

Company: Actua - Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

Nomination Submitted by: Pomp & Circumstance

Company Description: Actua is creating a Canada where every child has the skills and confidence they need to achieve their full potential. For 25 years, Actua has focused on identifying and removing the barriers for entry into STEM and now have national programs dedicated to engaging Indigenous youth, girls and young women, Black youth, those facing economic barriers and youth in Northern and remote communities.

Nomination Category: Achievement Categories

Nomination Sub Category: Achievement in Education for Girls and Young Women

Nomination Title: Jennifer Flanagan, CEO



HOW TO ENTER >

1. Which will you submit for your nomination in this category, a video of up to five (5) minutes, explaining the nominated achievements since July 1 of 2023, OR written answers to the questions? (Choose one):

Written answers to the questions

2. If you are submitting a video of up to five (5) minutes in length, provide the URL of the video here, OR attach it to your entry via the "Add Attachments, Videos, or Links to This Entry" link above, through which you may also upload a copy of your video. If you are submitting written answers to the questions, provide them in the appropriate spaces below:

3. Briefly describe the nominated organization: history and past performance (up to 200 words):

Total 200 words used.

For over 25 years, Actua, a leading Canadian youth STEM outreach organization, has been breaking down barriers to science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education for youth across the country. Led by co-founder and CEO Jennifer Flanagan, Actua engages over 500,000 youth annually in 600 communities.

At the forefront of this work is Actua's National Girls Program, Canada's boldest initiative addressing gender inequity in STEM. Now more than two decades strong, it reaches 20,000 girls each year, and an additional 160,000 through other programming, with hands-on STEM learning experiences rooted in confidence, mental health and digital literacy. Participants explore future-critical topics like AI, data science and online safety, guided by female mentors who reflect the leadership we want to see in STEM.

Actua also delivers programs for Indigenous youth, Black youth, youth facing economic barriers, and those in northern and remote communities, ensuring access to educational opportunities that power Canada's innovation economy.

Jennifer Flanagan is a recognized national voice for equity in STEM, having built Actua from the ground up, including its National Girls Program, and championed systemic change. Actua is a trusted leader advancing opportunity, confidence and future-shaping skills for girls and young women in Canada.

4. Outline the organization's achievements since the beginning of last year that you wish to bring to the judges' attention (up to 250 words):

Total 251 words used. If the word count is more than 25 words over the limit, please deduct one (1) point from your score.

In 2024, Actua made bold strides toward a more inclusive and equitable STEM ecosystem in Canada, with a strong focus on engaging equity-deserving girls and youth historically underrepresented in STEM. The year marked a major and historic milestone: Actua secured a \$38.4 million investment through the Government of Canada's Strategic Science Fund, the largest investment in STEM education ever made in Canada.

Actua's National Girls Program continued to lead as Canada's boldest initiative addressing gender inequity in STEM. Reaching 20,000 girls through all-girls programming and another 160,000 through other experiences, the program delivered hands-on learning in future-focused areas like AI, digital literacy, and online safety, guided by female mentors and grounded in mental health and identity development. The impact was clear:

- o 81% of participants said they learned or did something new in STEM
- o 60% reported increased confidence
- o Half of the participants said they are more interested in attending postsecondary STEM education

Actua's expansive reach, innovative partnerships and commitment to equity are transforming the STEM landscape across Canada. With new university members joining the network and impactful collaborations with WWF-Canada and the Canadian Space Agency, Actua is delivering cutting-edge STEM opportunities to hundreds of thousands of youth in northern and Indigenous communities and across the country. Under CEO Jennifer Flanagan's visionary leadership – recognized by her induction into WXN's Canada's Most Powerful Women: Top 100 Hall of Fame – Actua continues to break down barriers, empower the next generation of diverse STEM leaders and drive lasting systemic change nationwide.

5. Explain why the achievements you have highlighted are unique or significant. If possible compare the achievements to the performance of other players in your industry and/or to the organization's past performance (up to 250 words):

Total 240 words used.

Actua's 2024 achievements are both unique and significant in the STEM education landscape due to the scale, inclusivity, and national demonstrated impact of its programming.

Engaging over 500,000 youth in more than 600 communities – many of them remote, northern, or underserved – demonstrates an unparalleled reach in Canada. This is alongside the engagement of more than 10,000 teachers annually by providing training, resources and classroom activities. No other education organization in Canada matches this breadth and depth of engagement, particularly with a consistent focus on equity-deserving groups.

The \$38.4 million Strategic Science Fund investment is not only a strong endorsement from the Government of Canada and a testament to Actua's proven ability to scale high-impact programming, it is also the single largest investment ever made in STEM education..

This progress reflects the bold, sustained leadership of CEO and co-founder Jennifer Flanagan, a national voice for equity in STEM. Jennifer has spent decades building a STEM ecosystem where girls and gender-diverse youth are not only welcomed, but prioritized. Her vision is critical in a country where women remain 30% less likely than men to enroll in STEM postsecondary programs, largely due to confidence gaps, social norms and lack of role models. Under her leadership, Actua's National Girls Program is confronting these barriers head-on, engaging 20,000 girls in 2024 alone, and helping shape a generation of girls who see themselves not just in STEM, but leading it.

6. Reference any attachments of supporting materials throughout this nomination and how they provide evidence of the claims you have made in this nomination (up to 250 words):

Total 141 words used.

- o [WXN Announcement](#) and [Financial Post article](#)
 - Press release which confirms the announcement of WXN naming Actua CEO Jennifer Flanagan as one of Canada's Most Powerful Women: Top 100 Award Winners in the Hall of Fame.
 - This is referenced in question number two and three.
- o [Actua 2024 Wrapped](#)
 - Report-style article from Actua recapping the organization's 2024 achievements.
 - This is referenced in question number two and three.
- o [Actua 2023/24 Report](#)
 - Actua's annual report from 2023/2024
- o [Actua Receives \\$38.4 million from the Government of Canada's Strategic Science Fund](#)
 - SSF's funding press release.
 - This is referenced in question number two and three.

Additional Materials for Consideration:

- o [TheFutureEconomy.ca](#): The Future of Skills Development: What Canada Must Do Now to Lead
- o [Toronto Star](#): The truth about misinformation? It's all over the internet
- o [Today's Parent](#): Why I Feel Safer Knowing My 10-Year-Old Has a Cell Phone

Attachments/Videos/Links:

[Jennifer Flanagan, CEO](#)



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