CHANGE MAKERS AWARDS 2026

Nomination Criteria

The YWCA Banff Change Makers Awards recognize women and gender-diverse people who are creating meaningful, lasting change throughout the Bow Valley.

Our award recipients come from many backgrounds. They may be volunteers, entrepreneurs, educators, advocates, artists, professionals, caregivers, or community leaders. What connects them is their commitment to making our communities stronger, more equitable, and more inclusive.

When preparing your nomination, please provide clear examples that demonstrate how your nominee embodies the following values.

Gender Equity

The nominee actively works to advance gender equity and create opportunities for women and gender-diverse people.

Strong nominations will demonstrate how the nominee has:

- Challenged barriers or inequities
- Created opportunities for others to succeed
- Advocated for fair and equitable treatment
- Helped create safer, more inclusive communities

Evidence might include leadership, advocacy, policy development, mentoring, education, community initiatives, or other actions that have contributed to greater equity.

Adaptability

The nominee responds thoughtfully to challenges, changing needs, and emerging opportunities.

Strong nominations will demonstrate how the nominee has:

- Found creative solutions to complex problems
- Responded positively to changing circumstances
- Challenged traditional ways of thinking
- Continued moving important work forward despite obstacles

We recognize that meaningful change often requires flexibility, resilience, and innovation.

Inclusivity

The nominee creates environments where people feel welcomed, respected, and valued.

Strong nominations will demonstrate how the nominee has:

- Removed barriers to participation
- Included voices that are often underrepresented
- Created opportunities for belonging
- Fostered environments where diversity is celebrated

Inclusive leadership means ensuring everyone has the opportunity to contribute and thrive.

Empowerment *(formerly Autonomy)*

The nominee empowers others to lead, grow, and succeed.

Strong nominations will demonstrate how the nominee has:

- Mentored or supported others
- Shared leadership and decision-making
- Encouraged confidence and independence
- Recognized and valued the lived experiences of others

Great leaders don't simply create change themselves—they inspire others to create change as well.

Collaboration

The nominee brings people together to create greater impact.

Strong nominations will demonstrate how the nominee has:

- Built partnerships across organizations or sectors
- Connected people around shared goals
- Strengthened community relationships
- Increased impact through collaboration

Meaningful change rarely happens alone. We value individuals who build bridges and strengthen communities through partnership.

Integrity

The nominee demonstrates honesty, accountability, and ethical leadership.

Strong nominations will demonstrate how the nominee has:

- Acted in accordance with their values
- Earned the trust of their community
- Demonstrated fairness and respect
- Chosen long-term community benefit over personal recognition or convenience

Integrity is reflected not only in outcomes, but in how those outcomes are achieved.

Overall Impact

Above all, Change Makers create meaningful and lasting positive change.

As you prepare your nomination, consider:

- What challenge or need has this person addressed?
- Who has benefited from their work?
- What measurable or meaningful outcomes have resulted?
- How has their work strengthened the Bow Valley?
- How have they inspired others to take action?

The strongest nominations include specific examples, measurable outcomes where possible, and stories that illustrate the nominee's impact.

What Makes a Strong Nomination?

Strong nominations are specific, evidence-based, and demonstrate lasting impact.

Whenever possible, include:

- Examples of programs, initiatives, or projects led by the nominee
- Measurable outcomes or achievements
- Testimonials or stories demonstrating impact
- Partnerships or collaborations developed
- Awards, recognition, publications, or media coverage (if applicable)
- Letters of support or other supporting documentation

Quality is more important than quantity. A few well-explained examples are more compelling than a long list of accomplishments.

Keep it inspirational and simple.

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SCORING GUIDE

Nominees are assessed according to the following guide.

Score	Description
5	Exceptional evidence. Multiple clear examples demonstrating sustained leadership and measurable community impact.
4	Strong evidence. Several examples demonstrating meaningful impact and consistent leadership.
3	Meets expectations. Clear evidence that the criterion has been demonstrated.
2	Limited evidence. Some examples provided, but impact or supporting evidence is limited.
1	Minimal evidence. Criterion is only partially addressed.
0	No evidence provided.