



Candidates for the Equal
Voice's National Board
Election 2022

Past Chair

Eleni Bakpanos

Director for British Columbia

Rabi Al-Hassan

Director for Alberta

Dr. Kim Kelly

Director for Manitoba

Vacant

Director for Ontario

Sherry Antone

Director for Nova Scotia

Vacant

Director for New Brunswick and PEI

Frances LeBlanc

Director for Newfoundland & Labrador

Vacant

Director for Nunavut, Northwest Territories and Yukon

Kelsey Gammel

Director at Large (Three Positions)

Angela Bonfanti

Francyne Joe

Carrie Lynn Poole-Cotnam

Esmahan Razavi

Nathalie Eleanor Vilgrain

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Past Chair

The Honourable Eleni Bakopanos, P.C.

The Honourable Eleni Bakopanos, P.C., was first elected in 1993 as the Member of Parliament for Saint-Denis, was re-elected 3 times in Ahuntsic, and is a member of the Privy Council of Canada. She has served in several parliamentary roles including Assistant Deputy Speaker and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada. She also served as special advisor for caucus to the Honourable Stéphane Dion, Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada. She is a member and has served as President of the Women's Commission of the Liberal Party of Canada (Quebec).

Prior to entering politics at the federal level, Ms. Bakopanos had worked in provincial politics with the Liberal Party of Quebec and in the Quebec government as policy advisor for the Quebec Premier and the Minister of Immigration and Cultural communities. She was also a candidate in the electoral district of Cremazie for the Liberal Party of Quebec.

She held the position of Senior Director for Government Relations at McGill University and has worked at mentoring young women, including the students with McGill's "Women in the House" program which once a year brings McGill students to Parliament Hill to shadow women parliamentarians. She is presently serving as Honorary President of the McGill Women's Alumnae Association.

Ms. Bakopanos serves as a director on a number of non-governmental and not-for-profit Boards and has served as Chair and Treasurer of the National Board of Directors of Equal Voice and VP of the Quebec Chapter. She has volunteered with a number of Quebec women's organizations, including the Montreal Council of Women (as VP), Groupe Femmes, Politique et Démocratie and La Gouvernance au Féminin. In addition, she is presently the Vice-President of the Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians.



Director for British Columbia

Rabi Al-Hassan

I am Ghanaian-Canadian and have lived, worked and served the Nanaimo community since immigrating here 16 years ago, being involved with Equal Voice for six years. A graduate of Vancouver Island University, where I gained separate degrees in Criminology, Global Studies, and Education, I am currently a K-12 substitute Teacher.

Re Finance & Fundraising: As a founding director of the registered charity, www.beesforbabar.org, I was involved, for 5 years, in associated fundraising, budgeting and distribution of donations—as well as regularly canvassing, over 6 years, for the Child Development Centre and Kidney Foundation of Canada.

Re Legal experience: I have a Diploma in Criminology and have six years of continuing service, as a Community Representative, on Restorative Justice Commissions with the John Howard Society.

Re Political Acuity: I was instrumental in forming the Afro-Caribbean Club at VIU and became its first elected president. I campaigned and canvassed to successfully elect the first black member to the Nanaimo City Council.

Re Equity, diversity and inclusion: I was raised in a mixed Christian/Muslim household in which I developed key insights into blending disparate viewpoints. I was a coordinator for Youth Advocacy On Rights & Opportunities in Ghana. As a Haven Society volunteer, over 5 years, I foster the integrity and safety of women, children and families by advocating for and giving voice to vulnerable women, enabling them to better manage their lives. As a teacher I implement inclusion/equity tactics on a daily basis. During Covid19 I delivered food to vulnerable community members.



Director for Alberta

Dr. Kim Kelly

I am seeking re-election as the Alberta Director for the Equal Voice Board. If elected to the Board, my intent is to seek re-election as the Chair of the Board for a second 1-year term.

I identify as a cis woman, white settler and first-generation physician. I have 15 years of community leadership experience. I am a feminist and a strong advocate for equity, diversity and inclusion. I have started my learning journey in approaches to decolonization. I am trained as a family physician with a certificate of added competence in addiction medicine. I am currently a physician leader in the Wellness, Diversity & Development portfolio at Alberta Health Services.

My governance experience includes Chair of Equal Voice Board 2021-2022, Alberta Director for the Equal Voice Board 2020-2022, Vice-Chair of the Annual General Meeting of the Canadian Medical Association 2021-2024, Director of the Alberta Medical Association Board 2015-2019, and founder of the Equity in Medicine national leadership team.

Equal Voice's 3-year Sexual Harassment in the Workplace project is a topic I am passionate about and aligns with some advocacy work I have done. I was one of the first women physicians to disclose my [#MeToo](#) story, with my name attached, with the intent of affecting positive change for those following in my footsteps.

My leadership style is relational. I aim to empower and support others using my power and privilege. It would be an honour to continue to serve as your Alberta Director for a second term. Thank you for your consideration.



Director for Manitoba

Vacant



Director for Ontario

Sherry Antone

I am a devoted advocate for the rights and interests of First Nations and other marginalized people and have been for the better part of my professional career. As a First Nations woman and a citizen of the Oneida Nation of the Thames, I have been involved in the realm of political advocacy and social change for First Nations within Canada. My advocacy aspirations led me to work in senior positions with provincial organizations such as the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians and currently with Chiefs of Ontario where I am Chief of Staff for the Ontario Regional Chief's office. Prior to this position, I obtained a Masters from the University of Victoria and a law degree from

the University of Ottawa.

I continually seek opportunities to share the knowledge and skills I've gained to help other underrepresented groups and individuals find their voice. Now more important than ever, it is vital that we include voices of the underrepresented in places of political power and influence. As a board member for Equal Voice I can help ensure these voices, opinions and positions are a priority and that space is created for the inclusion of people of colour, black, Indigenous, and the LGBTQ2 communities



Director for Nova Scotia

Vacant



Director for New Brunswick & PEI

Frances LeBlanc

Frances LeBlanc is an executive and strategist serving primarily the healthcare and not-for-profit sectors. Frances currently serves as the Executive Director of the Hospice Southeast New Brunswick as well as provides consultative services for professional associations. She also serves on several Board of Directors, including Equal Voice, OMISTA Credit Union, Women in Business NB, Femmocracy Now among others. Frances has demonstrated her commitment to community building and advancing gender rights in Canada and beyond.



Director for Newfoundland & Labrador

Vacant



Director for Nunavut, Northwest Territories and Yukon

Kelsey Gammel

I grew up in the Yukon working in my family's small business from the time I was old enough to run the till and stock shelves until that business was sold and I was in high school. I moved away a few times but never for longer than a year, and always found myself coming back home to the Yukon.

I worked in the Premier's office for just over a year in my early twenties. It was my first job in politics, but not the first time I had been involved or interested in politics and making a positive difference in the community I lived in. I first got directly involved in politics when I was in 8th grade, by joining the Minister of Education's student advisory committee. I sat on that committee until it was disbanded due to an election. In high school I helped get the student council back up and running and sat on student council for two years.

After working in the Premier's office, I moved on to hold the position of Recreation Programmer for the Village of Teslin, which is a position that is unique to all of Canada. In that position, I worked for both the municipal government, the Village of Teslin and the first nations government, Teslin Tlingit Council. I held that position for three years and loved in.

In that time, I met the person who is now my husband. I moved back to Whitehorse two years ago, and we bought a house in Porter Creek. It is possibly the oldest house on our block, but we still love it and have made it our home.

When I moved to Whitehorse, I took a job with BGC Yukon. I was there for just under two years. It was a great place to work, and I learned a lot. I now work at the Recreation and Parks Association of Yukon. In the position I am in, I get to help people across the Yukon start up and access recreation programs that lead them to healthier and happier lifestyles.

Most recently, I ran for council in Whitehorse. While I unfortunately did not get elected, I did learn a lot about how to run a campaign, what it means to run in an election, and what it takes to run in an election.

Director at large



Angela Bonfanti

20+ years of experience in grass-roots advocacy, election campaigns (municipal, provincial, and federal- from knocking on doors to Charing campaigns), public policy and business transformation. I believe strongly now is the time for more women and people with diverse lived experiences to have seats in councils, legislatures, and the Hill.

Recent public opinion research indicates Canadians have a heightened appetite for a better, richer, fairer, and equitable Canada. Canadians are looking for leaders who can help to build a better Canada tomorrow. In my opinion, this cannot be done without more diversity in politics. To Quote Minister Carla Qualtrough, “Nothing without Us”.

In short, below are the skillsets I believe are pertinent to this opportunity:

Finance:

- Led Finance systems transformation
- Responsible for Budget Development and Oversight
- Responsible Development of FTE tracking tools and resources
- Executive Lead on Finance Committee

EDI:

- Led the development of EDI strategy
- Led L&D program for all staff and volunteers
- Led partnerships with allies in EDI

Fundraising:

- Led exponential growth in annual revenues; primarily in the areas of Monthly Giving, Corporate Giving, Government Grants and Digital Fundraising (of the top charities in Canada to increase annual revenues during the pandemic)
- Developed robust stewardship program for various giving levels
- Successfully recruited brand ambassadors to help increase fundraising and awareness for CNIB

Political Acuity:

- Extensive experience in
 - Campaign coordination, management, and oversight
 - Volunteer engagement
 - Donor engagement
 - Donor and voter insights
 - Get Out the Vote strategies



Director at large

Francyne D. Joe

As a member of BC's Nlaka'pamux First Nation, Francyne was raised in her Interior Salish culture and traditions with a strong sense of community. Growing up on-reserve with her ranching grandparents and single mother, she acknowledges that residential school, substance abuse, discrimination and poverty were a part of her childhood - but family, community, and the land provided her with the values that guide her through life.

As the former President of the Native Women's Association of Canada and the BC Native Women's Association, Francyne is committed to empowering Indigenous people through her work and philanthropic efforts. Her first-hand knowledge and experience on issues such as MMIWG, human rights, housing, education, and justice, have made her a fierce advocate for Indigenous people in Canada. She has presented on these issues across Canada, at the United Nations (Geneva and New York City), Organization of American States (Washington, DC), in Mexico, Morocco and Peru.

Currently working with the National Association of Friendship Centers, Francyne's role allows her the opportunity to collaborate with the Friendship Centers who provide Urban Indigenous persons with resources for education, training, housing, legal assistance, youth programs, leadership training and more. Her continued focus is advocate and educate on Indigenous issues and to provide mentorship for others who want to develop skills in leadership and governance.

Based in Ottawa and Kamloops, BC, she is most happy having large family dinners, doing her best on the golf course, or relaxing with a glass of Okanagan wine and her friends. Kukwstsétsemc!



Director at large

Carrie Lynn Poole-Cotnam

It is with excitement I advance my name to stand for the Director of Large position on the Equal Voice National Board. For the last 22 years I have championed women's economic justice issues on the front line in Ottawa, and for the last 14 years as a leader in the Canadian Union of Public Employees at the National, Provincial and Local level. It is my deep belief that good public policy decisions to lift up women in society require equal representation at all political levels in order to

achieve equity, inclusion and gender equality.

Some highlights of my achievements include:

- Treasurer of the Canadian Union of Public Employees Union, Local 503;
- Treasurer of the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care;
- Recipient of the Olivia Chow Child Care Champion Award through the Ontario Federation of Labour;
- Past CUPE Ontario Chair of the Social Services Sector representing 35,000 social service workers in Ontario;
- Recipient of the CUPE Ontario Sisters in Solidarity Award;
- CUPE Ontario representative on the Ontario Equal Pay Coalition;
- Graduate of the Harvard University Public Leadership Credential Program;
- Graduate of the Wharton School Executive Presence & Influence, Persuasive Leadership Development Program;
- Graduate of the Cornell University National Labour Leadership Initiative;
- Graduate of the Cornell University Women in Leadership Program;
- Equal Voice member since 2017.

My passion, education and experience aligns with the Equal Voice goal to elect more women from every party to every level of government and I am asking for your support to serve as Director of Large.



Director at large

Esmahan Razavi

Esmahan is a Principal at Champion Communications & PR. Her political experience spans all orders of government, including running for municipal council in 2017. She has worked as a political staffer for the Government of Alberta, and most recently as a public affairs consultant in British Columbia. For her outstanding work in politics, Esmahan was named one of the top 50 Arab women in North America by the Arab Women of Excellence Awards in 2019.

Esmahan is a trained mediator and a passionate community builder. She has served on the boards of a number of not-for-profits at a local and national level. She served a term as Director for BC on the EV National Board, and was also on the steering committee for the local Calgary chapter. She has also co-founded two organizations, including Ask Her, an organization dedicated to increasing the number of women running municipally in Calgary. In 2017, Esmahan was recognized by Chatelaine as one of Canada's 33 Women of the Year for her work on Ask Her. When she's not working or volunteering, Esmahan enjoys spending time with friends and family.



Director at large

Nathalie Eleanor Vilgrain

I am a feminist activist with a degree in political science and feminist studies from the University of Ottawa. I am passionate about the situation of women and girls in the world. I have worked in Haiti and in Canada with women survivors of violence. My areas of interest are many such as gender equality, survivor safety, participation in politics, women's homelessness, sex workers' rights, LGBTQI2+ rights and women's reproductive and sexual health. I am a founding member and the first co-coordinator of MARIJAN a feminist organization in Haiti. I was the recipient of the Young Leader of the Year Award at the 2018 Bernard Grandmaître Awards in Ontario, Canada.

As a Caribbean feminist and women's rights advocate, my work focuses on advocating for social justice through activism and capacity building of local organizations.

Political involvement and representation of all women and specifically young women at all levels in Canada is very important to me to ensure that political decisions are made by us and for us and that no one is left out. I would like to apply for the Diversity and Inclusion section because as a Black woman I am very familiar with the reality of marginalized groups that often face many barriers to women's political participation. I have served on boards that prioritized political representation and representation of the voices of Franco-Ontarians and other boards that specifically address the needs of Black women Ontario.