

## **Options Related to the Establishment of a Women's Bureau (Terminology and Municipal Public Consultation Processes)**

### **Terminology**

The high level summary of the results of the environmental scan provided in this report references specific terminology used in gender equity policies and initiatives. Below is a brief description of the most common terms used both in this report, and in the source documents referenced in the environmental scan.

As a start, the Deans/McKenney motion refers to a Women's Bureau, and identifies gender equality and gender parity as broad goals. The environmental scan indicates that most municipalities with similar initiatives use the term 'gender equity', which is generally accepted to mean "the process of being fair to women and men by recognizing diversity and disadvantage and directing resources and services towards those most in need to ensure equal outcomes for all".<sup>1</sup>

The most common tool used by the local governments reviewed in the environmental scan (Document 17 of the 2018-2022 Governance Review report) is some form of equity lens. The City of Ottawa has used an Equity and Inclusion Lens, developed in concert with the City for All Women Initiative (CAWI), for policy development and consultations since 2008, with the most recent updated handbook released in 2018. Ottawa's Equity and Inclusion Lens Handbook provides tools and tips to help ensure that City policies and services (both internal and external) are developed and reviewed in such a way that diversity and equity issues are considered, and that outreach and outcomes are inclusive and that barriers are identified and removed.

The federal government, and others (including the City of Calgary), are currently using the Gender-based Analysis tool developed by Status of Women Canada known as GBA+. GBA+ has been designed to help governments and agencies, "ask questions, challenge assumptions and identify potential impacts, taking into account the diversity of Canadians.... In addition to sex and gender, GBA+ considers all identity factors. Once an issue has undergone the GBA+ process, gender may emerge as the most important

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<sup>1</sup> Gender Equity in Local Government Partnership (Victoria, AU), Fact Sheet, "Why gender matters", 2010.

factor, while in other cases it might be any or a combination of factors that influence a person's experience of a government policy, program or initiative."<sup>2</sup>

The 'plus' part of GBA+ represents an approach known as intersectionality. Intersectionality recognizes that each individual's personal identity factors, including race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, income, religion, age and mental and physical ability, intersect with one's gender to shape how a person experiences something and the barriers they face.

Applying an intersectional lens to an experience such as a municipal program or service can help to assess the potential impacts of an initiative on diverse groups of people. Once an initiative has been analyzed with that lens, gender may emerge as the most important factor, while in other cases, it might be other factors or a combination thereof. As noted by the Ontario Human Rights Commission, applying an intersectional lens, "places the focus on society's response to the individual ... and does not require the person to slot themselves into rigid compartments or categories. It addresses the fact that discrimination has evolved and tends to no longer be overt, but rather more subtle, multi-layered, systemic, environmental and institutionalized."<sup>3</sup>

Much of the current research indicates that one tool required to advance an intersectional approach to policy making and service delivery is the systematic collection of data that reveals differences between groups within a wider population, commonly referred to as data disaggregation. The collection of disaggregated data allows for baseline measurements to be established, barriers to be quantified and qualified, and provides the foundation for measuring progress as well as reporting on those measures for decision-makers. The majority of municipalities reviewed in the environmental scan highlight the importance of measurement and reporting, with varying levels of data disaggregation. Toronto's City Council, as part of their 2017 direction to staff to develop an intersectional gender equity strategy, also directed staff to develop a framework for the collection of disaggregated data.

## **Consultation Processes**

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<sup>2</sup> Status of Women Canada, "What is GBA+"; <https://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/gba-accs/index-en.html>; date modified: 2017-05-25.

<sup>3</sup> Ontario Human Rights Commission, "An introduction to the intersectional approach"; <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/intersectional-approach-discrimination-addressing-multiple-grounds-human-rights-claims/introduction-intersectional-approach>; retrieved November 14, 2018.

Each of the municipalities reviewed by staff has either completed or is in the process of undertaking a multi-year process for setting priorities for a gender equity framework that includes consultations with the public, community organizations, service providers and subject matter experts, as well as staff within their own organizations.

That said, each consultation process was unique to that municipality. In brief:

- In 2012, two years prior to Council approval of the Edmonton Women's Initiative, municipal staff held several community forums, including three sessions, each with more than 700 women. Participants were asked to share their priorities with respect to women's issues, engagement and leadership.
- Staff from the Cities of Vancouver, Edmonton and Windsor worked closely with advisory committees of Council throughout the development of their respective strategies and initiatives. These committees – Vancouver's Women's Advisory Committee, the Women's Advocacy Voice of Edmonton (WAVE) Committee, and Windsor's Diversity Advisory Committee – provided external review and input.
- The City of Calgary did not have an established advisory committee on women or diversity at the time it developed its scoping report on gender equity, but it has since enlisted a group of service providers to enable external review and input on the development of the strategy as key project milestones are achieved. Additionally, the City of Calgary has also just struck an advisory committee on social wellbeing that will support the administration in providing equitable services to diverse populations and to advance the Calgary's process of Truth and Reconciliation; and
- The City of Montréal, through the Office de consultation publique de Montréal, is participating in a 36-month project (2017-2020), "MTElles", focused on improving women's civic participation in municipal development initiatives. Status of Women Canada has provided \$500,000 to three organizations collaborating on this project: Concertation Montréal, Coalition montréalaise des Tables de quartier, and Relais-Femmes. The Conseil des Montréalaises is also a partner.