

VANCOUVER: A CITY FOR ALL WOMEN



WOMEN'S EQUITY STRATEGY

2021 PROGRESS UPDATE

The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətaʔt (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.





In January 2018, Vancouver City Council adopted [Vancouver: A City for All Women: Women's Equity Strategy 2018-2028](#). The Strategy recognizes that the full inclusion of all residents is fundamental to creating a city which is diverse, welcoming, vibrant, economically successful and environmentally sustainable. The Strategy sheds light on many of the barriers which continue to limit the full participation and contributions of all women, and sets goals and objectives to address these barriers.

This update provides a summary of progress since 2018 as well as goals and objectives for 2021 to 2023.

For a detailed update on progress, refer to the March 10, 2021 [Report to Council](#).

Women's Equity Strategy – Priority Areas and Goals

During public consultations, consistent concerns emerged around key areas that intersect and impact on women's full inclusion into the social, economic and political life of Vancouver (see [Women's Equity Strategy](#), "Why it Matters", pages 9-10 and "Inequality's Differential Impact", page 13).

The Strategy identified these as priorities and established goals for each priority area.

WOMEN'S SAFETY

Vancouver is a safe city in which all women are secure and free from crime and violence, including sexual assault.

CHILDCARE

Women's full participation in the workforce and engagement in public life is supported by affordable and accessible quality childcare.

INTERSECTIONAL LENS

The City's decisions, programs and plans are informed by an intersectional approach to ensure that those facing multiple barriers to participation are fully included in community life.

HOUSING

A range of affordable housing choices is available for women of diverse backgrounds and circumstances, including single parents, seniors, newcomers, and those facing vulnerable conditions.

WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP & REPRESENTATION

The City will elevate the visibility, influence, representation and contribution of all women in the organization by providing equitable access to work opportunities, including leadership roles and other under-represented occupations and by creating and implementing initiatives to specifically enhance their development and leadership.

PHASE 1 (2018-2019) UPDATE

SUMMARY

The Strategy identified objectives and actions for each priority area to be completed during 2018-2019 (Phase 1). For a detailed update on Phase 1 actions and outcomes, see Appendix A of the [Report to Council](#).

Priority: Intersectional lens

Objective: In 2018, an intersectional framework will be established for City departments.

Outcomes and related work

- City staff have been working on the development of a comprehensive Equity Framework. The Framework will drive internal systems change and support the application of an intersectional lens that centres racial justice in our approach to equity. The Framework will be implemented during Phase 2 (2021 – 2023). The Framework also fulfils Council direction to develop a [comprehensive gendered intersectional strategy](#).
- City staff have been provided with education and tools to support the implementation of the Framework: Introduction to Intersectionality, Equity Reference Guide, and Equity Decision-Making Tool.
- The City’s senior leadership have received training in gender-based intersectional analysis.

Priority: Safety

Objective: By 2025, women’s sense of safety will be increased by at least 10 per cent (aligned with [Healthy City Strategy](#)).

Outcomes and related work

- The City completed five (5) of six (6) Phase 1 actions in this area including annual public campaigns to raise awareness of the [16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence](#) and joining the UN Women’s Global Flagship Initiative “[Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces](#)”.
- The safety of sex workers, in particular women and those who are 2SLGBTQQIA and gender diverse, is an important gender equity issue. The City has a number of initiatives to protect the [health and safety for sex workers and communities impacted by sex work, and the prevention of sexual exploitation](#).





Priority: Childcare

Objective: By the end of 2018, 1,000 new childcare spaces will be added from the 2015 baseline (aligned with [Healthy City Action Plan, 2015-2018](#)).

Outcomes and related work

- On June 26, 2018, Council announced that [it surpassed its target](#).
- The City completed all Phase 1 actions in this priority area including partnerships with senior levels of government to increase affordable, quality childcare, and creating child-friendly provisions to accommodate families' participation at Council meetings and public hearings at City Hall.
- The City supports local childcare providers through a number of annual grants aimed at [program development](#), [program stabilization](#), [research](#), and [enhancements](#).

Priority: Housing

Objective: 72,000 new homes across Vancouver in the next 10 years (aligned with [Housing Vancouver Strategy](#)).

Outcomes and related work

- See Housing Vancouver Strategy's 2020 Annual Progress Book for updates on the development of family friendly housing, rental housing, and affordable housing.
- The City's research into the extent of women's hidden homelessness is in progress and carried over to Phase 2.
- The City contributed a capital grant of \$1.2 million toward the development of [Olivia Skye House](#).
- [Aneki Housing for Women](#) – The City, in partnership with the Vancouver Affordable Housing Agency and BC Housing, developed 39 self-contained studio homes for women in the Downtown Eastside. Seven of the homes are wheelchair accessible.



Priority: Leadership & Representation

Objective 1: Effective immediately, the City will increase new hires for Senior Management roles to 50 per cent.

- This objective was met (see Table 1).

Objective 2: By 2020, the proportion of women new hires in under-represented occupations will be increased by at least 5 per cent over the 2017 baseline.

- Under-represented occupations include Engineering, Information Technology, Firefighting, Trades & Operations.
- The 2017 baseline was 20 per cent. The Phase 1 objective for all under-represented occupations was 25 per cent.
- This objective was not met. For under-represented occupations combined, recruitment during 2018-2019 remained at 20 per cent (see Table 1 on page 7). The City will work towards addressing barriers to recruitment outreach during Phase 2.

Outcomes and related work

- The [Report to Council](#), Appendix A, provides more details on the City's results and findings as they relate to the above objectives.
- The City completed all Phase 1 actions in this area, including developing a [Breastfeeding Policy](#) for staff, conducting focus groups with women staff in leadership and under-represented occupations, and publishing the [Workforce Pay and Gender](#) report.
- The City engaged in several partnerships with external organizations to support our work in improving our workplace cultures and hiring practices, for example:
 - Women Transforming Cities study, [Action on systemic barriers to women's participation in local government](#)
 - Project RISE - [Engendering Success in STEM](#)
 - [Immigrant Employment Council of BC - Mentorship Program](#)

Percentage of New Hires by Occupational Category

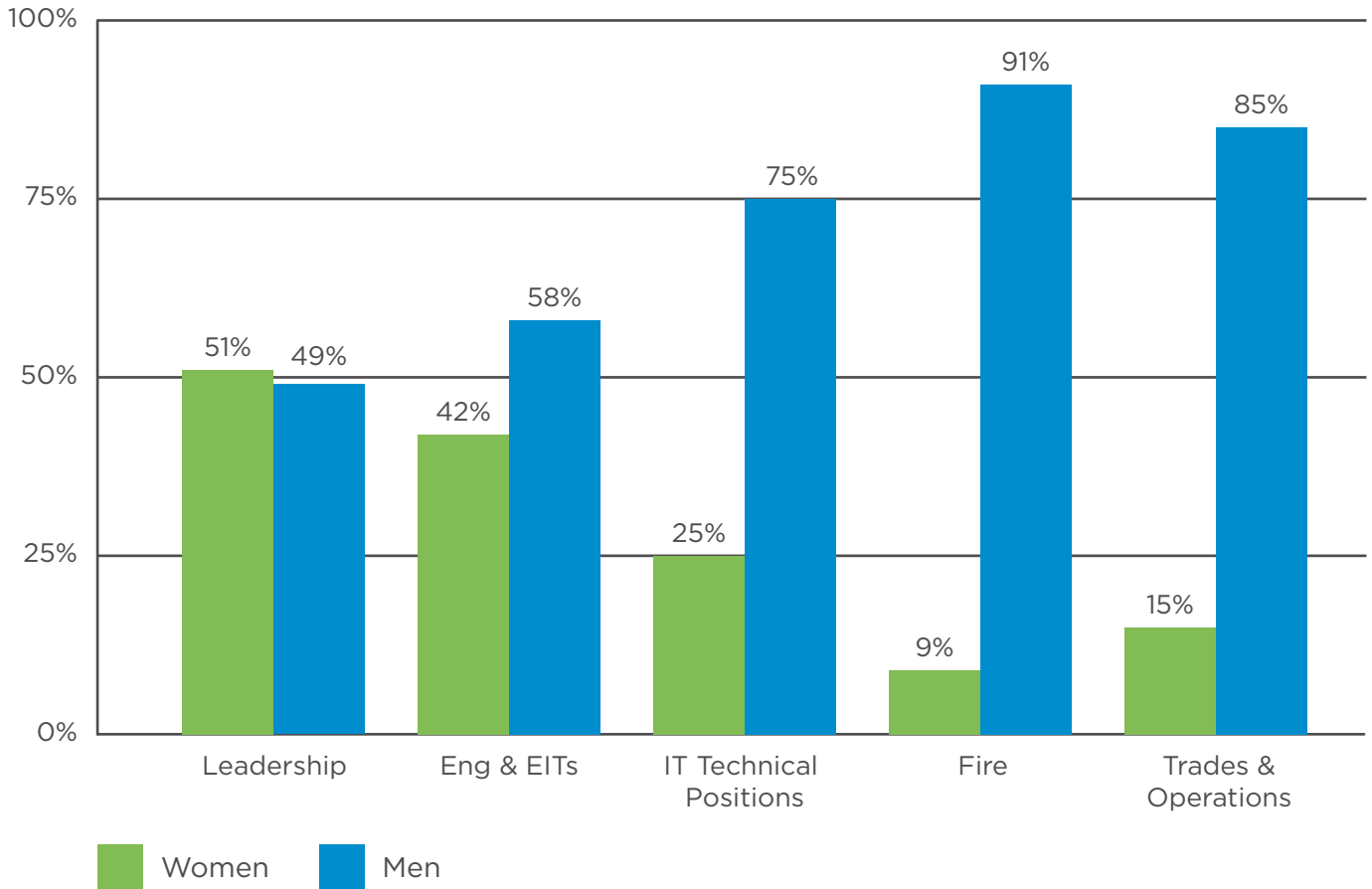


Table 1, Percentage of new hires by occupational category, cumulative results 2018-2019



PHASE 2 (2021-2023)

FOCUS ON SYSTEMIC CHANGE

The work during Phase 1 resulted in a deeper awareness of systemic barriers within the City’s operations to women’s full inclusion. The work also highlighted gaps in our ability to meaningfully apply an intersectional approach. The actions identified for Phase 2 (2021-2023) will help address those systemic barriers and provide the City with the tools – and the supporting qualitative and quantitative data – to meaningfully apply an intersectional approach to women’s equity.

The following Phase 2 actions are aligned with the Equity Framework and other City strategies. Work on these actions is underway and was delayed in 2020 because of the City’s pandemic response.

PRIORITY: INTERSECTIONAL LENS

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| OBJECTIVE | In 2021-2023 an Equity Framework will be implemented for all City Departments. |
| ACTIONS | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Finalize and adopt the Equity Framework (also fulfilling Council direction to create a comprehensive gendered intersectional strategy). 2. Develop and deliver training on applying the Equity Framework. 3. Pilot Equity Framework across several projects/programs/initiatives in different departments. 4. Refine and roll out Equity Framework across all City Departments. 5. Develop and implement systems to gather and refresh disaggregated data including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Conduct a corporate-wide workforce equity and inclusion survey. b. Develop and conduct a gender and diversity audit of Vancouver City Council and Council operations (related to Council direction for an annual Gender, Diversity and Intersectional Audit). |
| ACCOUNTABLE DEPARTMENTS | City Manager’s Office/Equity Office Arts, Culture and Community Services Human Resources |

PRIORITY: WOMEN’S SAFETY

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| OBJECTIVE | By 2025, women’s sense of safety will be increased by at least 10 per cent (aligned with Healthy City Strategy). |
| ACTIONS | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct a Scoping Study on sexual violence and sexual harassment in public spaces as a part of the UN Safe Cities Initiative, which aims to improve the safety of women, Two Spirit, trans, non-binary, and gender diverse people. 2. Continue to engage with Indigenous communities and review and identify opportunities to integrate within the City’s work key recommendations from: (1) Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and (2) Red Women Rising: Indigenous Women Survivors in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside. 3. Develop a Sex Worker Safety Plan with focus on long term goals and planning with internal departments and external partners. |
| ACCOUNTABLE DEPARTMENT | Arts, Culture and Community Services |

PRIORITY: CHILDCARE

| | |
|---|--|
| OBJECTIVE | <p>Families' access to affordable and quality childcare is increased through the efforts of the City working with the Province of BC and other partners. Through a unique Memorandum of Understanding with the Province, up to 2,300 new licensed spaces will be added to Vancouver's supply, building on the target of 1,000 spaces set by City Council as part of the City's 2019-2022 Capital Plan.</p> |
| ACTIONS For details and latest updates, visit Children and Childcare in Vancouver | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Childcare policy development - Addressing priority areas such as increasing equitable childcare access; supporting Vancouver's workforce; aligning childcare policy and investment with affordable housing policy and programs and with the Vancouver Plan; and building new and strengthened partnerships across sectors. 2. Childcare design and regulatory review - Exploration and development of a suite of possible incentive programs, planning and regulatory tools intended to accelerate the development of affordable, accessible and quality childcare spaces. 3. Childcare development process review - Review to enhance efficiency of internal and external processes related to permitting and licensing for childcare. |
| ACCOUNTABLE DEPARTMENT | Arts, Culture and Community Services |

PRIORITY: HOUSING

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| OBJECTIVE | <p>72,000 new homes across Vancouver in the next ten years, with 50 per cent of new homes serving households earning less than \$80,000, 40 per cent of new homes large enough for families, and 65 per cent of all new housing for renters.</p> |
| ACTIONS | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct a needs assessment on obtaining and maintaining housing for hard-to-house women in the Downtown Eastside. 2. Through the Women's Legacy Project, plan and develop safe affordable housing options that prioritizes Indigenous women-led families, 2SLGBTQQIA, and gender diverse peoples and their families. This project strives to attract capital from senior levels of government; co-create the functional programming & design of the project with the communities the project is intended to serve; and demonstrating women's, 2SLGBTQQIA, and gender diverse peoples' abilities in all aspects of the project including management, design, trades, governance and operations. |
| ACCOUNTABLE DEPARTMENTS | Arts, Culture and Community Services (1) Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability (2) Vancouver Affordable Housing Agency (2) |

PRIORITY: LEADERSHIP & REPRESENTATION

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| OBJECTIVES | <p>Establish and implement goals for diverse staffing.</p> <p>Identify and remove barriers within the City for women in under-represented occupations¹.</p> <p>Identify and remove barriers to women’s advancement and inclusion in leadership to ensure parity in new hires and equitable representation within the City’s leadership.</p> |
| ACTIONS | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a corporate-wide equity and inclusion plan for the City’s workforce that considers objectives based on disaggregated data, that identifies and addresses systemic barriers to full inclusion, and that includes individualized departmental plans and accountabilities for implementation. 2. Update the City’s individual and leadership development offerings with emphasis on inclusive leadership skills. 3. Sponsor emerging women leaders to participate in leadership development programs. 4. Increase recruitment outreach for job-seekers who are Indigenous, Black, persons of colour, women in under-represented occupations, immigrants, 2SLGBTQ+, and persons with disabilities. 5. Finalize the corporate-wide long term, flexible and remote work strategies. 6. Review and evaluate the City’s Works Yards and Firehalls in order to develop facilities that provide equitable access to all staff and genders. |
| ACCOUNTABLE DEPARTMENTS | <p>All City departments (2)</p> <p>Human Resources (1, 3, 4, 5, 6)</p> <p>Real Estate and Facilities Management (6, 7)</p> |

¹ Under-represented occupations include: engineers, engineers-in-training, engineering assistants, information technology, firefighting, trades and entry-level operational roles



CONCLUSION

The City prides itself on being a leader in equity and inclusion. This includes being honest about where we can do better, being open to feedback about how we can do better, and incorporating this feedback into our plans and programs.

The next few years will see an increased focus on systemic changes to embed equity into our policies, programs, and practices, and to do so with an inclusive intersectional lens. These are steps in a continuing journey to address systemic racism, colonialism, sexism, transphobia, homophobia and ableism inherent in our structures, which are informed by the history and ongoing present day realities and impacts of colonialism, patriarchy, and white supremacy that marks Canadian society.

The journey to dismantle these structures will be ongoing and will require constant vigilance, learning, growth, reflection, and action. The Equity Framework and our work on the Women's Equity Strategy and other equity-related strategies will support our efforts to create and sustain a vibrant, inclusive, diverse, and equitable organization and city.



453 West 12th Avenue
Vancouver, British Columbia
Canada V5Y 1V4

website: vancouver.ca

 [@CityofVancouver](https://twitter.com/CityofVancouver)

 [/CityofVancouver](https://www.facebook.com/CityofVancouver)

phone: 3-1-1