



# LEADERSHIP AWARDS '25

## AWARD CRITERIA

# About the VersaFi Leadership Awards

Canada's finance sector has something to be proud of; exemplary individuals and firms that share an inspiring vision for the future — an equitable workplace.

That's why we launched the VersaFi Leadership Awards back in 2007 — to honour the work, innovation, and ingenuity required to create an environment that enables everyone to thrive. Eighteen years later we are as excited as ever to recognize the exemplary leaders of change that help drive a mission that can harness the full potential of North America's financial sector — one that includes more innovation, diverse and impactful teams, improved businesses, and new levels of prosperity.

We do this through six awards categories, which include: Rising Star; Trailblazers; Outstanding Volunteer; Transformational Leadership; Excellence in Innovation; and Allyship. Details for each category, including award criteria and nomination dates, are listed on the next pages.



# Rising Star Award

## Recognizing Emerging Leaders Driving Change

**This award celebrates early-career women** who have shown exceptional promise in advancing gender equity within their organizations or the broader finance sector. Candidates have **fewer than 8 years of experience** and demonstrate a proactive commitment to supporting women through mentorship, advocacy, or innovative initiatives. Rising Stars are the future leaders already making a meaningful impact.

### Quantity:

- Up to 3 winners

### Eligibility Criteria:

- Women professionals with up to **8 years** of experience in finance. *\*To be verified through LinkedIn profile*
- Demonstrated passion for advancing gender equity through projects, mentorship, or advocacy
- Must be a VersaFi full member in good standing
- Currently working in the North American finance industry in a business line or supporting function on the sell side, the buy side, or in fintech; may also be working in an advisory firm in Capital Markets/Corporate Finance/M&A/Deals
- Self-nominations and nominations for others are accepted

### Nomination Guidelines:

- A summary (up to 500 words) outlining the nominee's contribution to VersaFi and VersaFi's mission to accelerate progress for women in finance. *\*Nominations must address all of the criteria noted below in order to be considered.*
- A completed application form found on [our website](#).

### Judging Criteria:

- **Impact on Gender Equity (50%)** - Provide examples of tangible contributions to advancing women in finance (e.g. mentorship, project leadership, advocacy).
- **Community & Peer Support (30%)** - Provide evidence of positive influence on colleagues, peers, or networks.
- **Initiative & Innovation (20%)** - How has the nominee demonstrated creativity in addressing challenges or seizing opportunities to support women?



# Trailblazer Award

## Honouring Mid-Career Champions of Equity

**This award recognizes women with 8 to 15 years of experience** who are actively driving positive change for women in finance. Trailblazers demonstrate strong leadership by challenging barriers, implementing inclusive practices, and fostering diverse talent pipelines. Their efforts have had a measurable impact, both within their organizations and across the sector.

### Quantity:

- Up to 3 winners

### Eligibility Criteria:

- Women professionals with **8 to 15 years** of experience in finance. *\*To be verified through LinkedIn profile*
- Proven leadership in advancing women in finance through policy changes, sponsorship, or high-impact initiatives
- Must be a VersaFi full member in good standing
- Currently working in the North American finance industry in a business line or supporting function on the sell side, the buy side, or in fintech; may also be working in an advisory firm in Capital Markets/Corporate Finance/M&A/Deals
- Self-nominations and nominations for others are accepted

### Nomination Guidelines:

- A summary (up to 500 words) outlining the nominee's contribution to VersaFi and VersaFi's mission to accelerate progress for women in finance. *\*Nominations must address all of the criteria noted below in order to be considered.*
- A completed application form found on [our website](#).

### Judging Criteria:

- **Impact on Gender Equity (50%)** - How has the nominee demonstrated influence on policies, programs, or cultural change that advances women in finance?
- **Mentorship & Sponsorship (30%)** - Provide examples of active mentorship/sponsorship of other women in the sector.
- **Sector-Wide Influence (20%)** - Provide examples of impact beyond their own organization.



**NOTE:** VersaFi Board and Advisory Council Members are not eligible for this category.

# Transformational Leader Award

## Celebrating Visionary Leaders Redefining the Future

**This award honours senior women leaders with 15+ years of experience** who have made significant and sustained contributions to advancing gender equity in finance. Transformational Leaders are champions of change — driving policy, culture, and strategy shifts that create lasting, systemic improvements for women in finance.

### Quantity:

- Up to 3 winners

### Eligibility Criteria:

- Women professionals with **15+ years** of experience in finance. *\*To be verified through LinkedIn profile*
- A proven track record of driving gender equity at the executive level or industry-wide; Influence on policies, sponsorship programs, or initiatives that have changed the landscape for women in finance in a lasting way
- Recognized thought leader, advocate, or public voice on gender equity in finance
- Currently working in the North American finance industry in a business line or supporting function on the sell side, the buy side, or in fintech; may also be working in an advisory firm in Capital Markets/Corporate Finance/M&A/Deals
- Self-nominations and nominations for others are accepted

- Must be a VersaFi full member in good standing; Has not been a 2023 / 2024 VersaFi Champion of Change

### Nomination Guidelines:

- A summary (up to 500 words) outlining the nominee's contribution to VersaFi and VersaFi's mission to accelerate progress for women in finance.
- A completed application form found on [our website](#).

### Judging Criteria:

- **Systemic Impact (50%):** Provide examples of nominee's influence of organizational or industry-wide change to support women's advancement.
- **Executive Leadership (30%):** Provide evidence of leadership in driving inclusive strategies, policies, or initiatives.
- **Legacy & Influence (20%):** Provide evidence of sustained impact and leadership across a long-term career.



**NOTE:** Category open to VersaFi Corporate Partners Only

# Excellence in Innovation Award

## Celebrating Game-Changing Innovation for Women in Finance

**This award honors a person, team, department, or organization** that has created meaningful, measurable, and lasting improvements for women through an innovative and impactful approach. The winning initiative will showcase bold thinking, strategic execution, and tangible results that have advanced gender equity in the finance sector.

### Quantity:

- 1 winner

### Eligibility Criteria:

- Open to VersaFi partner firms at the Platinum, Gold, or Silver level only
- The initiative must have been implemented within the last 36 months and demonstrates sustained progress over time.
- Both self-nominations and nominations of others are welcome

### Nomination Guidelines:

- A summary (up to 750 words) outlining: the initiative and its goals; the results (including measures); and the lasting impact and scalability.
- A completed application form found on [our website](#).

### Judging Criteria:

- **Innovation & Creativity (40%):**

- Clearly describe the initiative's objectives and how it was designed to accelerate equity for women in your organization;
- Describe how this initiative demonstrates bold, original thinking that challenges traditional approaches to advancing gender equity.

- **Impact & Measurable Results (40%):**

- Provide concrete data, metrics, or evidence showcasing the initiative's success. Where possible, include before-and-after comparisons to demonstrate measurable change.

- **Sustainability & Scalability (20%):**

- Describe the lasting impact.
- Show how the initiative can be adapted or scaled to benefit broader teams, departments, or industry partners.



**NOTE:** VersaFi Board and Advisory Council Members are not eligible for this category.

# Outstanding Volunteer Award

**This award recognizes individuals** who have **transcended the typical boundaries of volunteerism** at VersaFi. These individuals have demonstrated extraordinary leadership, initiative, and a profound commitment to advancing gender equity in the finance industry. They have become invaluable assets to VersaFi, significantly contributing to our mission by expanding our reach, enhancing our programs, and inspiring fellow volunteers. This award celebrates their dedication and tangible impact in accelerating progress for women in finance.

## Quantity:

- Up to 2 winners

## Eligibility Criteria:

- Has held a VersaFi volunteer position for min. two years
- Must be a VersaFi member in good standing
- Self-nominations and nominations for others are accepted

## Nomination Guidelines:

- A summary (up to 500 words) outlining the nominee's contribution to VersaFi and VersaFi's mission to accelerate progress for women in finance.
- A completed application form found on [our website](#).

## Judging Criteria:

- **Leadership & Initiative (40%):** How has the nominee proactively identified opportunities and led impactful initiatives beyond assigned tasks, and achieving outcomes (e.g., increased engagement, improved efficiency).
- **VersaFi Reach & Impact (40%):** Provide examples of expanding VersaFi's network and visibility, driving increased event attendance/program participation, and/or cultivating valuable industry relationships.
- **Commitment to Gender Equity (20%):** Provide examples of advocating for VersaFi's mission in their network, actively participating in VersaFi's events and programs, and doing all of this in a consistent and sustained way.



**NOTE:** VersaFi Board and Advisory Council Members are not eligible for this category.

# Allyship Award

**This recognizes men** who have **demonstrably championed gender equity and inclusion**, creating meaningful and lasting change for women within their teams, departments, organizations, and/or the broader finance industry. These individuals have moved beyond passive support to active allyship, exhibiting sustained leadership and implementing concrete actions that have resulted in measurable progress for their women colleagues.

## Quantity:

- Up to 2 winners

## Eligibility Criteria:

- Men employed at a VersaFi Platinum, Gold, or Silver partner level firm. *\*To be verified through LinkedIn profile*
- Must be a VersaFi full member in good standing; Has not been a 2023 / 2024 VersaFi Champion of Change
- Currently working in the North American finance industry in a business line or supporting function on the sell side, the buy side, or in fintech; may also be working in an advisory firm in Capital Markets/Corporate Finance/M&A/Deals
- Self-nominations and nominations for others are accepted

## Nomination Guidelines:

- A summary (up to 500 words) outlining the nominee's role as an ally in accelerating progress for women in finance.
- A completed application form found on [our website](#).

## Judging Criteria:

- **Demonstrated Active Allyship (40%):** Evidence of proactively using position and influence to challenge systemic barriers and advocate for women's advancement
- **Tangible Outcomes & Impact (40%):** Evidence that actions have resulted in measurable improvements in women's professional experiences and opportunities
- **Sustained Leadership & Commitment (20%):** Evidence of consistent and ongoing commitment to advancing gender equity over a significant period



