

Invisible No More Project's Research Roundtable

Pre-reading backgrounder | October 18, 2026 | Halifax, Canada

Purpose and intended results

Co-led and co-created by women Veterans¹, this roundtable will develop practical advice on funding, organizing, and sustaining a national research program focused on women² who serve or have served in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP).

Building on existing work, we aim to identify shared research priorities, how the program should be led and funded, responsible organizations, and the most important next steps.

The commitment and what remains to be verified

On June 12, 2024, Canada's parliamentary Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs (ACVA) released [*Invisible No More. The Experiences of Canadian Women Veterans*](#), with 42 recommendations.

Recommendation 1 states:

“That Veterans Affairs Canada, together with the Canadian Armed Forces, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and the allied countries, fund and implement a structured long-term research program on servicewomen and woman Veterans, and that this research be women-specific.”

The Canadian government agreed to this recommendation on October 10, 2024. Its response encouraged collaboration among various government departments and research partners, a working group involving Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC), the Department of National Defence (DND) and CAF, a joint federal research funding mechanism, and an updated VAC women veteran research plan.

There are a multitude of related initiatives led by Veterans, government, academics, and community. However, from the material reviewed, it is not clear whether these activities will naturally form into a coordinated national program with sustained funding, clear responsibility, and public reporting on results.

Why coordination matters

Women entered defence and security institutions that were already developed around supporting men: their body sizes, shapes, physiology, and social career patterns. Opening more roles to women did not automatically ensure that equipment, health care, and support during and after service consistently met their needs. Valuable evidence to support women is now spread across many organizations and projects. Coordination will help identify remaining gaps and turn existing and future research findings into better prevention, care, policies, programs, and benefits. Participants can help clarify what exists, what connections and collaborations are needed, and what decisions must be made to move forward.

How we will work together

Facilitated small groups will draw on personal and professional experience, research, and perspectives from Canada and allied countries. No specialist knowledge of Canadian Veterans policy is required. No one is expected to share personal experiences or speak for an entire community. Comments will not be linked to individuals without their explicit agreement. Starting points for discussion will be based on the existing evidence and research principles outlined below.

¹ For a list of the Veterans who are part of the project, see the “Meet the Team” tab at www.msvu.ca/InvisibleNoMore.

² For this work, we include anyone who self-identifies as woman or has female sex-specific medical needs.

Research across women's lives. Examine sex, gender, and how different circumstances combine to shape health and experiences, from recruitment through service, the move to civilian life, and aging. Include workplace and environmental exposures, reproductive and family health, and disability. Connect military, RCMP, Veteran, and civilian health systems with research funders.

Diversity and different service experiences. Include Indigenous identity, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, rank, type of service, occupation, language, location, marital status, and time period when women served in uniform. Keep distinct military and RCMP research streams to reflect their different working conditions, veteran support systems, and gaps in available information.

Women as decision-making partners. Women who serve or have served should help lead research, set priorities, interpret findings, and decide how results are shared and used. Fairly compensate lived expertise. Make participation accessible and consent clear and ongoing. Acknowledge exposure to trauma and violence, respect choice, and avoid repeated requests to recount difficult experiences.

Research methods and long-term support. Combine studies of health and populations, research on experiences, and studies following people over time. Set rules for privacy, consent, access, and safely linking data. Provide multi-year funding, develop partnerships across departments and disciplines while supporting training for new, emerging, and evolving researchers.

Indigenous rights and research. Any research specifically involving First Nations, Inuit, or Métis peoples, communities, knowledge, or data requires arrangements that respect their distinct rights and priorities. A general women Veteran framework recognizes Indigenous rights, protocols, and applicable requirements of Canada's [Tri-Council Policy Statement on research ethics](#) (TCPS 2, Chapter 9).

Accountability and community benefit. Define who coordinates the program and how women Veterans can independently review progress and raise concerns. Share findings accessibly and show how they improve prevention, policies, programs, benefits, and care.

Questions for discussion at the roundtable

- 1. Meaningful implementation.** What would demonstrate a funded, organized, long-term research program? What existing work can be verified, strengthened, or connected?
- 2. Identification of gaps:** What are the existing gaps in research, programs, and services?
- 3. Priorities and partnerships.** Which priorities need coordinated action first? What research, data, and expertise can we build on? What must differ for CAF and RCMP women research?
- 4. Leadership and resources.** Who should coordinate, fund, and make decisions? How will women share decision-making power and independently review progress on research?
- 5. Action and evidence.** What are the most important next steps to advance Recommendation 1? Who should lead implementation? What public evidence would show progress? What immediate follow-up is needed?

What happens after the roundtable

The Invisible No More (INM) project team will compile roundtable discussion notes and feedback into a public report in English and French, aimed for release by March 2027. The report will record agreement, differing views, proposed leads, next steps, and questions requiring clarification.

INM Project

This roundtable is convened by the INM project team at Mount Saint Vincent University, co-led by Dr. Maya Eichler and Dr. Karen Breeck with research and community partners.

The INM project is funded by VAC, DND, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). For more information on the INM project, see: www.msvu.ca/InvisibleNoMore