

2027 Women in Coaching Canada Games Apprenticeship Program Guidelines

INTRODUCTION

The Canada Games Council (CGC), the Coaching Association of Canada (CAC), and the Provincial/Territorial Governments (P/T) strongly believe that coaching apprenticeship programs are an essential part of the development of a coach. Furthermore, apprenticeship programs can be used as a means to attract and support underrepresented people in coaching, such as women and Indigenous coaches. The Canada Games have featured apprenticeship coach programs in every Games since the 2005 Canada Summer Games in Regina, Saskatchewan. The program provides up to two coaches per Games from each Province and Territory the opportunity to develop their coaching skills through the Canada Games.

Women in Coaching Program (WiC):

The WiC program is a partnership between the Provincial/Territorial Governments (P/T), the Canada Games Council (CGC) and the Coaching Association of Canada (CAC). This program provides the opportunity for each Province and Territory to send 2 women coaches to the Canada Games in apprenticeship roles.

OBJECTIVES

- Build coaching capacity for women in sport;
- Provide women apprentice coaches with domestic multi-sport Games exposure;
- Provide women apprentice coaches with enhanced professional development and learning opportunities to prepare them for higher level coaching and ensure an increase in their level of certification to a minimum of Competition-Development. (Apprentice coaches complete certification within 2 years following the Games).
- Expose women apprentice coaches to elite women coaches' experiences;
- Ensure women apprentice coaches are prepared to play a meaningful role during the Canada Games experience.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

Desired, measurable outcomes are established in consultation with the P/T, the CGC, and the CAC.

- The goal of the program is to have at least 75% of the quota allocations for women apprentice coaches in this program filled for the Games;
- Two professional development sessions are conducted before the Games;
- 80% attendance at professional development sessions;
- 100% of all apprentice coaches attending the Games will have been trained in the relevant context within one year following the Games;
- 75% of all apprentice coaches attending the Games will have been certified in the relevant context within two years of attending the Games;
- As a long-term objective, 100% of all apprentice coaches will continue to actively coach athletes at the community, provincial/territorial, or national level applying the experience gained from the Games;
- 100% of apprentice coaches, mentor coaches, and P/TSOs in this program will complete a feedback survey;
- 100% of apprentice coaches, mentor coaches, and P/TSOs in this program will positively evaluate the program and provide constructive criticism for the future of this program.

ELIGIBILITY

Generally, eligibility criteria for the coaches are:

- Open to all women
- Apprentice coaches must meet at least one of the following requirements:
 - are a Canadian citizen;
 - are an Indigenous person (registered under the federal Indian Act);
 - are a permanent resident;
 - have status in Canada and are applying for permanent residency and:
 - have submitted an application to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC);
AND
 - IRCC has confirmed they have reviewed the application and that you meet the eligibility requirements to apply;
AND
 - the application has not yet been denied;
 - are a convention refugee or other protected person (as defined by Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada);
 - Newcomers processed using temporary measures to facilitate them fleeing for safety due to a crisis.
- Coaching experience:
 - Minimum NCCP “In Training” status within any context of the sport pathway. Preference given to Competition Introduction Trained status;
 - Never attended a Canada Games as a coach;
 - Never attended the Paralympics/Olympics, ParaPan /Pan American Games, or Commonwealth Games as a coach;
 - Not already selected to the coaching staff of a province/territory’s Canada Games team.

Any exceptions to the above eligibility requirements must be approved by the P/T before a coach can be admitted into the WiC program.

CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

- The purpose of certification requirements is to ensure that apprentice coaches selected for the WiC program are genuine apprentice coaches who will, through participation in the program, gain valuable experience that will contribute to the coach becoming a Canada Games coach in the future.
- In order to be eligible for the Apprentice Coach role, applicants must not have obtained the necessary certification to coach at the Canada Games. The coach certification requirements vary by sport and can be found in the sport technical package.
 - If a sport requires NCCP Competition-Development Trained or Certified, the Apprentice Coach must be no higher than NCCP Competition-Development in Training
 - If a sport requires NCCP Competition-Development in Training, the Apprentice Coach must be no higher than NCCP Competition-Introduction Certified
 - If a sport requires NCCP Competition-Introduction Certified, the Apprentice Coach must be no higher than NCCP Competition-Introduction Trained

Any other exceptions to the coach certification requirements must be approved by the P/T before a coach can be admitted into the WiC program.

EVALUATION

At the completion of the 2027 Canada Games, the WiC program will be evaluated against the established desired outcomes. Upon evaluation, desired outcomes or elements may be changed to better reflect the state of the program.

Evaluation of the program will consist of actions taken against the desired outcomes and of surveying the apprentice coaches, the mentor coaches and the P/T.

TIMELINES

The timelines below reflect Alberta guideline deliverables and directly relate to key program objectives:

2027 Canada Winter Games – Québec City, Québec	
2027 Public Interest Form /Alberta Applications Open	September 8, 2025
Public Interest Form Closes	November 5, 2025
Apprentice Coach application due to PSO	November 24, 2025
PSO application/apprentice nomination due to SPAR	December 8, 2025
Coaches Selected and Notified by SPAR	Early February 2026
Program Orientation Webinar	February 2026
1 st PD Session – in person Calgary, AB	May 2026
2 nd PD Session – in person Ottawa, ON	November 2026
2027 Canada Winter Games Québec City, QC	February 26 – March 15, 2027

Selection Guidelines:

Candidates should be selected based upon a reasonably standardized application process that ensures parity at a Provincial/Territorial level and at a sport level. A degree of flexibility will be required in order to adapt to the unique circumstances facing any P/TSO and individual coach.

To ensure the program is as successful as possible the apprentice coach must be involved with the Provincial/Territorial program for a minimum of one year, but preferably upon appointment until completion of the Games, and will need to be actively involved in all training camps, selection camps, and preparation competitions.

A high degree of emphasis needs to be placed on the selection of the appropriate apprentice coach AND the appropriate environment for that apprentice coach's development. Every attempt must be made to ensure the best possible mentor is selected for the apprentice coach.

Alberta Selection Process:

1. National coach interest will be collected through a short intake form hosted by the Coaching Association of Canada (CAC). Alberta coaches are encouraged to contact their PSO directly to express interest and request a coach application form.
2. Each respective PSO will be responsible to send out coach applications to any Alberta coach who expressed interest through the CAC intake form.
3. From all coach applications received, Alberta PSOs will endorse one coach and submit the complete application to SPAR for consideration into the WiC program.
4. Following the PSO application deadline, SPAR will select up to two coaches to participate in the 2027 WiC program.

Mentor Coach:

A mentor coach will need to be assigned to each apprentice coach. The mentor coach could be a member of the Games' coaching staff or a non-staff mentor (preferable) assigned from within the sport.

The mentor coach is encouraged, if possible, to accompany the apprentice coach to the professional development workshops.

If the mentor coach is not part of the Games' coaching staff, they are not considered part of the Provincial/Territorial Team and will not be provided the privileges of accredited team staff, including, but not limited to travel, meals and accommodations. There are opportunities for non-Games' staff mentor coaches to get accredited at the Games, but all associated costs would be the responsibility of the mentor coach, or their PTSO/NSO.

Professional Development:

Professional development (PD) sessions are crucial for apprentice coaches. Two PD sessions will be scheduled for the WiC program in the years leading up to the Games. Where financially possible, mentor coaches are strongly encouraged to attend and take part in the Professional Development sessions.

Apprentice Coach Role:

Apprentice coaches attend the Canada Games as a means to provide them with a multisport Games experience and the opportunity to observe and learn from their mentor coaches and other NCCP Competition – Development certified coaches. The apprentice coach should have a specific and meaningful role within the team. Apprentice coaches cannot fulfill the role of a coach, as outlined in the sports technical package (i.e., WiC coaches may not be counted as a team's second coach in order to fulfill a female coaching requirement in a technical package). See Appendix A for two examples.

The apprentice coach will be provided with an accreditation at the Games. This accreditation will provide the coach with the same access as the other coaches. Due to the technical regulations of certain sports, apprentice coaches may not have access to the competition area in all sports. Any sport specific regulations regarding the WiC apprentice coach program will be noted in the sport technical package.

PROGRAM LEADERSHIP, ADMINISTRATION, and FINANCING:

In order to operate programs such as these effectively, there is a need to create a partnership that will ensure resources (financial and human) from a variety of sources to create an appropriate program. The leadership of the 2027 WiC program will come from the P/Ts, with support from the CAC and the CGC. This document will act as a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the involved parties to ensure the various roles and responsibilities for successful program delivery are clearly articulated.

The following is an overview of the various partners' roles and responsibilities for this program:

Canada Games Council

- Approval of WiC programs
- Approval of Apprenticeship Program Guidelines (shared with CAC)
- Support P/Ts and CAC on development of program guidelines and objectives
- On-going evaluation of program objectives of both programs based on CAC evaluations of identified stakeholders. Reporting of evaluations to Federal & P/T Government partners
- Promotion of the program (external)
- Communication with key stakeholders (Chefs de Mission/CAC)
- Ensure accreditation with the Host Society
- Ensure program requirements are built into sport selection numbers
- Work with NSOs to determine the level of access provided to apprentice coaches
- Reporting to FPT Governments as required

Coaching Association of Canada

- Approval of Apprenticeship Program Guidelines (shared with CGC)
- Providing program support to P/Ts for WiC
- On-going evaluation of WiC program with P/Ts, women apprentice & mentor coaches
- Promotion of the program (external)
- Communication with key stakeholders (P/Ts/CGC)
- Oversee the Apprentice Coach Professional Development sessions
- Development of workshop materials
- Reporting to FPT Governments as required

Provincial/Territorial Governments

- Leadership of WiC program
- Create and manage the selection process of WiC coaches with P/TSOs
- Select female apprentice coaches
- Cost-share the transportation, accommodation, and food of the apprentice coaches and mentors to the Professional Development sessions
- On-going evaluation of the program through PTSOs
- Promotion of the program
- Facilitation of local peer support for female apprentice coaches involved in Games
- Work with Provincial/Territorial Sport Organizations to ensure apprentice coaches are fulfilling pre-Games, Games time, and post Games requirements of the WiC program

National Sport Organizations

- Promotion of the program
- Support the selection of the mentor coach including assisting in the identification of appropriate mentors within Provinces and Territories when required
- Setting competition area access for apprentice coaches and ensuring it is clearly defined within the sport technical package

Provincial/Territorial Sport Organizations

- Promotion of the program
- On-going evaluation
- Cost-share the transportation, accommodation, and food of the apprentice and mentor coaches to the Professional Development session, when required.
- Fund expenses related to the apprentice coach's involvement with all training camps, selection camps, and preparation competitions pre-Games when required.
- Nominate apprentice coaches and appoint mentor coaches
- Work with P/T to ensure apprentice coaches are fulfilling pre-Games, Games time, and post Games requirements of the WiC program.

Canada Games Host Society

- Promotion of the program

- Provision of accommodation, accreditation, and food for the apprentice coaches (within the currently allocated participant quota for the Games; i.e., no new costs)
- Provision of facilities for professional development seminars prior to and during Games where necessary.

Provincial Contact Information

Alberta

Bonnie Feakes, Senior Sport Consultant
Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation (SPAR)
bonnie.feakes@gov.ab.ca

Partner Contacts

Coaching Association of Canada

Andrea Johnson
Manager, Equity Programs
ajohnson@coach.ca

Canada Games Council

Aaron Bruce
Vice President, Sport and Games
abruce@canadagames.ca

Appendix A

Technical Package Coaching Quota Example

Statement: Apprentice coaches cannot fulfill the role of a coach, as outlined in the sports Technical Package (i.e. WiC coaches may not be counted as a team's second coach in order to fulfill a female coaching requirement in a Technical Package)

Example 1

The Sport of Diving has a Technical Package quota of 2 coaches. If a Provincial/Territorial team has female divers, they must have a female coach. An apprentice coach of the WiC program does not count as the female coach needed to fulfill this requirement as the apprentice coach is an additional position within the PTs diving team (i.e. 2 coaches plus an apprentice coach). A coach cannot be both an apprentice coach, and the head or assistant coach of a PT team as outlined by the Technical Package. This does not mean the apprentice coach can't fulfill a meaningful role within the team.

If the Diving team requires a female coach, and the only coach available is the apprentice coach, the apprentice coach may apply to the Canada Games Council for a coach certification exemption. If successful, the apprentice coach becomes the diving team's female coach and is no longer part of the apprentice coach program.

Example 2

A women's softball team has a Technical Package quota of 2 coaches and one of the coaches must be female. If a Provincial/Territorial team names only one coach (who is female) the apprentice coach does not count as the team's second coach. The team would have 1 coach and 1 apprentice coach.

If the apprentice coach/Provincial/Territorial team wishes, they may apply for a coach certification exemption from the Canada Games Council and if successful become the team's second coach. The coach would no longer be part of the WiC program.

Additionally, in both examples 1 and 2, an apprentice coach may complete their NCCP Competition-Development certification prior to the Canada Games. In such a scenario the coach would still be permitted to be part of the WiC program, but still could not act as both an apprentice coach and a coach as outlined in the sports Technical Package.