

Supporting Equity Goals with Disaggregated Data

Date: April 30, 2018

To: Executive Committee

From: Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration and
Director, Equity, Diversity and Human Rights

Wards: All

SUMMARY

This report seeks approval of the framework outlined in this report that proposes guidelines for the collection, analysis and reporting of disaggregated data. This framework will guide the City in developing and implementing an integrated City of Toronto Disaggregated Data Strategy (DDS).

The framework outlines three principle based objectives that the City must incorporate when using disaggregated population and place-based data to inform equitable program planning and service delivery in support of the City's equity goals.

The report recommends that staff report to Council in 2019 with the Disaggregated Data Strategy that will identify the specific processes and required resources that City divisions will use to incorporate disaggregated data collection, analysis and reporting in their operations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration, and the Director, Equity, Diversity and Human Rights, recommend that:

1. City Council approve equity and human rights, privacy, and open government as the three key strategic principles that will be adhered to by a City of Toronto Disaggregated Data Strategy.
2. City Council direct the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration and the Director, Equity, Diversity and Human Rights, in consultation with the City Clerk's Office, Corporate Information Management Services Section to report to Council in 2019 with a detailed City of Toronto Disaggregated Data Strategy that identifies the specific processes and resources required by City divisions to incorporate disaggregated data collection, analysis and reporting to ensure equitable program planning and service delivery for Toronto residents.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact resulting from the adoption of the recommendations in this report.

Upon approval of the implementation of the Disaggregated Data Collection Strategy, City programs and Agencies will review their work plans and include any additional resources that may be required to implement the Strategy in their 2020 Capital and Operating Budgets for consideration with other City priorities.

The Interim Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

EX22.2 - 2017 Capital and Operating Budgets

On February 15 and 16, 2017, Toronto City Council requested, as part of the 2017 Capital and Operating Budget, for staff to develop a disaggregated data collection strategy that will assist in, among other things, assessing the gendered impacts of City budgetary and policy decisions and report back to the November 29, 2017 meeting of the Executive Committee on the strategy and implementation plan.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.EX22.2>

CD19.10 - Opportunities and Issues in Using Disaggregated Population Data

On April 26, 27 and 28, 2017, staff provided Council with a brief primer on the uses, benefits and limitations of disaggregated data. It addressed the potential use of disaggregated data as a tool to improve social equity in the delivery and assessment of the City of Toronto's services, programs and policies.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.CD19.10>

EX31.2 - 2018 Capital and Operating Budgets

On February 12, 2018, Toronto City Council requested, as part of the 2018 Capital and Operating Budget, that the City Manager expedite the disaggregated data strategy and report to Executive Committee on the implementation plan.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2018.EX31.2>

COMMENTS

Policy Context

All Toronto residents should have the opportunity to achieve equal outcomes for their wellbeing and that of their communities. Through its equity and Indigenous reconciliation objectives, the City recognizes that certain communities are more likely than others to experience barriers and discrimination. The City's commitment to equity-seeking groups and Indigenous peoples (e.g. First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples) is strongly embedded in its population and place-based initiatives and strategies, such as the establishment of an Indigenous Affairs Office, the Toronto Indigenous Health Strategy, the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism, the Poverty Reduction Strategy, the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020, the Toronto Seniors Strategy, the Toronto Youth Equity Strategy, and the Toronto Newcomer Strategy.

To ensure equitable treatment of Toronto's equity-seeking communities and Indigenous Peoples when planning, developing and evaluating City policies, programs and services, the City created the Equity Lens: An Equity Impact Assessment Tool. This tool asks divisions to answer three key questions:

- Have you determined if there are barriers faced by equity seeking groups or Indigenous peoples? Which groups or populations? What is the impact of the policy/program on equity seeking groups or Indigenous peoples?
- How did you reduce or remove the barriers? What changes have you made to the policy/program/service so that equity seeking groups and Indigenous peoples will benefit from it? What human and budgetary resources have been identified or allocated?
- How will you measure the results of the policy/program to see if it works to successfully remove barriers or create opportunities for equity seeking groups/populations and Indigenous peoples?

Some divisions also utilize equity-specific tools tailored to their unique lines of business. For example, Toronto Public Health conducts Health Equity Impact Assessments (HEIA) to analyze the potential impact of service, program or policy changes on health disparities and/or health-disadvantaged populations.

Using Disaggregated Data to Support Equity Objectives

Disaggregated data collection, analysis, and reporting is the practice of examining smaller units of data within a larger, aggregated data set. The use of disaggregated data can make it possible to more effectively target the delivery of resources, ensuring that all residents are served equitably by City programs and policies. As outlined in "[CD19.10 - Opportunities and Issues in Using Disaggregated Population Data](#)," the City considers disaggregated data to include subdividing data by population group (e.g. Indigenous communities, gender, racialized groups etc.), and/or place (e.g. neighbourhoods).

There are a number of policies and frameworks developed by public sector institutions which provide business rationale and guidance on how disaggregated data should be collected and used to support equitable service planning and service delivery, including:

- We ask because we care: The Tri-Hospital + TPH Health Equity Data Collection Research Project Report
- Ontario Data Standards for the Identification and Monitoring of Systemic Racism
- Ontario Human Rights Commission - Count Me In: Collecting Human Rights Based Data
- Government of Canada Gender-Based Analysis Plus Framework
- United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The City recognizes the importance of collecting, analyzing and reporting on disaggregated data to achieve the objective of equitable policy development and program delivery through evidence-based performance measurement and evaluation.

City of Toronto Initiatives to Support Disaggregated Data

For its part, the City is already taking steps to incorporate disaggregated data in a number of ways to support its work, including incorporating disaggregated data collection in its consultation activities, collecting and analyzing disaggregated data in service planning and analyzing disaggregated data in monitoring and tracking performance.

For example:

- Divisions like Toronto Public Health are already developing strategies to collect, analyze and report on socio-demographic client data across their operations
- Divisions like Toronto Employment and Social Services release disaggregated caseload and program output data in publicly available reports
- Not-for-profit agencies and groups that receive grants through the City's Community Investment Programs are asked to report on service outputs, disaggregated by key equity-seeking groups
- The City has established a Survey Working Group and is developing a standardized question bank to enable divisions to ask about demographic information from residents in an appropriate manner
- The City's Social Research and Information Management Unit operates a Social Data Warehouse to store and analyze thousands of disaggregated data attributes from Census, Taxfiler, and other sociodemographic datasets
- The City leads the Toronto Community Data Program Consortium which facilitates low-cost access to hundreds of disaggregated datasets for local government and the not-for-profit sector

Despite these initiatives, more can be done to improve the City's capacity to collect, analyse and report on disaggregated data in support of its equity objectives. According to the 2015-2016 Equity, Diversity and Human Rights Achievements Survey, only one-quarter of divisions reported using disaggregated demographic data in their operations in a "substantial" or "full" manner.

Developing a Disaggregated Data Strategy

Although disaggregated data can support more equitable service planning and service delivery, as well as effective implementation and evaluation of equity strategies, the City of Toronto does not have an umbrella strategy that provides staff with clear rationale on when, how, and why divisions should undertake the collection, analysis, and reporting of disaggregated data.

For those divisions that already have developed disaggregated data policies and procedures, this guidance can provide a mechanism under which their existing efforts can be supported and enhanced at a corporate-wide level. For those divisions that are not yet incorporating disaggregated data in their work, such guidance will help divisions develop work plans to utilize disaggregated data by answering the following key questions:

1. What disaggregated data is already available and how is it reported?
2. What is the reason for collecting, analyzing and reporting on disaggregated data in specific contexts?
3. How should the City collect, analyze and report on personal demographic information, consistent with its legal obligations to protect the privacy and safety of employees and residents?
4. What actions can the City take to make disaggregated data open and accessible to the public?
5. What are the limitations on the use of disaggregated data and how will the City ensure that these limitations are taken into consideration in the collection, analysis and reporting of disaggregated data?

A Principles-Based Framework for a Disaggregated Data Strategy

Underpinning the DDS will be clear principles that will guide City divisions in navigating the numerous, often competing data collection mandates for which City staff must comply. A principles-based approach provides actionable clarity in areas where there are conflicting goals such as disaggregated data. There are three key strategic principles that the DDS will incorporate: equity and human rights, privacy and openness.

Equity and Human Rights

Disaggregated data collection, analysis and reporting:

- Supports the identification and removal of barriers experienced by equity-seeking communities and Indigenous Peoples when interacting with City policies, services and programs, in alignment with good customer service principles.
- Focuses on relevant research questions and population groups that are informed by consultations with equity-seeking groups and Indigenous Peoples.

- Supports the identification of actionable recommendations to improve customer service and socio-economic outcomes for equity-seeking groups and Indigenous Peoples.
- Aligns with a human rights approach to data collection and disaggregation.

Privacy

Disaggregated data collection, analysis, and reporting:

- Is permitted only if it is conducted in a manner that ensures that personal privacy is protected at all times and in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA) and other relevant legislation (e.g. Personal Health Information Protection Act).
- Processes, projects and technological architecture ensure that privacy protection is proactive and embedded into design.
- Ensures that individuals are informed in a clear and transparent manner of the specific purpose for the collection of their personal information and how individual privacy will be protected in the analysis of disaggregated data.
- Incorporates privacy-protection procedures at all points in the collection, use, disclosure and secure disposal of personal information.
- Procedures ensure that City staff understand their roles and responsibilities in protecting personal information through appropriate training before engaging in disaggregated data collection, analysis and reporting.
- The analysis of disaggregated data takes into consideration the principle of "community privacy".

Open Government

When appropriate, anonymized datasets produced in the process of analysing disaggregated data will be:

- Released to the public in as complete a form as possible while complying with the City's legal obligations to protect personal privacy and other relevant restrictions.
- Made available to the public in a timely fashion to facilitate evidence-informed decision making about City programs, policies and services.
- Made available to anyone, with no requirement for registration, no exclusive control, and no license or usage fees.

Implementation Plan for a Disaggregated Data Strategy (DDS)

Based on this framework, Social Development, Finance and Administration Division (SDFA) will work with Equity, Diversity and Human Rights (EDHR), in consultation with key City units such as the City Clerk's Corporate Information Management Services Section, to develop a City of Toronto Disaggregated Data Strategy (DDS) that details how City divisions should collect analyze, and report on disaggregated data.

The DDS will provide clarity to City division by:

1. Cataloguing what disaggregated data is already collected, analyzed and reported on by City divisions.
2. Identifying context-specific disaggregated data collection objectives for City divisions, including an assessment of key policy and resource gaps.
3. Assessing the City's obligations to protect personal privacy and how it relates to disaggregated data collection, analysis and reporting.
4. Assessing whether divisions have access to appropriate information technology supports to collect, store and retrieve disaggregated socio-demographic data appropriately and securely.
5. Providing guidance on how divisions can release anonymized disaggregated data sets in an open manner to the public.

To validate the DDS, a limited pilot process will be conducted with a cross-section of City divisions to test key components of the strategy.

Alignment with Ongoing Activities

The DDS will be developed to support the work that is already occurring within the City to enhance staff capacity to collect, analyze and report on disaggregated data. This includes:

- Ensuring compatibility with any existing disaggregated data strategies that have been developed by City divisions and agencies.
- Incorporating and supporting current work to develop data standards and data collection tools in consultation with key stakeholders and Indigenous communities.
- Coordinating with public education campaigns, such as those being planned by the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism to build public support and staff acceptance of collecting disaggregated data.
- Aligning with planned capital investments in technology to support the storage and retrieval of disaggregated data.

Next Steps

Once the guidelines are developed, staff will report back to Council in 2019 with a City of Toronto Disaggregated Data Strategy. This report will include implementation and change management plans to support divisions that should, but are not currently utilizing disaggregated data, as appropriate. The report will also identify any additional resources that are required to fully implement the strategy.

Once established, implementation of the DDS will be monitored and reported on by the Equity, Diversity and Human Rights Division through its Equity Achievements Report.

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