



Women *in*
payments

CANADA 2026

AWARD CATEGORIES
& CRITERIA

*Kristy Duncan,
Founder & CEO,
Women in Payments*



ADVOCATE FOR WOMEN AWARD

The Women in Payments Advocate for Women Award will be presented to an individual—of any gender—working in payments, fintech or treasury. This award evaluates active allyship and structural outcomes that advance women in the workplace and industry. Submissions should demonstrate tangible, measurable impact, such as hiring, promotion, sponsorship, policy change, pay equity, or increased representation of women. Personal career milestones should not be considered primary scoring criteria, unless they directly enabled or resulted in these outcomes. Nominees must be employed in Canada.

CRITERION 1: PROMOTION OF FEMALE LEADERSHIP

Actively champions the advancement and visibility of women in leadership roles within and/or beyond their organization. Demonstrates leadership by advocating for and enabling measurable outcomes related to the hiring, promotion, retention, and sponsorship of women. Publicly recognizes and amplifies the achievements of female leaders and helps create pathways to leadership roles.

CRITERION 2: ADVOCACY & EQUITY

Serves as a strong advocate for gender equity across the industry, including equal pay, equal opportunity, and fair access to career progression. Actively supports or drives initiatives, policies, or structural changes that increase women's participation, representation, and advancement at all levels of the organization or industry.

CRITERION 3: SUPPORTS EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT

Promotes and enables access to education, training, and professional development opportunities for women with the intent of advancing career progression and leadership readiness. Supports learning initiatives that remove systemic barriers, close skills gaps, or improve promotion and retention outcomes for women in payments and fintech.

CRITERION 4: MENTORSHIP & EMPOWERMENT

Is widely recognized for mentorship, sponsorship, and knowledge-sharing. Actively mentors and sponsors women by advocating for their advancement, visibility, and access to opportunities. Demonstrates how mentorship or sponsorship efforts led to tangible career outcomes such as promotions, leadership appointments, or expanded responsibilities.

CRITERION 5: INTEGRITY, INCLUSION & DIVERSITY

Demonstrates high ethical standards and professional integrity. Actively fosters an inclusive, respectful, and supportive environment that values diverse perspectives. Contributes to inclusive practices or policies that create equitable opportunities and measurable progress for women.

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COMMUNITY & SOCIAL IMPACT

The Women in Payments Community & Social Impact Award recognizes a woman in payments, fintech or treasury who has made a meaningful and sustained positive impact on her community or society at large—beyond the core responsibilities of her professional role. This award celebrates individuals who contribute time, energy, leadership, or resources to causes they care deeply about, driven by personal values and a genuine commitment to making a difference. Nominees must be employed in Canada.

CRITERION 1: PURPOSE-DRIVEN LEADERSHIP

Demonstrates a strong personal commitment to improving the lives of others or strengthening communities. Takes initiative to lead, support, or participate in community, social, charitable, or nonprofit efforts—motivated by purpose rather than job requirements or formal responsibility.

CRITERION 2: MEANINGFUL COMMUNITY IMPACT

Has created a positive and tangible impact on individuals, groups, or communities. Impact may include—but is not limited to—volunteering, fundraising, nonprofit leadership, financial literacy, education, advocacy for social causes, or community-building initiatives. Contributions may occur within or outside the payments industry.

CRITERION 3: CONSISTENCY & COMMITMENT

Demonstrates sustained involvement and dedication over time, rather than a one-off initiative. Shows perseverance and follow-through in supporting causes or communities, even in the face of challenges, competing priorities, or change.

CRITERION 4: COLLABORATION & INFLUENCE

Actively brings people together to amplify impact. Collaborates with peers, organizations, or community groups to advance shared goals. Inspires others through action, generosity, and leadership, encouraging participation and collective contribution.

CRITERION 5: INTEGRITY & AUTHENTICITY

Acts with humility, integrity, and genuine care for others. Is recognized as someone who gives back authentically, without seeking recognition, and whose actions reflect strong personal values and social responsibility.

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INNOVATION AWARD

The Women in Payments Innovation Award recognizes a woman in payments, fintech and treasury who has demonstrated exceptional innovation by turning creative ideas into meaningful, measurable impact. Innovation may include technology, product, process, operational, customer experience, or business model improvements, and is not limited to formal innovation or technology roles. Nominees must be employed in Canada.

CRITERION 1: INNOVATIVE THINKING & INITIATIVE

Demonstrates originality, creativity, and vision in identifying opportunities for improvement or transformation. Challenges existing approaches and takes initiative to develop new ideas, solutions, or ways of working—often beyond the expectations of her formal role.

CRITERION 2: PROBLEM-SOLVING & EXECUTION

Applies new thinking, knowledge, or technology to solve real-world challenges. Successfully translates ideas into action by designing, implementing, and refining solutions that address customer needs, operational inefficiencies, or industry gaps.

CRITERION 3: IMPACT & SCALABILITY

Delivers measurable outcomes, such as improved efficiency, reduced risk or cost, enhanced customer experience, or increased revenue or adoption. Solutions demonstrate the potential to scale, be replicated, or applied across teams, functions, or organizations beyond the nominee's immediate scope.

CRITERION 4: COLLABORATION & INFLUENCE

Works effectively across teams and stakeholders to bring innovation to life. Encourages diverse perspectives, shares knowledge, and empowers others to innovate. Is recognized as a trusted collaborator who helps create a culture of continuous improvement.

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INSPIRATION AWARD

The Women in Payments Inspiration Award recognizes a woman working in payments, fintech, or treasury who inspires others through her vision, leadership, and example. This award celebrates individuals whose ideas, actions, and influence energize teams, elevate dialogue, and foster optimism and progress within the industry—particularly during periods of change. This award recognizes inspirational influence and role-based impact, which may be demonstrated regardless of title, seniority, or number of direct reports. It is not intended to recognize lifetime achievement or cumulative career legacy. Nominees must be employed in Canada.

CRITERION 1: VISION & THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

Demonstrates a clear and compelling perspective on the future of payments. Actively contributes to current industry dialogue through thought leadership—such as speaking, writing, mentoring, or leading meaningful conversations—that shapes thinking, sparks discussion, and influences how others engage with the evolving payments ecosystem.

CRITERION 2: INSPIRATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Leads with authenticity and purpose, inspiring others to perform at their best during times of growth, change, or uncertainty. Encourages open dialogue, curiosity, and diverse viewpoints, creating an environment where people feel valued, heard, and motivated to grow.

CRITERION 3: POSITIVE INFLUENCE & RESILIENCE

Maintains a constructive and optimistic mindset, particularly during periods of challenge, transformation, or change. Positively influences others by helping teams navigate uncertainty, embrace new ideas, and maintain momentum through setbacks.

CRITERION 4: RELATIONSHIPS AND MENTORSHIP

Builds strong, trust-based relationships and supports the growth of others through mentorship, guidance, or example. Inspires confidence and engagement, encouraging individuals to contribute positively and thoughtfully within their teams or the broader industry.

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RISING STAR AWARD

The Women in Payments Rising Star Award recognizes a woman in payments, fintech and treasury who has demonstrated exceptional performance, initiative, and growth early in her career, and who shows strong potential to become a future leader in the industry. This award celebrates individuals who consistently exceed expectations, contribute meaningfully to their teams or organizations, and demonstrate ambition, curiosity, and momentum in shaping their professional journey. Nominees must be **35 years of age or under as of December 31, 2025**, and currently employed in Canada.

CRITERION 1: DRIVE & INITIATIVE

Demonstrates a strong work ethic, ambition, and commitment to excellence. Takes initiative to go beyond assigned responsibilities, actively seeks opportunities to learn and grow, and contributes ideas or actions that create value for her team, organization, or customers.

CRITERION 2: PERFORMANCE & PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE

Consistently delivers high-quality work and strong results. Collaborates effectively with others, builds trust with colleagues, peers, and/or clients, and is recognized as dependable, capable, and professional in a variety of situations.

CRITERION 3: GROWTH POTENTIAL

Demonstrates a clear trajectory for continued development and leadership. Shows adaptability, curiosity, and the ability to learn from experience. Exhibits behaviors aligned with organizational values and demonstrates readiness to take on increasing responsibility over time.

CRITERION 4: TEAM CONTRIBUTION & COLLABORATION

Actively contributes to a positive, inclusive, and supportive team environment. Shares knowledge, supports peers, and leads by example regardless of title. Is recognized as someone others enjoy working with and can rely on.

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THOUGHT LEADER AWARD

The Women in Payments Thought Leader Award recognizes a woman in payments, fintech and treasury who is widely respected as a trusted expert and whose ideas actively influence industry thinking, dialogue, and progress. This award celebrates individuals who contribute original, insightful perspectives that educate and inspire others, help anticipate industry trends, and shape the future direction of the payments ecosystem—beyond commercial promotion or sales-driven messaging. Nominees must be employed in Canada.

CRITERION 1: RECOGNIZED THOUGHT LEADERSHIP & EXPERTISE

Is recognized as an authority in a specific area of the payments or fintech ecosystem. Shares original, informed perspectives through public forums such as speaking engagements, published articles, research, media commentary, panels, committees, or industry working groups. Contributions demonstrate depth of expertise and go beyond promoting products, services, or organizations.

CRITERION 2: INFLUENCE & INDUSTRY IMPACT

Ideas and insights influence how others think, discuss, or act within the industry. Contributions help drive progress by shaping conversations around industry challenges, opportunities, innovation, regulation, or future trends in the Canadian and/or global payments ecosystem.

CRITERION 3: ORIGINAL THINKING & FUTURE FOCUS

Demonstrates the ability to challenge conventional thinking, introduce new perspectives, and anticipate emerging trends. Thought leadership reflects creativity, critical thinking, and a forward-looking mindset that contributes to the evolution of the payments industry.

CRITERION 4: EDUCATION & DIALOGUE

Creates content or forums that educate and inform a broad audience. Encourages meaningful dialogue, debate, and knowledge-sharing that deepens understanding of complex topics and fosters informed discussion across the ecosystem.

CRITERION 5: CREDIBILITY, TRUST & INTEGRITY

Builds credibility through accuracy, balance, and professionalism. Is respected for responsible influence, ethical conduct, and a commitment to elevating industry understanding. Encourages diverse perspectives and thoughtful discourse that strengthens trust in the payments industry.

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DISTINGUISHED PAYMENTS PROFESSIONAL AWARD (LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT)

Women in Payments Distinguished Payments Professional Award recognizes a woman in payments, fintech and treasury whose career-long contributions have had a profound and lasting impact on the industry. This award honours an individual whose leadership, expertise, and integrity have helped shape the payments ecosystem over time, and whose influence extends beyond individual roles, organizations, or achievements. Nominations are encouraged from all functions across the payments and fintech industry. Nominees must be employed in Canada.

CRITERION 1: CAREER ACHIEVEMENT & INDUSTRY IMPACT

Demonstrates a sustained record of achievement across her career. Has significantly influenced the evolution, direction, or maturity of the payments industry through leadership, innovation, expertise, or stewardship. Her contributions reflect long-term impact rather than isolated accomplishments.

CRITERION 2: ENDURING CONTRIBUTION & INDUSTRY STEWARDSHIP

Has consistently contributed to the broader success and reputation of the payments industry over time. Is widely regarded as a trusted advisor, respected expert, and ambassador for the industry. Her work has strengthened the ecosystem and helped advance industry standards, practices, or understanding.

CRITERION 3: LEGACY, VALUES & INTEGRITY

Is known for authenticity, integrity, and principled leadership throughout her career. Has built enduring relationships across organizations and sectors, and is recognized as a role model whose values and conduct have positively influenced others and set a standard for excellence.

CRITERION 4: MENTORSHIP & LASTING INFLUENCE

Has made a meaningful and lasting impact on people and organizations through mentorship, knowledge-sharing, and leadership development. Her influence is evident in the growth of others, the cultures she has shaped, and the pathways she has created for future generations within the payments industry.

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WOMEN IN PAYMENTS CANADA 2026 AWARDS PROGRAM CATEGORIES & CRITERIA

NOMINATION REQUIREMENTS

- Self-nominations are not allowed.
- Nominees must reside in Canada.
- Each nominee can only be nominated for one award category; duplicate nominations will not be accepted.
- A maximum of one nominee per category per organization.

The following is required to submit an application:

Nominator

- Name
- Organization
- Email and Phone

Nominee

- Name and Job title
- Organization
- Biography and Photo
- Email and Phone
- LinkedIn Profile (URL)
- Address

Award

- Category
- Describe how the nominee meets the criteria for this award. (min 500 –1000 max characters)
- Outline of the nominee’s experience and most significant achievement(s) in the organization or within the payments industry in the areas of leadership, mentorship, integrity, and diversity. Provide concise examples of initiatives, efforts, programs, or policies that have contributed to success. (min 500 – 1000 max characters)
- Profile picture of the nominee (max 1000 x 1000 pixels). The picture must be labeled with full name and organization

References

- Minimum of one reference letter from colleagues and peers who can support the nomination. Up to two additional references may be provided to strengthen the nomination
- Name, Organization, Email, Phone
- Capacity in which they know the nominee (min 100 – 300 max characters)
- Reasons why they support the nomination (min 100 – 300 max characters)

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Judging Guidance

Unless otherwise stated, all criteria within each category are weighted equally. Judges are encouraged to assess each submission based on the overall strength, balance, and relevance of the nomination in alignment with the stated award intent and criteria.

Scoring (1-5)

1 = Does not meet expectations

5 = Exceeds expectations

Weighted Score Calculation

$(\text{Score} \div 5) \times \text{Criterion Weight}$

Final scores are calculated out of 100 points.

ADVOCATE FOR WOMEN AWARD

Sponsorship, hiring/promotion impact, pay equity, structural advancement for women

Criterion	Weight	Score (1–5)	Weighted Score
Promotion of Female Leadership	20%		
Advocacy & Equity	20%		
Supports Education & Development	20%		
Mentorship & Empowerment	20%		
Integrity, Inclusion & Diversity	20%		
Total	100%		

COMMUNITY & SOCIAL IMPACT

Charitable/nonprofit leadership, societal benefit beyond core payments role

Criterion	Weight	Score (1–5)	Weighted Score
Purpose-Driven Leadership	20%		
Meaningful Community Impact	20%		
Consistency & Commitment	20%		
Collaboration & Influence	20%		
Integrity & Authenticity	20%		
Total	100%		

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INNOVATION AWARD

Category-specific forward momentum, new ideas, industry visibility, early-career acceleration

Criterion	Weight	Score (1–5)	Weighted Score
Innovative Thinking & Initiative	25%		
Problem-Solving & Execution	25%		
Impact & Scalability	25%		
Collaboration & Influence	25%		
Total	100%		

INSPIRATION AWARD

Industry momentum, optimism, and influence on dialogue during periods of change, not lifetime career legacy

Criterion	Weight	Score (1–5)	Weighted Score
Vision & Thought Leadership	25%		
Inspirational Leadership	25%		
Positive Influence & Resilience	25%		
Relationships & Mentorship	25%		
Total	100%		

RISING STAR AWARD

Category-specific forward momentum, new ideas, industry visibility, early-career acceleration

Criterion	Weight	Score (1–5)	Weighted Score
Drive & Initiative	25%		
Performance & Professional Excellence	25%		
Growth Potential	25%		
Team Contribution & Collaboration	25%		
Total	100%		

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THOUGHT LEADER AWARD

Category-specific forward momentum, new ideas, industry visibility, early-career acceleration

Criterion	Weight	Score (1–5)	Weighted Score
Recognized Thought Leadership & Expertise	20%		
Influence & Industry Impact	20%		
Original Thinking & Future Focus	20%		
Education & Dialogue	20%		
Credibility, Trust & Integrity	20%		
Total	100%		

DISTINGUISHED PAYMENTS PROFESSIONAL AWARD

Lifetime achievement, sustained ecosystem impact, leadership legacy, advisory influence

Criterion	Weight	Score (1–5)	Weighted Score
Career Achievement & Industry Impact	25%		
Enduring Contribution & Industry Stewardship	25%		
Legacy, Values & Integrity	25%		
Mentorship & Lasting Influence	25%		
Total	100%		

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