

Guidelines for the preparation of an “Equity Impact Statement” for inclusion in reports to City Council and its Committees

A Pilot Project on the implementation of the Equity Lens

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Working Guidelines: “Equity Lens” - Pilot Project

1. Authority and background:

At its November/December, 2004 meeting, City Council established the mandate and projects of the Mayor’s Roundtable on Access, Equity and Human Rights and requested the Roundtable to develop a tool to address equity issues.

The development process included consultation with the Inter-Divisional Staff Team on Access Equity and Human Rights, field testing in 5 Divisions. The results of field testing were reported to the Roundtable which recommended that City Council undertake a pilot project.

City Council approved a “**pilot project**” to implement the use of an “**equity lens**”.
Policy and Finance Committee, Report 3, Clause 3 – September 2006.

2. Scope of the “pilot project”:

The “pilot project” has two components:

- (1) inclusion of an *equity impact statement* in reports from the City Manager’s Office, including reports prepared by operating Divisions for signature by the City Manager; and
- (2) application of the “equity lens” to *program reviews*.

(Note: The application of the “equity lens” will be included in the work undertaken by the program review teams.)

3. What is an equity lens

Equity means equitable outcomes for all. Achieving equity requires the removal of systemic barriers and accommodation of differences whereby individuals and groups can benefit equally.

Proactive measures are often required to achieve equal results. For example, providing language translation, sign language interpretation, real time captioning and attendant care at public meetings enables residents from different language groups and residents with different abilities to participate in the City’s decision-making process.

The functions of the equity lens are Diagnosis, Measurement, Evaluation, and Identifying and Celebrating accomplishments.

- Diagnosis – For a new policy or program, the equity lens helps to detect the impact on diverse individuals and groups, and identify barriers and appropriate accommodation to address barrier elimination.
- Measurement – For an existing policy and program, it helps to measure whether it eliminates barriers and benefits equitably diverse individuals and groups experiencing an adverse impact.
- Evaluation – It identifies strengths and areas for improvement and helps to find equitable solutions.
- Identifying and celebrating accomplishments – It identifies “best practices” and “milestones” that can be replicated to build upon original successes.

4. Using the “equity lens” to prepare an “equity impact statement”

The purpose of applying the equity lens is to determine if the proposal:

- (a) will result in equitable outcomes for all populations; or
- (b) will increase/improve access for a *target population* (such as youth, women, people with disabilities) or for *specific groups* within a target population (such as Black youth or Aboriginal women).

Consider the following questions:

- (a) ***Have you determined if there are barriers faced by diverse groups? Which groups or populations? What is the impact of the policy/program on diverse groups?***

(Examples of identifying barriers and assessing impact – consultation, research, collection of data on gender, race and other characteristics, outreach, field work, etc.)

- (b) ***How will you reduce or remove the barriers? What changes have you made to the policy/program so that the diverse groups will benefit from the policy/program? What human and budgetary resources have been identified or allocated?***

(Examples of barrier reduction and proactive strategies – language translation, accessible location, diversity training, hiring and retention of

diverse staff, designated accessibility planner, integrating community input into policy/program, special program, advocacy, etc.)

- (c) ***How will you measure the results of the policy/program to see if it works to successfully remove barriers or create opportunities for diverse groups/populations?***

(Examples – statistics on the distribution of resources, analysis of disaggregate data, improvement in specific areas, satisfaction with policy/program results, etc.)

5. Content of the Equity Impact Statement for reports to Council and Committees:

The equity impact statement will contain information to indicate that an assessment has been undertaken and what conclusion has been reached.

The type of equity impact statement will depend on the **content** of the report.

- (a) Where an equity impact analysis has been conducted, provide a summary of impact; or
- (b) Where a preliminary analysis has been conducted, provide result and identify where there is a need for a comprehensive assessment of how the proposal affects or will affect different users/diverse communities; or
- (c) If the report is providing information/results of a diversity/equity program, the statement will address the equity objectives and trends that are emerging; or
- (d) The reason for not conducting an equity impact analysis. i.e. No changes are being proposed to services, programs or policies or is a transmittal.

Appendix

Examples of Equity Impact Statements that have been included in recent reports to Council.

(1) City Manager Cover Report (March 9th) to the Executive Committee meeting of March 26, 2007 on Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) Community Management Plan (CMP)

“The CMP addresses the challenges faced by Toronto Community Housing and sets out actions that will help build and strengthen healthy communities. TCHC has a very diverse tenant population with over 70 languages spoken. Because of this diversity and the very low average household income, equity issues are very clear and very important to TCHC. The removal of systemic barriers and support for and accommodation of differences is vital to the work. Tenant participation in governance, support for youth programs and employment, translation and interpretation services and many other actions have been part of TCHC's approach since it came into existence.

There are a number of initiatives in the 2007 - 2009 CMP that continue the focus on improving equity. The diversity plan provides the framework for increasing diversity in the workforce so that it reflects the demographics of the community. A number of initiatives focus on improving social inclusion or reducing the barriers to participation. These include the development of pilot programs to address mental health and social isolation, anti-racism study circles that engage staff and tenants and the development of an accessibility plan that identifies priorities for investments in improving accessibility. Another set of initiatives work to create economic opportunities for tenants through setting goals and targets for tenant employment in contracted services and through programs focused on employment and education that provide opportunities and reduce barriers for youth within TCHC's communities.”

The foregoing statement responds to the purpose of the equity lens by:

- noting the diversity and income levels among the tenant population
- notes that these characteristics creates barriers
- notes that barriers are addressed through specific programs to address tenant participation in governance, support for youth programs and employment, translation and interpretation services
- identifies specific initiatives within the community management plan such as the development of pilot programs to address mental health and social isolation, anti-racism study circles that engage staff and tenants, the development of an accessibility plan, economic opportunities for youth and tenant employment in contracted services.

(2) City Manager Cover Report (March 9th) to the Executive Committee meeting of March 26, 2007 on French Language Services.

“The provision of information in French provides access to services by Francophones who do not have a working knowledge of English.”

This statement notes that

- a barrier exists for a linguistic minority;
- the provision of service (translation and interpretation) provides access.

(3) City Manager’s Report (April 16th, 2007) to the Executive Committee on the 2005 Performance Measurement and Benchmarking Report

“This report summarizes Toronto’s performance measurement results in seventeen service areas and also includes data of up to fourteen other Ontario municipalities. The measures and indicators included are at a high level and therefore are not at a level of detail that would allow for an equity impact analysis to be undertaken.”

The Equity Impact Statement notes that:

- an equity impact analysis could not be conducted as the indicators which were selected by the participating municipalities did not provide a level of detail to permit this analysis.

(4) City Manager’s Report (May 9th) to the Executive Committee meeting on May 28th, 2007 on the renewal of technical partnership with Botswana.

“The City of Toronto’s participation in technical partnerships such as this assists cities in the developing world with community and organizational capacity building initiatives. In the next phase of this partnership, the City of Toronto will continue to support SEDC in improving their capacity to address HIV/AIDS issues with particular emphasis on helping establish a solid foundation for the South East District Youth Empowerment League (SEDYEL), a youth led soccer league which integrates HIV/AIDS awareness, health promotion, life skills, sexual health and youth leadership development.”

The Equity Impact Statement notes that

- the City is sharing its expertise with other cities to address barriers for target populations.

(5) City Manager’s Report (May 11th) to the Executive Committee on hosting the 2008 Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities

“The 2008 Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative annual meeting and conference will provide a forum in which to discuss issues related to the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River for the benefit of current and future generations. A priority for the City of Toronto is improving access and enjoyment of urban beaches for the benefit of the population as a whole but specifically for City residents who do not have access to recreation activities outside the City.”

The Equity Impact Statement notes that

- the proposed forum will address issues which will result in benefits for future generations;
- a priority for the City is increasing access to recreation services for a target group of residents.

(6) City Manager’s Report (September 1, 2006) to the Policy and Finance Committee regarding the Policy and Processes for Public Appointments to City Agencies, Boards, Commissions and Corporations and Nominations to External Special Purpose Bodies

The report sets out the following equity objectives for the Public Appointments Policy:

“The objective is to build capacity on City boards to oversee services delivered within a diverse community. This is addressed in this policy by:

- (a) establishing procedures and a monitoring mechanism to ensure board members reflect the diversity of the community with respect to gender, age, Aboriginal status, race, disability and sexual orientation;
- (b) ensuring that boards accommodate appointed members with disabilities or other barriers inhibiting full participation; and
- (c) providing direction and orientation for board members on the City’s objectives of providing services that respect the needs and desires of diverse communities and ensuring access to services.”