



BU32.7.9

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May 11, 2017

RE: BU32.7

To the Members of the Budget Committee:

On behalf of our staff, the community we serve, the women we support, and their dependents, we at Women's Habitat want you to know that we are happy to see the Intersectional Gender-based Framework included in the recommended 2018 Budget Process and Schedule. We are glad the 2018 budget process is starting early, and hope to see the framework implemented early-on, as well.

We look forward to seeing a process unfold where women and gender-diverse members of equity-seeking groups are included in the development and implementation of the framework as advisors, consultants, and experts on the impacts City programs and services have on their experiences with gender-based poverty.

The development of a disaggregated data collection strategy will quantify our understanding of the gender-based poverty we witness everyday through our work. Collecting data about the impacts of, and barriers to accessing City programs and services on diverse gender groups, Council will have access to information that supports targeted approaches to improving those impacts and the livelihoods of people facing gender-based poverty.

We are encouraged by this important step the City is taking to address gender-based poverty, and look forward to the index, strategies and implementation plans that develop.

However, we urge City Council not to wait to take action to address what have already been identified as key areas of concern for women and gender-diverse people, including those fleeing domestic violence: stable housing, good jobs, affordable childcare, and adequate transit that connect resources with the people who so desperately need them. As an agency supporting diverse women fleeing gender-based violence, we witness how poverty prevents breaking the cycle of abuse. Women need access to affordable quality housing, food security, affordable transit, and childcare in order to realize independence and quality of life.

Addressing gender-based poverty at its foundation, in a way that would have long-term, fundamental impacts on the livelihoods of people experiencing it requires investment. Current research shows poverty costs the City around \$5 billion a year.¹ Research also shows, for example, that investing in poverty reduction initiatives such as childcare directly leads to growth in GDP. These kinds of returns on

¹ Briggs, A., Lee, C., Stapleton, J. (2016). *The Cost of Poverty in Toronto*.

poverty reduction investments not only have impacts on the livelihoods of people living in poverty by reducing inequities, they also have broad social and economic benefits for all Torontonians.

We remain hopeful that the City will show leadership towards reducing the poverty that threatens the safety and livelihoods of so many diverse women and especially those at risk of gender-based violence and abuse by making meaningful investments into poverty reduction initiatives using the Intersectional Gender Based Framework and Index tools. We look forward to continuing our partnership in the process of developing the framework, indicators, strategies, and implementation plans, and supporting the involvement of women in our communities.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'LB', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Laura Buccioni
Community Development Worker
Women's Habitat of Etobicoke