Worksheet: Community Action

Identifying community concerns & finding your voice.

What prevents my community from being a place where everyone belongs? *Identify barriers or issues.*

Who is involved and impacted by this issue? *Consider who is most impacted by this issue and who has the authority to address it.*

What actions could I take to raise this issue with my local representatives? *Consider ways to gather support and determine channels to voice your concerns. Do any of your elected officials already advocate for this issue? Are there community organizations or non-profits that you could partner with to approach elected officials? Are there current engagement opportunities on this issue?*

Find more ways to champion equity in your local government:

Link to YWCA City Shift *Municipal Equity Kickstart Guide*

Link to *WTC website*

A Pocket-Sized Guide to Engaging with Local Government

YWCA METRO VANCOUVER | CITY SHIFT | WTC WOMEN TRANSFORMING CITIES

Why Engage With Your Local Government?

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ARE THE CLOSEST LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT TO COMMUNITIES

Local elected officials are part of your community. There are many opportunities to engage directly with them on issues that matter to you.

FROM LITTLE THINGS, BIG THINGS GROW

Local governments are smaller and often more approachable than provincial and federal governments. In fact, many nationwide campaigns on equity issues begin at city halls. Fifty people organizing on an issue federally may not feel significant, but fifty people organizing locally can be quite impactful.

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS HAVE THE POWER TO MAKE THE PLACES WE LIVE MORE EQUITABLE

Local government leaders oversee essential programs and infrastructure, such as public transit, land use, emergency services, community centres, and more. Local policies profoundly influence the structural and social fabric of our cities, including the ways sexism, ableism, poverty, colonialism, racism, and other forms of inequity show up.

How Can Local Governments Affect Equity?

Local governments can affect equity through service delivery, urban planning, internal processes, and the development of policies and plans.

Some examples include:

1 ADVOCATING TO SENIOR LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT

Over 30 BC municipalities endorsed the AccessBC campaign for free prescription contraception, that started in Saanich, which led to the BC government enacting this policy.

2 GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS PLUS PILOT

The City of Burnaby is piloting the use of Gender-based Analysis Plus as an equity lens in the creation of the Edmonds Community Plan. Learnings from the pilot will influence future equity work in Burnaby.

3 SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF INNOVATIVE SOCIAL AND LOWER-COST HOUSING

The City of Vancouver partnered with YWCA Metro Vancouver to co-locate housing for single mothers and their children with city amenities. YWCA Cause We Care House is co-located with the nəca?mat ct Strathcona library, and YWCA Pacific Spirit Terrace is co-located with Fire Hall #5 in Champlain Heights.

How Can You Engage With Your Local Government?

Participation and engagement opportunities differ from one municipality to the next, including options to communicate with your elected officials and give input on community concerns. Visit your municipality's website to learn how your local government functions and the ways you can get involved.

STAY INFORMED

- Familiarize yourself with your municipality's website
- Find out about opportunities to participate in local decision-making, such as speaking to council
- Follow your municipal leaders on social media
- Sign up for local newsletters
- Review meeting minutes and voting records to learn how your elected officials have voted on issues that matter to you
- Look at upcoming meeting agendas to learn about current issues under consideration

TAKE ACTION

- Email or write to council
- Register through your municipality's website to speak at a meeting
- Participate in online engagements and surveys
- Attend a public hearing on an issue that matters to you
- Connect with community organizations taking action
- Vote for candidates who reflect your priorities