



ASSOCIATION OF  
Women in Finance

# 2026 PEAK AWARDS

NOMINATION  
INSTRUCTIONS AND PROCEDURES



May 6, 2026  
Fairmont Waterfront  
Vancouver, BC

# 2026 PEAK Awards

## Nomination Instructions and Procedures

### About the Association of Women in Finance

The Association of Women in Finance (AWF) is a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting the advancement of women in the field of finance. We are executives, bankers, lawyers, accountants, analysts, investment professionals, actuaries, venture capitalists, insurers, and entrepreneurs working across a range of industries. The AWF's mission is to:

- To encourage women to enter and advance in the finance field through our scholarship programs.
- To involve, connect, and develop women in the business community through our networking events.
- To recognize and endorse women in finance who have achieved excellence at our annual PEAK Awards.
- To support women in finance with reaching their professional goals through education events.

Since 1994, AWF has honoured the success of women in finance, supported their advancement throughout their careers, and served as a convener of knowledge and leadership.

### About the PEAK Awards

Performance. Excellence. Achievement. Knowledge (PEAK) — these are the qualities celebrated by AWF at the annual PEAK Awards, to be held on May 6, 2026. This prestigious event recognizes outstanding individuals in the field of finance and honours recipients of the AWF scholarships. It also serves as an important fundraising opportunity for AWF's scholarship fund. At the 28th Annual PEAK Awards, AWF will honour five individuals in the following categories, who have made a positive impact on British Columbia's finance community:

1. Rising Star
2. Excellence in Industry
3. Lifetime Achievement
4. Champion\*
5. Significant Board Contribution



\*The Champion Award honours a professional of influence, female or male, who furthers the advancement of women in finance for leadership positions in management or on boards.

For almost three decades, the PEAK Awards have honoured talented, respected and deserving women and men who combine professional excellence with a passionate commitment to championing women in the workplace. We invite you to join us for a memorable evening as we celebrate the PEAK Awards honourees and support changing the landscape of women in finance.

## Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible to receive a PEAK Award, the Nominee must:

- Live and work in British Columbia.
- Be currently or recently employed in the field of finance, or retired from it.\*
- Satisfy the criteria specific to the selected PEAK Award category.
- Provide written consent to the nomination and publication of their name, photo, and biographical information if chosen.
- Be available to attend the PEAK Awards on May 6, 2026, and a rehearsal earlier that day.
- Not be an AWF staff member or current AWF Director.

\* The “field of finance” is defined broadly and includes but is not limited to, educators, public service employees, finance professionals, including accountants, CFAs, CFPs, CBVs, actuaries, bankers, CFOs, CEOs and lawyers (such as corporate finance, business, securities, real estate, tax and financing)

Please note all Honourees will automatically be enrolled in the AWF Alumni Network which includes invitations to Alumni events and information about other Alumni initiatives.

## Award Categories and Criteria

**Rising Star PEAK Nominee** is a female finance professional or woman in the field of finance who:

- Is under 40 years of age (please provide birthdate);
- 70%: an emerging leader who has made meaningful professional contributions to their institution, industry, and professional community that are outstanding and unique.
- 15%: guides, supports and encourages the promotion/advancement of women; and
- 15%: actively involved in their personal community.



**Excellence in Industry PEAK Nominee** is a female finance professional or woman in the field of finance who:

- Has shown excellence in her industry, sector or field in recent years;
- 60%: demonstrates a high and quantifiable contribution to their company, industry and professional community;
- 20%: guides, supports and encourages the promotion/advancement of women; and
- 20%: actively involved in their personal community.

**Lifetime Achievement PEAK Nominee** is a female finance professional or woman in the field of finance who:

- Has 30+ years of experience;
- Demonstrated an enduring commitment to achieving excellence;
- Guides, supports and encourages the promotion/advancement of women;
- Is actively involved in their professional or personal communities; and
- Is described as a leader, ground-breaker, or visionary by their peers.



**Champion PEAK Nominee** is a professional of influence, either female or male who:

- Furthers the advancement of women in finance for leadership positions in management or on boards;
- Has sponsored women in finance, putting their reputation on the line to advocate for change and the advancement of these women;
- Has seen women that they mentored progress into position of leadership; and
- Is actively involved in their professional or personal communities.

The Champion Nominee should have one external reference letter from a woman who has been sponsored by the Champion. In addition, a second reference letter can be submitted by a woman who has been positively influenced by the Champion in their career.

**Significant Board Contribution PEAK Nominee** is a female finance professional or woman in the field of finance who:

- 60%: has made meaningful contributions for the board they work with that are outstanding and unique whether it is on a not-for-profit, public or private board;
- 30%: has shown significant leadership, oversight and/or stewardship on her board; and

- 10%: has seen the board that she works with progress or advance during the time of their involvement.

## Nomination Process

There are four parts to this Nomination Form. Given the timing required to obtain external reference letters, please feel free to save and continue as needed and submit when you have all information completed and after you have obtained all supporting materials.

To make a nomination you must complete the following sections in the online Nomination Form and provide us with the required supporting documentation (as attachments in the online portal):

### Part 1 – Nominee and Nominator Information

Please complete all Nominee Information, Nomination Information, PEAK Award Category and Previous Nomination Information.

Please note, one (1) Nomination per PEAK Award category. If a Nominator wishes to nominate the Nominee in more than one (1) PEAK Award category, the Nominator will need to submit a Nomination Form for the Nominee for each PEAK Award Category.

### Part 2 – Resume or Employment Summary

Please either complete the Summary of Employment for the four most recent employment positions for the Nominee or provide us with an up-to-date resume for the Nominee (1-2 pages).

### Part 3 – Narratives

**Professional Narrative (750 words max):** This is the Nominator’s opportunity to discuss how the Nominee meets the specific PEAK Award criteria for the PEAK Award category. In writing the Professional Narrative consider the questions outlined in Schedule “A” attached hereto for the applicable PEAK Award category. While these questions are provided as a guideline, you may respond directly to each question to complete the Professional Narrative.

Give consideration to the respective weightings attributed to each of the criteria (ie. contribution to: professional community; personal community; and advancement of women). Please provide specific examples and where relevant, financial metrics such as: size of company, financial and other impact created, number of people managed, size of projects and performance indicators used.

The narratives and metrics are critical evaluation tools for the independent panel of judges to examine and compare each Nominee. Take this opportunity to “tell the story” behind the Nominee.

Examples of Professional Narratives can be found at Schedule “B” attached hereto.

**Personal Narrative (250 words max):** This is the Nominator’s opportunity to provide some personal colour about the Nominee (hobbies, interests, family, etc.) and highlight the Nominee’s personal activities in the community.

Examples of Personal Narratives can be found at Schedule “C” attached hereto.

#### Part 4 – External Reference Letters

Please list a minimum of two and a maximum of three individuals who will submit written external reference letters.

Consider the following when selecting references:

- The Nominee’s industry involvement;
- The Nominee’s community involvement;
- Individuals that have been positively influenced by the Nominee; and
- Clients, customers or others who have worked with the Nominee.

Reference letters should provide examples or metrics that support the Nomination and personal colour around why the Nominee meets the PEAK Award criteria for the PEAK Award category that the Nominator has nominated the Nominee for.

A Nominee in the Champion category should have at least one external reference letter from a woman who has been sponsored by the Champion and another from a woman who has been positively influenced by the Champion in her career.

The fully completed Nomination Form must be submitted via the online form with all supporting documentation (including reference letters) by Monday, January 12, 2025. Supporting documents should be attached to the online submission.

#### Judging and Evaluation Process

All complete and eligible Nominations are forwarded to an independent judging panel composed of finance professionals at various stages of their careers. The judging panel will be chaired by the AWF PEAK Director of Nominations. The AWF reserves the right to move Nominees into another PEAK Award category if it is deemed suitable.

#### Successful Honourees

The successful PEAK Award honourees will be notified prior to the awards and individually honoured at the PEAK Awards.

### [Tickets to the PEAK Awards](#)

PEAK Award honourees attend the PEAK Awards on May 6, 2026 as guests of the AWF. We encourage friends, family and colleagues to attend. Given that the AWF is a not for profit organization, we are regrettably unable to provide complimentary tickets to supports of the honourees. For detail on ticket purchases please email [awfvancouver@gmail.com](mailto:awfvancouver@gmail.com).

## **Appendices**

[Schedule A](#) – Professional Narrative Questions: Guiding questions for each category.

[Schedule B](#) – Sample Professional Narratives: Examples demonstrating structure and tone.

[Schedule C](#) – Sample Personal Narratives: Examples for personal storytelling.

## Schedule A

### Professional Narrative – Questions to Consider

#### **Rising Star**

1. Explain why you consider the Nominee an early leader and describe how the Nominee has made meaningful professional contributions that are outstanding and unique.
2. Provide us with an example (or examples) where the Nominee has guided, supported and encouraged the promotion of women.
3. Tell us about the Nominee's professional and personal involvement in her community.

#### **Excellence in Industry**

1. Explain how the Nominee has shown excellence in their industry, sector or field in recent years.
2. Describe how the Nominee has demonstrated a high and quantifiable contribution to their company, industry and professional community.
3. Provide us with an example (or examples) where the Nominee has guided, supported and encouraged the promotion/advancement of women.
4. Tell us about the Nominee's personal involvement in their community.

#### **Lifetime Achievement**

1. Describe how the Nominee has demonstrated an enduring commitment to achieving excellence.
2. Provide us with an example (or examples) where the Nominee has guided, supported and encouraged the promotion of women.
3. Tell us about the Nominee's professional and personal involvement in their community.

#### **Champion**

1. Describe how the Nominee has furthered the advancement of women in finance for leadership positions in management or on boards.
2. Provide us with an example (or examples) where the Nominee has sponsored women in finance, putting their reputation on the line to advocate for change and the advancement of women.
3. Has the Nominee seen women that they've mentored progress into a position of leadership? If so, tell us about this.
4. Tell us about the Nominee's professional and personal involvement in their community.

## **Significant Board Contribution**

1. Provide us with an example (or examples) of how the Nominee has made meaningful contributions to the board they are working with that are outstanding and unique (whether it is a not-for-profit, public or private board).
2. Describe how the Nominee has shown significant leadership, oversight and/or stewardship on their board.
3. Has the board the Nominee works with progressed or advanced during the Nominee's involvement? If so, tell us about this.

## Schedule B

### Sample Professional Narratives

#### EXAMPLE 1

**Nominee Name: Jane Smith\***

**Professional Narrative – Max 750 words**

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Jane received her degree in Business Accounting at the University of British Columbia in ♦ and shortly thereafter she began working at ABC Company. As the most junior associate, she eventually became a team leader, then a people manager and eventually an employer.

When she first started her career, there were only three women in the accounting support area (and no men) and each of the women had an assigned day to complete tasks such as filing, typing and making coffee or running errands for the men in the office.

Writing the accounting exams while working was not easy and it took Jane awhile to complete these, but perseverant and determined, Jane received her designation in ♦ She was then put in charge of the study policy at ABC Company and used her own experience as an example for employees struggling with the exams. Note that there are currently ♦ accountants working in Canada, ♦ of these accountants are working in BC and less than ♦% are women.

When she qualified as an accountant, she was the only female accountant in BC and she had a difficult time in the office adjusting to being a part of an “old boys club”. Despite this, Jane didn’t give up on being included in the decision-making process along the way. Throughout her career, she has acted as a mentor to young women in the profession.

Hardworking, brilliant and loyal, Jane became an account manager in ♦ for ABC Company’s largest client, XYZ Company. Though her role was initially supposed to be temporary, she managed to understand the needs of XYZ Company in her own way. This level of client service eventually resulted in XYZ Company following Jane over to DEF Company once it was created.

The idea of DEF Company was formed in ♦, when ABC Company decided to get out of the business of servicing clients involved in certain types of business. After many years of working at ABC Company and much to Jane’s surprise, she was being sold to the highest bidder. Rather than sit around, Jane and two of her male colleagues decided to start their own accounting firm, DEF Company. The first thing Jane and her partners agreed on was that they would do things differently than other accounting firms. They wanted to create an employee-owned company where individuals would have the opportunity to grow in a supportive environment, be rewarded fairly for their contributions and be able to have a proper work-life balance and most importantly, without any discrimination based on

gender. When DEF Company was formed, Jane and her partners decided on salaries for all employees and themselves. Jane was able to have transparent and open discussions with her partners and negotiated an equal salary to her partners.

Jane would not admit it but the fact that she was willing to take the risk of founding DEF Company convinced many employees to join. DEF Company opened for business in ♦ with only ♦ employees in Vancouver.

In 2019 Jane is the president of DEF Company which consists of approximately ♦ employees, ♦% of which are women. DEF Company now has ♦ accountants, half of them being women. DEF Company revenues have grown from \$♦million to \$♦ ♦% of these revenues were generated under the direct management of Jane. From a handful of clients, DEF Company has grown its client base to over ♦ clients. Jane has had quite an amazing career, for a woman who managed her career and her business with her heart first.

\*Note that the Professional Narrative above has only been provided as a sample. The information and facts are fictional and should not be used or relied on in any way.

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## EXAMPLE 2

**Nominee Name: John Smith\***

**Professional Narrative – Max 750 words**

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John Smith, is known as a remarkable force for the advancement of women at ABC Company and in the business community for several reasons.

First, when he encounters talented, determined, women professionals, he personally wants to see them succeed. Whether personally mentoring them, tapping them into his network, or bringing them up through client teams, John is committed to helping them grow and succeed in their careers as much as he did. Because he remembers how critical this kind of support was for his own path to leadership.

Then, there's his leader's view that diversity and inclusion depend on organizational support and flexibility. That achieving career and leadership goals are tough enough, but achieving life and personal milestones at the same time can be even more challenging. Whether as working parents; individuals managing other, equally vital personal ambitions; those who want to give back to communities; or women making important lifestyle choices to enhance their wellbeing, John believes everyone deserves the chance to succeed. And if that requires support from ABC Company, John is dedicated to ensuring he and the firm provide it.

He regularly advises women executives and senior managers at ABC Company to "un-balance" at the right times, putting extra focus during critical moments in either their careers or their personal lives, so they can succeed in both realms. John's is a long-term view - one that wants potential women leaders never to have to choose between life and career.

"There are times when someone needs to re-balance parts of their lives, whether as a working parent or focusing on other life priorities, and if we can't be flexible to support these shifts in focus, we end up losing a great professional who, if we had a better support strategy, could have developed as a remarkable leader over the ensuing years," says John. "These are 35-year careers. We need to be smarter, to figure out how to re-balance and support that period of time where we're otherwise losing very capable women. That's the business imperative - keeping our best professionals with enough flexibility to create long-term, fulfilling careers building to leadership."

As a leader who puts his reputation on the line to advocate for change and the advancement of women, John has championed several women who have since become senior executives at ABC Company including ♦, ♦, ♦ and ♦.

He is also the lead executive on all-women teams serving customers including, for example, ♦, and ♦, and is a role model for his colleagues and customers. One customer said that because of John's great listening skills and welcoming style, she's "never shied away from bringing new discussions to him and have him work through them" with her. As well, she says, "it's incredibly positive, valuable and rewarding as a customer to see women moving into senior executive roles at ABC Company. The ABC Company is seen as a very positive place to work as a woman and that's a direct result of John's efforts."

John's influence on the advancement of women at ABC Company is most evident in the ♦ company, which he led from ♦ to ♦ and grew its senior executive ranks from ♦ (♦%) to ♦ (♦%), and company office now has ♦ women in senior executive roles. Much of that success is due to John's unfailing commitment to supporting the needs of women in ♦.

As managing director at ABC Company, John prioritizes budget for women's initiatives like ABC Company's Women Leadership program, which supports women as they progress through management roles, and his visible support of programs like this is respected across the firm.

He's personally involved and ensures ABC Company financially supports women's community organizations including ♦; ♦; ♦; ♦; and ♦. He also attends and participates in many of these organizations' events because he understands how important it is to visibly demonstrate ABC Company's support in the market.

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## Schedule C

### Sample Personal Narratives

#### EXAMPLE 1

**Nominee Name: Jane Smith\***

**Personal Narrative – Max 250 words**

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Jane's business accomplishments are accompanied by a true sense of service and a commitment to making life better for others.

Jane has generously supported and provided leadership for fundraising initiatives to help others in her community and abroad. These initiatives include ♦, ♦ and ♦. These initiatives all promote education, training and resources for those less fortunate and many of these initiatives are specifically targeted towards women. In addition, she generously supports a number of charities in BC and across Canada. Jane is currently volunteering her time with the GHI Association. The GHI Association has a goal of making accessible and available social programs to help local residents in Vancouver.

In her spare time, Jane enjoys travelling (she has visited all seven continents and more than 50 countries), collecting antiques, singing and crafting. Each year Jane makes and donates more than 3,000 jars of jams, pepper jelly and pickles to the Christmas Fair with all proceeds going to local charities. Jane lives in Burnaby with her family and two dogs rescued from the SPCA.

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#### EXAMPLE 2

**Nominee Name: John Smith\***

**Personal Narrative – Max 250 words**

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Over the past decade, John has volunteered on Boards and Executive Committees of ♦, ♦, and ♦ and has contributed to many other organizations. From ♦ to ♦, John served as Governor of the XYZ Association, and during that same period until ♦ he was also Audit Committee Chair for XYZ Association, helping restructure XYZ Association into a centralized national organization, improving remittances to international programs. In ♦ John was recognized as a ♦ and has since served on the DEF Committee. In ♦ he became a ♦ for GHI Committee and for the JKL Network.

John has also spearheaded various ABC Company volunteer and fundraising efforts, including four consecutive “123 Challenge” events in support of ♦ including sponsoring, fundraising and organizing riding teams, increasing fundraising outcomes from the event from \$♦ to over \$♦ million by ♦.

To relax, John sails and skis, and travels annually to spend time with family. John is married to Katie, an event planner, and together they have two children - Jane, a student at ♦; and Michael, a student in high school. John is passionate about innovation, impact, and diversity, and personally champions community and workplace inclusion, sharing his story within the firm and externally, to promote inclusion, understanding, and authenticity.

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