

Proposed Priority Action Areas, 2018 Equality Report Card

PEI ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Making Equality a Priority

Premier Wade MacLauchlan has mandated the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women to “work across all Government to advance equality and opportunity for women in policies and programs.” We expect the provincial government to apply gender and diversity analysis to understand potentially different effects of existing and proposed legislation, policies, and budgets on Islanders of all genders and diverse groups.

- Equality Report Card questionnaires completed by all departments of government
- Concrete example(s) of applied gender and diversity analysis from at least half of government departments
- Evidence that strategies, action plans, and reviews produced by government apply gender and diversity analysis
- Reports from all departments on ongoing or new gender and diversity analysis training their public servants have participated in during the reporting period
- Commitment to updating the statistical profile of PEI women, with target dates

Women in Decision-Making

We expect the provincial government to actively encourage women’s advancement in areas where women have been under-represented. We expect the provincial government to break down barriers to women’s leadership in elected and appointed decision-making. We expect government to be a model employer of women in the public sector, given their work is essential to delivering public services and their income is a foundation for families’ incomes and the provincial economy.

- Recruitment to agencies, boards, and commissions keyed to specific, publicly advertised gender and diversity goals for appointments
- Increased number of women appointed to agencies, boards, and commissions (ABCs), including increased number of women appointed as chairs or vice-chairs, on ABCs where government makes the appointment
- Steps to examine and reduce barriers to women being nominated or elected, especially in follow-up to the Special Committee on Democratic Renewal
- Increased number of women appointed by the Premier to Executive Council and more women in senior government leadership
- Increased employment equity, especially women in leadership roles and women in non-traditional roles, within the provincial public service

Violence Prevention

We expect the provincial government to work towards ending violence against women and children and all forms of family violence. We expect government to provide and support programs and services that aim to prevent violence and that support victims or survivors and hold perpetrators accountable when violence occurs. We expect government services to be gender appropriate, culturally sensitive, and trauma-informed.

- Increased core funding for Family Violence Prevention Services, Rape and Sexual Assault Centre, and/or other community-based organizations that support violence prevention or help victims of violence
- Measures and/or resources to allow adult protection workers to provide more help to adults in compromised circumstances
- Use of best-practice, updated, or new tools to prevent or respond to violence, including woman abuse/spousal abuse protocols and policies and/or risk assessment tools
- Examples of enhanced and specialized programs, information, or supports for victims of family violence, relationship violence, or violence against women and children from specific groups (such as newcomers, Aboriginal people, people with disabilities, youth, or people with mental health or addictions challenges)
- Examples of training for intervention in family violence, relationship violence, and violence against women and children for front-line workers such as police, justice workers, and child protection workers

Access to Justice

We expect the provincial government to place high priority on ensuring women and families have access to justice, particularly for family law, and to provide and support programs and services that assist people to receive legal help for legal problems. We expect therapeutic court options or restorative justice options where these are appropriate and where supported by treatment or services.

- Implementation of a pilot project for a domestic violence court option
- Steps towards expanded resources for family mediation, counselling, and conflict resolution that reduce/prevent families from requiring legal proceedings
- Improved access to family law legal aid lawyers
- Steps towards establishing a provincial child and youth advocacy office or other mechanisms to serve children and youth involved in provincial government systems (such as independent case review, policy audits, and arms-length reporting to the Legislature and the public on issues)
- Continued use of pre-motion conference procedures (triage), implemented by the Supreme Court, for family law matters

Women's Health

We expect the provincial government to sustain a strong system for acute care, balanced by continuing work in wellness and health promotion. We expect government to recognize whole-body, holistic physical and mental health, and to respond to social determinants of health, such as income, gender, language, and culture. We expect access to health services with dignity and without judgment or stigma.

- In-province access to abortion care in hospital, including clear and accessible information about services and choices, access to medical abortion (the abortion pill), surgical abortion, and follow-up care
- Greater access to sexual and reproductive health services on Prince Edward Island (such as support for IVF treatments, other fertility supports, reproductive endocrinology services, steps towards a sexual health clinic, support for trans health, and access to midwifery)
- Increased funding and services in mental health in community mental health and other non-urgent and preventative care, including gender-specific services
- Action on recommendations in the 2016 Mental Health and Addictions Strategy
- Continued enhancements to medical sexual assault response, including more training of and access to SANE and EESAS nurses in the two biggest hospitals

Supports for Caregivers

We expect the provincial government to value the frequently unpaid and underpaid work of caregivers, often women, who care for children or adults, including seniors. To allow caregivers full participation in the life of Island society, government must enact policies that increase supports, not burdens, for caregiving.

- Increased funding and/or other supports for home care for adults (including seniors) with disabilities or medical needs that make them dependent on others' care (for example, respite care programs or day programs)
- Improved access to quality early childhood care and education for Island families, planned collaboratively with early childhood educators to meet families' needs (which could include increased infant spaces, care options outside 9–5, and regionally responsive services)
- Improved childcare subsidies for lower-income families, which could include higher rates and/or increased eligibility
- Continued support for and promotion of the "Triple P" positive parenting program for PEI
- Opportunities for caregivers of school-aged children, especially women and diverse and under-represented groups, to collaborate meaningfully in education governance and leadership

Adult Education and Training

We expect the provincial government to continue to support women's equitable access to education and training, particularly in areas where women have been under-represented and in areas that are the focus of economic development. We expect livable income for citizens to be government's fundamental goal in supporting education and training and for programs and services that lay a clear path towards a life of independence and dignity for women and their families.

- Funding for programs that increase women's participation in trades and technology and/or funding for women to access these programs
- Evidence of a gender and diversity lens applied in economic development strategies and action plans, to ensure women and under-represented groups can participate and benefit equally
- Examples of government programs or services that apply a gender and diversity lens and focus on developing skills for long-term, year-round employment
- Increased investment in programs and services that improve literacy and numeracy for adults
- Steps towards Island-wide public transit

Diversity and Inclusion

We expect the provincial government to actively engage our increasingly diverse population and to take special measures to include diverse and vulnerable groups in the social, cultural, economic, and democratic life of the Province. We expect government to meaningfully consult and consciously include and accommodate diverse groups in its programs and services.

- A strong focus on social inclusion and democratic participation in government strategies and action plans
- Steps to implement provincially relevant Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report
- Steps towards establishing a provincial Ombudsperson to conduct independent investigations of complaints
- Examples of programs and services that promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities (including mental illnesses), especially participation in the labour force
- Changes to legislation that allow for supported decision-making, in compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Women's Economic Status

We expect the provincial government to set a high priority on improving the health, dignity, and wellbeing of economically vulnerable Islanders and to work towards a province where everyone has a livable income. Livable income means that people are able to meet their basic needs in good health and dignity and can also deal with emergencies. We expect responsive and flexible social programs and an effective cross-governmental provincial strategy to reduce or eliminate poverty.

- Increased social assistance rates that ensure individuals and families are able to meet their basic needs, including steps towards implementing a basic income guarantee for all Islanders
- Example(s) of policies that support food security, especially among vulnerable groups
- Increased funding for and construction of affordable, accessible, appropriate housing
- An expanded mandate for social assistance programs to support more economically vulnerable Islanders (including, for example, increased eligibility, more access to flexible short-term emergency support, more support for people to transition from social assistance to independent livelihood)
- Improvements to employment standards (including minimum wage) for non-unionized workers