	30,7 %	41,7 %	34 %
<b>Worked full-time all year round (during the reference year)</b>	35 %	45 %	34,2 %	43 %	29,1 %	38,7 %
<b>Worked part-year and/or part-time (during the reference year)</b>	26,5 %	23,9 %	28,1 %	26,3 %	29,2 %	27,3 %

In Prescott-Russell, there is an over-representation of women who have not worked in 2021 (38.5% for women, compared to 31.1% for men), and an under-representation of women who have worked full-time all year round (35% for women, compared to 45% for men).

### Industry/sector

The following table illustrates the representation of women and men in sectors where the difference is the most marked (more than 5%).

Table 24: Representation by industry, 2021 <sup>70</sup>

	Prescott-Russell		Ottawa		Ontario	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
<b>Construction</b>	2,6 %	19,6 %	1,6 %	8,5 %	2 %	12,1 %
<b>Manufacturing</b>	3 %	7,9 %	1,8 %	4,1 %	5,6 %	11,9 %
<b>Teaching services</b>	12,4 %	4,1 %	10,5 %	4,9 %	10,3 %	4,3 %
<b>Health care and social assistance</b>	22,2 %	3,8 %	18,1 %	5,1 %	19,6 %	4,3 %

<sup>69</sup> [Census of Population: Prescott-Russell, Ottawa and Ontario - 2021](#)

<sup>70</sup> [Census of Population: Prescott-Russell, Ottawa and Ontario - 2021](#)

Women are over-represented in teaching and health care/social assistance, and under-represented in construction and manufacturing, which have been identified as higher-paying sectors. Representation gaps in these sectors are more pronounced in Prescott-Russell than in Ottawa or the province as a whole, particularly in construction and manufacturing.

### Entrepreneurship and job stability

The breakdown of women and men by category of worker is shown in the table below, with detailed data for Prescott-Russell, Ottawa and Ontario.

Table 25: Category of worker, 2021 <sup>71</sup>

	Prescott-Russell		Ottawa		Ontario	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
<b>Proportion of people employed in a permanent position</b>	76 %	73 %	71 %	70 %	72%	68%
<b>Proportion of people employed in a temporary position</b>	13 %	10 %	17 %	14 %	14%	12%
<b>Proportion of people who are self-employed</b>	9 %	16 %	10 %	14 %	11%	18%

There are slightly more women than men in permanent and temporary positions in Prescott-Russell, and almost twice as many men as women are self-employed. Difficulties in accessing credit and government subsidies can be cited as a barrier to female entrepreneurship, to which we can add the lack of mental health support and the absence of childcare services<sup>72</sup>.

### Summary - Women's participation in the economy

The following table summarizes the situation of women in Prescott-Russell with regard to participation in the economy, as well as systemic barriers hindering the status of women in the region.

Table 26: Summary - Women's participation in the economy

Status of women in Prescott-Russell	Systemic barriers identified
<p><b>Wage gap</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>17% wage gap (compared to 11% in Canada, 16% in Ottawa)</li> <li>Representation of women higher in lower salary brackets, lower in higher salary brackets</li> </ul> <p><b>Related issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More women do not work, or work less (part-time) in the year</li> <li>Fewer women in better-paid sectors such as construction and manufacturing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inaccessible daycare services</li> <li>Difficult access to financial resources for women entrepreneurs</li> <li>Perception that gender equality is not an issue in Prescott-Russell</li> </ul>

<sup>71</sup> [Census of Population: Prescott-Russell, Ottawa and Ontario - 2021](#)

<sup>72</sup> [For a feminist revival of women's businesses: PARO's 2023 survey on the transition to business recovery - 2023](#)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lower proportion of self-employed women</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Social norms concerning the professional role of women</li><li>• Lack of mental health support for women entrepreneurs</li><li>• No disaggregated data</li></ul>
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## Women's representation in political bodies

The Government of Canada's *Gender Results Framework* defines "gender equality in leadership roles and at all levels of decision-making" as an objective for the "Leadership and Participation in Democracy" axis<sup>73</sup>. This study takes a closer look at local political representation and female representation on the governing bodies of francophone organizations operating in the region.

### Political representation

The following table paints a revealing picture of the political involvement of men and women at the in Prescott Russell.

*Table 27: Political representation, 2022 municipal elections*

City Council	Women candidates	Male candidates	Elected women	Elected men	Rate of female representation among elected officials
Alfred-Plantagenet	2 (including 1 for mayor)	7	0	5*	0 %
Casselman	3 (including 1 for mayor)	5	3*	2	60 %
Champlain	2	10	2	7*	22 %
Clarence-Rockland	4	15	1	8*	11 %
Hawkesbury	4	9	2	5*	29 %
Hawkesbury East	3	5	3	2*	60 %
La Nation	2 (including 1 for mayor)	10	1	6*	14 %
Russell	1	7	1	4*	20 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>25 %</b>

\* Represents the role of mayor.

In 2022, the representation rate for women candidates (24%) is comparable to the representation rate for women elected (25%).

The following tables show election data for the three previous election cycles, 2018, 2014 and 2010.

<sup>73</sup> [Leadership and Participation in Democracy, Gender Results Framework - sd](#)

Table 28: Political representation, municipal elections 2018

City Council	Women candidates	Male candidates	Elected women	Elected men	Rate of female representation among elected officials
Alfred-Plantagenet	4	9	2	5*	29 %
Casselman	3	4	2	3*	40 %
Champlain	4 (including 1 for mayor)	15	2	7*	22 %
Clarence-Rockland	3	13	1	8*	11 %
Hawkesbury	8 (including 2 for mayor)	10	1*	6	14 %
Hawkesbury East	2	3	2	3*	40 %
La Nation	3 (including 1 for mayor)	8	1	4*	20 %
Russell	2	10	1	4*	20 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>23 %</b>

\* Represents the role of mayor.

In 2018, the representation rate among female candidates (29%) was slightly higher than in than in 2022, as was the female representation rate among those elected in 2018 (23%).

Table 29: Political representation, 2014 municipal elections

City Council	Women candidates	Male candidates	Elected women	Elected men	Rate of female representation among elected officials
Alfred-Plantagenet	2	13	2	5	29 %
Casselman	4 (including 1 for mayor)	7	1	4	20 %
Champlain	3	9	1	8	11 %
Clarence-Rockland	3	20	2	7	22 %
Hawkesbury	2 (including 1 for mayor)	14	2	5	29 %
Hawkesbury East	2	5	2	3	40 %
La Nation	1	8	1	4	20 %
Russell	2	11	2	3	40 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>25 %</b>

In 2014, the rate of representation at the level of female candidates (17%) was lower than in 2018, and lower than the rate of female representation at the level of those elected (25%).

Table 30: Political representation, 2010 municipal elections

City Council	Women candidates	Male candidates	Elected women	Elected men	Female representation among elected officials
Alfred-Plantagenet	2	8	0	7	0 %
Casselman	1	7	1	4	20 %
Champlain	1	10	1	8	11 %
Clarence-Rockland	4	19	1	8	11 %
Hawkesbury	3 (including 1 for mayor)	12	1	6	14 %
Hawkesbury East	1	4	1	4	20 %
La Nation	2	7	1	4	20 %
Russell	1 (including 1 for mayor)	12	0	5	0 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>12 %</b>

In 2010, the representation rate for female candidates (16%) was slightly higher than the representation rate for women elected (12%), but both rates were much lower than in subsequent years.

In all cases, female representation is well below the parity representation zone (40% to 60%). There was a large increase in women elected between 2010 and 2014, then an increase in women candidates between 2014 and 2018, and little change thereafter.

Since representation at the political level in the United Counties of Prescott and Russell is indirect and includes only the mayors of the municipalities in the area, the representation rate is even lower, as illustrated in the following table.

Table 31: Political representation, Regional government- United Counties of Prescott-Russell Council

	Elected women - 2022	Men elected - 2022	Female representation rate
<b>2022</b>	1	7	13 %
<b>2018</b>	1	7	13 %
<b>2014</b>	0	8	0 %
<b>2010</b>	0	8	0 %

## Representation on governance bodies

A second aspect of female leadership is the occupation of governance positions in organizations. Research was carried out in 2021 to paint a picture of the presence of women on the boards of organizations whose services have an impact in the Prescott-Russell region<sup>74</sup> (locally, regionally, provincially or nationally). The following table shows the representation of men and women on the boards of directors surveyed<sup>75</sup>. The notes column in the following table shows the sectors in which women are under- or over-represented.

Table 32: Representation of women on boards of organizations

	Number	Average rate	Notes on the sectors concerned
<b>Organizations with female-majority boards (60 to 100% women)</b>	30	34 %	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Board of Directors was 100% female for 11 organizations, including all those working in the <b>women's</b> sector.</li> <li>The majority of the Board of Directors for half of the organizations working in <b>family services</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>Organizations with a joint board of directors (between 40 and 59%)</b>	34	38 %	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Board of Directors had equal representation for half of the organizations in the <b>education</b> and <b>arts, media and culture</b>.</li> <li>Two-thirds of the Board of Directors were made up of equal representation from organizations in the <b>community development</b> and social services and <b>employability and professional integration</b> sectors.</li> </ul>
<b>Organizations with male-dominated boards (0-39% women)</b>	25	28 %	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only one organization had no women on its Board of Directors.</li> <li>The Boards of Directors was had a majority male representation for all organizations working in the <b>agriculture, seniors</b> and <b>environment</b> sectors.</li> <li>Half of the organizations involved in <b>economic development</b> were male-dominated.</li> </ul>

Among the 89 organizations surveyed, there is an almost even split between boards with a majority of directors female-dominated, parity-dominated and male-dominated.

When assessing the role of women in governance bodies, it is also relevant to examine the distribution of women and men in positions of leadership and decision-making power. The following table shows the number of women and men who were chairs of the boards of directors surveyed.

<sup>74</sup> [Faits saillants – Étude sur la participation des femmes aux conseils d’administration de Prescott et Russell – 2021](#)

<sup>75</sup> Internal data, Centre de leadership et d’évaluation



Table 33: Representation of women as Chair of the Board, 2021

	Number <sup>76</sup>	Rates	Notes on the sectors concerned
<b>Women in chairperson positions</b>	40	44 %	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A woman held the position of chair for 75% of the boards of organizations working in <b>education</b>, and 80% of organizations working with <b>youth</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>Men in chairperson positions</b>	51	56 %	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A man held the position of chair of the board for all organizations involved in <b>agriculture</b>, <b>seniors</b>, the <b>environment</b> and <b>family services</b>.</li> <li>This was also the case for over 70% of <b>economic development</b> organizations, and for 75% of <b>health and social services</b> organizations.</li> </ul>

Generally speaking, women are under-represented in the agricultural, manufacturing and construction sectors. economic development, the environment and services for seniors.

Qualitative data on speaking out, decision-making power and influence, etc., could also be collected to complete this portrait.

### Summary - Representation of women and girls in political bodies

The following table provides a summary of the status of women in Prescott-Russel in terms of the representation of women and girls in political bodies, as well as the systemic barriers hindering the status of women in the region.

Table 34: Summary - Representation of women and girls in political bodies

Status of women in Prescott-Russell	Systemic barriers identified <sup>77</sup>
<p><b>Municipal policy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Large increase in women elected between 2010 and 2014, then an increase in women candidates between 2014 and 2018 and little change thereafter</li> <li>In the 2022 elections, 25% of municipal seats were held by women, and only one woman was elected mayor.</li> </ul> <p><b>Corporate governance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equal or majority representation of women on boards of 64 of the 89 listed organizations</li> <li>Risk of overload for those involved: "it's often the same people".</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of female role models</li> <li>Lack of support</li> <li>Low remuneration of elected officials in municipal politics</li> <li>Norms and attitudes regarding female leadership</li> <li>A political culture that encourages male participation</li> </ul>

<sup>76</sup> Two boards had two co-chairs: one where both co-chairs were women, and one where both co-chairs were men.

<sup>77</sup> Internal data, Leadership féminin Prescott-Russell and <https://fcm.ca/fr/ressources/wilg/centre-de-ressources-women-in-local-governments>

## Systemic barriers

TERMIUM Plus<sup>78</sup> defines a systemic barrier as "an obstacle that arises from seemingly neutral practices, policies<sup>79</sup>, procedures and cultures", and states that:

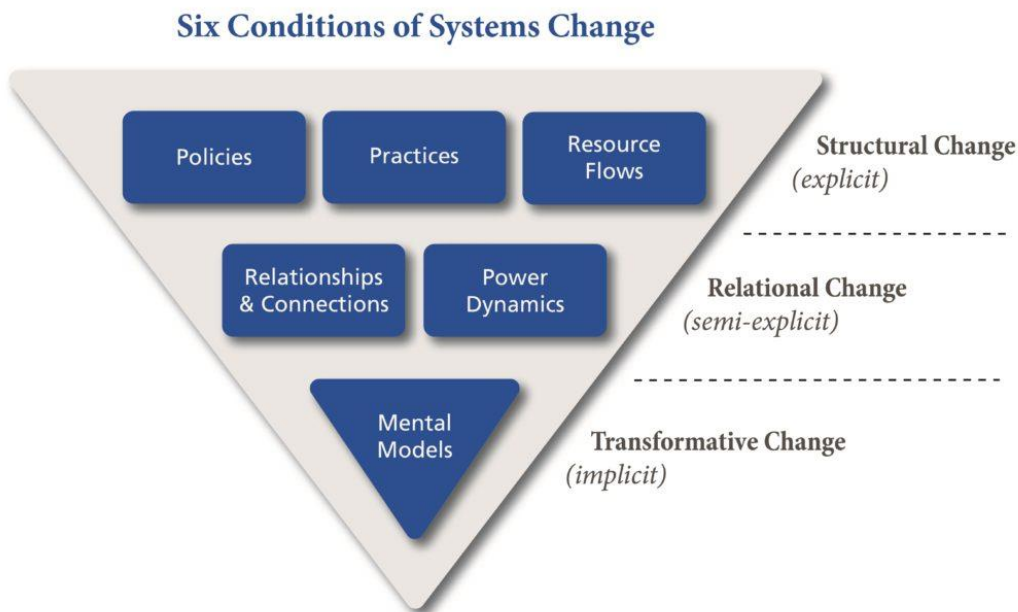
- "systemic barriers disadvantage minority groups, racialized groups, people with disabilities, people from LGBTQ2+ [lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, two-spirited and other] communities, Indigenous people and other marginalized individuals and groups;" and that :
- "systemic barriers are present in all spheres of society, such as employment, education, institutions and healthcare."

To illustrate the conditions on which we can act to bring about systemic change, we can also refer to FSG's The Water of Systems Change model<sup>80</sup>, illustrated in the following diagram:

*Diagram 35: Six conditions for systemic changes<sup>81</sup>*

**Adapted (with permission) from: Kania, Kramer and Senge, 2018 "The Water of Systems Change"**

Foundation Strategy Group – [www.fsg.prg.publications/water\\_of\\_systems\\_change](http://www.fsg.prg.publications/water_of_systems_change)



<sup>78</sup> [TERMIUM Plus - Systemic barrier](#)

<sup>79</sup> It is understood here that policies include the allocation of financial resources and organizational structures.

<sup>80</sup> [The Water of Systems Change - sd](#)

<sup>81</sup> Translation by Tamarack Institute

This diagram illustrates the conditions for systemic change and categorizes them according to the type of change achieved: structural, relational or transformative.

The following table presents the barriers identified by axis, and the conditions of change to which they are associated.

*Table 36: Systemic barriers identified by axis and their sources*

Axis	Systemic barriers identified	Change condition
<b>Women's health and well-being</b>	Perception that gender equality is not an issue that should be addressed to Prescott-Russell	Mental models
	Attitudes and norms towards women and their role(s)	Mental models
	No disaggregated data	Practices
<b>Women's justice and safety</b>	No public transport	Resource flows
	Geographical and social isolation	Relationships & connections
	Insufficient resources for women's services	Resource flows
	Difficulties in coordinating data concerning violence against women and services	Practices
<b>Participation of women in the economy</b>	Inaccessible daycare services	Policies
	Difficult access to financial resources for women entrepreneurs	Resource flows
	Perception that gender equality is not an issue at Prescott-Russell	Mental models
	Social norms concerning the professional roles of women and men	Mental models
	Lack of mental health support for women entrepreneurs	Resource flows
	No disaggregated data	Practices
<b>Representation of women and girls in politics &amp; governance</b>	Lack of female role models	Relationships & connections
	Lack of support	Resource flows
	Low remuneration of elected officials in municipal politics	Policies
	Norms and attitudes regarding female leadership	Mental models
	A political culture that encourages male participation	Practices

While some barriers are axis-specific (e.g., low remuneration of elected officials in municipal politics), several are cross-cutting (relevant to several axes), such as the lack of disaggregated data. We also note that all axes have barriers that are associated with the condition of changing mental models, which are at their core.

## Conclusions and recommendations

The United Counties of Prescott-Russell is a French-speaking, sparsely populated and relatively homogeneous region, located near Ottawa in Eastern Ontario, with an agricultural history and culture and the characteristics of a rural region.

This study was used to draw up a portrait of the status of women in Prescott-Russell regarding the four axes targeted by the *Concerté.e.s pour l'égalité* project, so as to inform the group's prioritization of actions in favor of gender equality. The following table illustrates the main findings for each axis:

Table 37: Findings by axis

Axis	Main findings
<b>Women's health and well-being</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certain mental health issues (stress and mental workload) are more prevalent among women.</li> <li>• Physical activity levels among women are very low.</li> <li>• More women head single-parent families.</li> <li>• Older women are more affected by financial insecurity.</li> <li>• Greater need for housing for women with children.</li> <li>• Relatively low levels of education, particularly among men.</li> </ul>
<b>Women's justice and safety</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is an upward trend in all forms of violence against women, including elderly women and immigrant women in the region.</li> <li>• Trafficking in women is on the rise.</li> <li>• Young women are more confident about reporting incidents of violence.</li> </ul>
<b>The participation of women in the economy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The wage gap between men and women is 17% in Prescott-Russell, compared with 11% in Canada and 16% in Ottawa.</li> <li>• Women are over-represented in the lower salary brackets and under-represented in the higher salary brackets.</li> <li>• More women do not work, or work less (part-time) than men, during the year.</li> <li>• There are fewer women in better-paid sectors, such as construction and manufacturing.</li> <li>• A smaller proportion of women are self-employed.</li> </ul>
<b>Women's representation in politics &amp; governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women have held around 25% of seats in municipal politics since 2014.</li> <li>• Women have held one of eight seats on the United Counties Council since 2018 (one mayoral position among the eight United Counties municipalities).</li> <li>• Female representation on the boards of organizations serving Prescott-Russell is often parity or majority - but it depends on the sector and "it's often the same people".</li> </ul>

The study also raised certain systemic barriers faced by women in Prescott-Russell, which can be categorized by conditions of change in FSG's social change model:

Table 38: Systemic barriers, categorized by social change conditions

Condition for social change	Systemic barrier
<b>Mental models</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perception that gender equality is not an issue to be addressed at Prescott-Russell</li> <li>• Attitudes and norms towards women and their role(s)</li> <li>• Attitudes and norms regarding female leadership</li> </ul>
<b>Relationships and connections</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geographical and social isolation</li> <li>• Lack of female role models in politics</li> </ul>
<b>Practical Policies Resource flows</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of support for women, including mental health support</li> <li>• Inaccessible daycare services</li> <li>• Low remuneration of elected officials in municipal politics</li> <li>• A political culture that encourages male participation</li> <li>• No disaggregated data</li> <li>• Difficulties in coordinating data on violence against women and services</li> <li>• No public transport</li> <li>• Insufficient resources for victim services</li> <li>• Difficult access to financial resources for women entrepreneurs</li> </ul>

That said, we can also point to the levers that the people of Prescott-Russell can draw on to exploit existing resources and structures in favor of gender equality. The involvement of various organizations in the *Concerté.e.s pour l'égalité (Concerted for Equality)* round table is a case in point.

### Future ideas

- We must note the absence of perspectives from women for whom the situation might be different due to their other identity factors (immigrant status, ethno-racial and/or Indigenous identity, 2SLGBTQI+ identity, etc.), and who might face additional barriers. The collection of disaggregated data and the intentional engagement of people with minority identities would serve to complete the portrait and ensure that prioritized interventions meet the needs of all.
- There are also intra-regional disparities within the United Counties of Prescott-Russell. A better understanding of the particularities of each municipality could enable us to conceptualize and develop customized interventions that respond more directly to local needs.
- Finally, a more in-depth analysis of the mental models existing at Prescott Russell and limiting the status of women would serve to specify the fields of action to respond to them. It should be noted that since this report was written, a discussion on mental models has taken place with participants at the annual Symposium [L'égalité, c'est ensemble qu'on y va y arriver](#), organized by LFPR on October 5, 2023. A summary of the discussion is presented in Appendix 4.

## APPENDIX 1: Glossaries

Several glossaries exist to define and explain terms related to the status of women, some of which evolve regularly. Here are two that may be of interest to those reading this report:

- [Glossary of IDEA terms](#), *Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion*, May 2023
- [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Terminology Guide](#), *Government of Canada*, April 2023

## APPENDIX 2: List of tables

Table 1: Socio-demographic profile of the Prescott-Russell population .....	5
Table 2: Perception of health in general, evolution between 2015-2016 and 2019-2020.....	6
Table 3: Perception of mental health, evolution between 2015-2016 and 2019-2020 .....	7
Table 4: Perceived level of stress, evolution between 2015-2016 and 2019-2020.....	7
Table 5: Prevalence of anxiety and mood disorders in men and women, 2019-2020 .....	8
Table 6: Physical activity levels, 2015-2016 and 2020.....	9
Table 7: Rate of single-parent families among census families, 2021.....	10
Table 8: People waiting for rent-geared-to-income housing, Prescott-Russell, 2023.....	11
Table 9: People experiencing homelessness, Prescott-Russell, 2023.....	11
Table 10: Incidence of low income, 2021 .....	12
Table 11: Highest level of education, population aged 25 to 64, 2021 .....	12
Table 12: Summary - Women's health and well-being.....	13
Table 13: Types of violence experienced, in descending order of frequency .....	14
Table 14: Types of violence reported to the police in cases of domestic violence .....	14
Table 15: Accusations of domestic violence made.....	15
Graph 16: Breakdown of victims of violence by gender and year.....	16
Table 17: Profile of female service users, MIH .....	16
Table 18: Support offered to victims by Coalition members.....	18
Table 19: Summary - Women's justice and safety.....	19
Table 20: Unemployment rates, 2016 and 2021 .....	20
Table 21: Wage gap - median after-tax income (2020).....	21
Table 22: Wage gap by income bracket (2020) .....	21
Table 23: Activity situation, 2021 .....	22
Table 24: Representation by industry, 2021.....	22
Table 25: Category of worker, 2021 .....	23
Table 26: Summary - Women's participation in the economy .....	23
Table 27: Political representation, 2022 municipal elections.....	25
Table 28: Political representation, municipal elections 2018.....	26
Table 29: Political representation, 2014 municipal elections.....	26
Table 30: Political representation, 2010 municipal elections.....	27
Table 31: Political representation, Prescott-Russell Council .....	27
Table 32: Representation of women on boards of organizations .....	28
Table 33: Representation of women as Chair of the Board, 2021 .....	29
Table 34: Summary - Representation of women and girls in political bodies .....	29
Diagram 35: Six conditions for systemic change .....	30
Table 36: Systemic barriers identified by axis and their sources .....	31
Table 37: Findings by axis .....	32
Table 38: Systemic barriers, categorized according to conditions of social change .....	33
Table 39: Intersection of mental model elements .....	38



## APPENDIX 3: References

[Améliorer sa santé grâce à l'activité physique – 2022](#)

[Analyse d'enjeu : La violence vécue par la communauté LGBTQ2S+ - 2020](#)

[Bulletin informatif – automne 2022](#)

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[Centre de ressources pour la gouvernance municipale inclusive - sd](#)

[Chronic Health Problems Snapshot – 2015-2020](#)

[Déterminants sociaux de la santé et inégalités en santé – 2023](#)

Données internes, Association canadienne pour la santé mentale Champlain Est – août 2023

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[Écart salarial, 1998 à 2021 – mai 2022](#)

[Élaboration de catégories utiles permettant de distinguer les niveaux d'éloignement au Canada - 2020](#)

[Faits saillants – Étude sur la participation des femmes aux conseils d'administration de Prescott et Russell – 2021](#)

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[Wage gap between men and women in Ontario has not changed in 10 years, report finds – 2023](#)

## APPENDIX 4: Deepening the mental models at Prescott-Russell

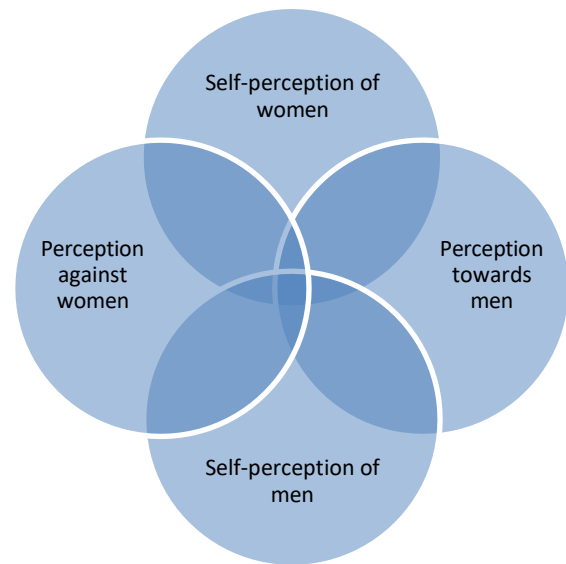
At [Leadership feminin's 2023 symposium](#) on gender equality, participants discussed the mental models that limit the status of women in Prescott-Russell, and identified elements of the region's culture and history that influence or explain these mental models. Here's a summary of the perspectives shared.

### Mental models

#### *Perceptions of women (by women and men)*

- They are unable to make decisions, understand finances or take on management/leadership responsibilities: they are too emotional and/or lack intellectual capacity.
- They should play a predominant role at home and in the family ("default parent"), and limit their professional ambitions, or prepare to do it all.
- They are better placed to take on roles similar to family management (library, health, administration, etc.).
- They have achieved equality with men.

Table 39: Intersection of mental model elements



#### *Perceptions of men (by men and women)*

- They should play a predominant role in providing for themselves and their families, and can easily be exempted from household or parental responsibilities.
- They need to maintain their position and control in society, in their family, and in their organization.

#### *Women's self-perception*

- Lack of self-confidence and assurance: fear of judgment, rejection, confrontation, appearances low.

### Prescott-Russell culture and history influencing or explaining mental models

- An agricultural culture, which influences perceptions of the roles of men and women.
- Education that's not very advanced and/or valued.
- The close-knit nature of small communities and the pressure not to break confidentiality.
- The place of religion in governance, education and healthcare.
- Oppressed linguistic minorities that have developed a scarcity mentality and a limiting survival mode.
- Little exposure to diversity and a lack of openness.
- An aging population, and the social influence of generations with traditional values.