

Creating Gender Equitable Municipalities

IDEAS THAT CAN TRANSFORM YOUR COMMUNITY



Creating Gender Equitable Municipalities

THEMES

ENGAGE



ADVOCATE



EDUCATE



EMPOWER



TRANSFORM



Creating Gender Equitable Municipalities

ENGAGE

Engagement is required in order to effectively advocate for, educate, empower, and transform the communities we serve. To make effective, long-lasting change, it's important to listen to the needs of those you are looking to support.

There are endless ways to engage your community, both as a whole and by specific demographics!

Depending on the nature of the event and topics at-hand, it make more of an impact to only invite women/gender diverse-only residents to certain events. Other times, it is beneficial/important to include men in the conversation.



POSSIBILITIES INCLUDE:

Difficulty Level



Affordability



	Difficulty Level	Affordability
<u>Pride Colours</u>	Orange	\$\$
<u>Wellness Events</u>	Orange	\$\$
<u>Free Mini-Photo Sessions</u>	Orange	\$ / \$\$
<u>High School/Jr High Engagement</u>	Orange	\$
<u>Youth Advisory Councils</u>	Red	\$ / \$\$
<u>Get On the Trails</u>	Green	\$ / \$\$
<u>Children's Clothing Swap</u>	Orange	\$
<u>Community Mural</u>	Orange	\$\$
<u>Hydroponics Session</u>	Orange	\$ / \$\$
<u>Other Engagement Ideas</u>	Green	\$

PRIDE COLOURS

When the weather allows for it, bring community members together to re-paint cross walks, as well as public benches and picnic tables.

Consider Pride colours, trans pride colours and orange handprints to raise awareness of residential schools.



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WELLNESS EVENTS

Are there local self-defence, yoga, karate, or kickboxing (etc) instructors in your community who'd be interested in a paid/volunteer opportunity to host a public session for your municipality?

Bring women and gender diverse folks in your community together for these events to provide them the opportunity to try new recreational activities, learn new skills and meet other locals. Attendance can be in exchange for a food bank donation.

This is a great opportunity to engage with residents and learn about how you can enhance their lives through municipal leadership.



FREE MINI-PHOTO SESSIONS

Pay or volunteer with a local photographer to hold mini-photography sessions in a local park space.



Sessions can be done in 10-minute slots for families, couples and young professionals living in your municipality.. It's an opportunity for residents to get a few professional photos taken in exchange for a food bank donation or pay-what-you-can donation for a local initiative.

Hang around to talk to some of the folks being photographed and learn about how you can help them through your role in municipal government.

HIGH SCHOOL / JUNIOR HIGH ENGAGEMENT

Where do youth from your municipality go to school?

Host a lunchtime or after-school focus group session for women, girls and gender diverse students at your local junior high and high schools.

The session can be broken down this way:

- Introduction: Why you're passionate about what you do and why you're hosting this session
- Ice Breaker
- Quick explanation of municipal government vs provincial/federal government responsibilities
- Open discussion about things that mean a lot to them, and start brainstorming examples of way the municipality could create a scalable, local solution to a global problem
- Take notes! Are you able to action any of these examples/ideas? Show them you are listening and willing to support them by following up



YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCILS

Create a youth advisory council that has equal numbers young women and men, as well as gender diverse representation.

Meet in the Municipal Chambers once every 3–4 months. This time is meant to be youth-led with with a mentor (Woman or gender diverse Municipal Councillor) present to facilitate or provide support as needed.

It's the youth's opportunity to bring topics to the table that mean something to them, and to discuss ways the municipality or community can work towards that issue. Create a small action plan on how to work towards that between now and their next meeting.

Keep the youth advisory council in the loop on the town's activities and invite them to represent. The major criticism we hear from larger City and Provincial Youth Advisory Councils is that there isn't enough engagement and they don't feel heard. Prove otherwise to the youth in your community, while promoting a pipeline of young leaders.



GET ON THE TRAILS

Host one or two events that bring women and gender diverse folks together, outdoors!

So many communities have beautiful hiking trails, but some folks may not have the confidence or may feel anxious to try going on the trails themselves. The same can be said for snowshoeing.

Perhaps there's an avid woman hiker that you know of in the community. Maybe there's a way to engage with the a non-profit like the [East Coast Trail Association](#), or consider creating an opportunity to bring in fabulous local adventurers like [TA Loeffler](#)!

By providing a safe and brave space to try something new, you are reminding your community members that they not only have what it takes to be an outdoors person, but **that they can do *all* the hard things!**

This will also give you a chance to engage with members in your community through a more informal setting.



CLOTHING SWAP

Facilitate a Children's Clothing Swap for your community.

Children grow quickly and it can be hard to keep up with the costs associated with buying new clothes - especially if you are in a rural or Northern community.

Bring parents and children together to swap and have tables organized by size. Offer a few snacks for those who participate, and consider bringing in non-profits like Single Parent's Association NL, Mothers of the Avalon, or Violence Prevention Avalon East to provide resources and chat about their services/volunteer possibilities. Donate whatever clothes is left over at the end of the day or store them somewhere for a future swap event.

This will also provide you the opportunity to engage with local parents and youth to find out more about how you can best support them through municipal government- while also saving them a bit of money.



COMMUNITY MURALS

Are there areas in the community where a mural could be added? Grafitti covered?

Engage with local artists and youth to create a mural that represents community.



HYDROPONICS SESSION

Food prices have been steadily increasing since the onset of the pandemic.

Hydroponic vegetable growing is an easy, affordable and scalable way to get the most out of fresh produce – all they need is water, a glass, and a windowsill!

- Green onions, peppers and lettuce are easy items to grow/re-grow, hydroponically
- There's a ton of activities and resources on Pinterest and YouTube
- Consider teaming up with SucSeed

Bring people together to learn about a few ways to do this at home and provide everyone with a little pot, some soil and green pepper seeds to go home with.

A great way to bring the community together and address food insecurity and healthy eating, while getting to know your community residents.



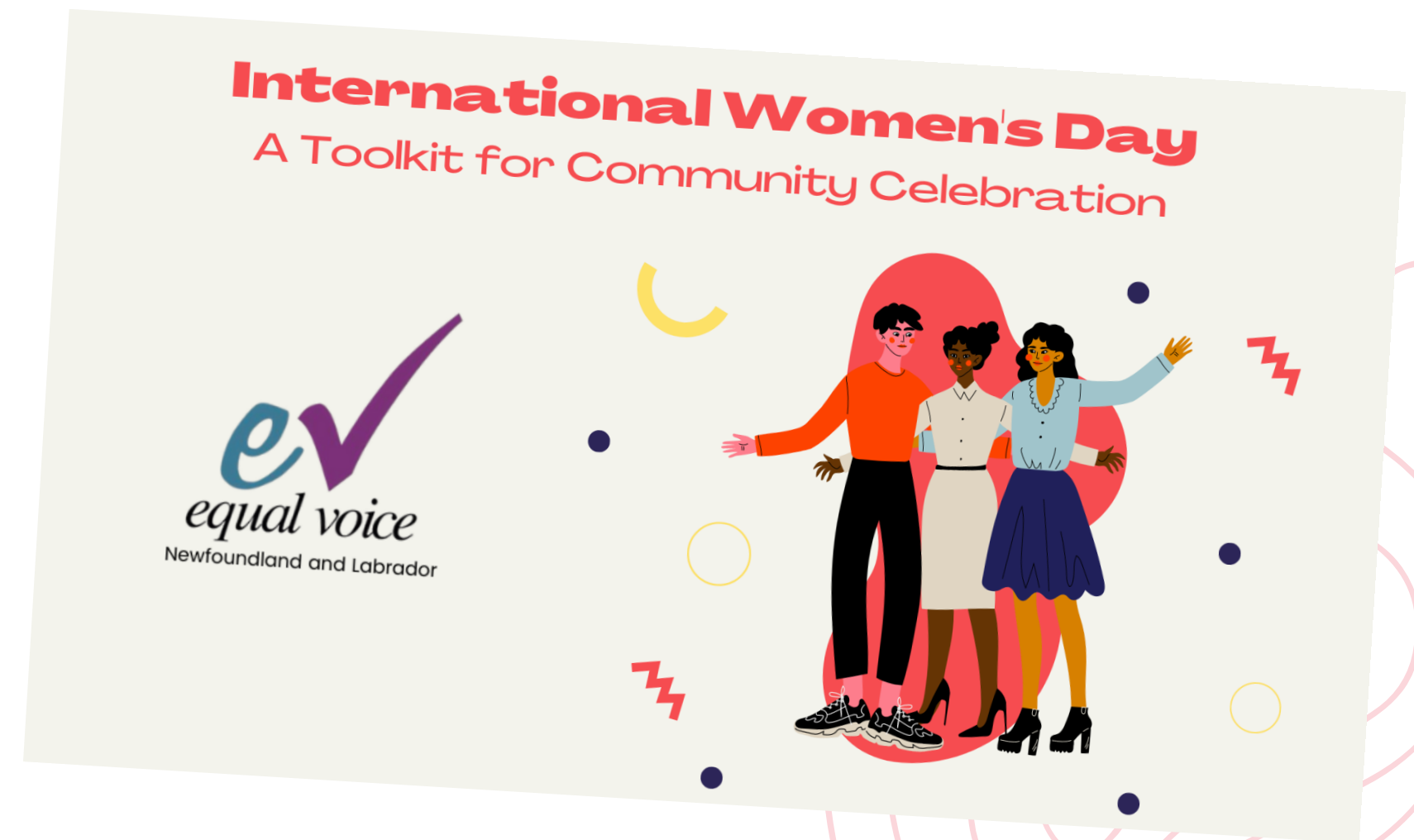
OTHER ENGAGEMENT IDEAS

Have you checked out our International Women's Day Toolkit for Community Celebration?

There may be a few ideas in there that work not just on International Women's Day, but any time of the year!

You can also find an abundance of feminist movie titles, colouring sheets, and activity sheets in this toolkit.

[CLICK HERE](#)



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ADVOCATE

As a municipal leader, not everything is in your control. Some items are provincially and federally regulated, but that doesn't mean that you don't have influence.

Use your platform to advocate for items that are handled outside of municipal government and make sure your community knows that there is no room for discrimination or hate.



POSSIBILITIES INCLUDE:

Difficulty Level



Affordability



Outdoor Lighting



\$\$\$

Formal Proclamation Signings & Flag Raisings



\$\$

Light Up Town Hall



\$\$

Use Your Platform - Addressing Discrimination



\$

Access to Internet



\$\$\$

OUTDOOR LIGHTING



Consider the following areas in your community:

- Road ways
- Municipal Building Parking Lots
- Park spaces

Do any of these areas have inadequate lighting? While lighting is a provincial responsibility, it is something you can advocate for on behalf of your community and work into longer-term planning. Even adding basic string lights along popular walk ways can make a world of a difference.

Illuminating areas in the nighttime allows everyone – not just women and gender diverse folks – to feel safer while walking, making your municipal spaces more welcoming.

FORMAL PROCLAMATION SIGNINGS & FLAG RAISINGS



Whether it's 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, Black History Month, Pride Month, or Sexual Assault Awareness Month (to name a few), there's opportunities to reach out to organizations affiliated with these Awareness Months for formal proclamation signings and flag raising ceremonies. It's a chance to reiterate your support to various causes, communities and initiatives.

Follow up by sharing resources about the topic to your community in local newsletters, local papers or on social media.

LIGHT UP TOWN HALL

NL's Government House does a great job of this!

Light up your municipal hall with different colours to show your support for different holidays.

To the right, you can see Lieutenant Governor Judy M Foote showing support for the people of Ukraine, as well as Earth Hour. Light up purple for International Women's Day, or light blue and pink during Pride Month!

Send a simple, but powerful message – You care.



USE YOUR PLATFORM.

Speak out against hate.

You can't always control what happens in your community. When instances of hate occur in our communities, use your platform to speak out against instances of misogyny, homophobia/transphobia, etc.. And do it blatantly, showing zero tolerance for hate or discrimination in your community.

If a community member has been victimized, try to reach out to them to let them know you are there for them and happy to connect them to a support resource ([Check out this local social supports directory](#)).

You can do this on your personal and Councillor social media pages, as well as making a point to do so on the Town social media page.



ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY

ACCESS TO INTERNET

Does your community have reliable access to Internet and cellphone services? WIFI in public spaces?

Especially in more rural and Northern communities, access to decent Internet and phone services is hard to find. As a Municipal Councillor, you can advocate on behalf of your community to try to get this kind of service.

Equitable access to internet and phone services provides more information at resident's finger tips, access to more job opportunities, and a better ability to engage with others.

Also consider providing free access to wifi at public buildings and park spaces.



Creating Gender Equitable Municipalities

EDUCATE

Arm your residents with knowledge and ensure they know how to seek support so they can enjoy a happy, healthy and safe life while living in the community you lead.



POSSIBILITIES INCLUDE:

Difficulty Level

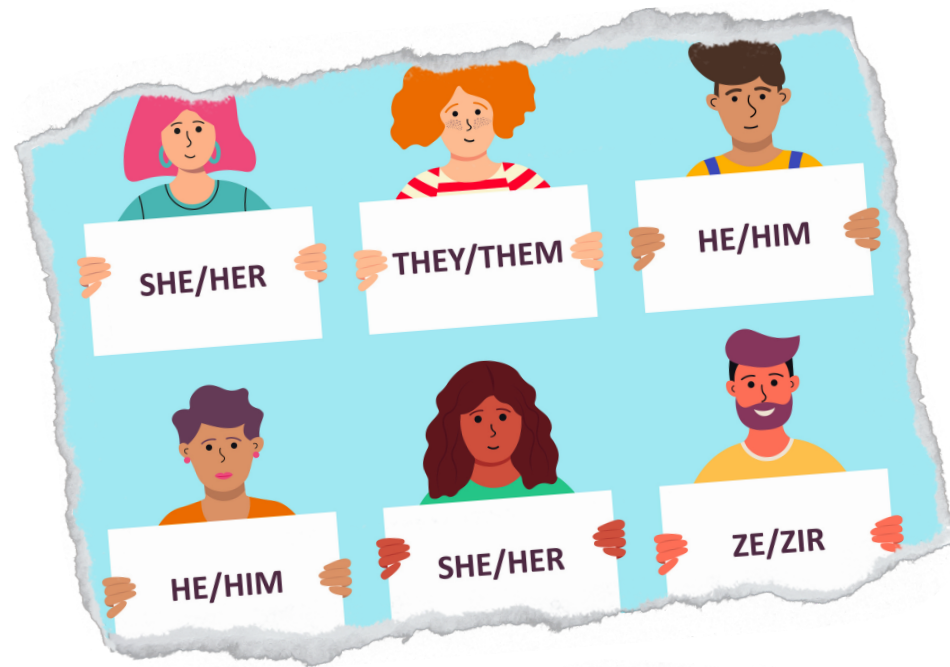


Affordability



	Difficulty Level	Affordability
<u>Using Pronouns</u>	●	\$
<u>Gender Neutral Language</u>	●	\$
<u>Safety When Out on the Town</u>	●	\$ / \$\$
<u>First Aid</u>	●	\$ / \$\$
<u>Municipal History Social Media Campaign</u>	●	\$
<u>Tough Topics Guide</u>	●	\$
<u>Little Libraries & Community Pantries</u>	●	\$ / \$\$
<u>Feminist & Inclusion-Focused Resources</u>	●	\$ / \$\$

USING PRONOUNS



List your pronouns in email signatures, during group introductions and while public speaking.

Encourage all municipal leaders on your Council to do the same!

Listing pronouns at the end of your name on an email signature or stating your pronouns while introducing yourself immediately creates a safe and brave space for individuals to be able to specify their gender identity.



GENDER NEUTRAL LANGUAGE

Creating Gender Equitable Municipalities

"Ladies and Gentlemen" is out. Inclusion is in.

Remove all gendered language from public addresses, when possible.

- "They" instead of "he or she"
- "Good morning everybody" instead of "Good morning ladies and gentlemen."

Bonus- Less syllables!



SAFETY WHEN OUT ON THE TOWN

Think about all of the pubs, bars, and restaurants in your community.

Educate these business owners about adding a safety plan to their operations, like 'Ask Angela' in the UK.

- 'Angela' is the safe word used by the individual to alert staff to a situation.
- When you ask the staff for 'Angela' they will offer to discreetly take you to a safe space.
- They will assist you to find a safe way out of the situation e.g. exit the venue and into a taxi, call a family member, remove the perpetrator from the venue.
- The individual causing the threat will then be dealt with accordingly e.g. asked to leave the venue, or police will be called if needed.



FIRST AID



Bring General and Mental Health First Aid to your community

Is there a funding opportunity or partnership/sponsorship with a local business to subsidize costs?

If so, bring a First Aid trainer to your Community Centre and cover a portion of the training to encourage others in your municipality to become armed with helpful information.

This idea also works with Babysitter Training courses for youth.

MUNICIPAL HISTORY SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAGIN

Create a social media campaign that highlights notable woman and gender diverse leaders in your community, both currently and in the past.

Educate and instil pride in your community by teaching them about the amazing change makers who helped shape the community to be what it is today.



MAUREEN WINZIG

TOUGH TOPICS GUIDE

Does your local
library have a sign
similar to this one?

TOUGH TOPICS

Got a question, but don't really want to ask?
Find your answers below.

- Abortion - 363.46
- Abuse - 362.76
- Alcohol - 362.29, 613.81
- Anxiety - 152.46, 155.5, 616.85
- Bankruptcy - 346.73
- Body Changes - 612.6, 613.04
- Bullying - 303.69
- Cancer - 616.99
- Child Custody - 343.73
- Cutting/Self Harm - 616.85
- Depression - 616.85
- Divorce - 306.89
- Drugs - 362.29, 613.8
- Eating Disorders - 616.85
- HIV/AIDS - 616.97
- Infertility - 616.69, 618.39
- LGBTQ - 306.76
- Loss of a Child - 155.90
- Loss of a Parent - 306.87, 155.90
- Mental Illness - 616.89
- Miscarriage - 618.39
- Post Traumatic Stress - 616.85
- Pregnancy - 306.87, 618.2
- Rape - 362.88
- Self Esteem - 158.1, 305.23
- Sex - 613.90
- STDs - 616.95
- Suicide - 362.28, 616.85

As librarians, we're here to help,
not judge.

Dream. Discover. Do.
SHIREVE MEMORIAL LIBRARY

LITTLE LIBRARIES AND COMMUNITY PANTRIES



Does your municipality have any Community Food Pantries or Libraries outside public spaces or neighbourhoods with a lot of youth?

Of the ones that do exist, are there any remaining regions/neighbourhoods in the municipality that could gain from having one? They are low cost to create and usually kept up by local community members.

It also provides an opportunity for residents to access literature and food in times they are in a financial bind, while also alleviating some demand on local food banks.



LITTLE LIBRARIES AND COMMUNITY PANTRIES (CONT)

So you have the little libraries and community food pantries.

This is a great way to provide resources to individuals in your community as well.
Consider the following:

- Laminate a sign on the inside of the pantry with some key community contacts such as the local food bank, violence prevention or woman's centre, mental health support line, etc.
- Put feminist and inclusion-focused books in the little library
- Print and distribute inclusion-focused and self-esteem building activities or colouring sheets for individuals to bring back to their children. Place it in a plastic/waterproof envelope in the library/pantry.
- Make a point to ensure municipal snow clearing staff keep these pantries clear when plowing the roads and clearing sidewalks, mail boxes and fire hydrants during the Winter.

Tons of activity and colouring sheets!

Click the image to view this toolkit.



Creating Gender Equitable Municipalities

EMPOWER

Walk the talk. Take action to make sure your municipality is gender equitable and inclusive for all individuals.



POSSIBILITIES INCLUDE:

Difficulty Level



Affordability



Menstrual Products & Diapers



\$ / \$\$

Breastfeeding Friendly Communities



\$ / \$\$

Gender Neutral Bathrooms



\$\$ / \$\$\$

Change Tables in Men's Bathrooms



\$\$

Municipal Lock Change Program



\$\$

Pet Foster Program



\$\$

Support Local



\$ / \$\$

MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS & DIAPERS



Think about all of the public buildings in your municipality.

Do they provide menstruation products or diapers for the public to use?

You never know when an unexpected incident can occur, so having these items on hand for your community members can be a huge help.

Costco sells these items in bulk but there's also opportunities to facilitate donation drives for these kinds of items, or engage with local period poverty initiatives like the [Period Priority Project](#) in NL.

You can take the initiative even a step further and consider having packages of diapers and menstruation products on hand at town hall for community members who cannot otherwise afford those items.

BREASTFEEDING FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

Is there a breastfeeding friendly spot in your local library and/or community centre?

Something as simple as a comfy chair and a privacy divider in the corner of the public space can make a world of a difference for mothers who are breastfeeding.

It's much more comfortable than having to try to do it in a public washroom or having to leave the community space earlier than they'd like to.



GENDER NEUTRAL BATHROOMS



Gender neutral bathrooms create a more welcoming and inclusive environment, whether it's to support gender diverse individuals, parents with different-gendered children, or folks with disabilities who need their Support Worker.

Every situation is different - some may require a simple door sign change, while others may require moving a urinal or small amount of plumbing re-routed.

In many cases, especially in smaller municipalities, bathrooms are already one stall only.

CHANGE TABLES IN MEN'S BATHROOMS

If your facility is unable to create gender neutral washrooms for whatever reason, then it's important to ensure both bathrooms have change tables.

Baby's changing tables should not be limited to the women's bathroom, only. We need to make spaces more dad-accessible and dad-friendly, to encourage men in spaces where mothers and children are predominately found.



MUNICIPAL LOCK CHANGE PROGRAM



Engage your local volunteer fire department or town hall

Find a way to provide quick, free access to lock changes for individuals in the community experiencing violence.

PET FOSTER PROGRAM TO SUPPORT PEOPLE LEAVING VIOLENT LIVING SITUATIONS

Does your municipality have a resource coordination service that can foster pets for individuals fleeing violent living situations?

Consider creating a list of local volunteers who would be comfortable fostering pets for anywhere from a few days to 3 months – perhaps in partnership with a local animal-focused group. Figure out volunteer's limits and breeds they're comfortable watching, as well as a discrete way for residents in need of this service to be able to reach out.

Pets are often a reason people stay in abusive households, so having a safe space for their pets can be a valuable service that provides your residents one less obstacle when needing to flee a violent situation.



SUPPORT LOCAL

Put your money where your mouth is.

We all want to support local, but make a specific effort to support women and gender diverse local businesses in your municipality.

Make a point to introduce yourself to them. Learn about how their needs can be met through municipal government.

Actually buy items from them over larger brand name stores and services, when possible. Share their posts and shout them out on your personal and Councillor social media pages.

Make sure they're aware that you are here to support them.



Creating Gender Equitable Municipalities

TRANSFORM

Take inclusion to the next level. Combat systemic oppressions that keep individuals from being able to have the same rights and freedoms as others.

Create long-lasting, sustainable change.



POSSIBILITIES INCLUDE:

Difficulty Level



Affordability



Ask Local Leaders to Run



Domestic Violence Leave



Gender Neutral Policies



Accessibility Funding



Pay Transparency & Close the Wage Gap



Childcare Budget for Municipal Councillors



ASK LOCAL LEADERS TO RUN

"A candle loses nothing by lighting another candle"

You see them at all of the community's events. They're already active and engaged in the community. They're offering their insights and contributing their time. They care about being part of something bigger than themselves. They're local volunteers and local business owners. Yet it can be so hard to get these same changemakers to put their name on the ballot. Women and gender diverse folks often have to be asked to run several times, before considering running for election.

Plant that seed. When you see a woman or gender diverse individual out there making a positive impact in their community, thank them and ask them if they ever considered running. Make them visualize it. Tell them their perspective is needed at the decision making tables.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LEAVE

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Newfoundland and Labrador has some of the highest rates of gender-based violence in the country.

Are your Council and municipal employees protected?

No matter what current union, provincial, or federal legislation states, is there a way you can also add a policy that protects all of your employees with guaranteed 5 days of paid leave?



GENDER NEUTRAL POLICIES

**Is the language within your municipal by-laws,
policies, procedures and regulations gender neutral?**

No? Get on that!



ACCESSIBILITY FUNDING

Whether it's creating more accessible spaces for folks with disabilities or for parents with strollers, accessible public spaces is key to a more equitable community.

Keep an eye on Employment & Social Development Canada and ACOA funding opportunities!

Examples of Accessibility Initiatives

- Ramps and automatic door buttons on all public buildings
- Automatic door buttons on public bathrooms
- Accessible bathrooms that allow a wheelchair to turn around and exit easily
- Grab bars around toilets, lower or tilted mirrors and a sink that has an opening underneath it make bathrooms more accessible
- Decent outdoor lighting
- Raised garden beds in community gardens
- More benches and accessible picnic tables
- Paved pathways
- Fire alarms that make noise for folks with sight issues
- Signage and main resources in braille
- Using image descriptions and #HashtagsLikeThis instead of #hashtagslikethis on social media posts
- Smooth any lips between outdoors and entrance to any public buildings and ensure your doorways are wide enough for wheelchairs and strollers.

PAY TRANSPARENCY & CLOSE THE WAGE GAP

You don't have to wait for the provincial government to pass legislation to set an example by incorporating pay transparency on all job descriptions and closing the wage gap of municipal workers based on gender.



CHILDCARE BUDGET FOR MUNICIPAL COUNCILLORS

Many municipal councils have funding allocated in their budget to accommodate paid time lost for municipal councillors; particularly, on unpaid councils.

That being said, many women councillors have to pay for childcare in order to attend a council meeting.

Municipal Councils like Wabush, thanks to Councillor Shazia Razi, have amended that budget policy to include paying for childcare, to empower parents (mainly mothers serving on Council) to be fully present at Council Meetings.

Alternatively, allow Councillors to bring children to the Chambers when childcare is unattainable.



Creating Gender Equitable Municipalities

IDEAS THAT CAN TRANSFORM YOUR COMMUNITY

QUESTIONS?

HAVE AN IDEA TO CONTRIBUTE?

NL@EqualVoice.ca