

Woman-Centered Policy Analysis Tool

Looking Beyond the Surface: An Indepth Review of Parental Benefits

An Atlantic Canada Project

This Woman-Centered Policy Analysis Tool was developed to assist project participants in the examination of the equity for women of the parental benefits policy currently employed by Human Resources Development Canada.

Step 1: Identify the Issues

- ♀ What are the issues for women which have necessitated a review of the policy? Who is being excluded from the policy? Who benefits from that exclusion? What are the short and long-term impacts of exclusion? What are the costs of exclusion and who bears them?
- ♀ What have equality seeking organizations and gender-sensitive researchers said about these issues?
- ♀ Consider critical factors that influence the issues - gender, age, sexual orientation, color, race, ethnicity, ability/disability, socio-economic status, employment status, education, marital status, others?.
- ♀ Consider the history or roots of attitudes which have created the issues being reviewed.

Step 2: Define Desired Goals and Outcomes

- ♀ What are the short and long-term outcome needs of women and their families?
- ♀ What are the values that we would like to see reflected in the policy?
- ♀ Determine the key groups of women who are affected by the policy and which groups will need special consideration (for example, single mothers or women with disabilities).
- ♀ Consider what government wants to achieve with this policy and how it fits into its stated commitments to social and economic equality for women.
- ♀ Establish outcome indicators to determine success (consider indicators for each diversity area/issue).
- ♀ Consider if there are gender or diversity factors which could interfere with achieving the outcomes identified.
- ♀ Consider the “big picture” - Are there other policies or practices of the department whose policy is being reviewed, or other federal government departments, that will impact on this policy or on women?

Step 3: Research and Consultation

- ♀ Consider what information or input is required to ensure inclusion of all women's perspectives.
- ♀ Determine your research needs (focus groups, cost/benefit analysis, etc.).
- ♀ Determine how both qualitative and quantitative data will be collected.
- ♀ Determine how you will consult with equality seeking organizations and individual women in Atlantic Canada about women's experiences with parental benefits.
- ♀ Consult documents about the implications of this policy for women, including briefs, statements and research by women organizations and others.
- ♀ When planning research that uses information gathered from women consider ethical implications.
- ♀ Ensure that researchers have demonstrated a capacity to perform competent woman-centered analysis.
- ♀ Collect available data desegregated by gender including information regarding Aboriginal women, women with disabilities, women of color, lesbians, others?
- ♀ Modify outcomes or success indicators based on research findings.

Step 4: Analyze Options and Make Recommendations

- ♀ Develop innovative solutions to the issues that meet the needs of all women and their families. Consider the solutions offered by women and equality seeking organizations.
- ♀ Determine who is to be included through the options developed. Who benefits from the inclusion?
- ♀ In what ways will the options disadvantage some groups or provide an advantage for others? Do the options have a differential impact on various women's social or economic position?
- ♀ Outline how each option supports equity and point out where equity may be compromised.
- ♀ Review options in light of desired goals and outcomes.
- ♀ Consider the impact of options on existing protocols, policies, programs or legislation.
- ♀ Consider the implications of each option if implemented and identify any possible unintended outcomes, including consequences based on gender or diversity.
- ♀ Consider alternative options where necessary, keeping gender and diversity as key elements in weighing the pros and cons.

Step 5: Communicate the Recommendations

- ♀ Consider communication strategies that reach all stakeholders, including women, equality seeking organizations and policy makers.
- ♀ Acknowledge the participation and contribution of all partners and consulting groups.
- ♀ Include suggestions about how the options can be implemented in an equitable, woman-centered manner.
- ♀ Highlight implications for each stakeholder in any communication materials developed.
- ♀ Use inclusive language, images and examples in any communication materials developed.
- ♀ Use plain language and an accessible format in the distribution of materials.

Step 6: Implementation of Recommendations and Further Evaluation of the Policy

- ♀ Create recommendations for further monitoring and evaluation of the policy in light of the desired goals and outcomes.
- ♀ Suggest inclusion of all stakeholders (women, equality seeking organizations and policy makers) in the monitoring and evaluation process.
- ♀ Consider the factors that may influence the evaluation plan (eg. gender, age, ethnicity, language, ability, etc.).
- ♀ Make recommendations about how results will be distributed and to whom.

For more information about ***Looking Beyond the Surface: An Indepth Review of Parental Benefits, An Atlantic Canada Project***, please contact:

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