

**BMO Financial Group Honoured with 2019 Visionary Award for Innovation in Shared Value from WomenCorporateDirectors Foundation**  
**Wednesday, May 22, 2019 01:01:00 PM (GMT)**

TORONTO, May 22, 2019 /CNW/ - BMO Financial Group today announced it has been recognized by WomenCorporateDirectors Foundation with the 2019 Visionary Award for Innovation in Shared Value.

The [WomenCorporateDirectors Foundation \(WCD\)](#) Visionary Award honours companies that are leaders in innovative approaches to building diversity and inclusion within their leadership teams and boards and demonstrate the strong financial performance benefits of diverse and inclusive workplaces.

"BMO's deep commitment to advancing women's leadership has been in place for decades," said Barbara Bowles, co-chair of the Visionary Awards committee.

"BMO has had at least three sitting female board directors since 1999 and was the first financial institution to receive the Catalyst Award for advancing women," added Joan E. Steel, co-chair of the committee with Bowles. "At BMO, sustainability is not an add-on. It's at the heart of their strategic agenda."

WomenCorporateDirectors referenced BMO's commitment to workforce diversity that has resulted in 40 per cent of BMO's senior leadership roles, and 36 per cent of independent members of BMO Financial Group Board of Directors, being held by women, along with initiatives supporting female entrepreneurs such as its 2018 announcement that \$3 billion in capital would be available over three years for Canadian businesses owned by women.

"We're honoured to be recognized by WomenCorporateDirectors with a Visionary Award. BMO has long recognized the significant power and potential that diverse and inclusive workforces bring to the growth prospects of companies across all sectors, including ours", said Darryl White, CEO, BMO Financial Group. "While we still have more to do, we are extremely proud of the significant improvements we've made in the number of women leading in roles across our organization, including serving as directors on our board. With greater diversity at all levels of our organization, including greater female participation, we've accelerated our growth and performance and strengthened our organizational culture. It is clear that a diverse and inclusive team is good for our business and for our customers."

**Current initiatives empowering women include:**

- **Products Supporting Women** – BMO offers an extensive suite of products and services to support women. For instance, the \$3 billion in capital for women-owned businesses will also create new jobs and strengthen communities. Additionally, BMO offers educational tools through, [www.bmoformen.com](http://www.bmoformen.com), and a podcast series, *Her Money*, *Her Way*, to help inform women on a wide array of relevant topics.
- **Diversity and Inclusion Strategy** – Vision 2020 is a multi-year strategy to drive the bank's performance and industry leadership by fostering greater diversity and inclusion across the organization.
- **Career Development** – BMO believes in growing leaders from within. More than 60 per cent of its senior leaders have completed the Leadership EDGE program since its launch in April 2016.
- **BMO Alliance for Women** – BMO's largest Enterprise Resource Group, BMO Alliance For Women, with over 3,000 members, is a community of employees – both men and women – who champion the inclusion, connection, development, advancement, and support of women for the betterment of BMO's business, communities and culture.
- **Developing Future Leaders** – BMO helps develop leaders for today and for the future. The bank was an executive sponsor of Plan International's "Girls Belong Here" initiative on the International Day of the Girl, during which young women shadowed several BMO executives. The initiative showcased the different career opportunities within the organization for future women leaders.
- **Support for Public Private Partnerships** – BMO this week announced a partnership with Women and Gender Equality Canada to provide educational tools to aid not-for-profit organizations supporting women, as well as its sponsorship for the 2019 Women Deliver Conference.

**About BMO Financial Group**

Serving customers for 200 years and counting, BMO is a highly diversified financial services provider - the 8th largest bank, by assets, in North America. With total assets of \$807 billion as of January 31, 2019, and a team of diverse and highly engaged employees, BMO provides a broad range of personal and commercial banking, wealth management and investment banking products and services to more than 12 million customers and conducts business through three operating groups: Personal and Commercial Banking, BMO Wealth Management and BMO Capital Markets.

SOURCE BMO Financial Group

**Industries:** Finance & Insurance, Services

**Languages:** English

**Primary Identifiers:** BMO-CA

**Related Identifiers:** BMO-CA, BMO-US