Prince Edward Island EQUALITY REPORT CARD 2022

Prince Edward Island Advisory Council on the Status of Women

The PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women dedicates the 2022 Equality Report Card to all the front-line workers, essential workers, and caregivers of Prince Edward Island whose undervalued resiliency and care are getting us through the global pandemic of COVID-19. Thank you!

The Equality Report Card is a process to assess Prince Edward Island's progress toward gender equality goals. It was initiated by the PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women in 2007.

This report is created through the hard work of all members and staff who have served on the PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women from April 2019 to March 2022.

Special thanks to three Chairpersons who led the work for this Report Card. Yvonne Deagle led development of a new assessment model (2019); Debbie Langston led adaptation of the model and process through the first phases of COVID-19 (2020–2021); and Cathy Rose led Council through the assessment process and final report (2021–2022). The Council would like to give special thanks to Jane Ledwell (Executive Director), Michelle Jay (Program Coordinator), and Becky Tramley (Office Manager) for their hard work and dedication to this project.

Special thanks to Minister Responsible for the Status of Women Natalie Jameson and to the Interministerial Women's Secretariat.

Heartfelt thanks to all departments of government, all participants in the focus groups, and all respondents to the community perceptions survey.

The PEIACSW acknowledges all women-identifying people in our understanding of "women," including cis women, trans women, and gender minorities.

The work of the PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women takes place on the island district of Epekwitk in Mi'kma'ki, the traditional territory of the Mi'kmaq: their home today and since time immemorial. We live and work in Epekwitk by virtue of treaties of Peace and Friendship.

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Related publications:

- Equality Report Card for 2022: Reporting and Assessment Guide Available https://peistatusofwomen.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/ FINAL-WEB-2022-Equality-Report-Card-Model.pdf
- Background on the 2022 Equality Report Card: Results from Focus Groups and Community Consultations Available https://peistatusofwomen.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/ FINAL-WEB-2022-Equality-Report-Card-Background.pdf
- Fiche de rendement (French-language summary document) Available https://peistatusofwomen.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/ FINAL-WEB-2022-Fiche-de-rendement.pdf

2022 EQUALITY REPORT CARD

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The Prince Edward Island Advisory Council on the Status of Women awards the Government of Prince Edward Island a **B+** (77.5/100 points) on progress towards gender equality goals from 2019 to 2021. This is the highest grade for government since the Report Card was initiated in 2007 and since the first pilot report was released in 2008.

Council awarded points on the following basis:

- Sustained Progress: 40.5 points
- New Progress: 30 points
- COVID-19 Response: 7 points

The 2022 Equality Report Card assesses actions taken by the current government, elected April 23, 2019, and led by Premier Dennis King. The assessment is based on comprehensive reports from government on initiatives to March 31, 2021, and Council has also credited significant announcements since then.

COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS

Progress towards Equality

It has been an incredibly hard time to hold on to gains some women have made—while some women remain left far behind. Precarity, intersectionality: if we don't get it now, we'll never get it.



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Participants in the community perceptions survey Council conducted from June to November 2021 scored PEI's overall progress towards full equality in at a median of 50%, halfway to equality, by 2019 and perceived a 5-point increase to 55% into 2021.

More information about participants in the survey and their community perceptions of progress towards equality can be found in the narrative report *Background on the* 2022 Equality Report Card. In awarding a B+ for progress, Council members express that they are pleased with government progress over two years. The grade for progress does *not* mean PEI has reached the three-quarter mark towards equality overall. As Council analysis, community perceptions, and focus group observations in this report indicate, community consensus is that we are at best *halfway* to gender equality overall in PEI, and we are not yet at the halfway mark for people living with low income or for groups labelled "diverse" because they are subject to systemic disadvantage and discrimination.

SUSTAINED PROGRESS

Council's Report Card assessment model set the 2019 status quo at a 50% (a "D" grade) and credited government for sustaining identified initiatives or programs that, in Council members' opinion, set the bar for the status quo. Council assessed that government sustained or enhanced 90% of identified initiatives.

NEW PROGRESS

Council awarded 37 points for new progress. Of these, 30 points recognize 60 new initiatives or enhancements to past initiatives, large and small, selected by Council as likely to result in positive change in their category. New progress sets a new bar for "status quo" for future reports.

In addition, 7 points are awarded for 7 aspects of the Province's COVID-19 response. By consensus of Council members, a section assessing gender and diversity considerations in COVID-19 response replaced a proposed section on bonus considerations.

CONSENSUS PROCESS

Council members decided on the assessment and content in this report by consensus, during lockdowns and restrictions in the difficult month of January 2022. All members and staff, without exception, reviewed dozens of government and community consultation reports, completed online forms and surveys. and took part in online discussions and a grade-setting workshop. All members confirmed consensus on the final grade. A government serious about gender equality and diversity would be investing in public services [such as childcare and social housing], and it would be mandating a living wage for all workers including and especially carers.

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Do the poorest women even have a chance to speak? They work one, two, three jobs ... Can they go to a focus group, can they go to meetings, can they even participate in activities that interest them? They are burnt out, they are tired, and they still have to pay their rent! This is very discouraging to me.

The PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women's stated goal is to use the Equality Report Card as a tool to work collaboratively with government to help the Province achieve high grades in *all categories*. Sustained and new progress from 2019 to 2021 has resulted in the highest overall grade yet on an Equality Report Card, led by substantial groundwork in "Making Equality a Priority." Unevenness from category to category remains. In some categories, such as Diversity and Inclusion or Poverty Elimination, people are starting further from equality and suffering as a result of racism, discrimination, or low income. The Advisory Council commits to work with government to sustain gains and achieve consistent new progress across all categories for future reports.

MAKING EQUALITY A PRIORITY



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We expect the provincial government to mandate the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women to work across all of government to advance substantive equality for women. We expect the provincial government to apply gender and diversity analysis to understand different effects of existing and proposed legislation, policies, programs, and budgets on Islanders of all genders and diverse groups; and to act on their analysis in ways that address and prevent systemic discrimination.

Women must be at the centre of any real change, and government must be part of the solution, not part of the problem, through a fierce and demonstrated commitment to intentional inclusion, accessibility, and respect.

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COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS

Progress towards Equality



Participants in the community perceptions survey scored PEI's progress towards full equality in the category Making Equality a Priority at a median of 50%, halfway to equality, by 2019 and held steady at 50% into 2021, with no change in the median score from 2019 to 2021.

SUSTAINED PROGRESS RELATED TO MAKING EQUALITY A PRIORITY



All departments of government complete a questionnaire for the Equality Report Card project

Sustained. All departments of government completed a questionnaire and submitted their information on time. Reports were completed to a high degree of thoroughness.



Support for the Interministerial Women's Secretariat to gather representatives of all departments of government to regularly consult on gender and diversity analysis and progress towards gender equality goals

Sustained and exceeded. See information about the Task Force for Gender Equity and Diversity on page 5.

At least half of government departments are able to provide a concrete example of applied gender and diversity analysis

Sustained and exceeded. For the first time since the Report Card process began, every reporting department was able to provide some kind of concrete example of applied gender and diversity analysis, including Education curriculum updates, climate change risk assessment, pre-budget consultations, allowances for people in family-violence shelters, fertility treatments, and epidemiological information in Health, among many other initiatives.



At least half of government departments report that employees participate in gender and diversity analysis training

Sustained. All departments reported at least some employees participating in some gender and diversity analysis training or diversity training.

At least half of government strategies, action plans, and reviews can demonstrate that they applied gender and diversity analysis

Sustained. Selected examples of strategies that applied gender and diversity analysis include the Health Strategy for Women and Islanders Who Are Gender Diverse; Gender Guidelines for schools; policy review for the School Athletics Association; Canada-PEI Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement; Health Services Plan for Seniors; review of program guidelines for Canadian Agriculture Partnership programs; development of the Active Transportation Network Plan; Inclusive Communities Program; Management and Access of Client Information (MACI) System in Justice; and Child Protection Act Review. Other strategies are highlighted elsewhere in this report.



Government public commitment to updating the statistical profile of women regularly

Sustained and exceeded. See information about the 2020 Statistical Profile on page 5.



A public mandate for the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women to advance equality for women in all government policies, programs, and services

Sustained and enhanced. The Minister Responsible's mandate letter of September 2020 was expanded, with detailed direction from the Premier on advancing equality.



Consistent funding for annual Interministerial Women's Secretariat community grants

Sustained and increased. These community grants have increased by \$200,000.



A requirement to account for gender and diversity analysis on all executive council memos (proposals for policies, programs, and services)

Sustained and enhanced. Executive Council Office has made efforts to increase staff capacity across all departments, added accountability measures, and updated guidelines to provide more comprehensive guidance on the types of information required in submissions (including diversity and inclusion impacts).



Full-scale gender and diversity plan in effect for at least one department of government (Department of Agriculture and Fisheries 2018)

Sustained. The Department of Agriculture and Land continues to be the one department with an actively applied full-scale plan. (Outcomes from the plan receive special notice on page 5.) Several other departments have policies in place and/or are developing plans.

NEW PROGRESS RELATED TO MAKING EQUALITY A PRIORITY



2020 Statistical Profile of Women in PEI (4th edition)

PEI's statistical profile is nation-leading and unique in its comprehensiveness for sex- and gender-disaggregated data.



New Task Force for Advancing Gender Equity and Diversity

The first committee of its kind in PEI, this interdepartmental working group's goal is to coordinate action and provide advice to Government towards ensuring gender equity and diversity considerations in policy and programs.

Hiring of PEI's first Gender and Diversity Analyst

The Interministerial Women's Secretariat hired PEI's very first gender and diversity analyst in April 2021.



Core funding for equality-seeking women's organizations

For the first time, the Province provided core funding of \$20,000/year, later increased to \$30,000/year, for four women's organizations that had no previous source of core funding.



Gender and diversity inclusion in pre-budget consultations

A ministerial directive to examine ways to make the prebudget process more inclusive led to reach-outs to underrepresented groups and resulted in more inclusive processes.



Steps towards gender budgeting

Departments are now required to submit gender and diversity considerations with capital budget requests. For the upcoming budget, the requirement extends to new initiatives proposed for the operating budget.



Training enhanced by gender and diversity analysis

Enhanced training includes new Public Service Commission offerings and examples of sector-specific good practice, such as training in inclusion for early-childhood educators.



Outcomes of departmental gender and diversity planning

The Department of Agriculture and Land's plan has had wideranging positive effects. See Background report for more.

Executive Council Office leadership on impact analysis See examples of ECO leadership outlined on page 4. The quality of our society is determined by how happy the women are. We are not just asking for ourselves, it is to make *everything* better.

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Something in the moment allowed people to pause and reflect. ... The Black Lives Matter march would not have been possible—many men and women and children were murdered in plain sight, and there wasn't a march. ... It is a revolutionary moment that hopefully will continue.

More needs to be done, especially to enhance gender equality and quality of life among women who are single, senior, disabled, and face mental health challenges.

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CATEGORY SUMMARY

Led by a strong mandate for equality and dedicated work by the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, government has made extraordinary progress in applying gender and diversity

analysis across government and has set a high bar for future work. Gender and diversity factors are still sometimes an afterthought (for example, establishing the Premier's Council for Recovery and Growth without members experienced in gender and diversity analysis). However, check-and-balance structures now catch what is missed (for example, establishing the Sector Champions group to advise the Premier's Council). Moving forward it will be important to sustain and build on gains and support each department to have its own formal plan to reach gender and diversity goals.

WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING



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We expect the provincial government to actively encourage women's advancement in areas where women have been and are underrepresented. We expect the provincial government to remove barriers to women's leadership in elected and appointed decisionmaking. We expect progress towards greater pay equity. We expect government to be a model employer of women in the public sector, recognizing their work is essential to delivering public services and their income is a foundation for families' incomes and the provincial economy.

Until women are in positions of power in Government, we will continue to have gender inequality. That means workers from the Minister to backroom staff.

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COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS

Progress towards Equality



Participants in the community perceptions survey scored PEI's progress towards full equality in the category Women in Decision-Making at a median of 47% by 2019 and perceived a 3-point increase to 50% into 2021

SUSTAINED PROGRESS RELATED TO WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING

Engage PEI as a mechanism to promote and manage applications for agencies, boards, and commissions

Sustained. Additionally, Engage PEI provided support and information to Departments undertaking reviews and research around how to increase diversity on their respective agencies, boards, and commissions.



Gender parity (defined as 45% to 55% women or men) in appointments to agencies, boards, and commissions

Sustained. From June 2019 to June 2021, government appointed 194 men and 217 women (47% men and 53% women).

Gender parity (defined as 45% to 55% women or men) in appointments of chairs and vice-chairs to agencies, boards, and commissions

Not sustained. From June 2019 to June 2021, government appointed 21 women and 27 men as chairs. The total of 43.75% women does not meet the defined bar of 45%.



Critical mass of women (defined as 33%) in senior leadership roles, including senior staff, deputy ministers, CEOs, and senior executives

Sustained. Using numbers from December 2021 and counting Deputy Ministers, Assistant Deputy Ministers, CEOs, and Executive Directors, the balance is close to 50%. The higher up in appointed senior management, the fewer women. Looking just at the Clerk of Executive Council and Deputy Ministers (excluding Assistant Deputy Ministers), women make up only 25% (4/12). Two departments do not meet the bar of 33% women.

In the public service, a strong balance between the percentage of women workers and the percentage of women managers (<10% gap) in at least 60% of government departments

Not sustained. Based on evidence submitted by 12 departments and divisions, only 7/12 (58%) met the bar. The average gap between percentage of women workers and the percentage of women managers in the public service is -14.1 points.



Municipal governments across the Island required to provide information about the level of representation of women

Sustained. Municipal Affairs reports that women serve in 78% of hired CAO roles in municipal government, 26% of elected mayoral roles, and 39% of elected councillor roles.



A government-led and supported community of women in leadership across government for women at the Director and Deputy level (networking meetings)

Not sustained due to COVID-19 shifting priorities and making networking difficult.

Workforce Diversity Policy administered through the Public Service Commission, underlining principles of increasing all diversity groups that are under-represented in the public-sector workforce)

Sustained. The Diversity and Inclusion Policy 2019 underlines the principles of inclusion for all diversity groups including women, and all genders in non-traditional roles in the public-sector workforce.

Support for Interministerial Women's Secretariat in work it undertakes to promote women in decision-making

Sustained. It is positive that the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women's Mandate Letter specifically notes women in leadership. See page 8 for more evidence of support.

A special legislative committee or similar mechanism tasked with guiding public engagement on democratic renewal such as electoral reform, increasing the representativeness of the Legislative Assembly, and election financing

Not sustained. There is no special committee engaging the public on democratic renewal and no similar mechanism. At the end of October 2021, a motion to create a citizens' assembly on voting systems was brought forward by the Opposition and passed 13 to 11 in the Legislative Assembly. There has not yet been action on this.

NEW PROGRESS RELATED TO WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING

Recognition for PEI's Famous Five women in government

In 1993, women held five of the most influential positions of government in PEI, the first, and only, time in Canadian history this happened. To acknowledge this 25th anniversary of this historic moment, the Interministerial Women's Secretariat created a website, peifamousfive.ca; launched a book, *In Their Own Words*, that was distributed to libraries and classrooms across PEI; and provided funding to endow the PEI Famous Five Graduating Student Award at UPEI for the PEI Coalition for Women in Government.

Family-friendly changes to Legislative Assembly sittings

The Legislative Standing Committee on Rules, Regulations, Private Bills and Privileges made numerous family-friendly changes to the legislative calendar, including eliminating evening sitting hours and other recommendations from a 2009 report by the PEI Coalition for Women in Government.

Modelling good practices for appointments to ABCs

The Department of Agriculture and Land developed a new policy for ABCs that included equity, diversity, and inclusion terms and requirements for new members to complete GBA+ training. The Interministerial Women's Secretariat continues to apply a rubric for diversity and inclusion for new appointments to the Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

Modelling good practices of diversity in leadership

The Department of Finance has women in numerous top-level senior roles. Finance is a field where women have been underrepresented in leadership in the past. Health PEI is exploring a partnership as well as leadership training with the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI).

Reviews of regulations relating to municipalities

Municipal Affairs is reviewing regulations for elections and for Codes of Conduct with gender and diversity in mind.



Funding for programs to assist women in business

Council notes funding for PEI Business Women's Association's projects through the Transitioning Toward Growth Project.

We have seven out of twenty-seven seats women [in the PEI Legislature]: 26% women and only two of them are Ministers, and that is just ridiculous. ... Women are not engaged in the political system, as it doesn't serve them.

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Let's stop talking and celebrating: let's integrate [equality in decision-making] into our daily life!

To increase women in decision-making, representation is important. It is important for women's confidence to have [role models as] inspiration, as aspiration to other things; to have models who show us that it is, in fact, possible.

CATEGORY SUMMARY

Prince Edward Island's Executive Council is made up of 8 white men and 2 white women. With very low representation of gender diversity and even lower representation of other diversities or intersecting diversities, work to ensure gender parity and diversity in decision-making should be high priority. Unfortunately, the work to sustain past gains in women's leadership and decision-making has been slipping. A leadership network fell victim to COVID-19; no special committee of the legislature exists to study barriers or to recommend systemic changes or supports that could diversify leadership and decision-making. Renewed attention is needed.





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We expect the provincial government to work towards ending violence against women and children, other genderbased violence, and all forms of family violence. We expect government to provide and support programs that aim to prevent violence, whether it is an abuse of power and control that is physical, emotional, financial, or sexual. We expect services that support and never revictimize victims or survivors and hold perpetrators accountable when violence occurs. We expect government services that are gender appropriate, culturally sensitive, and traumainformed.

[There is] growing understanding of intersectionality of how feminism makes sure we are paying attention to who is still not safe, who is still not cared for, who is more at risk as a result.

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COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS

Progress towards Equality



Participants in the community perceptions survey scored PEI's progress towards full equality in the category Violence Prevention at a median of 47% by 2019 and perceived a 3-point increase to 50% into 2021.



Annual commitment of core funding to Family Violence Prevention Services with yearly increases of at least 1% and that reflect cost of living

Sustained. In 2019-2020, funding increased by 1% (\$10,000), and this increase was sustained for 2020-2021. A 6% increase was committed for 2021-2022, which equates to an increase of \$43,500 in core funding and reflects increases in inflation.



Annual commitment of core funding to the PEI Rape and Sexual Assault Centre at increased 2018–2019 level

Sustained. In 2019-2020, funding increased by 90% (\$216,200), and this increase was sustained for 2020-2021. A 5% increase has been committed for 2021-2022, which equates to an increase of \$25,000 in core funding.

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Continuation of The Bridge: a hub model of intervention that brings together government departments and community agencies to allow information-sharing and to connect people at acutely elevated risk of serious harm to timely services

Sustained. The Bridge Program evaluation was completed in 2019, and progress on recommendations has continued to create more accessible options and to ensure ongoing, appropriate representation around the table. The Bridge continues to consult with a variety of organizations to provide supports to clients.



Continuing updates and training on woman abuse/spousal abuse protocols and policies in justice and social services

Sustained. Protocols and policies remain active. Some, such as those in Victim Services, are reviewed regularly. Departments include content from the protocols in domestic violence prevention trainings with police and other service providers.



Ongoing application of a spousal assault risk assessment/management tool and training for new staff to become certified

Sustained. Victim Services front-line staff are certified in Spousal Assault Risk Assessment (SARA) and Victim Services engages regularly in training for new staff. Child and Family Services' department has received \$500,000 over 5 years from the Federal Department of Justice to support SARA training for Child Protection Workers across the province.



Support for PEI families affected by the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

Sustained. The Family Information Liaison Unit continues to provide specialized services to families of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.



Continuation of Violence Against Women Grants to support specialized programs, at a minimum of 2018 funding levels

Sustained and enhanced. Annual funding for grants increased from \$50,000 to \$75,000.



Continued examples of training for intervention in family violence, relationship violence, and gender-based violence for front-line workers such as police, justice workers, child protection workers, and health-care workers

Sustained. Government provided examples of intervention training in Social Development and Housing, Justice and Public Safety, and Health and Wellness.



Multi-Agency Service Teams (MAST) in schools to bring together a variety of professionals to create a case plan for a child or youth

Sustained, with a change in service delivery. Student Well-being Teams now participate in meetings; preventative work, referral-based services, and case planning continue.



Continued support for work by the Premier's Action Committee on Family Violence Prevention (PAC) and its working groups

Sustained and enhanced. PAC's annual funding increased from under \$10,000 to \$25,000. PEI had its first ever Sexual Assault Awareness Week, led through a PAC working group. The role of the Family Violence Prevention Coordinator has been refocused to include more work and support for PAC and its working groups.



20-Unit transitional housing for survivors of family violence

This 20-unit complex opened in August 2020 to provide shortterm housing for survivors of family violence. Anderson House and PEI's Child and Family Services have partnered to provide the supports needed to help people live independently.



Establishment of Atlantic Domestic Homicide Review Network

Atlantic Premiers established this network to help prevent domestic homicides (which are usually, in fact, femicides)—the first regional review network of its kind in Canada.

The new Children's Law Act

In addition to addressing family violence, the new Act promotes out-of-court dispute resolution in family-law disputes respecting a child, updates statutory presumptions respecting parentage, and improves access to the family justice system.



See the *Background* document for more information on the substantive commitments government has underway.

Special Cabinet Committee on Family Violence Prevention

This work is also credited under COVID-19 Response, page 31. It is positive that this pandemic-inspired work has continued.



New positions in Victim Services

Victim Services has created 1.5 new positions. Much of the work is done with victims of gender-based violence.



Post-Secondary Institutions Sexual Violence Policies Act

This legislation and its regulations, the first of their kind in Atlantic Canada, came into force in September 2020 to require post-secondary institutions to develop, implement, review, and amend (as necessary), their sexual violence policy.



Coordinated Adult Sexual Violence Response Task Force

This inter-departmental government committee is meeting monthly to develop a provincial strategy to improve responses and coordination, to prevent harms associated with adult sexual violence in PEI. The pandemic exposed and worsened longstanding crises in our system. Housing, lack of childcare, food insecurity, poverty, violence—all became more visible during this time. The government did very little to analyze impacts on different populations. They did even less to address the different impacts.

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I don't know how people who are living in home situations of violence and walking on eggshells are doing, but I am pretty sure the shoe has yet to drop on that situation and its effects.

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CATEGORY SUMMARY

In Canada and around the world, sexand gender-based violence has been called the "shadow pandemic." Specialists and advocacy groups have reported increased incidences

and intensity of intimate partner violence under COVID-19, affected by the social and economic impact of the public health emergency. The PEI government's response to the shadow pandemic of violence has been strong, leveraging federal partnerships and sustaining—and building—supports to respond to gender violence. Government has also been responsive to advocacy, for example reversing decisions that limited referrals to the crucial Turning Point program for perpetrators of violence. More remains to be done to prevent violence, especially to address root causes such as inequality, discrimination, colonization, stigma, and marginalization.





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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, including domestic violence court options, supported by treatment or services. We expect more restorative justice programs and approaches. We expect transparent processes for deciding when restorative and alternative approaches are appropriate for victims, offenders, and the community.

There is no access to justice, no legal aid. If you're not well off, you get nothing. How can a woman afford legal costs in child custody situations?

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We've seen how awful things are for so many people, and we can't unsee that. Normal isn't good, and it isn't serving a big part of our community.

COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS

Progress towards Equality



Participants in the community perceptions survey scored PEI's progress towards full equality in the category Access to Justice at a median of 46.5% by 2019 and perceived an 8.5-point increase to 55% into 2021.

Continued collaboration between mediation services and the Court and expanded

alternative dispute resolution processes

Sustained. Programs available through Family Court and Legal Services include the new ways for families program, child-focused parenting plan mediation, and the provincial parenting coordinator.



A provincial child and youth commissioner's office to serve children and youth involved in provincial government systems

Exceeded. The Child and Youth Advocate office has been established under the Child and Youth Advocate Act. The Child and Youth Advocate is an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly. See more information on page 14.



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

Sustained. Pre-motion conference procedures are mandatory for all family court matters.



Continued Office of the Children's Lawyer, employing a front-line worker who ensures the voices of children are heard in court matters that will impact on them

Sustained and enhanced. Government has added two staff members to the Office of the Children's Lawyer, one lawyer and one parenting coordinator, to assist with high-conflict matters, to better support the needs of children in the province.

Continued Supervised Access and Exchange Program in partnership with Family Resource Centres 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

Sustained. With agreement from Family Resource Centres, the Program has moved to a government program and improved their name to "Supervised Parenting Time and Exchange Program." The program has added more supports to assist families to transition out of the service.



Continued Parenting Coordination Program for high-risk families in transition, publicly funded parenting for low-income clients

Sustained. Justice and Public Safety's Family Law and Court Services provides Parenting Coordination offered to families within the Office of the Children's Lawyer.



Not sustained. Government reports the pro bono clinic has been affected by COVID-19.

Consistent follow-through on legislation regarding training for judges in sexual violence law

Not sustained. PEI has legislation relating to the continuing education of provincial court judges and is monitoring development of legislation in other jurisdictions. The Province identifies follow-through as a responsibility of the judicial branch. Council members respect the independence of the judiciary and nonetheless see a role within the legislation for government to offer non-directive encouragement and information.



Support for high-quality, meaningful sexual consent and sexual violence resources in schools

Sustained. Work continues on development and uptake of resources such as the "Microphone" Project. A recent highlight is partnership with the PEI Human Rights Commission and UPEI to develop a three-module resource that supports education on sexual harassment through awareness, response, and empowerment.



Sustained support for existing restorative justice programs and discussion of/planning for expanded restorative justice programs and approaches

Sustained and exceeded. The Restorative Justice program receives referrals Island-wide for youth and adult cases across the criminal justice continuum. See page 14 for more.



Hiring of an independent Child and Youth Advocate

The Child and Youth Advocate office has been established under the Child and Youth Advocate Act. The Advocate is an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly.



Expansion of restorative justice options

The Restorative Justice program now receives referrals islandwide for youth and adult cases across the criminal justice continuum. See the *Background* document for more.

"Third Option" anonymous sexual assault forensic evidence

Survivors of sexual violence who present at an Island hospital emergency room can now agree to have evidence collected and stored anonymously to give them more time to consider making a complaint to police while they receive immediate medical help.



Participation in sexual assault investigations reviews

Victim Services participates on the RCMP Sexual Assault Investigations Committee, established to look into sexual assault cases and ensure that investigations were handled correctly. Reviews can result in recommendations to reopen or reclassify a case or in broader recommendations.

Funding for Community Legal Information (CLI) to hire a Tenant Support Worker

In 2019, government provided financial support to CLI for a Tenant Support Worker to provide tenants legal information, referrals, and support during the rental hearing process.



Details of the Joint Declaration endorsed by federal, provincial, and territorial Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women are available in the *Background* document.



Increased funding for the Human Rights Commission

Government increased the Human Rights Commission grant for the last two years by \$50,000 annually and provided a \$60,000 grant in 2021 to increase information on economic, social and cultural rights, and anti-racism rights.

People were very negative about a person in the marginalized community they suspect as being affected in an outbreak [of COVID], in which case there was a lot of negative conversations. speculation, and pushback. [When a young Black man was in jail for breaking selfisolation.] there was a lack of transparency, and there was secrecy, why he was in jail, when there were different rules for others.

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It is more and more clear to me every day how people are shut out due to systemic barriers. [Diversity and inclusion] is what makes a compassionate world that is interesting and exciting.

CATEGORY SUMMARY

Justice systems in PEI and elsewhere remain difficult and expensive to navigate for family law, and traditional gender roles and

structural inequalities mean this affects women more deeply than men. PEI has experienced its "#MeToo" moments recently, and both statistics and survivors' stories tell us that the justice system is broken in its ability to respond to sexualized violence, which is almost always gender-based. However, in a short time, PEI's justice system has made some positive changes—and has taken big steps on implementing restorative justice and supporting the rights of children and youth. In the future, Council will look for more inclusive youth and adult policies to ensure less discrimination in justice response, and more equality in access to justice.





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I find everything related to childbirth and the gynecological side is very complicated on the Island. ... because to see a gynecologist you have to go through the general practitioner first, but to have access to a general practitioner, you have to go to the emergency room or to a clinic.

COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS

Progress towards Equality



We expect the provincial government to sustain a strong system for acute care, balanced by continuing work in wellness and health promotion. We expect health decision-making to be based on the best upto-date gender-sensitive research and evidence. We expect government to recognize wholebody, holistic physical and mental health, and to respond to social determinants of health, such as income, gender, language, and culture. We expect system-wide support and timely help for mental health and addictions. We expect health equity and support for public health approaches to public health issues. We expect access to health services with dignity and without judgment or stigma.

Participants in the community perceptions survey scored PEI's progress towards full equality in the category Women's Health at a median of 46% by 2019 and perceived a 4-point increase to 50% into 2021.

SUSTAINED PROGRESS RELATED TO WOMEN'S HEALTH



Continuation of abortion care through the Women's Wellness Program, including in-province access to both surgical and medical abortion (the abortion pill), clear and accessible information about services and choices, and follow-up care

Sustained. Surgical and medication abortion care continues to be available at Prince County Hospital, and medication abortion care is available at The Mount. Initial intake assessments are available by phone with a registered nurse and a nurse is on call 24/7 for clinical care afterward. Mental health counselling with a nurse is available anytime either before (pregnancy options counselling) or following abortion care, if requested.



Continuation of all services provided by the Women's Wellness Program and Sexual Health Services' programs for women and all genders

Sustained. Sexual health and reproductive health services continue to be available at both Prince County Hospital and The Mount. See Background document for a complete list.

Continued access to sexual and reproductive health services both at the Women's Wellness Centre at PCH and at a variety of community-based sites across the province

Community sites not sustained due to COVID-19; some have resumed or are slated to resume. Council members emphasize the importance of access to care in rural PEI.



Continued support including approval and funding for gender-affirming surgeries

Sustained. The Gender Confirming Surgery Policy approved in March 2019 is currently under review for updates. In the meantime, staff have received trainings, a memorandum of understanding is in place for gender-affirming surgeries, and Health PEI has established Gender-Affirming Clinics (described on page 17).



Continued support for mental and physical health for youth and families through Student Well-being Teams in schools

Sustained. Student Well-being Teams expanded into new families of schools in 2019-2020, including Kensington/Kinkora, Charlottetown Rural, and Three Oaks.



Continued training of EESAS nurses (Enhanced Emergency Sexual Assault Service) in all hospital emergency rooms and 24/7 access to trained nurses in at least one ER

Sustained and enhanced. All emergency departments in PEI now offer EESAS in their emergency departments, and training continues in each of the hospitals.



Health promotion and health monitoring through the Public Health Office that focus on social determinants of health and apply gender and diversity analysis

Sustained. The CPHO continues to focus on social determinants of health and apply gender and diversity analysis in its health monitoring, reports, and health promotion. See page 31 for more on the CPHO response to COVID-19.



Partnerships that promote improved health for women involved in the criminal justice system

Sustained. A new women's correctional unit is currently under construction as part of the Provincial Correctional Centre, including two medical cells to meet health needs.



Use of gender-specific protocols in Health PEI substance use treatment programs, such as the Strength and in the Transition Unit

Sustained. Highlights include work to make services more responsive to gender diversity, gender-specific day programming, and Addiction Services adding women-specific treatment groups and group programming options for some situations, and a standing doctor's appointment for a women's clinic appointment to support detox.



Action on health-related goals in the poverty reduction action plan, with an acknowledgement of income as the most important social determinant of health

Sustained. Government provided a solid account of progress departments have made on health-related initiatives in the poverty reduction plan. Council members were impressed by detailed metrics in reporting from Health PEI and Social Development and Housing.

NEW PROGRESS RELATED TO WOMEN'S HEALTH

Expanded support for the Women's Wellness Program

In 2019-2020, an additional 0.2 FTE family physician was added to this essential program to provide care for Islanders seeking reproductive and sexual health care. Council members are also pleased to say they hear positive accounts from community members of pre- and post-natal care through the program.



Funding increases for fertility support

Through the Fertility Support Program, funding is now available to access in-vitro fertilization (IVF), intrauterine insemination (IUI), and associated prescribed medications at out-of-province clinics.



Launch of a Gender-Affirming Care Clinic

Health PEI has launched a Gender Affirming Care Clinic and is taking focused measures to build a community of practice, particularly establishing a partnership to leverage regional expertise and participation in client consultations.

Support for the UPEI Doctor of Psychology program and mental health supports at post-secondary institutions

Mental health funding to three post-secondary institutions since 2018-2019 has included funds for outreach programming to specific student populations. Financial support to the PsyD program has allowed for PsyD students in 2020-2021 to provide (supervised) 2,692 hours of direct psychological services, with increases to 4,500 hours anticipated this year.



Scope of pharmacists has expanded so pharmacists can assess and treat uncomplicated urinary tract infections, which women experience at higher rates than men.

Progress on a provincial Health Strategy for Women and Islanders Who Are Gender Diverse

This health strategy is being developed with a steering committee having been struck in November 2020 to guide the work, including an engagement process. Further, a fund was created as part of the strategy to support research in areas related to the strategy. We are now facing a tremendous collective mental health crisis, and we don't have the trained people to take up the slack and deal with that.

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Speaking as a senior I think that ... seniors were affected in a different way [by pandemic lockdowns] ... the longer the time in isolation, the more fear. The more time in isolation, things creep up.

I think that addiction is even more prevalent than it always was. ... It is not enough to have one addiction centre that is not even halfway effective. If you have to wait two weeks, you might be dead, and some are.

CATEGORY SUMMARY

During this period of global pandemic, drastic public health measures were needed to maintain Islanders' individual health and the viability of strained public health systems. And yet,

health services for women and gender-diverse people were sustained. There is more to do. We need to continue to develop in-province capacity through recruiting and retaining adequate numbers of OB-GYNs, being aggressive on staffing vacancies. Rural, community-based services that were reduced due to COVID-19 need to return. Prospective parents are still waiting for midwives. We need to reduce the pressure on current staff. Gender-responsive mental health and addictions services still have room to grow. We look forward to implementation of a gender-focused health strategy.





We expect the provincial government to acknowledge, value, and invest in 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.

Caregivers, front-line workers, and workers in healthcare roles are predominantly women, and a large portion are newcomers and members of the **BIPOC** community. As the pandemic unfolded, it showed that these groups were hit harder than others ... very little was done in PEI to address these inequalities in caregiving and wages.

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COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS

Progress towards Equality



Participants in the community perceptions survey scored PEI's progress towards full equality in the category Supports for Caregivers at a median of 44% by 2019 and perceived a 1-point increase to 45% into 2021.

SUSTAINED PROGRESS RELATED TO SUPPORTS FOR CAREGIVERS

Continued support for programs that allow seniors to stay in their own homes, such as Seniors Safe @ Home, Seniors Home Repair Program, and Seniors Independence Initiative

Sustained. Government continues to support all three noted initiatives. Enhancements to these programs included increases in income thresholds. Safe @ Home and home repair programs saw increased accessibility in application procedures and increased grants. Seniors Independence was enhanced with the addition of support for a medical lifeline.



Continued support for almost 50 early years centres across the Island

Sustained with progress. There are now 61 designated Early Years Centres across PEI.



Support and funding for at least 300 infant spaces in public and private settings

Sustained with progress. Government reported approximately 450 infant spaces as of December 2021.



Support and funding for at least 4,860 total child care spaces including school-age programs, or at least 3,065 excluding school-age programs

Sustained with progress. Government reported approximately 6,864 total child care spaces including school-age programs and 4,386 spaces excluding school-age programs as of December 2021.

Maintenance of investment in child-care action plan focused on under-served populations and vulnerable children

Sustained. Using numbers from the 2020-2021 fiscal year, government reported an average of 247 children annually supported through the Enhanced Early Learning and Child Care Access stream under the Child Care Subsidy program; approximately 170 children supported through the Special Needs Funding program; and approximately 100 children supported in the Early Years Autism program.



Support for child-care subsidies at the increased 2019 rates for before- and after-school child care and private sitters

Sustained. The Child Care Subsidy Program continues to help families with the cost of before- and after-school child care and private sitters. As of March 31, 2021, 79% of families accessing the subsidy were fully subsidized, and 21% had a parent share. On March 31, 2021, 1,412 children/958 parents had open files with the program. Eligibility has been expanded to include families that are financially and socially vulnerable.



Continued support for and promotion of the "Triple P" Positive Parenting Program

Sustained. In 2019, Social Deputies agreed the Triple P Coordinator role is a priority, and departments are working to secure a permanent Triple P Coordinator position. To support parents during COVID-19, 250 additional access codes to Triple P Online were purchased in 2020. During the reporting period, 370 families accessed Triple P Online services.

Continued support for the Handle with Care program for parents and caregivers of children zero to six years old

Sustained. Handle with Care continues to be offered as a simple interactive parenting program that promotes mental health of young children and their parents or caregivers.



Continued support for parenting such as Period of Purple Crying, Parenting from Two Homes, Best Start voluntary in-home visiting for caregivers and young children; and Strongest Families Program for mental health

Sustained. Programming has continued despite the pandemic. Council highlights steps towards offering Positive Parenting from Two Homes for diverse families.



Support for the Grandparent and Alternative Care Provider program to provide financial support to some grandparents and alternative care providers

Sustained. Government continues to support this program. As of March 31, 2021, 166 care providers were receiving financial support to care for 211 children while child protection risks in the child's parent's home were being mitigated.

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Agreements that will move us toward an average of \$10-a-day childcare, in partnership with the federal government

Council members are excited that PEI has moved swiftly to enter into the Canada-Prince Edward Island Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement to include Island children and caregivers in national child-care improvements.



Increases in wages for Early Childhood Educators

Council recognize increases in wages for early childhood educators and cooks working in Early Years Centres as well as for special needs assistants and autism assistants.

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Increase in the number of designated Early Years Centres

The number of designated Early Years Centres in PEI increased from 50 on the last Report Card to 61 today.



Reduction to daily parent fees in Early Years Centres

Swift action on agreements mentioned above mean daily parent fees in Early Years Centres changed from \$34/\$28/\$27 per day to a flat rate of \$25 per day effective January 1, 2022.

Consultation and implementation for the universal prekindergarten program

Public consultation on the universal pre-kindergarten program included virtual meetings, virtual town-hall meetings with early childhood educators and parents, an online survey, written submissions, and site visits to speak with children currently enrolled in the pre-kindergarten program. The program was implemented in September 2021 as an optional play-based program for all Island four-year-old children.

Development of a health action plan for seniors, near seniors, and caregivers

Promoting Wellness, Preserving Health Action Plan for Seniors, Near Seniors and Caregivers contains 38 recommended actions to promote wellness and preserve health in priority areas including implementing age-in-place initiatives, incorporating age-friendly approaches in various settings, addressing ageism, and supporting upstream endeavours to address social determinants of health. No matter your choices, your profession, women may well have to be caregivers to their family. Seniors in our community and young people are definitely going through things. To expect people in the sandwich generation to just keep going is unacceptable. The caregivers are getting sick. Then it all falls apart.

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Women are overworked. Tired. Tired of doing it all.

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CATEGORY SUMMARY

Supports for caregivers in PEI are trending in the right direction, towards more homecare supports, more Early Years Centres, more spaces for infants and children, more subsidies and lower costs for parents and guardians, and higher wages for early childhood educators. At the same time as these supports have grown, needs have grown. The COVID-19 pandemic reveals just how essential caregiving and caregivers are to PEI's social, emotional, and economic wellbeing. Caregivers to young and old and vulnerable people are mostly women and have shouldered an enormous burden through the pandemic. As caregivers reach the point of burnout, their wellbeing will continue to require maximum attention and support from government. Council members also look toward enhanced inclusion in caregiving for young and old, including more French-language supports and supports for Indigenous elders and ceremony.





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

There are employers here who hire [from outside Canada], who fill positions by bringing in employees who will not be able to make a living on the Island, who will fall directly into poverty. They will not be able to pay rent, and they will have to seek help from community agencies just to make ends meet. And for me, that is totally unacceptable. It is living in a state of emergency.

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COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS

Progress towards Equality



Participants in the community perceptions survey scored PEI's progress towards full equality in the category Workforce Development at a median of 50% by 2019 and perceived no increase into 2021.



Support for Trade HERizons, a Women's Network PEI–led program for women pursuing careers in trades and technology

Sustained. SkillsPEI continues to fund Women's Network PEI to deliver Trade HERizons, a 12-week career exploration and college prep program that introduces women to non-traditional trades and industrial technology occupations.



Support for PropELLE, a Women's Network PEI–led program building essential skills and employment readiness for various traditionally male-dominant workplaces

Sustained. SkillsPEI continues to fund Women's Network to deliver PropELLE, a life skills and work readiness program for women experiencing multiple barriers to employment.



Sustained. Training PEI program continues to provide support for caregivers with wholly or partially dependent children under 12 or dependents who live with intellectual or physical disability.



A minimum wage that would allow a worker to reach the Market Basket Measure poverty threshold working 40 hours a week for 52 weeks

Sustained. Minimum wage reached \$13/hour in 2021, currently the highest in Atlantic Canada. Recommendations regarding changes must now take into consideration cost of living increases, provincial economic conditions, measures of poverty, and employees' ability to maintain a suitable standard of living. A 2020 report by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives calculated \$19.30/hour as a *living wage* for a Charlottetown resident.



A commitment to fully review and update the Employment Standards Act, as recommended in the Poverty Reduction Action Plan

Sustained. A comprehensive review of the Employment Standards Act is now underway, led by a three-person panel tasked with completing the consultations. The panel members have been asked to complete a gender and diversity analysis training.



Commitment to develop initiatives that contribute to a more sustainable transportation system in the Climate Change Action Plan

Sustained and enhanced. In 2019, the Province released the Sustainable Transportation Action Plan (2020–2025). The Action Plan contains 27 action items. Government has also already acted to expand rural transit options into Kings County communities.



Tuition-paid SkillsPEI programs and services to assist Islanders in completing their high school education (GED) and upgrade for further study

Sustained. The total number of GEDs issued in 2020-2021 was 79, and approximately 70% of recipients were women. A federally funded, provincially managed Workplace Essential Skills program includes in its target group individuals who are pre-GED and/or who have a skill level too low for consideration for GED.



Support for the Provincial Student Loan Payment Relief Program

Sustained and increased. Support for the program increased from \$2,000 to \$3,500 per year in 2018-2019, and students now have 3 years to apply but must provide proof of PEI residency within 6 months of their application.



Support for measures to build migrant workers' paths to permanent residency and citizenship

Not sustained. While government provided an account of some supports for migrant workers, including limited pandemic supports, they described supporting workers' paths to permanent residency as an objective rather than describing specific measures.



Coming into force of leave provisions for domestic violence/intimate partner violence/ sexual violence

Sustained. In 2019, the Domestic Violence, Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Violence leave was introduced into the Employment Standards Act and came into force.



New emergency leave provisions in the Employment Standards Act

New Emergency Leave, under the Employment Standards Act, is for employees who cannot work because of a governmentdeclared emergency or they are unable to work because of an order of the Chief Public Health Officer. Employees that are required to provide care to an adult may also qualify.



New bereavement leave after pregnancy loss or stillbirth

The Council notes that gender and diversity analysis informed amendments to the Employment Standards Act to include bereavement leave after pregnancy loss for pregnant people and their partners.

Supports for integrating newcomers and under-represented groups in the workforce

Council notes funding expansion to support integration of newcomers, including Economic Empowerment for Newcomer Women, Workplace Diversity and Inclusivity project (with Charlottetown Chamber of Commerce), Newcomers in Trades, and the RN Bridging Program: for internationally educated nurses. Council also highlights continued commitment to post-secondary supports for students with disabilities through the PEI SFA disability supports program.

Expansion of rural transit, towards Island-wide transit

The provincial government partnered with T3 Transit to operate two low-fare weekday rural public transit routes in Eastern PEI and reduced fares on an existing Charlottetown-Summerside route. These are substantial steps for transit.

Supports for building the not-for-profit sector

Kudos to the Province for providing funding for the report *The Non-Profit Sector in Prince Edward Island*, which quantified that "70% of employees and 65% of leaders are women" and "the share of employment of underrepresented groups is also above the PEI average." Also notable for capacity-building are the Youth on Board Pilot Project for youth participants to gain experience in non-profit governance and the Inclusive Communities Program, providing supports for inclusion. One of the big gaps ... is the infamous issue of recognition of credentials. We have newcomers who arrive here, who will take lower salaries, lower positions, and who will not have jobs that allow them to live a full life [because their credentials are not recognized].

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Business people have to make equitable choices. Minimum wage is NOT a living wage—pay more.

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Even though there has been a slight increase in [social] assistance, the program still means that when I go back [to work], [the clawback] is going to be dollar for dollar on my income. ... What do you do? Go to work for your mental health? Stay home because you can't afford to go to work?

CATEGORY SUMMARY

COVID-19 exposed gender inequality in PEI's workforce. In 2020, the number of women employed in PEI decreased by 5.7% compared to 2019, while there was no change in the employment rate for men. PEI's statistics stood out from the rest of Canada. Another indicator to watch is the gender wage gap: by 2015, PEI women were earning 93% of men's incomes; in 2020, it had decreased to 84%. Workforce development and poverty elimination are deeply tied, more so because government is changing the emphasis of social programs to focus more on employability. Government has described numerous examples of innovative workforce development programs. Commitment and attention are there. Now, a coordinated plan is needed, with gender and diversity factors fully integrated.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION



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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 policies, programs, and services. We expect government to make active efforts to remove barriers to social inclusion and to substantially address exclusion and discrimination based on gender, race and ethnicity, ability, age, language, and other diversity factors.

I find there is a lot of talk, a lot of consultation, and that's good, as a starting point. But there comes a point where just talking, just consulting to say that voices were included, to say that diversity was considered, loses its credibility. It loses the sense there's an intention to really take action. I am eager to see implementation!

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Photo by Stephen Harris. Used by permission.

COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS



Participants in the community perceptions survey scored PEI's progress towards full equality in the category Diversity and Inclusion at a median of 40% by 2019 and perceived a 5-point increase to 45% into 2021.

SUSTAINED PROGRESS RELATED TO DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

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Government able to provide a solid account of social inclusion being taken seriously in consultations, strategies, and action plans

Sustained. All reporting departments provided an account of social inclusion being taken seriously in consultations, strategies, and action plans, with varying degrees of solidity.



Continued affirmation of diversity as a guiding principle of the Poverty Reduction Action Plan

Sustained. The Poverty Reduction Action Plan states "Diversity of Voices" to be one of its five guiding principles and aims to achieve a diversity of voices by engaging a variety of sectors, communities, and individuals, including those with lived experience, in the design and implementation of the action plan.

Public Service Commission Diversity Employment program providing opportunities for persons with disabilities to enter the public-sector workforce

Sustained. The Public Service Commission's Diversity Employment Program continues to offer a variety of programs and support services for diversity members (including persons with disability) seeking employment within the public service.



Leadership by the Department of Education on diversity and inclusion in school curriculum and programming

Sustained. The Department of Education's leadership continues, with highlights including renewed Intermediate sexual health curriculum, renewed Intermediate social studies curriculum to include Indigenous content, and English Language Arts "Authorized Book Lists" to include more diverse content and authors.

Strong tripartite agreements with the federal government and the Mi'kmaw First Nation government on justice and health

Sustained. Tripartite agreements among PEI, Canada, and the PEI Mi'kmaq in areas of health, justice, and rights-related topics remain active and evolving.



Consistent 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

Sustained. The Public Library Service deserves extra credit for creativity and inclusion in its programming throughout the pandemic. Council members love our libraries!



Leadership by the Public Service Commission (PSC) within government on diversity and inclusion, especially through training programs

Sustained. The Public Service Commission offers wide-ranging diversity and inclusion and cultural competency training. Notably high numbers took advantage of the PSC's newly developed "Unconscious Bias in the Workplace" webinar course, credited on page 26.



Support for public festivals and events that celebrate diversity and inclusion

Sustained. The Province continues to support festivals and events such as DiverseCity and continues to promote and recognize local, regional, and international multicultural festivals/events/celebrations. Along with festivals, awards such as the Premier's Leadership Award for Diversity and Inclusion are an emerging trend for recognizing diversity.



Support the social inclusion allowance for children whose caregivers are on Social Assistance to participate with peers in community activities

Not sustained. While there were increases to the social assistance School Age Allowance to assist with school-related costs, government reports "there is no plan to create a social inclusion allowance for children ... to participate with peers in community activities."



Commitment to a 211 service—a confidential service to connect people with government and community-based social programs and supports

Sustained and implemented. In May 2020, government partnered with the United Way to implement a free, confidential 211 service with quick and easy access to information and referrals to community and social services. See more on 211 on page 29.



New Anti-Racism Policy Advisor within government

The Province hired its first Anti-Racism Policy Advisor to offer an anti-racism lens to policies and to work collaboratively across government to develop an Anti-Racism Framework.



Anti-Racism Advisory Table/BIPOC community investment

With the Policy Advisor's hiring came the commitment to establish an Anti-Racism advisory table. Additionally, government provided funding for operational support for the Black Cultural Society and BIPOC USHR for the first time.

Steps to improve inclusion for gender minorities

Council noted changes to legislation to recognize gender diversity, including in the Vital Statistics Act, the Interpretation Act, and the Change of Name Act. Council recognizes work in Education and Lifelong Learning to develop and consult on draft Gender and Diversity Guidelines for Schools.



Executive Council's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion project

In November 2020, ECO engaged external consultants and subject matter experts to work through a Citizen Engagement Committee to increase opportunities for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion within the government of PEI.



Black Women's History Project for curriculum resources

The Minister Responsible for the Status of Women has been very supportive of this project initiated by the PEIACSW. Work by the Women's Secretariat is making the project possible.



Inclusion initiatives through Museums and Heritage

The Museums and Heritage Foundation has incorporated diversity and inclusion initiatives across the board from outreach to publishing, from collections to heritage sites.



Inclusion initiatives through the Public Library Service

Libraries have worked to diversify collections and undertaken initiatives to reduce barriers and increase accessibility.



New trainings through the Public Service Commission

See more on PSC trainings (and other inclusion initiatives mentioned on this page) in the *Background* report.

The only issues I have is the division that is between my [Indigenous] community right now about on and off reserve. I would like to see equality, where there is no division of onand off-reserve people. and we all have the same rights and access to the same programming and benefits ... We shouldn't have to reside on reserve in order to benefit from our inherent rights.

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There definitely needs to be education on the value of the community that is coming into PEI.

There is a lack of commitment to actual inclusion. Government needs to show students that they are valuable by action not just by saying you are valuable because you pay more fees.

CATEGORY SUMMARY

In the words of Arthur Chan, "Diversity is a fact. Equity is a choice. Inclusion is an action. Belonging is an outcome." PEI's privileged white-settler majority is beginning to recognize the fact

of diversity, but sometimes after painful, harmful cost to people labelled "diverse" due to race, gender, ability, age, or language. However, government is increasingly engaging in equity as a choice in public policy and programs. Actions for inclusion are gaining more substance. More has been done recently than ever before in the past. Focus groups and community consultations show that PEI has substantially more work to do to reach the outcome of belonging and remind us that PEI is starting from a point far from full equality in diversity and inclusion.

POVERTY ELIMINATION



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We expect the provincial government to set a high priority on improving the health, dignity, and wellbeing of poor and 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. **Basic needs must include** access to enough healthy food and to affordable, accessible, appropriate, and safe housing. We expect responsive, flexible, non-stigmatizing social programs and meaningful action to implement an effective cross-governmental provincial strategy to eliminate poverty.

It was very promising there was a model [for basic income guarantee] presented in the Legislature, the whole house voted on it, and it was very exciting. ... As time goes on, we're going to lose that momentum and PEI's chance to lead the country for once, and help people who live here.

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COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS

Progress towards Equality



Participants in the community perceptions survey scored PEI's progress towards full equality in the category Poverty Elimination at a median of 33.5% by 2019 and perceived an increase of .5 of a point to 34% into 2021.



Continued affirmation of the Poverty Reduction Action Plan and its principles as a starting point for reducing and then eliminating poverty

Sustained. Government highlights actions including support for a new women's shelter (Blooming House); introduction of a 211 service; implementation of a School Food Program and Summer Food Security Program; strengthened trauma-informed care; implementation of the Secure Income Pilot Program, and development of the Community Housing Fund and Affordable Housing Development Program.



Continued support for a Poverty Reduction Advisory Council to monitor the Poverty Reduction Action Plan

Sustained. Poverty reduction and elimination work by government continues to be advised and monitored by a Poverty Reduction Council as well as an Implementation Cross-Departmental Secretariat with representation from most departments.



Continued support for increased food security through programs such as the Community Food Security and Food Education program

Sustained and enhanced. The Department of Agriculture and Land invested \$120,000 in community food security projects and funded 17 community food security projects, and Social Development and Housing implemented a School Food Program and Summer Food Security Program. See more on page 29 and page 32.

Continued support for Skills Enhancement and Mentoring Program (SEAM) and Start to Apply Right (STAR) for youth at high risk of not completing high school

Sustained. Council members note the value of continuing to offer these important programs across PEI. They are each offered in 6 locations, which is very positive.



Continued support for school breakfast and snack programs and lunch programs maintained at least matching 2018 levels

Sustained. Through annual funding (\$200,000) government continues to support schoolbased programs, which are operated by hundreds of volunteers across the province. Averaged across two years, 68 schools a year implemented 86 programs which provided about 10,150 students 43,100 breakfasts/snacks each week.



At least 1,400 Islanders supported through the AccessAbility program

Sustained. In 2020-2021, 1,888 clients were supported through the AccessAbility Program, with 1,034 receiving Assured Income to meet essential needs. As of March 31, 2021, approx. 100 clients received an additional benefit of \$198/month through a Secure Income Pilot.



Continued support for the Generic Drug Program and Catastrophic Drug Program

Sustained. The Provincial Pharmacy continues to support both these programs. In addition, Pharmacare also administers the High Cost Drug Program and Family Health Benefit Drug Program which also support the goal of poverty reduction.

Affirmation of the Provincial Housing Action Plan and support for the Housing Council to implement its actions

Sustained. The Housing Action Plan for 2018-2023 continued to serve as a blueprint to support efforts to ensure Islanders have access to safe, accessible, appropriate and affordable housing. The terms of all Housing Council members ended in October 2021.



At least 275 Island-wide rent supplements to support low-income housing needs

Sustained and increased. As of March 2021, 1,150 new mobile rental vouchers had been initiated for renters facing affordability challenges.



Support for targeted projects (examples named below)

Sustained. Targeted projects Council named as desirable continued, including partnerships to provide Employment Supports Services (ESS) to social assistance clients; such as the Harvest and Prosper Program; SkillsPEI funding for women-focused programs run by Women's Network PEI (PropELLE and Trade HERizons) and EPWIC (Women Moving On).

NEW PROGRESS RELATED TO POVERTY ELIMINATION

New food security programs for PEI students and families

PEI now has a Healthy School Food Program on a pay-whatyou-can model, launched in September 2020 within all school sites. To the end of March 2021, the program provided a total of 298,000 meals. Additionally, during school closures due to COVID-19, healthy lunches were delivered to PEI students from self-identified families in need. Deliveries continued through the summer of 2020. Over 110,000 meals were delivered and 1,420 gift cards were provided across PEI in 2020. The Summer Food Security Program continued during summer 2021.

Increased funding for charity-based responses to poverty

While charitable responses do not eliminate poverty, they remain essential as immediate help to people suffering today. Notable government partnerships and investments included the United Way Common-Outcomes fund, Social Community Sector Partners Fund, and the Community Housing Fund.



Increased rates/expanded eligibility for existing programs

An example of increased rates for existing programs was the Secure Income Pilot for Islanders with severe limitations to entering the workforce to meet essential needs. Expanded eligibility applied to programs including energy efficiency programs that help address energy poverty, among others.

Referral and outreach support for vulnerable people

Highlights of referral and outreach to support poverty elimination were implementation of the 211 service and support for a Charlottetown Community Outreach Centre.

Health supports to enhance physical health, bodily integrity, and dignity

Numerous programs to address health included the Minister Responsible for Status of Women's initiative to provide free menstrual products in accessible settings; the announced Provincial Dental Care Program was set to launch in July 2021; and increased or new health-cost coverage for ostomy supplies, additional prescription drugs, home-care supplies, and supplies for people with diabetes. My issue with affordable housing here in PEI, is that rents in these 'affordable' housing units being built are not affordable. Rents are in the \$1,250 range and more ... rent should be based on a person's income.

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The priority during COVID-19 has clearly been economic recovery, with marginalized groups and communities not being provided with adequate supports to weather the pandemic.

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There is always a benefit to someone in keeping people poor.

CATEGORY SUMMARY

Far too many Islanders are suffering as a result of poverty and its terrible effects on people's health and dignity. While initiatives

have grown from government's poverty reduction action plan,

and new legislation creates structures for future targets and timelines, real life has swamped anti-poverty measures. A global pandemic. A deepening housing crisis. High rates of food insecurity. Escalating inflation affecting the cost of basic needs. Fledgling public transit. Racism and other discrimination costing the time, energy, and money of excluded groups. Emergent effects of the climate crisis. Not-for-profits straining to survive and fill gaps in public services and systems. New initiatives and strong efforts have not kept pace with this torrent of challenges. Focus groups and community consultations provide stark visions of what people are living day to day and witnessing in their communities.





COVID-19 CONTEXT

In its 2020 report Gender and COVID-19 in Prince Edward Island, Advisory Council members stated, "All aspects of recovery planning require application of a gender and diversity lens to ensure greater equality of outcomes for all genders, all groups that face systemic and structural barriers to equality, and women and gender minorities who also belong to groups that experience discrimination." Other "Insights for Policy" included that "There will be no recovery without high-quality accessible and affordable childcare, eldercare, and other supports for caregivers."

We have been fortunate, mostly by accident and not design. I do appreciate that this government has respected CPHO [Chief Public Health Office] advice and prioritized the health of all over business needs. I expect to see more leadership in addressing the glaring inequities the pandemic has exposed.

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We can't have an economic recovery without a social recovery.

COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS

Responsiveness to Gender and Diversity Considerations



Participants in the community perceptions survey scored PEI's responsiveness to gender and diversity considerations in its response to COVID-19 at a median score of 55% of the way toward "fully responsive to gender and diversity."

The report Gender and COVID-19 in Prince Edward Island is available here: https://peistatusofwomen.ca/wpcontent/uploads/2020/10/WEB-PEIACSW-Gender-and-COVID-19-Project-Oct-2020.pdf.

SELECTED HIGHLIGHTS OF COVID-19 RESPONSE

During their January 2022 assessment discussions, the members of the PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women decided by consensus to focus what otherwise would have been "bonus considerations" on the Province's COVID-19 response. They decided to award seven points for government initiatives from 2019 to 2021, under the following seven themes:

Leadership by the Chief Public Health Office, Chief Public Health Officer Dr. Heather Morrison, and Chief of Nursing Marion Dowling

Throughout the global pandemic of COVID-19, public health leaders in Prince Edward Island provided excellent care and communication thanks, especially, to Dr. Morrison and nurse Dowling. Throughout, the Chief Public Health Office kept gender and diversity in mind, in data collection and public health information, from epidemiology to vaccination planning and roll-out.

Planning for post-pandemic recovery

The Premier's Council for Recovery and Growth brought together leaders from across PEI; government also established a group of Sector Champions, including the PEIACSW, to provide input to inform the Premier's Council. Additionally, government sought feedback from the public to ensure even more voices were heard. Council's input was reflected well in the Premier's Council final report. The PEIACSW could be said to have advocated for 8/35 (23%) of the report's Guiding Principles and recommended 12/44 (27%)—in whole or in part—of the report's Key Actions.

Creating workforce supports

Government put in place workforce supports including a Special Leave Fund (temporary support for workers and self-employed people to support COVID-related leave); job-protecting Emergency Leave under the Employment Standards Act (see page 23); and the Workforce Integration Fund to support innovative projects from organizations. The Fund was designed to support people and groups most highly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including women, youth, members of the Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) community, newcomers, and social assistance recipients.

Supporting violence prevention and victim-supporting organizations

The provincial government worked diligently with federal colleagues to assist in COVID-response funding for financial assistance programs and funding women's shelters, rapecrisis centres, and women's organizations. A number of Island organizations received this federal funding to help support them during the pandemic. The creation of a Family Violence Cabinet Sub-Committee at the onset of the pandemic was essential to an effective response. I don't think gender was a factor in the government response to COVID. There did not seem to be any consideration of the impacts of school closures on parents/ caregivers of children.

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The provincial government has continued to respond to the needs of the business community instead of more vulnerable groups such as non-profit organizations who serve populations disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.

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People were working extra hard if they were women. The jobs of taking care of children and helping them learn fell on women to a great extent. When we went into essential services, most of the frontline workers ... were mostly women: women who were working lower wages and yet considered 'essential services.'

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Striving to meet basic needs in an emergency situation

Examples of government focus on meeting Islanders' basic needs included food security programs for students and tied in with the agriculture sector; increased funding for housing, transition housing, and homeless shelters and for a community outreach centre; and a secure income pilot.

Steps to meeting caregiver needs

Council members saw evidence of attempts to meet the overwhelming needs of caregivers during the pandemic in responses such as the Early Years sector's response to COVID-19; Health PEI's assessment of caregiving needs among essential workers in health; and efforts to put respite care in place for parents of children and youth with special needs. Council members noted that some caregiver supports got off to rocky starts but improved through subsequent waves of the pandemic as the systems learned, grew, and responded.

Swift adaptations of service delivery for essential services

Council members noted swift adaptations to delivery of essential services for Islanders during lockdowns and public health measures, including telehealth services; Family Court parenting access and exchange; inclusion measures at Health PEI vaccination clinics to accommodate gender, diversity, and inclusion; and deployment of the new 211 Service to ensure more equitable access to timely information and referrals. I feel like with so many things shut down or forcibly changed, it is such an opportunity to do better in so many sectors. A lot of things, because of COVID, are very problematic to do right now, but there are chances to do recovery better in many sectors.

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Some things we have to learn from this: to do some things better, address inequalities between different groups, do better for how we care for people in community care and nursing homes.

CATEGORY SUMMARY

Through the phases of the COVID-19 pandemic from March 2020 to the end of 2021, the PEI government focused its decisions on public health to protect the people of PEI and preserve public health resources. We reached the end of December 2021 with less than a handful of hospitalizations and no deaths and an extraordinarily high uptake of vaccination.

Yet, there is no question that both the pandemic and the public health measures had unequal effects on women, gender diverse people, and groups that are marginalized or made vulnerable by inequality.

Despite the omicron wave in progress in 2022, we continue to move into a recovery phase in Prince Edward Island. A key "insight for policy" from Council's 2020 report *Gender and COVID-19 in Prince Edward Island* continues to hold true: "A recovery plan that focuses on restoring or making whole those who were doing well before the pandemic will reinstate the same inequalities that left women and other groups vulnerable to the worst effects of the pandemic. Benefits resulting from investment in recovery must be available equitably across all genders and structurally disadvantaged groups: an explicit goal needs to be making the distribution of benefits better than it was, for more people."

The global pandemic of COVID-19 has created an opportunity for transformative change to bring about greater equity and inclusion. We have yet to take advantage of the opportunity for an intersectional feminist recovery.



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