



**Prince Edward Island**

# **EQUALITY REPORT CARD**

**2018**

**Prince Edward Island Advisory Council on the Status of Women**

# PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

## EQUALITY REPORT CARD 2018

The Equality Report Card is a process to assess Prince Edward Island's progress towards women's equality goals. The PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women's goal is to work collaboratively with government to help the Province achieve high grades in all categories.

The priority actions and other considerations assessed in the 2018 Equality Report Card were established for the mandate of government which began in May 2015. They were made public in June 2016. This report assesses actions by government updated to December 31, 2017, except where more recent dates are noted.

Previous Equality Report Cards were published in 2008 (pilot), 2009, 2011, 2013, and 2015.

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### SCORING KEY

The 2018 Equality Report Card rates the Prince Edward Island government's progress towards women's equality goals as a **B-** (70.3/100).

**26.8 out of a possible 45 points**  
for **PRIORITY ACTION AREAS** set by the PEIACSW

These priority action areas were selected from recommendations the Advisory Council has made to government in past Report Cards, briefs and submissions, policy guides, and formal meetings. Some recommendations date back many years.

Little or No Progress = 0.3 point  
Some Progress = 0.65 point  
Good Progress = 1 point

**33.5 out of a possible 45 points**  
for **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS** in nine categories

These considerations include initiatives that government nominated and Council assessed as good practices to support equality goals.

Much Worse = 1 point  
Somewhat Worse = 2 points  
Status Quo = 3 points  
Slightly Better = 3.5 points  
Somewhat Better = 4 points  
Better = 4.5 points  
Much Better = 5 points

**10 out of a possible 10 BONUS points**

These highlight excellent projects and initiatives that are good practices for continuing to improve the status of women and girls and their families in Prince Edward Island.

Bonus = 1 point each

**THE TOTAL SCORE OF 70.3 OUT OF A POSSIBLE 100 IS AN OVERALL GRADE OF B-.**

49 or less = F  
50-59 = D  
60-63 = C-  
64-66 = C  
67-69 = C+  
70-73 = B-  
74-76 = B  
77-79 = B+  
80-83 = A-  
84-86 = A  
87 or more = A+

## OVERALL ASSESSMENT 2018

# B-

“We must open the doors and we must see to it they remain open, so that others can pass through.”

– Rosemary Brown (1930–2003)  
Canadian MP and activist

The 2018 grade of “B-” on the Equality Report Card demonstrates important, but still uneven, progress towards women’s equality goals in PEI.

The Advisory Council on the Status of Women sets the status quo as a D and aims to work collaboratively with government to achieve high grades, B or better. Government’s progress from May 2015 to the end of December 2017 shows progress goes beyond the small steps that resulted in “C” grades on Report Cards in 2013 and 2015. Progress is not yet even across the board. A “B-” reflects strong results on some priorities women have identified and stalled progress on others. We are opening the doors and have work to do to see that they remain open.

➔ Work to integrate gender and diversity analysis into policy and programs since 2015 is impressive. Work remains to integrate this analysis into economic development planning, infrastructure development, and gender-sensitive budgeting.

➔ While gender and diversity analysis are finding their way into government’s work, programs and policies have not changed enough since 2015 for women, underrepresented groups, and women in underrepresented groups to experience consistent positive effects in their day-to-day lives.

➔ Challenges still remain to enact legislation, programs, and policies that ensure positive change endures into the future.

➔ Overall, progress is greater on government-identified “other considerations” in each category than on Council-identified priority action areas.

➔ Progress towards women’s equality is stalled where work to address social inclusion is stalled. Most particularly, women’s equality cannot be achieved without work to eliminate poverty, which still affects women disproportionately due to lower wages, more part-time and precarious work, and greater caregiving responsibilities.

➔ Despite progress, sexist discrimination continues and is real. Discrimination is deeper for many: gender intersects with other aspects of identity (women who live with disabilities; LGBTQ2+ women and non-binary femme people; Black women, Indigenous women, and women of colour; women whose first language is not English; rural women; women from non-dominant age groups; newcomers to Canada; and others).

## FOCUS GROUPS SAY...

- “When I came to PEI first I was struck by the chances for equality available here. Very different from my own restrictive, racist, classist culture. It was refreshing to come here.”
- “We need a huge sea change... More women and diverse views have to be allowed, given space, to change the political system, to improve it. If we really want to engage women and diverse groups, we have to listen to those voices.”
- “Poverty has not been addressed. I don’t want to complete another jeezly provincial survey (about it). Let’s start doing what we already know.”
- “They (government) said lots of great things at the height of the #metoo movement, and we need to keep the pressure on now to make sure they actually follow through and make changes that will benefit women.”
- “Not all women support women... We’re very quick to judge or diminish what a woman has to say... Stand by your woman... everywhere women are prepared to stick their necks out.”
- “Young women give me a lot of hope... There is a powerful bravery in young women to speak the truth and not be afraid. And not be ashamed.”
- “I keep the vision of a beautiful world in my mind and heart. I live that vision daily as much as I can and live it through my family.”



# 10 GOOD PRACTICES FOR WOMEN'S EQUALITY\*

## 1 WOMEN'S WELLNESS CENTRE AND SEXUAL HEALTH SERVICES

In 2017, the government of PEI repatriated abortion care to PEI and, more than that, surrounded it with a growing program of reproductive and sexual health services and supports for women's health and all Islanders. (Find out more on pages 15-17.)

## 2 2015 WOMEN IN PEI STATISTICAL REVIEW

Government fulfilled its commitment to report stats on women with a comprehensive report, created with strong attention to diversity and intersectionality. (Find out more on page 4.)

## 3 THE BRIDGE

The Bridge is a hub model of intervention that brings together government departments and community agencies, to connect at-risk Islanders to the services they need. The Bridge offers assistance to Islanders facing serious, often time-sensitive issues including violence or abuse, homelessness, or mental health concerns. It allows critical information-sharing among departments and agencies that work with people at an acutely elevated risk of serious harm happening soon - so they can reach out to offer help right away. Community not-for-profits have a seat at the Bridge secretariat and situation table.

## 4 SUPPORT FOR PEI FAMILIES IN THE NATIONAL INQUIRY ON MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS

With few missteps despite a painful topic and fraught national process, the PEI government has shown consistent support for a National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and the participation of affected Indigenous women and families from PEI, through advocacy for an inquiry, to pre-inquiry roundtables, to hearings and story-gathering and family information liaison units.

## 5 SUPPORT FOR GRANDPARENTS & CAREGIVERS

First steps have begun to ease financial burdens for grandparents and alternative care providers who are giving a safe, loving home for a child. (Find out more on page 20.)

## 6 THREE NEW FAMILY LAW PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT CHILDREN

Since 2015, in PEI's Family Law Centre, three new programs have been initiated to provide legal or clinical intervention or both for children and families in high-risk litigation cases: 1) the Office of the Children's Lawyer to ensure the voices of children are heard in court matters that affect them; 2) a supervised access and exchange program to provide a safe and supervised access service for children moving between parents; and 3) a parenting coordination service for high-risk families in transition. (Find out more on page 14.)

## 7 COLLABORATION ON SEXUAL CONSENT CURRICULUM RESOURCES

The Premier's Action Committee on Family Violence Prevention Youth Engagement Working Group is developing curriculum resources to go along with PEI singer-songwriter KINLEY's "Microphone" song and video. Four linked modules will be used in Grade 9 health classes across PEI.

## 8 AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES: GENDER, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION PLAN

Using prompts from the Equality Report Card, the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries not only reported on their activities but also developed an action plan for enhancing their response to gender and diversity needs in their sector.

## 9 STUDENT WELL-BEING TEAMS

Pilots have begun with multi-member teams embedded in schools to support the mental and physical well-being of children and families and reduce prevalence of illness. (Find out more on page 17.)

## 10 SUPPORT FOR LGBTQ2+ ISSUES ACROSS GOVERNMENT

With his personal connection to the LGBTQ2+ community, Premier MacLauchlan has been a role model and leader. His government has promoted increased visibility and equality for the LGBTQ2+ community across its work, leading most notably to recent policy changes to support gender affirming surgeries for trans Islanders.

**1 BONUS POINT EACH - 10/10**

**\* not listed by rank**

**Equality Report Card questionnaires completed by all departments of government**

**ASSESSMENT: GOOD PROGRESS**

- With excellent collaboration and support from the Interministerial Women's Secretariat, every department of government responded to the Equality Report Card questionnaire, as did all agencies, divisions, or offices of government who received questionnaires.
- Responses were thorough, thoughtful, and complete and demonstrated good progress towards understanding the implications of gender and diversity in policy-making. The representatives from each department who coordinated their departmental response deserve high praise.
- Notable was effort from Agriculture and Fisheries, who responded to the Report Card questionnaire with a full-on report and plan on Gender, Diversity, and Inclusion Initiatives.

**Concrete example(s) of applied gender and diversity analysis from at least half of government departments**

**ASSESSMENT: GOOD PROGRESS**

- The Executive Council memo format now requires that all submissions of proposals include some analysis of gender and diversity.
- Council members received examples of gender and diversity analysis from 10 departments. (This is up significantly from 2015, when only 5 departments identified gender analysis.)
- Council members assessed that there was variability in how "concrete" the examples were and in their demonstrable effects of the analysis.
- On the whole, Council also noted that examples showed greater comfort with diversity analysis than gender analysis.
- Departments still tend to do gender and analysis work around social issues with more obvious gender effects. Effort is required to apply gender analysis to budgets, economic development plans, and other issues beyond the social.

**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.**

**Evidence that strategies, action plans, and reviews produced by government apply gender and diversity analysis**

**ASSESSMENT: SOME PROGRESS**

- While Council suggests there is still work to be done to include gender and diversity in strategies, action plans, and reviews, there is some progress.
- Communications and Public Engagement has produced a workbook for public engagement that emphasizes gender and diversity considerations.
- Some strategies and action plans that take gender and diversity into account: 2016-2018 Chief Public Health Office Strategic Plan; PEI Action Plan to Prevent and Mitigate Opioid-Related Overdoses and Deaths; 2017 PEI Children's Report; Five-Year Culture Action Plan; Climate Change Action Plan; Suicide Prevention Plan; and Department of Agriculture and Fisheries strategic plan.
- Reviews that are taking gender and diversity into consideration include efforts to address recommendations from the Child Protection Review Advisory Committee Report; the Disability Support Program review/transformation that began in 2016; and the Public Service Commission review of the Workforce Diversity Policy.
- Work is in progress to consider gender and diversity in the Provincial Housing Action Plan and Poverty Reduction Action Plan.

**Reports from all departments on ongoing or new gender and diversity analysis training their public servants have participated in during the reporting period**

**ASSESSMENT: GOOD PROGRESS**

- The Interministerial Women's Secretariat, Equality Report Card liaisons in all departments, and all Deputy Ministers recommended the Status of Women Canada online course on GBA+ (gender-based analysis, plus diversity) to managers and staff. Successful completion of this online course yields a certificate. All departments promoted and recommended the GBA+ course.
- A few departments (5) tracked numbers of some or all their employees who successfully completed the training (total almost 100). The Public Service Commission also provided a full report on numbers of participants in diversity training on several themes (almost 300 participants).
- Council members acknowledge that devolving information and promoting training is a good start. They would like to see progress in requiring training, tracking participation, and following up to see how training gets applied.

**Commitment to updating the statistical profile of PEI women, with target dates**

**ASSESSMENT: GOOD PROGRESS**

- *Women in PEI: A Statistical Review* provides a statistical in-depth snapshot of the female population in PEI and sex-disaggregated data related to education, work and income, health, justice, violence against women and women in leadership. The version released in 2015 is the most comprehensive version to date.
- Diversity and intersectionality measures were strongly considered throughout the process to reflect the diversity of women's experiences in the *Review*, both in the data and in the graphics.
- Since publication, the *Review* has been used and cited numerous times in government and community research and reports. This data is also vital to women's organizations, particularly when developing project proposals. Having gender-specific disaggregated data makes it easier for organizations to prosper.
- Government has publicly stated its intention to update the statistical review regularly.

**FOCUS GROUPS SAY...**

- **"I am constantly reminded of how young girls need to see themselves. They need to see women on political signs. Kids notice race and gender. If this government had an interest in advancing women, they could put women forward. If there was any little opening in the chasm that is PEI, women would come through with amazing skills."**
- **"Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's vocal support for women's equality brings support to the cause. It is important for women in the country to be supported by the Prime Minister." "I do think there is some movement federally to use (gender and diversity analysis) – to apply this perspective to budgeting, and this pressure should be put on the provincial government as well. Decisions around housing, disability supports, etc. affect women differently."**
- **A focus group participant noted expanded gender and diversity analysis tools as "positive": "The Province has updated their gender and diversity guide for communities and created one specifically for agencies, boards, and commissions, which is useful."**
- **A participant placed a priority on "implementing a code of conduct around sexual harassment among MLAs... The #metoo movement has sparked change and conversations at workplaces at all levels, and that needs to be recognized and extended to the level of government as well. They need policies and procedures that would signal accountability."**



**ASSESSMENT: BETTER (4.5/5 POINTS)**

- ➔ Since 2015, there has been more work on gender and diversity analysis across government than ever before. A representative of each department of government met quarterly with the Interministerial Women’s Secretariat for the past two years to share their work on addressing the concerns in this Report Card.
- ➔ On behalf of the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, the Interministerial Women’s Secretariat continues to do an enormous amount of work, sitting on almost 40 community and government committees to provide a gender and diversity lens, and ensuring gender and intersectionality are components of events, published resources, work on UN conventions, and more. This is in addition to working collaboratively with the Atlantic Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women and federal/provincial/territorial counterparts on regional and national issues of importance for gender equality.
- ➔ Some notable initiatives singled out by Council members in this category include the following:
  - Premier MacLauchlan introduced public mandate letters for all ministers, and the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women has a specific mandate to advance equality and opportunity for women in all Government policies, programs and services.
  - Over the past three years, the Interministerial Women’s Secretariat updated versions of the guide *Honouring Our Differences: A Guide to Gender and Diversity Analysis* for government use and community use and adapted a guide specifically for agencies, boards, and commissions. The new version specifically includes the transgender population.
  - One of the priority themes selected for the 2018 Interministerial Women’s Secretariat grants for community organizations is engaging community in gender and diversity analysis.
  - Communications and Public Engagement has produced a guide, *Public Engagement – A Planner’s Workbook*, which emphasizes gender and diversity as important considerations. This book outlines tactics and considerations that public bodies should consider when going to the public and advises on approaches that make sure that the broadest possible range of community members has the opportunity to participate in engagement activities and provide their views to government.
  - Evidence from Education, Early Learning and Culture that gender and diversity analysis continue to be strongly entrenched in this department’s work, including the Public Schools Branch which now forms part of government. French schools continue to be operated by the Commission scolaire de langue française, which has its own elected board and falls outside the scope of this report but which has also reported excellent measures for equality and diversity.
- ➔ The 2018 Federal Budget sets a new standard for gender-sensitive budgeting in Canada, and Council members look forward to Prince Edward Island following the federal government’s lead to incorporate evidence-based gender analysis into the next provincial budget.
- ➔ In the words of one Council member, “There were a lot of things being done. Many of them positive. Some reports (were) only tangentially related to equality. But much of it was essentially considering women, or working towards neutral systems. It’s positive that things are happening. It’s problematic that we aren’t holding ourselves to concrete standards or taking steps to achieve substantive equality.”

**“We must work with the government and make politicians aware of the importance of women’s needs. We see an improvement... but there is still a lot to do.”**

**- Focus group participant**

**“As an Indigenous, two-spirited single mother, equality is still far out of reach for me.”**

**- Focus group participant**



**MAKING EQUALITY A PRIORITY CATEGORY SUMMARY**

**If the only goal of the Equality Report Card were to encourage the use of gender and diversity analysis across government, its work would almost be complete. The progress recorded in making equality a priority is very strong.**

**It will take time and consistent pressure for gender analysis to deepen, to translate into more concrete actions, and to be applied to less obvious, harder issues.**

**It will take even more time for positive effects to be felt in the lives of women, diversity groups, and women in diversity groups.**

## 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.**

**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**

### ASSESSMENT: GOOD PROGRESS

- ➔ Through Engage PEI, government has achieved gender parity in appointments to agencies, boards, and commissions across PEI.
- ➔ At the end of December 2017, 47% of board membership was made up of women. (This is up significantly from 2015, when women made up just 38% of appointed board members).
- ➔ The number of new appointments of women was consistent with the proportion of applications received from women. Between October 2015 and December 2017, 142 (53%) of 266 new appointments and 397 (53%) of 756 applicants were women.
- ➔ On December 31, 2017, 43 of 98 (44%) chairs or vice-chairs of ABCs were women. (This is down slightly from 2015, when 48% of newly appointed chairs and vice-chairs were women, and 47% of all boards had women as chairs or vice-chairs.) This slippage, while small, indicates why it is so important to entrench positive change in policy.

**Recruitment to agencies, boards, and commissions keyed to specific, publicly advertised gender and diversity goals for appointments**

### ASSESSMENT: LITTLE OR NO PROGRESS

- ➔ Engage PEI was launched in October 2015 "with an aim to recruit Islanders to sit on 74 government agencies, boards and commissions." Premier MacLauchlan has championed gender parity and diversity in Engage PEI appointments. Engage PEI shows undeniable progress in advertising and promoting openings on agencies, boards, and commissions, and drawing attention to gaps and needs for gender parity and increased diversity. However, promotion and advertising are not recruitment.
- ➔ For durable progress, Council members are looking for a formal recruitment program for Engage PEI, entrenched in policy, that will sustainably extend results beyond the recent very hard and successful work of the Engage PEI office and the very good intentions of current leaders and champions.

**Steps to examine and reduce barriers to women being nominated or elected, especially in follow-up to the Special Committee on Democratic Renewal**

### ASSESSMENT: LITTLE OR NO PROGRESS

- ➔ The White Paper that launched the Special Committee on Democratic Renewal in 2015 included most of a set of 2009 evidence-based recommendations of the PEI Coalition for Women in Government on ways to reduce barriers to women in elected office. That was heartening.
- ➔ In 2017, Minister Responsible for the Status of Women Paula Biggar introduced a motion (M-32) to change and modernize the sitting hours of the Legislature to make them more family friendly.
- ➔ Government sponsored an intense consultation process through the Special Committee on Democratic Renewal and an even more intense plebiscite on democratic renewal. Council and others undertook careful comparative analysis of electoral options' potential to reduce barriers to women and diversity groups. We promoted MMP (Mixed-Member Proportional) as the option with strongest potential. This option "won" the plebiscite.
- ➔ Government rejected the opportunity to use the pro-MMP plebiscite results as a mandate for positive change. Council was very disappointed. A past Chairperson concluded: "We cannot achieve equality with the current political structure in place."



## Increased number of women appointed by the Premier to Executive Council and more women in senior government leadership

### ASSESSMENT: LITTLE OR NO PROGRESS

- ➔ A woman is the Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.
- ➔ The Premier began his mandate in 2015 with 2 of 10 (20%) women in Cabinet and the proportion decreased to 2 of 11 (18%) with the addition of one department. As of December 2017, PEI had the lowest percentage of women in Cabinet of any Canadian province. Five provinces had over 1/3 women in their Cabinets. The federal Cabinet had gender parity.
- ➔ In 2016, Premier MacLauchlan announced senior management changes, achieving gender equity at the highest level of the public service. The changes saw women occupying 6 of 13 (46%) highest roles. The Premier was quoted: "There is an impressive talent pool to draw upon in the process of evolution and renewal, including a growing number of women assuming senior leadership roles." Since then, numbers have fallen. As of December 2017, 4 of 14 (29%) of Deputy Ministers were women. Among CEOs, Chairs, and Senior Executives, 4 of 11 (37%) were women.

## Increased employment equity, especially women in leadership roles and women in non-traditional roles, within the provincial public service

### ASSESSMENT: SOME PROGRESS

- ➔ Across all reporting departments, women make up 71% of total workers (down 2% from 2015) and 49% of managers (down 1% from 2015). There is still a 22-point gap between women workers and women managers, essentially unchanged since 2015. The 2018 numbers include the Public Schools Branch and Commission scolaire de langue française, which are big employers of women.
- ➔ Women continue to make up 69% of full-time workers and now make up 84% of part-time workers (2015: 82%).
- ➔ As an important equality indicator, Council looks for a strong balance between the percentage of women workers in a department and the percentage of women in management. For this report, 9/15 reporting units reported a gap of 10 points or less between the percentage of women workers and the percentage of women in management. In only 2 of the less balanced units, representing 1.4% of all workers, the imbalance was in women's favour. (In 2015, 9/12 reported a gap of 10 points or less, down from 10/12 in 2013.)

### FOCUS GROUPS SAY...

- "In Prince Edward Island and the rest of Canada, there are (proportionally) very few women in government. In countries where there are more women in power, there are more services that meet the needs of women, such as free or very low-cost childcare."
- "I've been thinking a lot about the need for more women and diverse people in leadership in PEI. There are more women being appointed to (agencies, boards, and commissions) on PEI, but no targets and timelines have been identified. There is also no plan that can be sustained beyond the current government."
- "When we look at the barriers women face (to running for office), the wage gap, violence, childcare access: I think parties can really provide a buffer against those barriers, should a party choose."
- "They (government) could stick to the fixed election dates, which we know really help women plan and prepare for running in the first place."
- "There has been conversation about restructuring the Legislature hours to allow MLAs with small children reasonable daycare hours, among other things."
- "Another big one is a proportional representation system, which has been identified as an electoral system that elects more women and diverse groups to government."
- Past chairs of the Advisory Council say "All of these gains are because women and their allies worked damn hard... And any gains can be lost. How do we get more feminist women into leadership?"



## WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING | OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

### ASSESSMENT: SLIGHTLY BETTER (3.5/5 POINTS)

- ➔ Some notable initiatives singled out by Council members in this category include the following:
- The Interministerial Women's Secretariat continues to place a premium on promoting women in decision-making, supporting initiatives including local filming for a documentary on women in politics, "From Nellie to Now"; leading coordination of the local event for Equal Voice Canada's "Daughters of the Vote" project, welcoming young women leaders into the Legislative Assembly; co-hosting an International Women's Day event called "Faces of Leadership on PEI" to celebrate diverse women leaders; and recognizing women leaders during Women's History Month events and messaging. In 2018, Council is looking forward to events to celebrate the 25th anniversary of PEI's "Famous Five" moment in 1993 when for the first and only time women held five of the most influential positions in government.
  - In the Fall of 2017, Executive Council Office partnered with the Interministerial Women's Secretariat to create a community of Women in Leadership across government. The purpose of the group is to provide opportunities for female leaders of the public service at the Director and Deputy level to get together and strengthen networks, share leadership experiences, and celebrate and learn from women leaders from diverse workplaces across PEI.
  - In June 2017, the Community and Correctional Services Division of Justice and Public Safety introduced a new Leadership Development Program for current, new, and aspiring supervisors and managers. The program is cohort-based, reflects adult learning principles, and uses formal and informal learning approaches, work assignments, divisional projects, and committee leadership experiences to build leadership capacity. Six of the 13 participants are women.
  - Under the new Municipal Government Act, as part of the annual municipal reporting to Communities, Land, and Environment's Municipal Affairs Branch, all municipalities are required to provide information about the level of representation of women on municipal councils to help track progress on increasing women in government. Additionally, Municipal Affairs maintains a strong partnership with the PEI Coalition for Women in Government to encourage interest and participation in local government. The election-related provisions of the Municipal Government Act and its companion Election Regulations are informed by this partnership. Finally, the new, clear, and detailed standards about the expectations, roles, and responsibilities of a municipality's Chief Administrative Officer provided for in the Municipal Government Act are expected to improve women's economic status over time, professionalizing a role often performed by women in smaller municipalities and establishing a basis for pay equity for this role.
- ➔ Employment equity in PEI's public sector is essential to closing the gender wage gap, which remains over 10% and has significant cumulative effects over time. Council's analysis of staffing numbers across government shows scant improvement in women in non-traditional sectors or roles. The Workforce Diversity Policy administered by the Public Service Commission underlines principles of increasing all diversity groups that are currently under-represented in the public-sector workforce. Under this diversity policy, the Public Service Commission provides departments with assistance and technical support to increase numbers and to use the PSC diversity talent pool in hiring processes. However, there is no legislated program of employment equity, so no programmatic effort to recruit from under-represented diversity groups or to hire affirmatively to increase employment equity.

**"I heard (the Coalition for Women in Government says) it will take 105 years to achieve gender balance if we continue at the current rate. Something needs to be done: concerted effort by women, parties, the Legislature, and the government."**

**- Focus group participant**

**"They say all the right things (about support for women in government), but when the opportunity comes up to implement it, I think there is a gap there."**

**- Focus group participant**



### WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING CATEGORY SUMMARY

**Engage PEI achieving gender parity in appointments to agencies, boards, and commissions is a highlight that will have positive effects for well-functioning boards. Next on the agenda: measures to make gains durable and to make gender parity and increased diversity permanent features of PEI's ABCs.**

**So much work is needed to decrease the barriers to seeing women and diverse groups in elected office. Small steps are underway, but progress is, frankly, discouraging.**

**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**

**ASSESSMENT: LITTLE OR NO PROGRESS**

- ➔ Family and Human Services increased core funding to Family Violence Prevention Services in 2016–2017, but only by 1%. Over the last 13 years, there has been a meagre 8% increase overall. The core grant to Family Violence Prevention Services no longer covers salaries, let alone operational costs. This is too little funding for live-saving services to families.
- ➔ Family and Human Services continues to provide core funding to the Rape & Sexual Assault Centre, but there were no increases during the reporting period, and there have been no significant increases since 2006. This, despite increased demand for services and significant attention drawn to the need for enhanced health and justice responses to sexual violence. A one-time funding boost at the end of March 2018 will help fill gaps but is not sustained core funding.

**Measures and/or resources to allow adult protection workers to provide more help to adults in compromised circumstances**

**ASSESSMENT: LITTLE OR NO PROGRESS**

- ➔ No new measures reported, except that the Office of the Public Guardian and Public Trustee is working to increase the coordination of processes/ services between adult protection and the public guardian and public trustee to ensure that there are always care providers involved in an individual's life and to prevent a lapse in continuity of care.
- ➔ Abuse of older adults is a significant concern in the community, and the demand for help from adult protection is very high. There is no mandate for adult protection to help adults who are facing abuse or family violence unless they are formally deemed to be vulnerable. Abuse of adults affects people with intellectual and developmental disabilities as well. And if an adult is not formally deemed vulnerable, Adult Protection cannot even do anything to ensure a case plan is made.

## **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.**

**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**

**ASSESSMENT: GOOD PROGRESS**

- ➔ The most important new tool introduced since 2015 is The Bridge intervention model, described on the next page. It is an essential addition to services, though it does have limitations for people who experience a chronically elevated risk, such as people in a long-term abusive relationship.
- ➔ Three new family law programs – the Office of the Children's Lawyer, the supervised access and exchange program, and parenting coordination – will make a big difference for high-risk and high-conflict families. (See page 14.)
- ➔ Existing protocols have been updated: Justice updated the Spousal Abuse Protocol for the Honourable C.R. McQuaid Family Law Centre, and Family and Human Services updated several social assistance spousal abuse policies with input from Family Violence Prevention Services and community groups.
- ➔ Victim Services workers and staff of Turning Point completed training to become certified in the SARA, a spousal assault risk assessment/ management tool. Victim Services made eight much-appreciated seats available for Family Violence Prevention Services staff as well.

**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**

**ASSESSMENT: GOOD PROGRESS**

➤ Violence Against Women Grants, piloted in 2017 by the Interministerial Women's Secretariat, supported specialized programs. Council is pleased to see these in the budget for 2018–2019 and would like to see them continued. IWS's annual community grants also have violence-related themes and should be continued as well.

➤ During the past few years, there was call for extraordinary support to address violence against Indigenous women, with a National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. The Province of PEI answered this call admirably well.

➤ The Department of Justice and Public Safety reports a lot of violence prevention work, led by consistent efforts by Victim Services. There is evidence that Family and Human Services is working hard to respond to a review of the Child Protection Act. However, enhancing programs for specific groups with particular needs will require ongoing work that engages more departments. Small actions are not enough.

**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**

**ASSESSMENT: SOME PROGRESS**

➤ The reporting period included examples of expert trainings for professionals in justice, community services, child protection, and the public by Dr. Peter Jaffe, national expert on domestic violence and filicide; workshops for police, Crowns, Victim Services workers, and various victim-serving agencies and counsellors with Dr. Lori Haskell, a clinical psychologist dedicated to prevention, treatment and training on issues relating to violence against women and children; a workshop on screening for family violence, for parenting coordinators and dispute-resolution professionals, by Dr. Hilary Linton.

➤ Mandated intervention training sessions with police services continue to provide solid content from local experts who are year-round resources.

➤ Council's observation continues to be that training for intervention in violence and abuse is essential. While much is being done, too much is being done by too few people with too few resources to meet the need.

**FOCUS GROUPS SAY...**

- **"The #metoo movement makes me think about trauma-focused policy. Women are abused a lot. Trauma-based policy takes into account that exists in forming policy, and behaviours. Even the way we talk to one another. The #metoo movement reminded me of that trauma lens. For refugees too. Women experience a high level of violence on this province. It has been a long time (that) PTSD has been acknowledged, (since) the 1960s. We include paramedics, police, first responders (in PTSD supports), but women are not recognized as being primarily those who experience violence in our community. We need a gender lens that includes a trauma lens."**
- **Services in French are very important for one of the French-language participants. "When dealing with traumatic situations, it is important to be able to express yourself in your first language, whether in the justice system or in health care."**
- **An Indigenous focus group participant said, "PEI families have been involved in (National Inquiry into) missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls hearings in the region. We are grateful to PEI Victim Services for providing support during the hearings and aftercare for the families. They also provide counselling and cultural connections after assaults."**



### ASSESSMENT: SOMEWHAT BETTER (4/5 POINTS)

- ➔ Some notable initiatives singled out by Council members in this category include the following:
  - The Bridge model brings service providers together to offer collaborative programs for Islanders who are at very high risk of harm. As of Spring 2017, 900 professionals from education, human services, family law, and public health groups across the Island had received information on the Bridge model, and more than 165 professionals had enrolled in or completed Bridge training. As of February 2018, The Bridge had received 112 referrals resulting in 207 Islanders supported.
  - In Education's Public Schools Branch, Multi-Agency Service Teams (MAST) have expanded from 8 to 15 schools. These bring together a variety of professionals to create a case plan for a child or youth when resources are required that go beyond the capacity of a school's Student Services Team.
  - Government is working to develop amendments to the Rental of Residential Property Act to enable a victim of family violence to terminate a lease without financial penalty.
  - A new committee has been formed to make Employment Standards more family friendly, and the committee has updated the provincial government's *Guidelines for Addressing Family Violence and the Workplace* as a resource for all workplaces in PEI.
  - Since 2016, Health PEI has participated in a Trauma/Gender/Substance Use Project (TGS project) of the Centre of Excellence in Women's Health, to integrate trauma-informed, gender-informed, and gender-transformative practices into prevention, health promotion, treatment, harm reduction, and policy affecting those who use substances in Canada.
  - In the 2016-2017 school year, counsellors and youth service workers in Education were provided an opportunity to participate in evidence-based Trauma-Informed Care training. This training focused on sensitivity to and awareness of the factors faced by many students who are struggling with mental health-related concerns, including addictions and immigration-related trauma.
  - Community and Correctional Services trained an additional clinician to enhance capacity to deliver treatment for intimate partner violence and sexual deviance. The division also recruited and trained 11 new facilitators to deliver the Turning Point Program for people who use violence in their intimate relationships. Council members are also looking forward to more information from a formal review and evaluation of Turning Point.
  - Council congratulates government for including in its 2017-2018 capital budget funding for Structured Decision Making in Child Protection Services. This was a central recommendation of the Child Protection Act review, to enhance evidence-based decision-making.
- ➔ Council members participate in and value the broad-based prevention work of the Premier's Action Committee on Family Violence Prevention and its working groups. PAC is made up of community, government, and police members, organized in working groups in the current five-year mandate to implement its framework for action, *Strategies for Addressing Family Violence in Prince Edward Island*.
- ➔ Council members observe that a lot of the notable programs in this category are new, so we do not know the full effects yet. Evaluation will be essential to ensure the best outcomes possible. Practitioners add that monitoring will also be essential to determine if training in new practices and principles leads to any appreciable change in how people work with or approach clients.

**"The health system sucks. Constant re-telling of your story is very frustrating. We need more professional counselling for women who experience violence. There are so many."**

**- Focus group participant**

**"Things are still horrendous. The level of violence is shocking. I thought we'd come further."**

**- Chairs Circle participant**



### VIOLENCE PREVENTION CATEGORY SUMMARY

**Family violence, relationship violence, violence against women and children: these are issues that affect all Islanders, directly or indirectly. Everyone has a role to play in preventing violence against women.**

**Council members believe that people can be doing more to prevent and address violence - and that to show leadership, more departments of government need to be engaged in violence prevention, especially in measures that go beyond internal structures to touch the wider community.**

**In light of the #metoo movement, medical and justice systems' responses to sexual violence need urgent improvements.**

## 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

#### ASSESSMENT: LITTLE OR NO PROGRESS

- ➔ The recommendation for PEI to implement a pilot project for a domestic violence court option was developed as a collaboration of community front-line service providers and government representatives through Justice Options for Women. Successful pilots have been implemented in neighbouring provinces. The recommendation in PEI is approaching its 20th anniversary.
- ➔ Meanwhile, Justice and Public Safety “continues to assess the Province’s readiness to implement a therapeutic court model. This work continues.” Health reports, “The actions identified under this heading are not under the mandate of the Department of Health and Wellness or Health PEI.”

### Steps towards expanded resources for family mediation, counselling, and conflict resolution that reduce/prevent families from requiring legal proceedings

#### ASSESSMENT: SOME PROGRESS

- ➔ In 2015–2016, additional work was done to enhance collaboration between mediation services and the Court. A new protocol was developed for judges to more easily refer clients to mediation with specific instructions on issues to be addressed. Additionally, alternative dispute resolution processes offered by the mediator were expanded to include informal counseling, issue identification, parenting planning education, neutral evaluation, coaching, and options for settlement and peace plans. There has been collaboration between the Court and the Family Counsellors’ Office to develop a Suite of Services that has reduced wait times for service and streamlined cases by providing for focused assessments. And, in April 2017, a permanent, full-time Alternative Dispute Resolution Coordinator position was created.
- ➔ Council members assess that they see “good progress with what we do” in this category, “we just don’t do enough.” For instance, restorative justice processes are still largely undeveloped outside the Indigenous Justice Program.

### Improved access to family law legal aid lawyers

#### ASSESSMENT: LITTLE OR NO PROGRESS

- ➔ Council members acknowledge that access to affordable legal advice for family law is a Canada-wide problem, not specific to PEI. However, the problem creates barriers to access to justice that disadvantage women in particular.
- ➔ Family Legal Aid on PEI continues to focus on helping families effectively and efficiently, at the earliest point in the process, so that solutions can be reached without the cost and stress of litigation in courts. Community organizations that work with women note that the focus on families means family law legal aid for women who do not have dependents is still sadly lacking.
- ➔ In 2017, the minimum income threshold was increased to allow more Islanders to qualify for legal aid to solve their legal matters. This is the first increase since 2008 and it is a small step but is insufficient to meaningfully reduce barriers.
- ➔ The Province reports it has been active implementing programs outlined in the high-profile National Action Committee on Civil and Family Justice (in late 2013), which found that increasing legal aid alone will not solve the barriers to justice for family law litigants.

**Steps towards establishing a provincial child and youth advocacy office or other mechanisms to serve children and youth involved in provincial government systems**

**Continued use of pre-motion conference procedures (triage), implemented by the Supreme Court, for family law matters**

#### **ASSESSMENT: SOME PROGRESS**

➤ The Province reports numerous actions it has taken “rather than create a child advocate office,” stating, “it is prudent to strengthen direct services to children engaged in custody conflict, and to address the systemic challenges they face.” Actions reported include implementing recommendations from the review of the Child Protection Act; The Bridge; the Office of the Children’s Lawyer; Supervised Access and Exchange; Parenting Coordination and Alternative Dispute Resolution; improvements to the Maintenance Enforcement Program; and an enhanced voice for children in the Family Court Counsellors’ Office.

➤ PEI is the only province in Canada that lacks a child and youth advocate. Examples of services Council specified as wanting included independent case review, policy audits, and arms-length reporting to the Legislature and the public on issues. Additionally, Council members are increasingly concerned that there is no voice in PEI for children’s fundamental rights. These functions are still mostly lacking, despite new initiatives.

#### **ASSESSMENT: GOOD PROGRESS**

➤ In 2017, the Court expanded the availability of pre-motion conference dates to increase access for family law litigants. This is good news.

➤ Council members are given to understand that use of pre-motion conference procedures is now the norm, and that there is ongoing effort to make the system work well. Feedback from the community on “triage” continues to be positive.

#### **FOCUS GROUPS SAY...**

- **“There is still a need for a Child Advocate... on PEI. To consider how policies impact children. I would say we hardly ever think about children’s rights, and they are often squashed or overlooked... We need to listen to a child’s voice.”**
- **“I’m thinking of the Indigenous Gladue reports and a history of intergenerational trauma... maybe we can learn something from how the first peoples are integrating that into their lives, and how they are dealing with the system.”**
- **“(Justice officials) still have misconceptions about women’s sexual assault, such as that they deserved it, that they wanted sex but changed their minds partway through; that they should not have gone out so late, or drunk so much, or worn those clothes, etc... And if by chance a person is charged (and convicted), they generally get a ridiculous sentence. Women are not taken seriously. Police and justice officials need to be better trained and more aware of the sexual assault that many women experience.”**



### ASSESSMENT: SLIGHTLY BETTER (3.5/5 POINTS)

➤ Some notable initiatives singled out by Council members in this category include the following:

- In July 2017, government created an Office of the Children's Lawyer. A children's lawyer is a front-line worker who ensures the voices of children are heard in court matters that will impact on them. The children's lawyer will work directly with individual children who require the services of a lawyer to protect their interests, and provide legal counsel to them, in order to legally represent their voice.
- A Supervised Access and Exchange Program was launched in November 2016. Most parental conflict occurs during access with/exchange of children. Government has partnered with CHANCES and Family Resource Centres across PEI to provide safe and neutral places for children to be picked up and dropped off for access visits or to spend time with a parent.
- A Parenting Coordination Program is being developed for high-risk families in transition. To government's knowledge, PEI will be the first jurisdiction in the world to provide publicly funded parenting coordinators for low-income Islanders.
- The limit for small claims increased from \$8,000 to \$16,000 after input from key stakeholders including the judiciary, the legal community, the Law Society of PEI, the PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women, the PEI Access to Justice Committee and the Community Legal Information Association of PEI (CLIA). This represents the first increase in nearly 20 years. More women (who as a group make less income to spend on legal matters) will be more likely to pursue small claims thanks to this change.
- The PEI Court of Appeal began piloting a pro bono summary legal advice clinic to provide free legal advice and help people in a civil or family dispute navigate the court system. This important pilot has been extended in 2018.
- A five-year capital budget plan allocates funding for planning, designing, and building new facilities for women offenders, to be opened by 2021. This new unit will be purpose-built to meet women's risks and needs and will be more gender responsive – with appropriate separation from male offenders, dedicated program space, and privacy.

➤ Fearless national investigative reporting led by Robyn Doolittle revealed another layer in the lack of justice for survivors of sexual violence: a staggering rate of sexual violence reports labelled "unfounded" by police. Here in PEI, a review following from *Globe and Mail* reporting concluded that nearly 40% of cases reported to PEI's police departments were categorized as "unfounded." Justice and Public Safety developed a working group composed of PEI police chiefs, Crown Attorneys, Victim Services, justice policy, and other officials to identify and implement actions to improve the justice system response to sexual assault. This includes a review of all cases identified as unfounded, implementing improved standardization of coding, exploring evidence-based models for reporting sexual assault that are more person-centered and trauma-informed for the victim, establishing a dedicated Crown position for such cases, and training sessions (Victim Services) on trauma-informed service delivery. The working group continues to research and assess best practices in other jurisdictions, including various investigative oversight models. There is very, very much work to do to improve the justice response to sexual violence in PEI: it is good to know it has at least started. Past chairpersons of the Advisory Council reflected, "The system is so incredibly broken with regard to sexual assault and violence against women. If (survivors) are to get any satisfaction, it will not be through police or the courts."

**"Access to justice and legal aid is very limited on PEI. That is an issue that is certainly gender heavy. It is quite a thing to go through on your own, and often women do."**

**- Focus group participant**

**"I am a circle-keeper and participate in sentencing and intervention circles. It is a beautiful process of making amends, not punishment. We speak from our hearts and there is real healing among everyone impacted. I wish for more of that."**

**- Indigenous focus group participant**



### ACCESS TO JUSTICE CATEGORY SUMMARY

**We can't afford as a province or a nation to declare the issue of access to justice intractable and throw up our hands. There is much that can be done to improve access to justice for family law and victims of gender violence. Improvements require systemic change to a legal system designed around property rights, in which women were long treated as property rather than persons. PEI is small enough for changes to make a big difference.**



**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**

**ASSESSMENT: GOOD PROGRESS**

- In January 2017, the Women's Wellness Centre provided the first in-province abortion services in Prince Edward Island in 35 years. Both medical and surgical abortions are available through the Women's Wellness Program. Information on abortion services is readily available through a toll-free phone line, online, and through family physicians and nurse practitioners. Costs for medical abortions are covered when accessed through the Women's Wellness Program. Through the program, any physician on PEI can access the drugs for their patients free of charge.
- Under this government's direction, the now former unjust policy on abortion services was repealed to make way for care repatriated to PEI.
- In the words of one past-Chairperson of Council, the Women's Wellness Centre is "the best thing in the world – and a long time coming."

**Greater access to sexual and reproductive health services on Prince Edward Island**

**ASSESSMENT: GOOD PROGRESS**

- The Women's Wellness Program and Sexual Health Services provide a range of programs for women and Islanders of all genders, available at the Women's Wellness Centre at PCH and at a variety of community-based sites across the province. Services include sexual health education and counselling; sexually transmitted and blood-borne infection screening, testing, and follow-up; birth control counselling and prescriptions, including IUDs; pregnancy testing and options counselling; surgical and medical abortions; pre-natal care for women without a primary care provider; peri-natal and post-partum mental health services; pregnancy loss support; and menopause care for women without a primary care provider.
- News in May 2018 that the Province will support gender-affirming surgeries is good progress. We look forward to clear and appropriate processes for assessing people who request surgeries and for paying for surgeries that happen off-Island.
- Supports for IVF are still limited in PEI, and access to midwifery remains glaringly absent. The registered health professionals act has passed. Government promises long-awaited regulations to allow midwives to practice here will come in 2018.

## **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.**

**Increased funding and services in community mental health and other non-urgent and preventative care, including gender-specific services**

**ASSESSMENT: SOME PROGRESS**

- Progress on community health programs to support youth are the highlight in this category: the INSIGHT Program for youth 13 to 18 and Student Well-Being Teams rolling out in schools. Behaviour support programs for parents and youth are effective.
- Council members want more counselling supports within the mental health system and so applaud Mental Health Walk-In Clinics. They are concerned these could be a short-term fix for long-term problems that will essentially serve the "worried well" while what is needed is more support for people who live with mental health conditions to live and thrive in the community.
- Council members remain concerned with the erosion of self-referral for some Community Mental Health services. It is not acceptable for self-referral to place people on one waiting list and a doctor's referral to place them on a shorter one. For individuals, an additional doctor visit is stressful and unevenly accessible (what if you don't have a family doctor or they won't provide a referral?); for the system, the cost of a doctor visit reduces the cost-effectiveness of community mental health.

## Action on recommendations in the 2016 Mental Health and Addictions Strategy

### ASSESSMENT: SOME PROGRESS

- The Advisory Council on the Status of Women sat on the committee to develop this strategy to ensure a gender lens on recommendations.
- Throughout the reporting period, Health PEI focused on the increased use of gender-specific protocols in its substance use treatment programs, such as the Strength Program (provides a range of programming and supports, both residential and day-treatment, for youth ages 15-24 and their families who are dealing with substance abuse and mental health issues) and in the Transition Unit (a 10-bed addictions transition unit located in the Mount Herbert addictions treatment facility in which recovering addicts are provided additional programming and supports following detox).
- Actions noted in the previous question on community mental health responses also address the 2016 Mental Health and Addictions Strategy, as do many other actions credited elsewhere in this report, including The Bridge, Triple P Positive Parenting, Student Well-Being Teams, family violence prevention training, and poverty reduction.

## Continued enhancements to medical sexual assault response, including more training of and access to SANE and EESAS nurses in the two biggest hospitals

### ASSESSMENT: LITTLE OR NO PROGRESS

- A partnership with New Brunswick's Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) program has made this top-notch 40-hour classroom training, 24-hour clinical training program available to PEI nurses. One PEI nurse completed the program in 2016.
- Emergency departments at the QEH and PCH have been implementing an eight-hour Enhanced Emergency Sexual Assault Services (EESAS) course and clinical training program for nurses. During the reporting period, 33% of QEH nurses and 50%+ of PCH nurses completed the training, as well as a number at Community Hospitals West.
- Council members recognize that a small government and community working group has put incredible effort into improving medical response to sexual assault. And yet, despite all this effort, no Island woman who presents at a hospital emergency room in early 2018 can ask for a nurse with special training in sexual assault response and be assured of having this enhanced care available. Council members noted there are no nurses with special training in Kings County at all.

### FOCUS GROUPS SAY...

- **"The Women's Wellness Centre is a very welcoming place, and they are being very inclusive: despite being named explicitly for women they do serve the general population with many of their services. But we still need to get fired up and angry and support one another. Because change is going to come from the ground up, from the base, and push the top to change."**
- **"We should start at a younger age to educate children (about sexual and reproductive health). Sexual health is normal, and the sexual health curriculum needs to be redefined and overhauled... Young people have the right to know and understand, and thereby to be better understood and accepted. Silence or negative judgment about people's differences is not healthy, and it doesn't support their human rights."**
- **"The Women's Wellness Centre is good, but what if you're a woman but your body is male?... Access to psychiatrists and other specialists is especially difficult for the LGBTQ2+ community."**
- **"There is a dire situation in terms of access to the limited mental health services that are available here. How do we share resources so that everyone has enough?"**
- **Past Chairpersons note that sexual assault nurse examiner training "is still stalled," meaning "often no one is available at the hospital" to provide specialized post-assault care. "This is one area that is really discouraging. It feeds into the whole cycle of women then being reluctant to come forward."**



**ASSESSMENT: SOMEWHAT BETTER (4/5 POINTS)**

- ➔ After a 35-year abortion ban on PEI, government could have done just the minimum necessary to provide sexual and reproductive health services that are a woman's right. Instead, government established a comprehensive set of sexual and reproductive health services for women and all genders and made room for an incredible team to be hired for the Women's Wellness Centre and Sexual Health Services. This team will be able to provide even better care when the ambulatory care centre is built at the Prince County Hospital to house the centre.
- ➔ Some notable initiatives singled out by Council members in this category include the following:
  - Reports from the Chief Public Health Officer signal a sea change in understanding about Islanders' health. Dr. Heather Morrison's office has made the monitoring of health inequities among vulnerable groups of Islanders a priority action in its 2016-2018 Strategic Plan, and highlighted the role that social determinants of health have in Islanders' health and well-being in its 2016 Chief Public Health Officer's Report. An excellent 2018 report on Children's Health provides the first comprehensive look at children's health in PEI, also focused on social determinants of health and health equity.
  - Likewise, social determinants of health are central to the promising work towards a Seniors' Health and Wellness Strategy, with active work to include voices of diverse groups of seniors, including LGBTQ2+ seniors, Indigenous seniors, newcomers, and caregivers of seniors.
  - Provincial support for a new Psy.D. program in clinical psychology, being established at the University of Prince Edward Island, is good.
  - Student Well-Being Teams in schools are welcome. Team members include mental health therapists, nurses, and youth workers, responding to the needs of children and families and delivering preventative programming. Services support mental and physical health in children and families. Pilot projects began in the Westisle and Montague families of schools in September 2017 and will be in place in all schools by September 2019.
  - Steps to improve the health of women involved in the criminal justice system deserve mention: a partnership between Addiction Services and the Provincial Correctional Centre was established to deliver weekend and evening addictions programming at the Correctional Centre; Women's Wellness Centre sexual health services reach out to the Correctional Centre; and plans for new corrections facilities for women offenders that promise to be more gender responsive.
- ➔ In the mental health system, Council members continue to emphasize the importance of community mental health and are concerned with an overemphasis on the role of psychiatrists in public discourse. "Psychiatrists are not the right care for the kinds of trauma women often experience," said a member with front-line service experience. Likewise in the mental health system, emerging emphasis on the role of families in care is worrying. Caregiving in families often equals caregiving by women. There is a risk of blaming or stigmatizing families who have reached the limit of support they can provide. Many people with mental health challenges need professional support, not family. An emphasis on families also forgets that families can be a site of trauma for some.
- ➔ Council members note regional inequalities in access to all kinds of health care, with particular lack of support and resources for Kings County in many areas of care.

**"We have a very high tolerance for not getting our health needs met as women."**

**- Focus group participant**

**"The stress of not being able to make ends meet financially can lead to severe stress and depression. How can a person be well knowing that you can't pay for heat in the winter - or that if you pay for heat, you won't have enough money for groceries?"**

**- Focus group participant**



**WOMEN'S HEALTH CATEGORY SUMMARY**

**Progress in women's health since 2015 is worth celebrating and is making a difference in women's lives. There is more to be done, particularly to support introduction of midwifery as a birthing option, to build community mental health services, to expand access to therapeutic counselling, and to enhance medical response after sexual assault and sexual violence. Also essential to health is poverty reduction. But news continues to be good. The recent announcement of support for gender-affirming surgeries is another tremendous step towards health equity.**

## 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**

### ASSESSMENT: SOME PROGRESS

- In November 2017, a new Seniors Independence Program was announced which will provide for practical services such as light housekeeping, meal preparation, general maintenance, snow removal, and transportation, making it easier for seniors to remain in their own homes and communities.
- Examples of other supports in this question included respite care programs or day programs, of which no new examples were reported.
- In 2018, government announced three new home-care initiatives, including a controversial proposal for home care delivered by advanced care paramedics from Island EMS to bridge the gap between hospital and home by supporting patients after they're discharged and until home care begins. The proposal has received mixed reviews because it bypasses nurses and introduces more privatization into the health system. Was this proposal subject to a full gender analysis?

**Improved access to quality early childhood care and education for Island families, planned collaboratively with early childhood educators to meet families' needs**

### ASSESSMENT: SOME PROGRESS

- Using numbers current to March 2017, government reports 309 infant spaces; 258 in designated Early Years Centres; 51 in non-designated Early Years Centres (private). This represents an increase of 70% since the Preschool Excellence Initiative began in 2010.
- The number of designated Early Years Centres has increased to 49.
- March 2017 saw 4,860 spaces including school-age programs, or 3,065 excluding school-age programs. Spaces excluding school-age programs increased by 2.2% since the last reporting period.
- Since March 2017, a Canada-PEI Bilateral Agreement and related Child Care Action Plan have resulted in 105 new spaces (26 infant, 79 preschool) that did not exist prior. Investments focus on under-served populations and vulnerable children. These include Acadian and Francophone children, newcomers to Canada, and children from families that work non-standard hours.
- Changes in ratio guidelines eliminated many licensed home-based operations. Reviewing these changes could increase the number of licensed at-home providers and the level of access.

**Improved childcare subsidies for lower-income families, which could include higher rates and/or increased eligibility**

### ASSESSMENT: SOME PROGRESS

- Effective September 1, 2017, with an investment of \$300,000, rates for before- and after-school child care and private sitters increased and the monthly subsidy increased by \$120 for eligible families whose income is below a particular level. More than 1,600 Island children will benefit. The paperwork has also been simplified for both parents and child care centres.
- Under the Child Care Action Plan, \$700,000 annually has been allocated toward increasing access to early learning and child care supports for children who are more vulnerable. Through the Child Care Subsidy program delivered by Family and Human Services, this funding enables families to have access to a subsidy who previously did not meet eligibility criteria because a parent was at home and whose child was experiencing some vulnerability.
- SkillsPEI's Training PEI program provides a child care allowance to cover incremental costs incurred for child care while the caregiver is attending training approved under the Training PEI program.
- To meet needs, subsidies still have to be much higher and expanded to include more families.

## Continued support for and promotion of the “Triple P” positive parenting program for PEI

### ASSESSMENT: SOME PROGRESS

➔ Council members love this evidence-based, population-level parenting program. To date, 105 service providers from across PEI (many of them parents or caregivers to children themselves) have been accredited as Triple P practitioners. It is estimated that over 500 parents and caregivers have been reached through Triple P programs, over 280 parents have used Triple P on-line, and there have been over 5,000 visits to the parent website. These are strong indicators.

➔ This year, 2018–2019, is the final year of a planned five-year implementation of “Triple P.” No reports from government commit to continue support past five years. Council members perceive that without a commitment to continue beyond this year, they are hearing less promotion of this program and are relying on word of mouth. Family resource centres were not supported to fully engage in the rollout of this program; with support, they could have been a sustaining partner.

## Opportunities for caregivers of school-aged children, especially women and diverse and under-represented groups, to collaborate meaningfully in education governance and leadership

### ASSESSMENT: LITTLE OR NO PROGRESS

➔ Since government dissolved the elected English-Language School Board and established the Public Schools Branch under Education, Early Learning and Culture, one elected avenue for education policy-making has disappeared. The Learning Partners Advisory Council (appointed by government) and nine District Advisory Councils (selected by schools) provide volunteer work and advice; they cannot formulate binding policy.

➔ A painful 2017 school review process heard from women, men, and communities. Three school review commissioners (two women, one man) heard and read hundreds of submissions and came to some difficult recommendations. When they publicly announced these recommendations, they faced an angry crowd and personal attacks. Rather than considering their recommendations or addressing a flawed process, government rejected and overturned the recommendations the very next morning.

### FOCUS GROUPS SAY...

- **“Single mothers often cannot afford to stay in the labour market because they cannot pay for everything with one salary... Even with two incomes... paying for three or four children in daycare is unthinkable. With that many children, it is better to stay at home than to work – and usually it is the mother who sacrifices her career.”**
- **“I’m sitting here and one of my kids is with my mom and the other is in a registered child care centre. (Other family members) are caring full-time for their disabled son, and I see all the emotional labour the mom does in the household. And we’re much more likely to compensate physical labour than emotional labour... There is still so much unrecognized and unpaid work being done.”**
- **“Hundreds of new registered child care spaces are being announced, but four times more spaces are still needed. So it’s like just picking away at the problem with just tiny little chips at a time.”**
- **“A lot of families do have male partners that are dedicated and roles are changing within families, but I’m not seeing that reflected in government policies.”**
- **“(There’s) no availability of seniors low-income apartments and hasn’t been for ten years... So it’s a pretty drab kind of a situation when you look at your loved ones being left in desolate little apartments in your dotage.”**
- **“I think of homecare... and the recent bringing in of another artifact of privatization with the first-responders private ambulance service. Homecare is 97% women, and it is very interesting they didn’t see fit to enhance this service that is already in place.”**



## SUPPORTS FOR CAREGIVERS | OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

### ASSESSMENT: SLIGHTLY BETTER (3.5/5 POINTS)

- ➔ Some notable initiatives singled out by Council members in this category include the following:
- The Province continues to invest in programs for parents aimed at improving the lives of children. These include the Triple P Positive Parenting Program; Period of Purple Crying (tips on coping with normal infant crying); family violence prevention programs; Parenting from Two Homes programs; Best Start, a voluntary in-home visiting program for caregivers and young children; information sessions on custody and access; Women's Wellness Program supporting mental health of new mothers and infants; and the Strongest Families Program to provide high quality, timely, no-cost mental health care for PEI children and youth and their families.
  - Handle with Care is a parenting program for parents and caregivers of children zero to six years old. Handle with Care gives parents and caregivers the knowledge and skills necessary to understand what their children need and to create a happy, healthy environment for them. Programming is offered across the province. 23 facilitators were trained in 2017, bringing the total facilitators to 120 in communities across PEI. Education, Early Learning, and Culture now funds the program completely, with \$400,000 allocated over three years.
  - In the review of the Child Protection Act, in 34 consultations, government heard from approximately 400 Islanders, including youth, parents, families, professionals, and communities, about how we can strengthen our shared responsibility to prevent and protect children from parental harm. The Province committed to work on six priorities in response to this review: 1) strengthen the voices of children, 2) increase supports for grandparents as primary caregivers; 3) improve data collection, analysis and reporting processes related to outcomes for children; 4) address legislative changes required to better protect the best interest of the child; 5) implement an evidence-based decision-making model to support the delivery of consistent and thorough child protection services; 5) develop a social policy framework for better accountability and integrated collaboration. Work continues towards these priorities.
  - In December 2017, phase one of a new program called the Grandparent and Care Provider program began to provide financial support to some grandparents and alternative care providers. This program is available when a child needs out-of-home care (for child safety reasons), and the parent, in collaboration with child protection services, arranges for the child to be cared for by grandparents, (or other family members or friends) to prevent the child from having to go to a foster home or a group home. The program is also available to grandparents and care providers caring for children on a full-time basis for safety reasons and there is no child protection service. While phase one does not yet reach enough caregivers to meet the need, making a start to support alternate caregivers is big.
- ➔ Early Childhood Educators are looking for employment elsewhere because of low pay, minimal benefits and time off, no pension, and major responsibility. Our government needs to invest in Early Childhood Educators with a strategic workplace plan over the next 5-10 years to elevate this profession to where it should be, without adding costs to parents who are already struggling.
- ➔ On reviewing the evidence, Council members see support for caregivers of the very young and very old and not much in the middle. Caregiving continues to be demanding unpaid and underpaid work and caregiving responsibilities continue to be a barrier to women's full and active participation in many aspects of Island life.

**"Ontario announced free child care by 2020. If Ontario can do it, PEI can do it."**

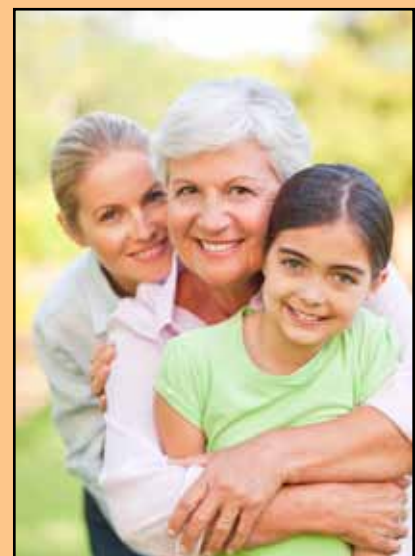
**- Focus group participant**

**"People who care for people are the least paid. It is the least supported role in our society to care for youth, the elderly, the disabled."**

**- Focus group participant**

**"Without proper child care, women are at a disadvantage."**

**- Focus group participant**



### SUPPORTS FOR CAREGIVING CATEGORY SUMMARY

**"Some progress" is the only fair way to assess increased investments in supports for caregiving and the advent of new pilots and programs. But as Council members who are caring for young children, seniors, and vulnerable adults reflect, "We are not close to 'good progress' yet."**

**The day-to-day struggles of caregiving continue endlessly, and continue to fall disproportionately on women. Where public services are missing, the burden falls on grandmothers, mothers-in-law, aunts, and women friends.**

**Funding for programs that increase women's participation in trades and technology and/or funding for women to access these programs**

**ASSESSMENT: SOME PROGRESS**

- ➔ Government deserves full credit for almost ten years of support for Trade HERizons, Workforce and Advanced Learning partners with Women's Network PEI so they can deliver Trade HERizons, a college preparation course with a focus on skill-building for training and employment readiness for women interested in pursuing a career in the skilled trades and technologies field. This program is a success. We look forward to learning what is the next step to achieve durable progress and to meaningfully increase numbers of women participating in trades and technology.
- ➔ Other initiatives to promote trades and technology remain largely gender neutral. As in other fields, women's participation in trades needs to be supported by services such as caregiving supports, accessible transit, and work to actively address sexism and discrimination in workplaces.

**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**

**ASSESSMENT: LITTLE OR NO PROGRESS**

- ➔ Under "Making Equality a Priority," on page 3, Council noted "some progress" on "Evidence that strategies, action plans, and reviews produced by government apply gender and diversity analysis," but that progress applies primarily to action plans and reviews that relate to social, not economic development. In general, government remains unable to articulate how a gender and diversity lens informs economic development planning.
- ➔ The new Regional Economic Advisory Councils who are mandated to make recommendations regarding opportunities for growth within their regions and the PEI economy included 12 women out of 26 members. This is a positive step. Women on these consultative councils will provide a vital diversity of life experience. It should be noted, however, that women are not born with gender and diversity analysis any more than men are: this still must be integrated into the work.

**ADULT EDUCATION & 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.**

**Examples of government programs or services that apply a gender and diversity lens and focus on developing skills for long-term, year-round employment**

**ASSESSMENT: SOME PROGRESS**

- ➔ New programs that partner with community-based organizations to develop skills are showing positive and visible results for participants. For people who are pre-GED (getting ready to begin high-school completion) and/or with a skill level too low for consideration for GED, Workplace Essential Skills training uses a flexible, blended learning model that includes in-class, one-on-one, and on-line learning. The program is offered in Summerside and Charlottetown. Programming was also funded in Lennox Island from 2015 to 2017. In 2017-2018, Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada recognized this as a best proactive project and funded the Lennox Island project 100%.
- ➔ The Province partners with Women's Network PEI on PropELLE, a program that focuses on confidence building, essential skills, and employment readiness for a variety of traditionally male-dominant workplaces. PropELLE is a work readiness program for women who have some barriers to employment but are ready for the next step in employment or education or both.

## Increased investment in programs and services that improve literacy and numeracy for adults

### ASSESSMENT: LITTLE OR NO PROGRESS

- ➔ The PEI Literacy Alliance reports that 45% of working-age Islanders “lack the skills necessary to participate fully in a knowledge economy.” Services remain insufficient to meet this level of need.
- ➔ Emergency provincial funding for the PEI Literacy Alliance to keep their doors open is supporting a staff person to work on the Volunteers for Literacy adult tutoring.
- ➔ SkillsPEI provides programs and services to assist Islanders in completing their high school education (GED) and upgrade for further study. The province absorbs the cost of tuition.
- ➔ Literacy is among the pre-GED skills being built up by the Workplace Essential Skills training discussed and credited on page 21.
- ➔ Transportation, Infrastructure, and Energy provides information to the seasonal workforce to encourage and support participation in the provincial literacy initiatives.

## Steps towards Island-wide public transit

### ASSESSMENT: LITTLE OR NO PROGRESS

- ➔ There is no Island-wide public transit system and no current plan to expand services beyond existing (relatively limited) transit in Charlottetown, Stratford, and Cornwall, with a commuter link to Summerside and summer commuter/tourist link to Cavendish.
- ➔ The clearest path to increased public transit for Islanders may be through plans to prepare people and environments for climate change. Communities, Land and Environment states, “Reducing vehicular emissions, improving the mobility of low income Islanders and new immigrants to the Island, and reducing social isolation are all factors that together inform one... objective of the... Climate Change Action Plan: that of achieving greater use of active and public transportation networks across Prince Edward Island.” The 2018 Climate Action Plan indeed has a commitment “to develop initiatives that contribute to a more sustainable transportation system.”

### FOCUS GROUPS SAY...

- “NGOs shouldn’t have to threaten to close to receive adequate core funding for essential services, as (the PEI Literacy Alliance) did last year. We heard that the third sector, the NGO sector, is the largest employment sector on PEI. That whole sector is never really acknowledged, and it is one which mostly hires women. Not-for-profit work is women’s work. And a lot of time is spent organizing fundraising events rather than providing services. We are the only province in Canada that doesn’t even have a civil servant to liaise with that entire sector. But there’s lots of support for tourism operators.”
- “The quandary women get in around child care, the dilemma of having to abuse another woman to make sure I can go back to work, is awful. Someone else is underpaid. If we subsidize anything in this province, wouldn’t you think it would be to support women returning to the workplace and taking care of our children?”
- “If government would lead by example, private businesses would be dragged along.”
- “In my rural community, a lot of people are afraid to express (political opinions) publicly because they might not get called back for summer employment or reduce their opportunities. Especially in the rural areas where people are reliant on seasonal employment to draw EI.”





**ASSESSMENT: SLIGHTLY BETTER (3.5/5 POINTS)**

- ➔ While it can't be counted as progress beyond the status quo, Council members want to express again how much they support and value Workforce and Advanced Learning's effective partnership with Women's Network PEI so they can deliver Trade HERizons. The program truly helps the participants transition from low-income to a sustainable livelihood. It is a good model for what can be accomplished through a strong partnership with the not-for-profit sector and especially equality-seeking women's organizations.
- ➔ One notable initiative singled out by Council members in this category is that Municipal Affairs and Provincial Planning Division offers orientation, education, and training sessions and day-to-day coaching as needed, to municipal representatives. Such educational initiatives are designed with the awareness that municipal councillors and staff live in both rural and urban parts of the Island; that many of them work on a voluntary and part-time basis, juggling several responsibilities that impose time and financial constraints; and that a high proportion of municipal representatives consist of women.
- ➔ It is vitally important to PEI's progress for strategies and plans to include women. The Climate Change Action Plan provides a good example of a plan developed with solid, systematic attention to gender and diversity analysis. And for good reason. UN Climate Change Executive Secretary Patricia Espinosa has said, "For the Paris Agreement to succeed, women and girls must be fully involved in climate policy. When we include women in climate solutions, we see enhanced economic growth and the outcomes are more sustainable." And yet, when PEI's Climate Change Action Plan was released in May 2018, none of the following words made it into the plan: gender, woman, women, child, children, family, families, equity, equality, equitable, social, society, care, caregiving, inclusion, diversity (other than biodiversity), vulnerable/vulnerability (of people rather than environments). Better represented in the report are words such as business, commerce, industries, and industrial infrastructure. These key words are one kind of indicator; on the more positive side, poverty and low income are acknowledged, and aspects of social and public infrastructure show up prominently in the plan. Also highlighted as a result of gender and diversity analysis are partnerships with residents and communities, outreach with not-for-profit groups, and collaboration with watershed groups that might not otherwise have been included as strongly.
- ➔ While not directly connected to adult education and training, there is much PEI could do to support the rights of migrant workers, who are present here in growing numbers. Many migrant workers on PEI are women. They are working far away from their families in order to support them financially. Most critically, PEI employment standards need to be updated – and then enforced – to protect migrant workers' rights and meet their needs. They continue to face barriers to timely access to healthcare. Workers cannot get a health card if their work permit is six months or less, and are routinely living without a health card for several months while they wait for their permit to be renewed. Private insurance provided through workplaces usually does not cover essential services like pregnancy. A child who is born in Canada by a migrant worker will only get public health coverage if their mother has a health card, despite the child being a Canadian citizen. The Province is doing a good deal to support migrant workers' paths to permanent residency and citizenship but could do more to lobby the federal government to lift restrictive policies. The lack of public transportation in communities where migrant workers live and work continues to isolate them from supports and services.

**"We need more opportunity for youth to learn leadership skills, for girls to be mentored and see who they can be."**

**- Focus group participant**

**"Friendship Centres are key. They are the best support system, a whole wrap-around of services for Indigenous people. PEI is in a deficit, so behind in this way. In lots of ways."**

**- Indigenous focus group participant**



**ADULT EDUCATION AND TRAINING CATEGORY SUMMARY**

**The world of work is transforming, and adult education and training is more essential than ever to support Islanders' livelihoods and well-being. Established programs continue, and this is positive. Beyond the status quo, programming, planning, and public and social infrastructure are not keeping up with people's needs, and women's needs in particular.**

## 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**

### ASSESSMENT: GOOD PROGRESS

➔ Government is able to provide a solid account of social inclusion being taken seriously in consultations, strategies, and action plans. Examples include the PEI Wellness Strategy, Health PEI Strategic Plan, and Seniors' Health and Wellness Strategy (Health); creation of the Poverty Reduction Advisory Council, the Child Protection Act Review, Adoption Act Review, Child Care Subsidies Review, Disability Support Program Transformation, and Provincial Housing Action Plan (Family and Human Services); the Provincial Child Sexual Abuse Protocol and programming in Community and Correctional Services (Justice); the Water Act, the Building Codes Act, the Municipal Government Act, the Climate Change Action Plan, and the draft Provincial Land Use Policy (Communities, Land and Environment); and the Bonshaw Hills Public Lands Committee (Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy).

**Steps to implement provincially relevant Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report**

### ASSESSMENT: LITTLE OR NO PROGRESS

- ➔ Council members acknowledge the Province's work towards implementing the calls to action that apply to PEI but finds that the work remains preliminary: establishing working groups, negotiating agreements, finding resonances between existing programs and the calls to action.
- ➔ Work has begun on Jordan's Principle (a child-first principle intended to resolve jurisdictional disputes concerning payment for services to First Nations children); the most recent theme of the very hopeful annual Indigenous Justice forum was reconciliation; and PEI is doing its part in national initiatives to develop education curriculum as called for by the TRC. In schools, individual teacher-driven efforts have had the biggest impact so far.
- ➔ Historian Ian Mosby has been tracking the status of TRC Calls to Action and as of 16 October 2017 evaluated 7 as complete and 87 as incomplete, with only 1 implemented by provinces.
- ➔ PEI efforts to support the call to action for a National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women are credited in this report.

**Examples of programs and services that promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities, especially participation in the labour force**

### ASSESSMENT: SOME PROGRESS

- ➔ The Disabilities Support Program has seen significant growth in disabled students attending post-secondary education and receiving supports from PEI Student Financial Services to assist them. Excellent progress.
- ➔ The Public Service Commission Diversity Employment program provided a number of opportunities for persons with disabilities to enter the public-sector workforce, supported by effective working relationships with organizations of people with disabilities.
- ➔ Council supports work to expand the Disability Support Program to include help for disability related to mental illness. Under the expanded supports, eligibility will be based on functional needs rather than a diagnosis, and, the Province says, "Supports will be provided for unmet needs such as assistive devices, respite care, employment supports, or helps navigating various services. The improvements will complement supports already in place."
- ➔ Employment supports specific to people with disabilities are essential, but there has been no increase in support for the PEI Council of People with Disabilities to provide these supports.

## Steps towards establishing a provincial Ombudsman to conduct independent investigations of complaints

### ASSESSMENT: LITTLE OR NO PROGRESS

- ➔ There are no steps towards establishing a provincial Ombudsman independent of the Legislative Assembly to investigate and act on complaints.
- ➔ In fall 2017, the Province enacted the Public Interest Disclosure and Whistleblower Protection Act. This legislation establishes the independent office of the Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner, which is tasked with receiving, investigating and making recommendations with respect to employee disclosures of wrongdoings and complaints of reprisals related to such disclosures. While this might be good, it is a much more limited role than what we advocated for.

## Changes to legislation that allow for supported decision-making, in compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

### ASSESSMENT: LITTLE OR NO PROGRESS

- ➔ Government reports Canada continues to maintain reservations to Article 12 regarding supported decision-making within the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities but has developed a workplan at the federal, provincial, and territorial level.
- ➔ Provincially, in Justice and Public Safety, the Office of the Public Guardian and Public Trustee, with a working group of representatives from the health, community, and senior sectors, continues to explore legislative amendments around the concept of supported decision-making. Supported decision-making also remains in the current Family and Human Services legislative work plan.

### FOCUS GROUPS SAY...

- **“Government accountability to its citizens, its most vulnerable, to its littlest ones, is a truer measure of a society. What does the GDP have to do with everyday lives, actually? When decisions are made on primarily monetary basis, we have lost a lot of humanity as a society. Even healthcare, nursing homes use to run by people who were in healthcare, and now they are run by business people with degrees in economics.”**
- **Indigenous focus group participants had a lot to say about inclusion: “I see a lot of great changes here on Lennox (Island) – the school, the health centre. What’s going on here, all the retreats and workshops, is amazing and needs to continue.”**
- **“Having a cultural mentor was really important to me. When I was growing up sweats were underground, only whispered about. I now experience spirituality and a great connection with Creator. Having that connection with mother earth is really valuable. It has helped me know what it means to be Mi’kmaq, an Aboriginal from Lennox Island.”**
- **“We depend too much on others to narrate our story, to share it authentically. By creating safe space for our women, we have a little sliver of opportunity here. We need to tell our own story. Its important that we take ownership back. Back into ourselves.”**
- **“As Métis, I stood up and fought for my status. My Mom would be proud that we fought back for what she lost.”**
- **“Growing up I hated being an Indian in a white community. The history books didn’t help. The journey to become proud of who I am... was long. I have had to learn my culture and find out who I am. I had to get myself on the red road, learn teachings from the elders. I am native and Mohawk, and I don’t care anymore if you like me.”**
- **“I struggle with raising my three youngest. They know their culture, but I worry about making them proud and setting them up for racism. For the inevitable negative and hurtful responses they’ll face. My dream for every child here is that they leave our school proud and are accepted at the schools they’ll attend next, off the community.”**



## DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION | OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

### ASSESSMENT: SOMEWHAT BETTER (4/5 POINTS)

- Every department of government is able to give an account of work they are doing to support diversity and increase inclusion.
- Some notable initiatives singled out by Council members in this category include the following:
  - As should be the case, Education, Early Learning, and Culture continues to show leadership on diversity and inclusion in school curriculum and programming. This is work that will have enduring positive effects as children grow into adults who are ready to accept diversity and be actively inclusive. Public Schools Branch initiatives for accessibility and inclusion include a standardized referral process to ensure that every student in or entering school with a mobility issue that impacts their safety or ability to participate and engage in learning can be appropriately accommodated. PEI is a non-categorical inclusionary province, meaning that no diagnosis is necessary to access supports in schools; students who need support to succeed in school receive it. And the PSB continues to invest annually in assistive technology to meet the needs of its students. In recent years, investments come largely in the form of subscriptions to different online tools.
  - Consistent and ongoing efforts by the Public Library Service to host events; feature books, presentations, and displays; and share public messages that make these essential public spaces welcoming, diverse, and inclusive. Shout out to libraries for signage that lets people in libraries know that breast-feeding is welcome.
  - The Public Service Commission (PSC) demonstrates leadership within government on diversity and inclusion. Since 2009, almost 1,600 members of the public service have been supported by their departments to participate in PSC diversity training. Topics have included “Valuing Our Differences,” “Valuing Diversity in the Workplace,” “Mi’kmaq Culture and History” (coordinated with Aboriginal Affairs and the Mi’kmaq Confederacy), and “Diversity and Cultural Understanding.” The Public Service Commission also holds Public Service Week events that celebrate and educate about diversity and inclusion in the workplace.
- Council members note that a lot of diversity and inclusion initiatives focus on festivals and celebration. While the drive to celebrate our differences is valuable, initiatives that actively support integration and education towards acceptance are needed to ensure we continue to have something to celebrate.
- It is more than a dozen years since a previous government cut the PEI Human Rights Commission’s core funding for public education and awareness-raising on human rights. Restoring this funding would valuably support all Islanders to know and understand their rights and to value the rights of others in an increasingly diverse province.
- Truly inclusive public consultation seems difficult for governments to get right. It is easy to consult too much or too little. There are topics on which the government cannot directly consult people affected because power imbalances are too great to allow safe and democratic participation. It is easy to exclude groups by failing to hold the consultation at a good time, in a physically accessible location, with language interpretation, in sync with a bus route or transit schedule, with sufficient support for caregiving, and so on. Good consultation processes also result in reports and plans in which participants see their input reflected. Council members would like to see a framework for public consultations and would like government consultations to consistently meet the standards of accessibility and inclusion that not-for-profit community organizations regularly hold themselves to.

**“White people think they’re better, but they’re not. Nobody is better than anybody else.”**

**– Focus group participant**

**“Our traditional values have been lost – respect of the earth, respect of family, respect of self. Language is such an important part of who we are as a people, and so many Mi’kmaq have lost that. That saddens me.”**

**– Focus group participant**

**“As a child, we were taught that we were extinct. I’m real. Mi’kmaq still exist.”**

**– Focus group participant**



### DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION CATEGORY SUMMARY

**Diversity and inclusion is the category on this Report Card that most actively engages the most departments of government. That results in consistent good progress. As in past years, between diversity and inclusion, there is greater progress on diversity than inclusion; and when presented the challenge to consider gender and diversity, there is progress on (some aspects of) diversity before gender.**

**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**

#### **ASSESSMENT: LITTLE OR NO PROGRESS**

- ➔ The personal comfort allowance for social assistance recipients increased in 2015 and 2017; food rates have been increasing within a five-year plan to increase rates for all households to an inadequate 70% of the cost of a basic food basket; the Canada Child Benefit was exempted as income for social assistance and disability support program income calculations. These increases do not come close to allowing people to meet basic needs.
- ➔ All political parties supported a motion in the Legislature to explore basic income guarantee with the federal government. The Minister of Family and Human Services contacted federal Families, Children and Social Development Minister Jean Yves Duclos in writing regarding a basic Income pilot. Minister Duclos offered to share federally held data related to such a pilot, but the federal government has not offered any financial support.

**Example(s) of policies that support food security, especially among vulnerable groups**

#### **ASSESSMENT: SOME PROGRESS**

- ➔ Council members gave credit to projects funded through the multi-departmental Community Food Security and Food Education program. Members who live and work with low-income Islanders are seeing real results from community food security projects funded by this program.
- ➔ School breakfast and snack programs continue to play a role in improving food security. Provincial funding provides a starting point for volunteer work, mostly by women, and donations.
- ➔ Council members consider it shameful that a fifth of Island children live in families that worry about having enough food. Wellness grants focused on healthy eating are good, but in the words of one Council member, "Messaging around healthy eating is irrelevant if people can't afford to buy food." Council expressed concern about reliance on volunteer-driven programs and charitable donations, and on short-term projects rather than long-term policy. A past Chairperson addressed social assistance food rates: "Working towards 70% of a basic food basket, how is that acceptable?"
- ➔ There is hope the local food act in development will support food security and food sovereignty.

## **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 funding for and construction of affordable, accessible, appropriate housing**

#### **ASSESSMENT: SOME PROGRESS**

- ➔ A provincial housing action plan began development in 2017 and is expected to be completed in June 2018. In the past few years, the Province has added 75 new rent supplement arrangements and has expanded access to and funding for renovation programs that support people, especially seniors and people with disabilities, to stay in their homes. The 2016 federal budget included an investment of \$7.2 million in PEI social housing that will see positive effects.
- ➔ In the meantime, people characterize the availability of affordable, accessible, appropriate housing as a "crisis," with a province-wide apartment vacancy rate of just 2% and a Charlottetown rate dropping below 1%. And Charlottetown still lacks an emergency shelter for homeless women, for women who are using substances, and that is inclusive for trans people.
- ➔ Supporting people in the homes they already have, especially across rural PEI, is clearly good policy but is impracticable if they have limited access to public spaces or public services because there's no Island-wide public transit.

**An expanded mandate for social assistance programs to support more economically vulnerable Islanders**

**ASSESSMENT: LITTLE OR NO PROGRESS**

- ➔ Examples Council provided of an expanded mandate would include increased eligibility, more access to flexible short-term emergency support, and more support for people to transition from social assistance to independent livelihood.
- ➔ Small projects are being tested: partnership with Workforce and Advanced Learning to strengthen employment focus and provide Employment Supports Services (ESS) to social assistance clients; the Harvest and Prosper Program to link Islanders identified in need of jobs to fill workforce needs in agriculture during harvest time; SkillsPEI funding for women-focused programs run by Women's Network PEI (PropELLE and Trade HERizons) and EPWIC (Women Moving On). Successful programs need to expand.

**Improvements to employment standards (including minimum wage) for non-unionized workers**

**ASSESSMENT: LITTLE OR NO PROGRESS**

- ➔ At the April 2018 minimum wage of \$11.55, a person improbably lucky enough to get work for 40 hours a week for 52 weeks would earn \$24,000, or about \$20,800 after taxes. According to the Market Basket Measure poverty threshold, this is enough to support one person, but not two, on PEI.
- ➔ There have been small changes to employment standards, but there is need and opportunity for overhauls. There has not been a major review of the Employment Standards Act since 2006, and the work world has changed a great deal in that time. Council is excited and hopeful about a new intergovernmental committee to review Employment Standards legislation as it relates to making workplaces in PEI more family friendly (and women friendly). Consultation desired, please!

**FOCUS GROUPS SAY...**

- **“So much of the issues and challenges lead to income. If you have enough resources, you will likely be okay with quality child care, quality housing... Those at the bottom suffer exponentially... It feels especially unkind here, because we do know, we do see one another... I'd like a whole revolution on PEI, with leadership that reflects our values.”**
- **“I think you are getting close to a Basic Income Guarantee conversation - it's important to remember that every political leader voiced support for BIG during the 2015 election. Someone needs to take leadership on this. We are a perfect test site.”**
- **“On PEI we really love charity. We love how good it makes us feel. It's still giving of our extra instead of dealing with the systemic issue of poverty on PEI. And those who get elected are well-off generally, and they are men generally. And they are straight, white, well-off men.”**
- **“Yes, poverty is entrenched, but we need to start questioning who it is serving to believe that and maintain that? What kind of society do we want? One where some people work for terrible wages and conditions, one where children do not have enough to eat?”**
- **“Poverty is also impoverishment. People feel unworthy and don't even want to say they are stuck. We as a society should be ashamed. I feel that about the Indigenous people as well. The shame of living in a rich country and not providing clean water. It's our disgrace. It's my disgrace that we live in a country where people have to put a cup out. I allow it. I facilitate it.”**
- **“I am continually surprised at how much money there is here on PEI... A lot of people are making a lot of money that is not coming back to the general coffers for redistribution. It's not trickling down. Seems more like a trickling up.”**



### ASSESSMENT: STATUS QUO (3/5 POINTS)

- ➔ Some notable initiatives singled out by Council members in this category include the following:
  - Two pilot projects funded through Workforce and Advanced Learning and Family and Human Services focus on youth to prevent poverty. Skills Enhancement and Mentoring Program (SEAM) and Start to Apply Right (STAR) are directed at youth identified as high risk of not completing high school and at risk of living in poverty. The goal of SEAM is to motivate young people to complete school, further their education, explore different options, and find support needed for their success. STAR worked on building skills in areas such as financial literacy, and discussed information on careers of interest and the steps to take to get into those careers. Forty students were enrolled in 6 locations across the province and a number of the participants secured summer work as a result of the program.
  - The Harvest and Prosper Program was a pilot program aimed to ease labour shortages within the agricultural industry, while establishing a connection to work for work-ready Islanders connected to services from Family and Human Services, Disability Support, and/or the PEI Association for Newcomers. Eligible income assistance recipients could earn up to a maximum of \$3,000 per fiscal year without having these earnings affect their basic income assistance payments.
  - SkillsPEI supported Downtown Charlottetown to hire a street navigator to work with homeless people in Charlottetown in an effort to address their situation and eventually secure employment.
- ➔ Pilot projects are good and, if they are evaluated as effective, should be expanded. As it stands, they are very small steps. In the words of one Council member, "Social assistance legislation, policies, and practices require extensive review and update."
- ➔ Council members support the transformation of the Disability Support Program but note that work is progressing slowly to expand the scope of the program and encompass and include people who experience disability related to serious mental illness. And while the program eligibility is expanding, the funding is not necessarily expanding.
- ➔ Not yet addressed are needs to support the dignity of social support recipients. Positive steps could include increasing the inexcusably low liquid asset exemption for all household types. Another positive step would be to allow people on social assistance to retain more of the income they can and do earn before it is clawed back. For example, people with serious, enduring mental illness who can't work full-time or all the time should be able to keep more of what they earn part-time or intermittently, to support their dignity and their connection to the community and workforce.
- ➔ The housing crisis was a recurring theme in consultations to validate this Report Card. Concerns included lack of regulation of Airbnb and similar short-term vacation rentals, contributing to low vacancy rates; the risk of federal housing money being used for institutional-type housing for people with intellectual disabilities rather than housing where they have more control over their lives; concern about privatized housing, given that a lot of the conversation about housing has been about housing stock and how to support developers "to do the right thing."
- ➔ A Council member commented, "There are barriers to getting on social assistance, but there are even more barriers to getting off." She wants to see more active supports offered to people in difficult circumstances. For example, a new parent on social assistance should be actively offered support in income and child care to support a return to education or training. Recipients need to be able to receive benefits while they access programs to make changes in their lives, without income being clawed back.

**"We must eliminate poverty, because everything starts there... If a person is poor, they can not access justice, they can not get out of a violent relationship, they do not have time to look after their health... Women's incomes must be increased so that they can take control of their own lives."**

**- Focus group participant**

**"Poverty is the final frontier. The one thing that people are allowed to judge and stigmatize people for. We need to upend the applecart. Extreme feminists. Feminist extremists!"**

**- Focus group participant**



### WOMEN'S ECONOMIC STATUS CATEGORY SUMMARY

**Government first publicly committed to a poverty reduction strategy in 2008. In the third mandate of government since then, finally a credible poverty reduction advisory council has been struck and begun consultations. In ten years, how many low-income, lone-parent mothers have given up how many suppers so their children could eat? If visible action doesn't arise from 2018 poverty reduction efforts, how many women will give up hope?**

# 10 YEARS OF THE EQUALITY REPORT CARD

## IN-PROVINCE ACCESS TO SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES

- 2008 “No access to abortion in PEI hospitals”
- 2009 “Complete lack of access”
- 2011 Vulnerable youth focus group participants called again for “access to abortion services”
- 2013 Premier Ghiz declared, “The ‘status quo’ of no local access to abortion services will hold”
- 2015 With government “failing to act to protect women’s sexual and reproductive health... the provincial situation was worsening”
- 2018 Women’s Wellness Centre and provincial sexual health services offer a suite of options, including surgical abortion care in hospitals and free medical abortion care

## GENDER BALANCE ON PROVINCIAL AGENCIES, BOARDS, AND COMMISSIONS

- 2008 Under new “Participate PEI” process more than 40% of new appointees were women
- 2009 Close to 40% of new appointees were women, a small decline
- 2011 Over 30% of applicants and 41% of appointees were women
- 2013 Now 39% of applicants but just 37% of appointees were women
- 2015 Women made up 45% of appointments – but only 33% of applicants
- 2018 Under the rebranded and revamped “Engage PEI,” women made up 53% of both applicants and new appointments and were 47% of ABC members

## STEPS TO IMPLEMENT A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COURT OPTION PILOT PROJECT

- 2008 “Signs of further steps towards a domestic violence court option...”
- 2009 Minister Responsible for the Status of Women “publicly stated... support”
- 2011 Discussions initiated with Policy Board...
- 2013 April 2012 Speech from the Throne committed to examine “therapeutic courts,” which could include a domestic violence court option
- 2015 “No further public updates”
- 2018 Government continued “to assess the Province’s readiness to implement a therapeutic court model,” with recommendations now almost 20 years old

## FAMILY VIOLENCE PROTOCOLS AND BEST PRACTICE TOOLS WITH VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE

- 2008 Woman Abuse Protocols in income support, hospital ERs, and justice needed evaluation, updates, and training
- 2009 Evaluation happened to identify needs for updates and gaps to be filled
- 2011 The Family Law Section of the Department of Justice developed a spousal abuse protocol and all justice protocols were reviewed and updated
- 2013 The Provincial Child Sexual Abuse Advisory Committee released a revised Provincial Child Sexual Abuse Protocol
- 2015 The Police Response to Domestic Violence Protocol was reviewed and updated; the Social Assistance Family Violence Protocol was finalized then strengthened as a policy
- 2018 The Bridge model of intervention connects at-risk Islanders to services through a collaborative hub of service providers

## GENDER AND DIVERSITY ANALYSIS BEING APPLIED ACROSS GOVERNMENT

- 2008 The Minister Responsible for the Status of Women put forward a “motion to set up a committee on best practices in gender-based analysis...”
- 2009 The committee began to examine best practices and assess training needs
- 2011 “A concerted effort to ensure there is a representative with a gender lens on committees and projects that are important to women’s equality...”
- 2013 “The Interministerial Women’s Secretariat developed two nation-leading gender and diversity analysis (GDA) training guides
- 2015 Gender and diversity implications were included in revised Executive Council Memorandum requirements for policies and programs
- 2018 Examples of GDA training or application or both across all of government



### **SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

- 2008 “Mental Health services for both women and men are still under-resourced and under strain”
- 2009 In a health-care focused budget, increases to Community Mental Health were “less than 1.5% of total new health spending”
- 2011 “Community Mental Health continues to make up about 1.6% of the Health PEI budget and acute mental health services make up about 2.9%”
- 2013 A comprehensive review of mental health and addictions services looked at access to Community Mental Health
- 2015 Government appointed the first Chief Mental Health and Addictions Officer, and the PEIACSW was included on a Mental Health and Addictions Advisory Council
- 2018 Government was slowly but surely implementing the 2016 Mental Health and Addictions Strategy but community mental health remains “under strain”

### **SUPPORTS FOR AFFORDABLE, ACCESSIBLE, HIGH-QUALITY CHILD CARE**

- 2008 “Additional investment in licensed child care centres”
- 2009 “Incrementally increase[d] investment in Early Childhood Care and Education...”
- 2011 The Preschool Excellence Initiative more than doubled investment in early childhood care and education; kindergarten became part of the public school system; PEI established 40 Early Years Centres to provide over 1,340 spaces
- 2013 Early Years Centres increased to 46 and infant spaces increased by 51% in 2011-12 and again by 3.3% in 2012-13
- 2015 Child care spaces increased by 1.6%, but with a 6% decrease in infant spaces
- 2018 PEI had 4,860 child care spaces (including school-age programs); Infant spaces had increased 70% since the Preschool Excellence Initiative began; PEI and Canada reached a bilateral funding agreement to support child-care improvements

### **SOCIAL INCLUSION EMBEDDED IN POLICY, PROGRAMS, AND PLANS OF GOVERNMENT**

- 2008 Council links social inclusion, health, income
- 2009 Economic development plans failed to mention planning for inclusion
- 2011 “Making connections between women and economic development plans is a key to progress”
- 2013 2012 Social Action Plan did not commit to social inclusion, though a prior discussion paper defined it as “central”
- 2015 Council found no evidence social inclusion was “understood - let alone implemented”
- 2018 A new government’s June 2015 Speech from the Throne emphasized social inclusion, and small steps followed...

### **STEPS TO IMPLEMENT AN ISLAND-WIDE PUBLIC TRANSIT SYSTEM**

- 2008 “Investment in Island-wide public transit is needed”
- 2009 “What about wraparound services, such as broad-based public transit?”
- 2011 “The first substantial provincial investment in public transit” supported T3 transit operating in Charlottetown, Cornwall, and Stratford
- 2013 “Women need wrap-around public services such as transit”
- 2015 The T3 transit system continued, with “limited bus runs between Charlottetown and Summerside”
- 2018 No steps towards expanding transit Island-wide were on the horizon

### **PROGRESS TOWARDS A POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY**

- 2008 “Initial steps towards a Poverty Reduction Strategy for PEI are very positive...”
- 2009 “No action towards the promised Poverty Reduction Strategy...”
- 2011 “Steps towards poverty reduction have been slow, but we are hopeful”
- 2013 2012 Social Action Plan to Reduce Poverty lacked “targets, timelines, or vision,” “buy-in,” or “action”
- 2015 Council called the Social Action Plan a “failure,” which did “little or nothing to address entrenched poverty”
- 2018 Government appointed a strong Poverty Reduction Strategy Advisory Council to consult community

## PROCESS NOTES

**The Prince Edward Island Advisory Council on the Status of Women commits to a fair, collaborative, and transparent process to create the Equality Report Card.**

### A fair and collaborative process

- In consultation with government departments, the PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women developed a timeline, an assessment model, and a list of priority action areas for the 2018 Equality Report Cards. These were made public in June 2016.
- Each department of government completed a questionnaire about actions their department had taken to support women's equality and diversity.
- Advisory Council staff conducted focus groups and consultations with groups and organizations.
- All members of the Advisory Council reviewed information from departments and recorded their individual assessments through a survey.
- Using the survey results as a starting point, Advisory Council current and recent members participated in a collaborative, consensus-based workshop to decide on assessments. Members selected evidence to support assessments.
- PEI Status of Women staff shared draft grades and analysis with government representatives for corrections, updates, and other input.
- Advisory Council members and staff selectively shared draft grades and analysis with expert community members and community organizations for corrections, updates, and other input.
- Based on feedback and new information from government and community, members of the Advisory Council made changes they were convinced were necessary to grades and analysis.
- PEI Status of Women staff and chair finalized the Equality Report Card and made it ready to release in a public news conference in June 2018.

### ABOUT THE FOCUS GROUPS

- Three focus groups informed this report: one organized in partnership with the Aboriginal Women's Association, one in French with Francophone and francophile women, and one with past participants in 2016 and 2017 study groups on reconciliation and women's issues.
- The focus groups were held in Lennox Island, Summerside, and Charlottetown.
- Taken as a whole, the focus groups included 16 people plus various Council representatives, ranging in age from youth to seniors.
- Participants included people from urban, suburban, and rural communities; Indigenous participants lived on-reserve and off-reserve. Participants included lone parents, parents co-parenting in one home or from two homes, and grandparents who raised grandchildren. Their children ranged in age from very young to fully grown.
- In discussion, one or more participants identified themselves as having personal, familial, and/or front-line professional work experiences with violence, abuse, separation or divorce, disability, mental illness, trauma, various health needs, poverty, unemployment and/or underemployment, immigration to Canada, inadequate housing, food insecurity, caregiving responsibilities to children or adults, early childhood care and education, colonization, racism, ageism, cis-heterosexism, and/or sexism.
- Focus group participants were not asked to formally identify gender, age, ability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or other diversities.



## Acknowledgements

The members and staff of the PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women thank the many groups in the community and in government that contributed information for this report.

We thank those who received and reviewed whole or partial drafts and provided corrections, comments, insights, and analysis as we prepared this Equality Report Card.

We particularly acknowledge the time that people and groups contributed as unpaid volunteers.

WITHIN GOVERNMENT, we thank...

- The Minister Responsible for the Status of Women and the Interministerial Women's Secretariat for helping to shape the project and for coordinating government's response.
- Departmental representatives in all departments of government and in the government offices of Executive Council, the Interministerial Women's Secretariat, and the Public Service Commission.
- The Premier and all Ministers and Deputy Ministers of Government.

IN THE COMMUNITY, we thank...

- Individual women in the community who were consulted by Advisory Council members for their comments and perspectives.
- Women who have called the Advisory Council on the Status of Women office to share their experiences and to help us identify the gaps in policy, services, and legislation that affect their lives.
- Participants in focus groups whose analysis complemented that of the Advisory Council and kept the Equality Report Card grounded.
- Past Chairpersons of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women, who participated in the 2018 Chairs Circle consultation to review the Equality Report Card draft and provided valuable input.

## Diversity Statement and Community Organizations Consulted

The current and recent members of the PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women were appointed by government to advise government and educate the public on issues important to the status of women. The members who created this report include women who come from every region of PEI, rural and urban. One or more members identify as newcomers to PEI, newcomers to Canada, youth, seniors, people with disabilities, Indigenous, Black, Asian, Francophone, and/or members of the LGBTQ2+ community. To increase the diversity of perspectives, Council members and staff invited representatives from community organizations to review parts of the draft Equality Report Card. Most of the following groups provided feedback:

- Aboriginal Women's Association of PEI
- Abortion Rights Network of PEI
- Community Legal Information Association (CLIA)
- EPWIC: East Prince Women's Information Centre
- Justice Options for Women
- Mi'kmaq Family Resource Centre
- PEERS Alliance
- PEI Action Team for Migrant Worker Rights
- PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada
- PEI Coalition for Women in Government
- PEI Council of People with Disabilities
- PEI Family Violence Prevention Services
- PEI Literacy Alliance
- PEI People First
- PEI Rape and Sexual Assault Centre
- PEI Working Group for a Livable Income
- Union of Public Sector Employees (UPSE)
- Women's Network PEI



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