



RBC Canadian Women  
Entrepreneur Awards

Presented by:

**WOMEN OF  
INFLUENCE+**

## **2023 RBC CANADIAN WOMEN ENTREPRENEUR AWARDS FINALISTS ANNOUNCED TODAY**

TORONTO – Women of Influence+ announces the 2023 RBC Canadian Women Entrepreneur Awards finalists. This year marks the 31<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the program, which received over 11,000 nominations for women entrepreneurs from all over Canada. After an intensive judging review, 20 finalists were selected across seven categories. An additional five recipients were chosen to receive the Ones to Watch Award, which recognizes entrepreneurs who have launched businesses that have made an incredible impact in less than three years.

The women business owners and leaders in this shortlisted group were selected for their accomplishments in a wide range of industries including Sustainability, Urban Planning, Innovation in Healthcare, AI and Real Estate.

“Our 2023 RBC Canadian Women Entrepreneur Awards finalists are changing the narrative by fearlessly defying convention and reshaping the perception of what women can achieve in the business world,” said Dr. Rumeet Billan, Owner and CEO, Women of Influence+. “Their impact extends far beyond their own companies. These exceptional entrepreneurs are also making a significant difference in their communities, addressing social challenges, and advocating for positive change. They are not only building successful enterprises, but also using their influence and resources to uplift others and leave a lasting legacy of positive transformation. We are thrilled to celebrate the remarkable achievements of this year’s finalists during our annual gala and share their inspiring stories with a wider audience.”

The winners will be announced and celebrated in-person at the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Awards Gala, on Wednesday, November 22, 2023. This year, Women of Influence+ is thrilled to host this inspiring red-carpet event at the Ritz-Carlton, Toronto, where nominees, executives, dignitaries, and notable industry guests will come together once again for an evening of celebration and meaningful connection with business leaders from across the country.

The RBC Canadian Women Entrepreneur Awards recognize women business owners from across Canada who make impressive and substantial contributions to the local, Canadian, or global economy. These awards recognize businesswomen and leaders of non-profits from three major regions across Canada: East, Central, and West.

“RBC is proud to recognize and celebrate the outstanding contributions of female entrepreneurs who are driving impactful change in the local and global economy with their leadership, innovation and excellence”, says Sean Amato-Gauci, Executive Vice-President, Business Financial Services, RBC. “For more than three decades, the RBC Canadian Women Entrepreneur Awards program has uncovered countless stories of trailblazing women who have shattered barriers, fostered innovation across sectors, and inspired the next generation of entrepreneurs. We’re excited to see the number of women entrepreneurs grow in Canada with each passing year, and today, we’re proud to put a spotlight on the stories and achievements of this year’s finalists and winners who make up the diverse fabric of Canada’s thriving business community.”

All nominees are required to submit thorough applications, which are reviewed and judged by a panel of prominent business leaders and subject to a due diligence review conducted by Deloitte.



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**2023 Recipients of the Ones to Watch Award:**

Sang Le & Arielle Lok, Peko  
Linell Grudnitzki, GC Group of Companies  
Laurie M. Clark, Onyen Corporation  
Shania & Anya Bhopa, The Canadian Courage Project  
Golnasim Riahi, Pharmacie Golnasim Riahi

**2023 RBC Canadian Women Entrepreneur Awards Finalists:**

**Micro-Business Award**

*West:* Nikki Nordick, Airdrie Puppy Pals  
*Central:* Naama Blonder, Smart Density Inc.  
*East:* Jolene Johnson, Wabanaki Maple

**Start-Up Award**

*West:* Christine Ochieng, Amani Travel Health Clinic  
*Central:* Laura Suen, Fire & Steel Inc.  
*East:* Angele Miller, Creekside RnR

**RBC Momentum Award**

*West:* Dionne Laslo-Baker, DeeBee's Organics  
*Central:* Francisca Quinn, Quinn & Partners Inc.  
*East:* Jennie Coleman, Equifruit Inc.

**Social Change Award: Regional Impact**

*West:* Ginny Becker, Child Advocacy Centre Of Kelowna  
*Central:* Dr. Sukaina Dada, SMILE Canada - Support Services  
*East:* Jenn Deon, PerSISTence Theatre Company

**Social Change Award: National Impact**

*West:* Aditi Loveridge, Pregnancy & Infant Loss Support Centre  
*Central:* Onome Ako, Action Against Hunger Canada  
*Central:* Karen Greve Young, Futurpreneur

**Innovation Award**

*West:* Norma Biln, Augurex  
*Central:* Shamira Jaffer, Signifi Solutions

**Excellence Award**

*West:* Aisha Yang, Herband Natural Inc.  
*Central:* Cailey Heaps, Heaps Estrin Real Estate Team  
*East:* Julie Roy, Les Services Ménagers Roy Ltée.



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The 2023 RBC Canadian Women Entrepreneur Awards are presented by Women of Influence+. Award presenters include RBC, Telus Business, Brescia University College and Bell Media. Our official Due Diligence partner is Deloitte and the official gift sponsor is Bulova.

### **About the RBC Canadian Women Entrepreneur Awards**

The RBC Canadian Women Entrepreneur Awards are the pre-eminent national business awards recognizing the country's leading women entrepreneurs. The awards are an initiative of Women of Influence+, an award-winning global organization dedicated to advancing women in the workplace.

### **About RBC**

Royal Bank of Canada is a global financial institution with a purpose-driven, principles-led approach to delivering leading performance. Our success comes from the 97,000+ employees who leverage their imaginations and insights to bring our vision, values and strategy to life so we can help our clients thrive and communities prosper. As Canada's biggest bank and one of the largest in the world, based on market capitalization, we have a diversified business model with a focus on innovation and providing exceptional experiences to our more than 17 million clients in Canada, the U.S. and 27 other countries. Learn more at [rbc.com](https://www.rbc.com).

We are proud to support a broad range of community initiatives through donations, community investments and employee volunteer activities. See how at [rbc.com/community-social-impact](https://www.rbc.com/community-social-impact).

### **About Women of Influence Worldwide Inc.**

For almost 30 years, [Women of Influence+](https://www.womenofinfluence.ca) (WOI+) has been the community where ambitious women with wide-ranging expertise, and innovative ideas go to create a new future for themselves and for the world of work at large. A future where women-led leadership thrives. At WOI+, our ethos is rooted in making meaningful and impactful change. We do this by placing ourselves and our community in positions of influence and power — places where we can drive transformation.

We measure influence by impact — the ripples that are made, the doors that are opened, the number of seats that are added to the proverbial decision-making table. Influence is about how decisions, innovations, and systems create a more inclusive and equitable world for everyone. At WOI+, we are unafraid to shake the status quo to transform society's expectations of our capabilities.

We are dedicated to sharing and elevating the unfiltered success stories of a diverse group of role models. We know that when done right — from the podium or the page — these stories not only inspire, educate, and connect — they start to redefine our perceptions of gender roles and abilities. We are changing the narrative. The result? Our community is equipped with the connections, support, training, and tools to carve new pathways, and excel within their careers on their own terms.

Follow us on [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/womenofinfluence), [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/womenofinfluence), [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/womenofinfluence), and [Twitter](https://twitter.com/womenofinfluence)

### **For interview requests or further information, please contact:**

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