Welcoming & Inclusive Communities
Together we shine

Report on the March 16-17, 2017 Municipal Inclusion Symposium

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Alberta Human Rights Commission

AUMA ™

Contents

Executive Summary

In an effort to increase knowledge and awareness of how municipalities can create more welcoming and inclusive communities, the Alberta Human Rights Commission (AHRC) and the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) collaborated to host a Municipal Inclusion Symposium on March 16-17, 2017 in Edmonton, Alberta. The event provided an opportunity for administrators and elected officials of municipalities and invited stakeholders to share ideas and discuss potential strategies to eliminate racism and discrimination in Alberta's communities.

The Symposium featured presentations by thirteen municipalities that highlighted current inclusion initiatives including cultural events, awareness campaigns, community consultations, development of strategic plans, and training programs for municipal employees and local businesses. The Trans Equality Society of Alberta and the AHRC presented on the experience of transgender individuals and how the *Alberta Human Rights Act* includes gender identity and gender expression as protected grounds of discrimination. Delegates also engaged in a series of discussions on how municipal governments can build an inclusive environment for municipal employees and support the various intersections of diversity in the community such as gender, Indigenous peoples, refugees, immigrants, LGBTQ community, age, faith, and persons with different abilities.

Through the presentations and discussions, a number of themes emerged. To be a more inclusive employer, delegates suggested that municipal governments should implement human resource policies and practices to attract and retain employees that are representative of the community's demographics. To be a more inclusive service provider, delegates suggested that municipalities should continually train employees about diversity, which will create a workforce that is aware of and more committed to designing and delivering services that are inclusive of all residents. Delegates highlighted the importance of implementing policies to support inclusion but to be effective, all employees need to be aware of the policies and understand how they apply to day-to-day service delivery. Municipalities also stressed the importance of sharing best practices and the need for funding support from other levels of government.

One area of common concern by delegates was how to be inclusive when community leaders, residents or organizations reject the value of diversity and inclusion. The discussions suggested that to overcome prejudice-based attitudes, inclusion advocates need to use education and factual campaigns to build awareness while creating opportunities for persons of differing backgrounds to engage in a safe environment. Through face-to-face interactions, people can hear the stories and experiences of others, which will begin to break down the barriers that divide people.

Overall, delegates expressed appreciation for the Symposium and requested that similar events be held regionally to encourage ongoing and regular communication between stakeholders interested in building more welcoming and inclusive communities.

Background

On March 16 and 17, 2017, the Alberta Human Rights Commission (AHRC) and the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) hosted a Municipal Inclusion Symposium in Edmonton, Alberta. The event was designed to bring municipal administrators and elected officials together to present, share, and learn about the initiatives that Alberta municipalities are taking to create more welcoming and inclusive communities. In addition to municipal representatives, selected stakeholders from government and the not-for-profit sector were invited due to their involvement with diversity and inclusion and their supporting relationship with municipalities. The Symposium drew approximately 50 delegates and speakers.

The Symposium used a collaborative and interactive format to enhance learning. Focused discussions were facilitated to 1) ascertain how best to engage with targeted audiences, 2) explore key issues affecting municipal inclusion strategies and 3) identify what supports municipalities require to improve the inclusivity of their organizations and communities.

Symposium attendees

Not-for-profit organization 5%
Government of Alberta 12%
Elected official of a municipality 14%
Employee of a municipality 70%

Day 1 of the Symposium represented 'knowledge sharing day', which included municipal presentations about Community Inclusion grant projects, an experiential activity, discussions on themes of diversity and how municipalities, as corporations, can become more inclusive and how the Alberta Human Rights Commission can better support municipalities.

Not applicable 14%
County or Municipal District 2%
Urban municipality under 2,500 population 5%
Urban municipality with 2,500 - 10,000 population 14%
Urban municipality with over 10,000 population 66%

Day 2 represented 'education day', which included a panel presentation, case studies, and discussions about gender identity and gender expression as well as a presentation by AUMA about its proposed framework to evaluate the Welcoming and Inclusive Communities (WIC) initiative. Refer to Appendix A for a copy of the event agenda.

This report offers a summary of the key learnings and outcomes of the Symposium.
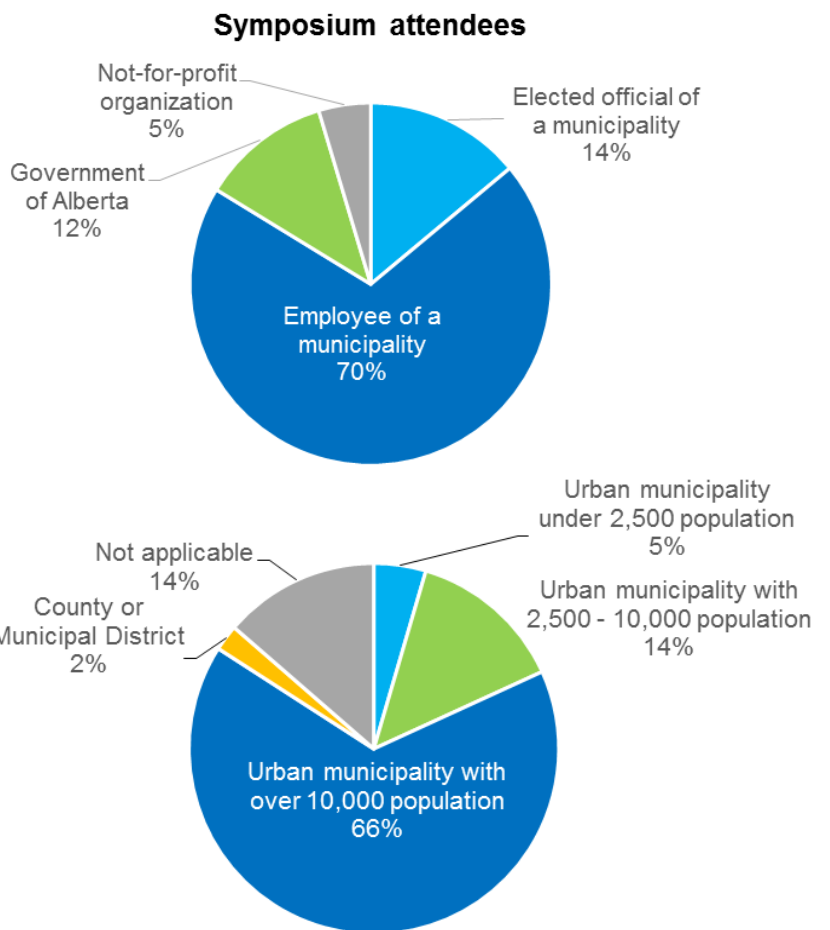
Day 1 Session: Showcasing the Community Inclusion grant projects

This session involved presentations by 13 municipalities that have received a Community Inclusion grant through the Human Rights Education and Multiculturalism Fund. The session used a 'PechaKucha' style where each municipality had five minutes to share details about their grant project and any successes and challenges in implementing it. The following offers a summary of each presentation. A copy of the PowerPoint presentations can be found under 'Tools and Resources' on AUMA's WIC website.

1. City of Chestermere (presented by Danielle Fermin and Sumon Mamun)
    Rural South Central Alberta Regional Forum on Inclusion Strategies (2015-16 grant)

    This project involved hosting an inclusion forum for community partners and a cultural celebration. The forum resulted in the formation of a Regional Inclusion Coalition in Rural South Central Alberta, which has plans to meet in the future.

2. Town of Jasper (presented by Kathleen Waxer)
    Fostering a Welcoming and Inclusive Jasper Community (2015-16 grant)
    This project involved a Diversity Photo Project where residents held signs that explain how they are diverse. The photos have resulted in the development of a book and banners are displayed in public areas. The project has also resulted in the expansion of the Jasper Community Team and Collaborative Action Teams to be more inclusive of underrepresented populations.

3. City of Medicine Hat (presented by Leslie Jerry)
    Raising the Curtain: A Celebration of Diversity and Inclusion (2015-16 grant)

    This project involved a World Café event in March 2016 to identify gaps. This led to the development of 21 free events across the community in March 2017, where residents will be asked to 'raise the curtain' and share their culture and experience. The City hopes to establish 'Raising the Curtain' as an annual event.

4. Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (presented by Caitlin Downie and Tinna Ezekiel)
    Diversity Plan 2016 and Beyond (2015-16 grant)

    This project involved the development of a community diversity plan, which will be launched in fall 2017. The RM took active steps to seek input from vulnerable populations, which has helped inform the plan and raise awareness of barriers and challenges for marginalized populations.

5. **City of St. Albert (presented by Leanne MacMillan)**
    It Starts With Me: Diversity and Inclusion Education and Awareness Campaign

    This project used AUMA's Measuring Inclusion Tool to focus strategies on diversity training for staff and create awareness of discrimination through communication materials on its website, social media and newspaper ads. The project also produced a one minute animated video that explains diversity and inclusion.

6. **Strathcona County (presented by Erfan Tabarsi)**
    Explore new paths to building inclusive ethno-cultural communities (2015-16 grant)

    This project involved a survey of approximately 8,000 residents that supported the renewal of the County's social framework. The County also attended community events to promote unity and diversity as well as inform newcomers about available programs and services.

7. **Town of Wainwright (presented by Carley Herbert)**
    Wainwright Welcoming and Inclusive Project

    This project was focused on raising awareness of cultural differences by distributing topical books, hanging a banner on main street and hosting events to help integrate newcomers into the community.

8. **City of Lethbridge (presented by Roy Pogorzelski)**
    Bonvenon: A Welcoming and Inclusive Space (2015-16 grant)

    This project was designed to engage, inform and encourage action by downtown businesses to reduce discrimination and create a welcoming and safe downtown core. It involved offering a three-phase training series where businesses would receive a display sticker that recognized the phase of inclusion training that it has completed.

9. **City of Cold Lake (presented by Darren Reedy of AUMA on behalf of the City of Cold Lake)**
    Measuring Inclusion Evaluation Report

    This project involved using AUMA's Measuring Inclusion Tool to understand the current level of inclusion in the community and use public meetings to discuss ideas and strategies to become more inclusive. The City received responses from 700 residents and developed a report that summarizes its level of inclusion across eight areas of focus including suggested actions as next steps.

10. Town of Whitecourt (presented by Chelsea Grande)
    Inclusion in Sport (2015-16 grant)

This project involved a collaboration with community partners to develop a 20 minute video on inclusion in sport. In addition, the Town developed a policy whereby sporting teams that want to use a Town recreation facility are required to watch the video prior to use. The goal is to increase the participation of youth females in sport and create more welcoming spaces for all youth to enjoy physical activity.

The project...

- Worked with a diverse range of community members (including but not limited to employees, board members, coaches, players, community youth, Mayor's Youth Committee) to create a 20 minute video on Inclusion In Sport.
- Developed a policy, that was approved by Council, in which teams utilizing any Town of Whitecourt Indoor or Outdoor Recreation Facilities may be required to watch the video prior to utilizing the facilities.

11. Town of Banff (Bow Valley Immigration Partnership) (presented by Meagan Reid)
    Bow Valley Workplace Inclusion Charter (2016-17 grant)

This project involves engaging employers to commit to 5-15 key actions that promote inclusion in the workplace and the community. In return, employers receive clear priorities and actions, supporting resources and contact for help and public recognition through decals and media coverage.

12. Town of Cochrane (presented by Melissa Engdahl)
    Equity and Inclusion Initiative: An Inside/Out Approach (2015-16 grant)

This project involved internal training and a cross-sectoral staff committee to build awareness of inclusion. The Town used AUMA's Measuring Inclusion Tool to evaluate its level of inclusiveness and is using that knowledge to engage residents through community picnics and citizenship ceremonies.

"These ideas will definitely help to create more inclusion projects."
~Attendee

13. City of Wetaskiwin (presented by Linda Mueller)
    The Wetaskiwin Community Inclusion Project

This project will involve creating opportunities for residents to have input on anti-racism initiatives and identify cultural needs that will allow the City to develop a plan of action. One of the project goals is to engage with neighbouring First Nation communities as the City serves as an economic hub for the region.

The Community Inclusion grant is offered by the Alberta Human Rights Commission. Municipalities can receive up to $10,000 for a project, which must be completed between January and December of a year. Applications are due by September 15th. Obtain more information at
www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca/fund/financial_assistance.asp.
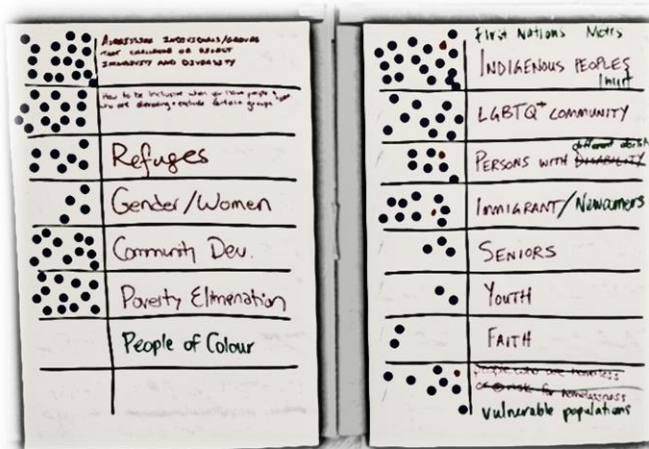
Day 1 Session: Experiential activity

Attendees engaged in the Barnga simulation game, which requires players to remain silent and only communicate using visual actions. The activity created an environment for attendees to understand how newcomers may feel when they come to Canada and are unable to communicate due to a lack of English. The activity also demonstrated the challenge in adjusting to unknown rules and social norms, which may be different than a newcomer's home country.

Day 1 Session: Communities of interest discussions

Attendees were asked to suggest topics for the 'communities of interest' discussions and then vote for their three priority topics using a 'dotmocracy' approach. The topics were consolidated to form the following nine themes for discussion.

Votes	Discussion topic
30 votes	How to be inclusive when you have persons that reject diversity and inclusion
19 votes	Poverty elimination/vulnerable populations
17 votes	Indigenous peoples – First Nations, Métis, Inuit
16 votes	Immigrants/refugees/newcomers
10 votes	LGBTQ+
6 votes	Persons with different abilities
5 votes	Seniors/youth
4 votes	Gender/women
2 votes	Faith

Using a World Café approach, attendees formed groups to ask questions and share knowledge on each topic. The voting demonstrated a significant interest in the topic of how to be inclusive when there are community leaders, residents or organizations that reject the value of diversity and inclusion. Across the range of topics, the key theme that emerged was that the acceptance of diversity can be overcome with education, awareness, and face-to-face experiences between people. Refer to Appendix B for a complete list of the ideas and comments shared during the session.

Day 1 Session: Looking internally (interview matrix discussions)

This session was designed for attendees to explore practical processes for municipalities to become more diverse and inclusive employers. The session used an 'interview matrix' approach to facilitation that required attendees to answer the following questions:

1. What are 2 or 3 practices or policies that would move municipalities to offer a more diverse and inclusive workplace?
2. What are 2 or 3 ideas to engage and gain support from municipal leaders (administration or council) for WIC/CCMARD initiatives?
3. What are 2 or 3 ways that municipalities can adjust services to be more inclusive of the community?
4. What are 2 or 3 challenges in your work in supporting diverse communities?

To become a more diverse and inclusive employer, it was suggested that municipalities adapt unique inclusion policies and practices, attract and retain workers that are representative of the community's population, and create learning and education opportunities. Several ideas were recommended to gain support from municipal leaders, including understanding political and business ramifications, using democracy to engage them, and effectively communicating about the benefits of inclusion programs. As a service provider, municipalities can provide education and learning opportunities, engage staff and citizens in the decision making, and review and revise policies and practices to reflect the diversity of the community. Participants felt that individuals, business units, municipal organizations and community groups all had unique challenges in supporting welcoming and inclusive initiatives. Refer to Appendix C for a complete list of the ideas and comments shared during the session.

> "I will employ some of the facilitation techniques I experienced and will consult with many of the wonderful colleagues I met over these two days." ~Attendee

Day 1 Session: Alberta Human Rights Commission conversations

This session was a precursor for the Alberta Human Rights Commission's plans to host conservations across Alberta to celebrate 2017 as the Commission's 45th anniversary. Attendees were asked about what supports the Commission could offer to help make communities welcoming and inclusive, as well

as free of racism and discrimination. Many valuable ideas were suggested around the themes of supporting research and resource development, influencing youth programming in the schools, promoting engagement activities, enhancing educational opportunities, and increasing access to funding. Refer to Appendix D for a complete list of the ideas and comments shared during the session.

Day 2 Session: Panel presentation on understanding gender identity and gender expression

This session involved a panel presentation with guest speakers Angela Reid of the Trans Equality Society of Alberta and Terri Susan Zurbrigg, legal counsel of the Alberta Human Rights Commission.

Angela Reid provided perspective on gender identity and gender expression by discussing trans terminology, the experience of trans individuals and by addressing some of the common myths in society.

Terri Susan Zurbrigg provided background on the changes to the Alberta Human Rights Act in 2015 to include gender identity and gender expression as protected grounds of discrimination. The presentation also explained the difference between the terms gender identity and gender expression and shared information on legal terminology and best practices for municipalities.

> "I will look at everything we do through a gender inclusion lens. Some of the best practices shared were new to me and very useful." ~ Attendee

Copies of the PowerPoint presentations can be found under 'Tools and Resources' on AUMA's WIC website. Refer to Appendix E for a transcript of the question and answer portion of the session.

Day 2 Session: Case studies on gender identity and gender expression

Attendees were asked to discuss two real-life scenarios where municipalities have contacted the Alberta Human Rights Commission for support in addressing an issue associated with gender identity and gender expression.

The first scenario involved a complaint from residents that were concerned about a transgender person using the women's change room at the municipal swimming pool. Attendees discussed the importance of having inclusionary policies but many were unaware if their municipality had a policy. This demonstrated the importance of employee education on municipal policies and how the development

of a workplace culture based on inclusion concepts is a more effective approach to provide a supportive environment for residents.

The second scenario involved employees of a municipality that were refusing to attend training on diversity. The employees argued that the training content on sexual orientation and gender identity and gender expression conflicted with their religious beliefs. Attendees discussed how the employees have a duty to perform their job, which includes delivering customer service in a non-discriminatory manner. Attendees also highlighted that the employees are not being asked to change their beliefs but just take training that will increase awareness and knowledge about persons of different backgrounds and how that may impact service delivery to ensure all residents feel safe and respected by the local government.

Refer to Appendix F for a complete description of the scenarios and notes from the group discussion.

Day 2 Session: Sharing of promising practices to support the transgender community

Attendees were asked to discuss and share ideas of how municipalities can be inclusive of the transgender community either through service delivery or collaboration with community partners. Key themes that emerged was to ensure that appropriate policies are in place and that staff need to be trained to create a culture where staff are knowledgeable of the issues and how to apply the policies. In addition, municipalities can explore how services can be modified (e.g. intake forms and gender neutral washrooms) and what partnerships in the community will help support further progress. Refer to Appendix G for a complete list of the ideas and suggestions shared by attendees.

"Will need to update our harassment policy to include gender identity and gender expression." ~Attendee

Day 2 Session: Evaluating AUMA's Welcoming and Inclusive Communities initiative

This session involved a presentation by Darren Reedy of AUMA on a draft framework to evaluate the performance of AUMA's WIC initiative. The presentation involved an overview of how AUMA could measure the trend of municipalities to become more inclusive through the desired outcomes that municipalities are leaders in change, implement policies and practices to be inclusive employers and service providers and collaborate with community stakeholders to support inclusivity in community networks and organizations. The presentation also provided an overview of AUMA's Measuring Inclusion Tool and how it will serve as a tool for municipalities to measure and report on their progress to become more inclusive.

Summary

The Municipal Inclusion Symposium offered an environment for municipalities to share challenges and ideas that are unique to municipal government operations in supporting diversity and inclusion. The Symposium allowed attendees to explore inclusion as an employer, a service provider and a leader in collaboration with community partners. The event also allowed attendees to build connections and relationships with colleagues from across the province that will allow knowledge and resources to be shared more broadly.

A satisfaction survey was shared with attendees, which received an 89 per cent rate of response. As per the chart below, attendees were extremely pleased with the topics and opportunities to learn and network with only a few attendees expressing dissatisfaction with attributes of the facility.

Feedback from Symposium attendees
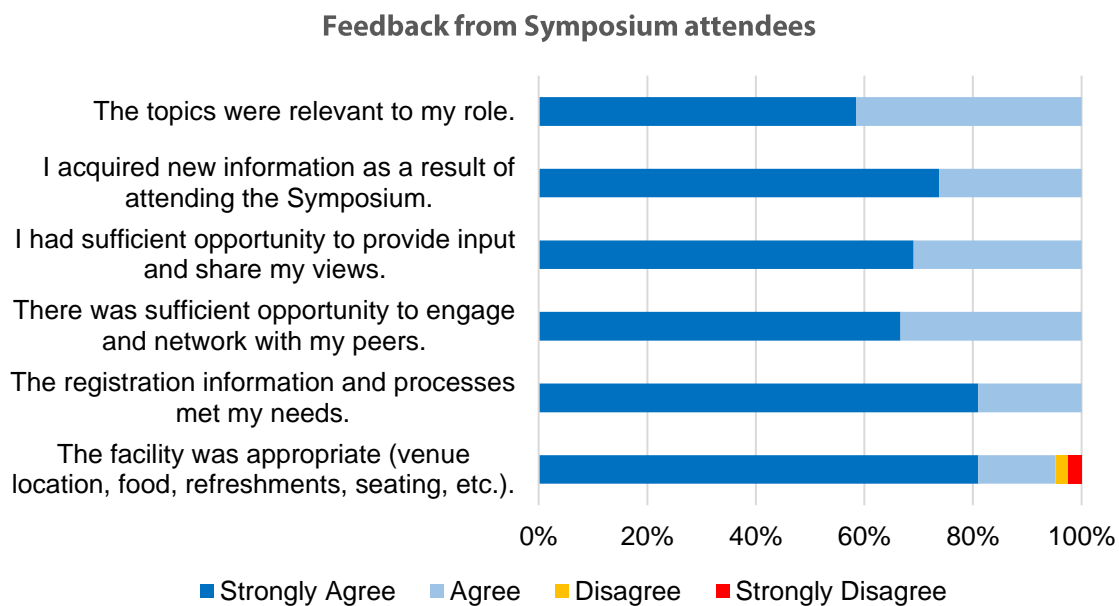
The survey indicated that 82 per cent of attendees heard about the Symposium either through AUMA's WIC email network or by referral. This demonstrates the value of the WIC network to spread awareness of inclusion-related resources and events. The survey also produced over 30 suggestions for topics to be addressed at a future conference. Overall, the event was considered an overwhelming success as 100 per cent of attendees expressed that they were either very satisfied (34 per cent) or satisfied (66 per cent) with the event.

To learn more about diversity and inclusion, visit the Alberta Human Rights Commission at https://www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca/ or the AUMA's WIC initiative at wic.auma.ca.

> "Lots of seeds to plant following these presentations and discussions with others. No doubt there will be lots that grow - some right away and some over time." ~Attendee

Appendix

A: Event agenda

Municipal Inclusion Symposium
March 16-17, 2017
Radisson Hotel South, Jubilee Room, 4440 Gateway Blvd, Edmonton, Alberta

Day 1 | March 16 | Knowledge Sharing Day

9:00 – 9:25 am	Welcome and greetings Alberta Human Rights Commission Alberta Urban Municipalities Association
9:25 – 11:00 am	Community Inclusion grant projects Recipient municipalities of the 2016 and 2017 Community Inclusion grants (under the Human Rights Education and Multiculturalism Fund) will present their strategies to build awareness of the breadth of inclusion approaches across Alberta.
11:00 – 11:15 am	Break
11:15 am – 12:00 pm	Experiential activity Participants will take part in an experiential learning activity that offers insight on diversity and inclusion.
12:00 – 1:00 pm	Lunch (provided)
1:00 – 2:30 pm	Communities of interest discussions Participants will discuss strategies to engage with identified communities of interest to influence inclusive municipal work, such as Indigenous, immigrant/ethno cultural, LGBTQ, faith, people with disabilities and seniors' communities. Topics will be determined by the participants.
2:30 – 2:45 pm	Break
2:45 – 4:15 pm	Looking internally Participants will explore practical processes for how municipal organizations can become more inclusive and how that knowledge can extend to the broader community. This session will allow participants to learn on a one-to-one basis through mini-interviews that will result in broad-based group knowledge.
4:15 – 5:00 pm	Alberta Human Rights Commission conversation The Alberta Human Rights Commission will be facilitating conversations to learn about your local human rights priorities and issues in Alberta. These conversations mark the 45th anniversary of the *Individual's Rights Protection Act* and the *Alberta Bill of Rights*. The conversations hosted during this Symposium and across the province this year will assist the Commission in planning future supports to community.
5:00 – 7:00 pm	Reception hosted by the Alberta Human Rights Commission Appetizers and networking with a cash bar available.

Day 2 | March 17 | Education Day

8:30 – 8:35 am	Welcome
8:35 – 9:30 am	Panel presentation: Understanding gender identity and gender expression

8:35 – 9:30 am   Panel presentation: Understanding gender identity and gender expression
- Demystifying gender identity and gender expression - Angela Reid, Trans Equality Society of Alberta
- Understanding the legal aspects of gender identity and gender expression under the Alberta Human Rights Act – Terri Susan Zurbrigg, Alberta Human Rights Commission

9:30 – 10:15 am   Case studies
Participants will review two scenarios where Alberta municipalities have been challenged to respond to concerns over gender identity and gender expression. Participants will have the opportunity to discuss how they could respond to each scenario in their own municipality.

10:15 – 10:30 am   Break

10:30 – 11:10 am   Sharing of promising practices
This session will involve group discussions on how municipalities will be inclusive of transgender people accessing municipal facilities and services.

11:10 – 11:15 am   Break

11:15 – 11:55 am   Evaluating AUMA's Welcoming and Inclusive Communities (WIC) Initiative
Participants will learn about AUMA's new draft framework to evaluate the WIC initiative and how it can help guide municipal actions to measure the performance of local inclusion initiatives. Participants will have the opportunity to provide input on the evaluation framework to help guide AUMA's approach.

11:55 am – 12:00 pm   Closing remarks

B: Notes from the communities of interest discussions

The following represents the transcribed notes from each discussion topic during the 'communities of interest' discussions.

Topic #1: How to be inclusive when you have individuals/groups that challenge or reject diversity and inclusion *(30 votes)*

Challenges
- Need for the education system to teach about diversity and inclusion instead of relying on one's own experiences with friends and family
- Not including people who are not inclusive of others

Opportunities
- Establish rules of behavior and emphasize commitment to each other
- Freedom of speech also means a responsibility to counter hate speech
- Need for our society to overcome its lack of willingness to confront those that make discriminatory jokes or statements - State that you are not interested in engaging in discriminatory conversation
- Provide the facts, reasons, and actively provide a counter narrative of the comment/behavior
- Provide the history of Canada, which represents a mosaic of cultures
- Be strategic in the words we use and use common language – e.g. what is "Canadian values"
- Be aware of the lens we use to view the world and that we all hold biases
- Create safe spaces, be positive, and maintain continuous and open dialogue that will build relationships
- In instances where council members resist diversity and inclusion: inform them of the economic benefits, educate them about the issues, and inform them that is makes you feel uncomfortable

Topic #2: Poverty elimination/vulnerable populations *(19 votes)*

Challenges
- "Affordable housing" is limited and not necessarily affordable – we are charging unaffordable rates for housing
- Power differential – citizens are vulnerable to abuse from landlords and employers or other family members that may use violence to maintain power
- Recognize the challenge with burnout of caregivers or helpers

Opportunities
- Form a community action plan – bring residents and community partners together to build natural connections
- Form a poverty elimination strategy that addresses root causes such as racism, education, and limitations
- Form an affordable services strategy that could include recreation or food supports or education on basics of life (e.g. strategies on buying groceries)

- Homeless prevention strategy within rural populations – people at risk for homelessness include low income, youth, etc. – need education and awareness to citizens
- Housing first approach
- Use resources such as the Homeless Hub or AUMA's Housing Hub
- Recognize populations in need – e.g. Indigenous population
- Communities need to collaborate instead of being set up to compete

Topic #3: Indigenous peoples – First Nations, Métis, Inuit *(17 votes)*

Challenges

- Indigenous communities are often misunderstood
- Education and awareness aspect are both so important
- Sometimes struggle with "us/them"
- Indigenous leaders are feeling over engaged
- Transitioning from a reserve to a non-reserve requires similar supports as newcomers

Opportunities

- Implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action for municipalities because it is the right thing to do
- Workplaces need to create space for employee training
- Relationships and trust are the pinnacle of moving forward
- Onus is non-Indigenous people for creating relationships and readiness of people to be involved
- First step to engaging is to be humble
- There are gaps in the youth education curriculum but parents also need to teach children
- Important to ask "what should I do?"
- Move away from doing "once a year events" and try to incorporate relation building every day
- There is little awareness about Indigenous peoples for newcomers
- Identify any barriers to having the Indigenous community come to events (e.g. alcohol)
- Move past consultation to relationships – ongoing, lasting, mutually beneficial
- Be aware of the political aspects associated Indigenous communities

Topic #4: Immigrants/refugees/newcomers *(16 votes)*

Challenges

- Challenges in mapping the newcomer community – not always visible – reach out to schools, churches and employers for connections – limitations in accessing statistics/information
- Challenges around who is eligible to receive services – especially for persons that have settled but not necessarily integrated. (e.g. undocumented children and newcomers that have settled five years ago are not eligible for services)
- Issue with access to immigration offices in rural communities
- Lack of funding for the integration side of settlement and integration – negativity affects the children of newcomers
- Children raised in Canada have different skills and activities (e.g. swimming, camping, bike riding)

- Smaller communities have a lack of services, which exacerbates social isolation
- Employers treating temporary foreign workers poorly

Opportunities
- Success of newcomer children can lead to a feeling of success for the parents – use children as a method of engaging newcomers
- Public education campaigns help for engagement and identifying "who is a local"
- To help engage newcomers use immigrant advisory groups that can rely on newcomer expertise for goal setting and implementation and/or join/engage community groups and ethno-cultural communities
- Should be more priority on community connections
- Need for increase in services for newcomers that arrived over five years ago – including an emphasis on mothers
- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and umbrella organizations could do outreach to build partnerships with other funders to support ineligible newcomers
- Increase priority on English as second language training for more established newcomers
- Potential for corporate partnerships? – more difficult in small communities
- Alberta Parks runs a camping program for newcomers
- How do you measure success?
  - Do newcomers feel safe?
  - Do newcomers have meaningful employment?
  - Do newcomers have positive attitudes?
  - Do newcomers have equal success in education?
  - Do newcomers have success of children?
  - Do newcomers participate in the community?
  - What is the capacity of the community to serve newcomers?

Topic #5: LGBTQ+ *(10 votes)*

Challenges
- How to make recreation facilities inclusive – especially for the transgender community?
- The challenges are different for youth than adults
- Connecting faith groups' values re: LGBTQ+
- Concern for personal safety
- Small communities – focus is on those that have 'come out' – need to change to support all those that have not 'come out'

Opportunities
- Education and awareness for non-LGBTQ+ persons
- Get input from the community
- Family change room – open to anyone who wanted a private area to change
- Conduct accessibility audits to understand what works and what is needed and a plan to act
- Newer recreation facilities are providing more family change rooms but the cost is prohibitive
- Implement a signage committee
- Signage for opposite gender change rooms/space for mixed gender sports team
- Install sinks in halls

- Use examples to 'sell' why action is needed
- Accessible washroom for seniors – opposite gender partners help each other at home but cannot do so at public facilities
- Safety is important and how do we move to integration (e.g. when labels do not matter)
- Building ally-ship (e.g. gay straight alliances)

Topic #6: Persons with different abilities *(6 votes)*

Challenges
- Accessibility, particularly in winter, is very limited – even more pronounced in rural areas – where to start can be overwhelming
- Literacy can be an issue – have to train people to write for a broad audience
- Can be difficult to grapple issues without getting into silos
- There are huge assets in communities – sometimes the issue is identifying them

Opportunities
- "Different" abilities is key…not "disabilities"
- Generationally have started to see language change. People have taken the time to correct misconceptions – language slowly follows
- Opportunities to make improvement in Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo during the rebuild after the fire
- Any provincial standards? – municipalities have to ensure their own buildings are accessible
- Use 'test runs' of accessibility to help identify problems (e.g. someone in a wheelchair can only reach to a certain height)
- Lack of opportunity for people with different abilities – consider intergenerational programs – don't just target seniors or youth as independent programs
- Community suppers, game nights, and welcoming events can help
- Formed own rotary group with self-advocates, which has led to a number of them finding jobs just through the networking opportunities that is has provided
- Going to client groups directly, rather than staff, can lead to great discussions/learnings
- Ask what people want and then give them that – "What do you think?" is a powerful question

Topic #7: Seniors and youth *(5 votes)*

Challenges
- How best to keep seniors and youth engaged/involved in the community?
- Challenge can be that there are so many different groups that you can engage with
- Seniors bring a lot of expertise to communities – need to tap into it – seniors are often isolated and some have financial needs

Opportunities
- One community set up a youth council 7-8 years ago, originally through the Mayors' Council – has evolved into Yell & Shout leadership groups. Many of the youth available for volunteering, intern opportunities, etc. Seniors are not doing as much but want to change that.
- Youth Advisory Council in Brooks – kids who host events for other kids – works really well. The first meeting included RCMP, city staff, etc.

- Seniors host an appreciation breakfast during Seniors' Week
- Staff sometimes get approached (e.g. someone wanting to provide free haircuts) – just need to make connections
- Need to connect seniors and youth to each other (e.g. an initiative that had youth teaching seniors how to use computers)
- Run summer programs that allow youth to learn basic skills and get reference letters at end that help them get jobs.
- "Community brokers" can go into communities and connect with marginalized youth, newcomers, etc. and ask what is needed (e.g. mentors, organized sport for a small groups)
- A new provincial seniors' Council has been created and there is also a provincial Seniors' Advocate

Topic #8: Gender/women *(4 votes)*

Challenges
- How can we get more women into council or other elected roles?
- Often there is an assumption that any 'social' issues are the responsibility of female leaders
- A young, growing community – ½ women, ½ men but younger women often not available for council due to other commitments (e.g. young children, jobs)
- Having additional accessibility/affordability is important (e.g. if there is not enough money to pay for a babysitter, it's difficult to make it to council meetings)

Opportunities
- Can begin to change the 'old boys' culture by getting on council – social, health, environment are all important – not just economic so need to have balance at the table
- Status of Women ministry will continue to do panels on encouraging women to run in politics

Topic #9: Faith *(2 votes)*

Challenges
- Religion is used as a tool for politics as well as oppression
- Faith is invisible (for the most part)
- Challenge to find a balance in what one can do and accept when one's opinions are entrenched in religious values
- Tension between being inclusive and including those who do not accept others or their values

Opportunities
- Policy can influence cultural and societal changes (e.g. smoking)
- Important to have all faiths at the table
- Social media is a market to engage people who do not normally read – a minor change can lead to a ripple effect

C: Notes from the looking internally discussions (interview matrix)

The following represents the transcribed notes on the four questions posed during the 'looking internally' discussions that were facilitated using the interview matrix approach.

Question 1: What are two or three practices or policies that would move municipalities to offer a more diverse and inclusive workplace?

Suggested inclusion policies and practices
- Audits and assessments (done externally)
- Workforce surveys to address gaps
- 360 evaluations
- Advisory boards
- Diversity days – sharing
- Employer sponsor events for staff
- Create shared value of diversity
- Safe space for dialogue and communication leading to better policy recommendations
- Reconciliation and implementation team
- Protection against retaliation
- Arm's length investigations of discrimination allegations
- Ensure facilities being inclusive, including gender neutral washrooms
- Evaluations for staff on implementation of inclusion and diversity policies
- Inclusion and anti-racial policies formalized by council
- Open minded leadership/ council support
- Similar and important as safety and harassment policies

Making sure you attract and retain representative people in the community
- Human resource recruiting diverse populations
- Diverse human resource team
- Remove names from application process
- Personality fit – hiring practice
- Remove gender ID from application
- Full recognition non-Canadian experience

Creating learning and educational opportunities
- Gender neutral phrasing
- Educate each other
- When and how to use gender pronouns
- Education on inclusion
- Unconscious bias training
- Mentorship for women and other marginalized people

Question 2: What are two or three ideas to engage and gain support from municipal leaders (administration or council) for initiatives that align with the goals of the Welcoming and inclusive Communities (WIC) initiative or the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination (CCMARD)?

Communicating effectively
- Highlight success stories (internally and externally)
- Send personal invitations (face to face, social media)
- Give them the language
- Shame though media

Utilizing democracy
- Community and public support
- Use election to question their commitment
- Find their heart and motivate that
- Frame as helping everyone and community benefit
- Empowering grassroots and bottom up
- Leaders are about the vision
- Vote!
- Bring in community to speak for themselves
- Elected officials need to represent community
- Decision must benefit all residents
- Voice to advocate on behalf of community
- Not speaking on behalf but creating space to speak
- Focus on similarities not always differences
- Why inclusion matters
- Create personal connections to community
- Create a strategic plan
- Connect leaders to the community and events

Understanding political and business ramifications
- Evidence based perspective
- Understand the public image
- Make financial sense and economic gains
- Recruit leadership one by one
- Social policy plan/mandate
- Have an open mind

Question 3: What are two or three ways that municipalities can adjust services to be more inclusive of the community?

Provide education and learning opportunities
- Internal training to leaders by frontline staff/ lived experience
- Recognize/awareness of diversity in community
- Awareness of need to be deliberately inclusive

- Public education (with the use of media)

Engage citizens and staff in the process
- Asking questions (face to face with residents)
- Accessible locations > outreach
- Advisory groups
- Diverse and multilingual staff
- Culture of inclusion
- Build a diverse community
- Create a culture by not identifying the difference
- Going to the citizens instead of the citizens coming to you
- Accessibility – physical and specific communications
- Take time to hear from community on what inclusion means
- Engagement / deliberation actions

Revising policy and practices
- Dedicated position for facilitate relationship building
- Enabled as mandated policy
- IPad access in locations > sending people out with IPads making surveys etc.
- Build leadership values and principals
- Define inclusion before adjusting services
- Service deliver to reflect diversity of community
- Accessible facilities and services
- All communication in plain language and accessible for all (regardless of ability)

Question 4: What are two or three challenges in your work in supporting diverse communities?

By the individual or business unit
- No expertise
- Heavy workloads
- Not enough education
- Work alone and in isolation

Within the municipal organizational
- No mandate (example council)
- Potential for scope creep
- Lack of diversity at leadership levels
- No sense of urgency
- Unless a crisis
- Not addressed in a systemic way
- Lack of leadership and elected official support
- Managers and leaders unaware of issues
- Resistance to change
- No budget policy

Finding community support
- Trouble engaging public
- Trouble measuring public engagement
- Buy-in from public for equitable service
- Reaching people who don't access services
- Groups with different mandates
- Public lacks knowledge of issues or alternatives
- Homogenous advisory group
- Lack of creativity in engaging groups

Physical accessibility
- Land use updates
- Municipal accessibility plans
- Standards and audits
- Plans > occupancy the reassessed

Hiring practices
- Hours of work
- User fees
- Asset hiring practices to ensure services providers
- Diversity representative of community

Transit
- Rural and urban
- Provision services
- Leveraging of community
- Stakeholders to provide gaps in services

D: Notes from the Alberta Human Rights Commission conversation

The following represents the transcribed notes on the input offered during the Alberta Human Rights Commission conversation.

What two to three supports would help you or your agency make your communities welcoming and inclusive, as well as free of racism and discrimination?

Support research and resource development
- Define racism and discrimination and awareness communication.
- Research/evidence of what works on compound discrimination.
- Facts to address support, which results in reframing biases.
- Needs identification/assessment/language.
- Sharing best practices (communities of practice).
- Good speech, evidence, policy support, address, misconceptions, funding, public education material.
- Show how it benefits the municipality and community.
- Economic evidence is also helpful.
- Collaboration with academic institutions.
- We need to implement a modernized Act encompassing the new diversities.
- AUMA could collect industry policies/documents and post them on their website.
- Explore a tool for regional development of engagement strategy for the development of common policy.
- Updating human rights Act to incorporate UNDRIP other rights language.
- Resource sharing and more open lines of communication between municipalities and organizations in each municipality.
- Putting it on the AUMA agenda.
- I want AUMA to provide specific examples that municipalities can use to become more welcoming and inclusive.
- Everything that AUMA does that is effective, people will follow suit. Tell us what works and what will adopt it in to our community.
- Resources sort into population small, medium, large communities document of municipal project with contact information.
- Continue to provide toolkits, resources, symposium, not just for staff but communities at large/ council members, board members and help to identify the needs and groups in community.
- Resources in different languages.
- One stop facility to assist and answer questions. Currently, they use our library.
- Contact list or online community of practice to ask questions and share ideas in order to find resources.

Engage youth through school programs
- Schools impact children and youth.
- School resources as a community of a very young population we will have greater impact.

Promote engagement activities
- Principal standard – leadership buy in.
- Get diverse population in decision making or research what type of racism exists.
- Support is making community connections to other communities.
- Discussion forum.
- Multicultural marketing and support.
- Human resources > resource list of diversity champions to come speak with municipal focus > speaks series for us to bring organizational needs.
- Process facilitation – interview matrix awesome
- Ask municipalities to adopt code of conduct (MGA)
- Capacity building in community for folks to speak them selves
- Need to be able to engage people who do not see racism as an ongoing problem.
- How do we engage those who either don't know/acknowledge racism etc.?
- Need more support on collaborating on your building a movement.
- Hosting a series of evenings within the community in which minorities could speak about their culture their language and cuisine, etc.
- Awareness of these organizations (municipalities) don't have to go at it alone.
- Collective impact – organizations to connect municipalities to other stakeholders.

Enhance educational opportunities
- Public education videos (that are not tied to community) e.g. St. Albert
- Opportunities for free external workshops to provide professional development for committees
- Training for the renewal areas and small communities online. Free training on the measurement tool. Council training and workshops on inclusion or on specific topics like LGBTQ leadership workshops for community. Member, someone decided (staff) to diversify and inclusion (dollars)
- WIC/CMARD portal for shared info, data, etc.
- Facilitation training for changes / difficult conversations
- Can be a valuable process if not a formal opposition of power to challenge or assess diversity issues with the action
- Training for elected officials to better reflect these values of inclusivity
- We need support to educate abought systematic racism
- It's not only about individual acts of antiracism, but to combat the rising appeal of racist population. One central resources (online) that shares each municipality's individual initiatives.
- Conventions such as these to be more frequent
- More opportunities to share ideas and best practices between municipalities
- More participation by elected officials in gatherings and conferences around industries and diversity
- More networking meetings, seminars, conferences, discussions
- Repeat the learning/ sharing as done at this symposium

- Person questions to ask each other to check out own reflections on topics.
- All communities are diverse but diversity is not always visible due to lack of awareness (e.g. Jasper photo project is a great idea).
- Ongoing education for all employees and elected officials. A "committee" to address the TRC recommendations an aboriginal gathering space that is open to all ongoing. GL code dedicated to being an inclusive Community mandated polices to support this work.
- Education materials and session on cultured awareness

Increase access to funding
- Having support from the government
- Stable coalitions funding (to connect all community players)
- Funding for non-profits to carry out and collaborate on WIC initiatives
- Funding grants for assessment, initiatives, coalitions
- Dedicated staff position
- Funding to help eliminate graffiti
- Keep the grant option available to get started in topics
- Funding to hire someone to lead this work in our own community; difficult to do off the side of one's desk
- Funding and training for agricultural organizations to lead this work

E: Questions and answers during panel on understanding gender identity and gender expression

The following represents the comments heard during the question and answer portion of the panel presentation on gender identity and gender expression. The panel included speakers Angela Reid of the Trans Equality Society of Alberta and Terri Susan Zurbrigg of the Alberta Human Rights Commission.

Question: Do you have suggestion for how to communicate gender/sex on intake forms for health care and other situations?

Response from Angela Reid:
- This can be tricky due to restrictions of computer databases and software programs
- Easiest approach is to put a blank space after gender
- Calgary Sexual health STI clinic has space for name and legal name as well as chosen name

Question: City of Brooks has gender neutral washrooms in its Centennial Regional Arena. What happens if an employee requests a gender neutral washroom in other facilities in the community? Are you required to develop a general neutral washroom?

Response from Terri Susan Zurbrigg:
- Gender neutral washrooms are seen as a safer space especially for people who a transitioning. However, organizations should be cautious about "requiring" people to use the gender neutral washroom, as some may feel excluded and singled out by this approach and would prefer to use the washroom that accords with their gender identity. It is best for organizations to allow individuals to use the washroom of their choice.
- If an organization is unwilling, or believes it is unable, to provide accommodation by making a gender neutral washroom available, it would need to establish that doing so would result in undue hardship (i.e. due to costs or other limitations with the facility). The undue hardship threshold is a high threshold and requires actual evidence (as opposed to perceptions) about the alleged hardship.

Question: How should one refer to people who don't identify either way?

Response from Angela Reid:
- Gender fluid or non-binary.

Question: How do you deal with people who feel their religious rights are being discriminated against by having to accommodate transgender people?

Response from Terri Susan Zurbrigg:
- This is an emerging issue of competing rights and it is working its way through the courts. The Supreme Court of Canada should be providing a framework in a few months.

Question: We are in a remote northern community with few doctors who sometimes refuse to treat people. Is there any support for travel to receive medical services in other communities?

Response from Angela Reid:

- Unfortunately this even happens in cities. Doctors may be able refuse service if it is related to an area they are trained in. Generally this is not the case. It is called transgender broken arm syndrome, where being transgender has nothing to do with the service being requested.

F: Notes from case studies on gender identity and gender expression

The following scenarios represent actual events where municipalities have contacted the Alberta Human Rights Commission for support.

Scenario 1: Washroom use in a recreation centre

Cathy, a resident of an Alberta town who locals knew as a male, was transitioning into a female. She went regularly to the swimming pool of the local community recreation centre to exercise and usually used the male change room. When she felt comfortable during her transition, she went into the female change room and the two females there began questioning her as to why she was using the female change room and not the male change room. She explained that she was transitioning to a female. The two women became very abusive towards Cathy. Nevertheless, Cathy changed into her swimsuit and went to swim. After she finished her swim she returned to the female change room to change. She was again confronted by the same two women and a few other women who were very abusive and called her several derogatory names.

Cathy went to the town staff who were working at the recreation centre and told them of the two incidents of abuse by the women in the change room. The staff told her they will look into it. Meanwhile, the women who had been abusive towards Cathy also went to the town staff and told them that they did not want a man "pretending to be a woman" in their change room.

The town has a policy that specifically states that there would be no discrimination, including harassment, of their patrons on the grounds in the Alberta Human Rights Act. Two of the grounds cited in their policy are gender identity and gender expression.

1. Was Cathy being harassed and should she be allowed to use the female change room?
2. How would you have dealt with this situation if it happened in your city or town?
3. Does your town or city have a non-discrimination policy for residents using your recreational and other facilities? How is your policy designed to create a respectful, inclusive environment in your public facilities?

Comments from the discussion:
- Many municipalities may not have a policy and staff may not be aware of the policies.
- Not all policies are created equal. Many policies are very vague and do not provide guidance on how to actually deal with situations of discrimination.
- Policies are only as good as their enforcement, leadership and action is critical.
- Communication with front line staff is key.
- Use information posters and signage for improved awareness.
- Need to balance the need for a detailed policy that explains how to handle different situations with having simple one pagers that are easy for people to digest and refer to.
- Work place culture means more than a policy. Policies often get overlooked.
- Facilities should consider having a code of behaviour that clearly articulates that if you do not adhere, you will be banned.

Scenario 2: Conflicts with religious beliefs

Your municipality has decided that all staff in every work unit is to take mandatory training on harassment prevention and diversity which is to be held in two months' time. The training emphasizes that staff is to treat each other with respect, and to "value" differences, including gender, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. Three of the staff in one of the work units have objected to taking the portion that deals with sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression citing a conflict with their religious beliefs.

1. Can an employee refuse to take the mandatory training because of their religious beliefs?
2. How would you handle this?

Comments from the discussion:

- No, if there is a policy then staff of the municipality are required to represent that policy.
- Religious beliefs are protected under the Act.
- The municipality is not asking them to become transgender. It is asking them to learn about it.
- Training is one thing, then you need to put it into use in your workplace.
- Try to engage in conversation about how it is a conflict. You are not asking them to change their beliefs you are asking them to take training about how to treat people.
- If you are trying to teach customer service, everyone should have to take it.
- Need to accommodate only goes as far as your ability to do your job.
- The law has given a toolkit to deal with religious beliefs. One's religious views do not enable one to engage in harassment. Mere exposure to other viewpoints is not discrimination. When religious belief severely held is undermined that is discrimination.
- An employee can behave however they want outside the workplace, but they have a duty to provide a discrimination and harassment free workplace.

G: Notes from the discussion on promising practices to support gender identity and gender expression

The following represents the comments heard during the group discussion on how municipalities can be inclusive of transgender people accessing municipal facilities and services.

Culture
- Start with being open and ask if you don't understand.
- There may be younger staff – they need support and training to act with respect.
- Staff onboarding and training – create opportunities to practice and role play in a safe environment so that training is not just sit and listen.
- Conversations with staff is important to connect culture with policy.
- Provide education for all employees. Often the people who need it most won't seek it out.
- Challenge is how to deal with staff who are disruptive. Reality that discipline may be needed.
- Train staff to ask respectful and appropriate questions where necessary.
- Provide opportunities to celebrate diversity.
- Make sure awareness of diversity is based on facts.
- Rely on the younger population that has grown up with more understanding of diversity
- Balance the perspectives of the quiet majority with the louder minority.

Implementation of policy
- Understanding of what inclusion means – more than just about race or ethnicity
- Respectful workplace policy is important but so is a bylaw about respectful community services.
- Post policies prominently both for employees and the public to see.
- Infrastructure review with a gender lens. Policy review with a gender lens.
- Be proactive. Even if it hasn't overtly come up – it may.
- Have an advisory workplace committee.
- HR policy may need to be revised and vetted through unions.
- Like municipalities who have signed on to WIC or CMARD, there are also municipalities who have made public declarations in councils after presentations in council (e.g. City of Hamilton-council passed a resolution).

Service delivery
- Have a workplace mentor and advisor.
- Adjust intake forms.
- Social housing and seniors housing are often built for specific populations instead of being inclusive to all.
- Find and make space for gender neutral washrooms.

Community partnerships
- Reach out to businesses and chambers of commerce to have those conversations.
- Work with other agencies to identify gaps and connect resources.
- Engage community partners such as school boards to help with education.