

Update: Gender Based Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention Initiative

Initiative Title: Gender Based Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention
City Council Lead(s): Councillor B. Esslinger / Councillor S. McKeen
Department Lead(s): Citizen Services, L. Brenneis / J. Kain

Recommendation - Renew for 2017-2021 Council Term

Objective

In April 2015, City Council approved the Gender-based Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention Initiative. The aim is to reduce and ultimately end gender-based violence and sexual assault in Edmonton. The initiative is about shaping attitudes, raising conversations, and building awareness to prevent all forms of gender-based violence. The Initiative targets the root causes: inequity and discrimination.

Key outcomes, projects or activities and their status as of May 2017

Outcome #1: Increased awareness of and understanding about gender based violence and sexual assault.

- On November 1, 2016 Administration launched the “It’s Time” branding and public awareness strategy.
- Collaboration with Today Family Violence Help Centre to provide a two-day “Family Violence across the Lifespan” bimonthly training.
- The United Nations Safe Cities and Public Spaces Scoping Study (Phase I) was completed (April 2017) providing local research on sexual violence in public spaces.
- To better understand the local context and understanding of, and identify opportunities for engagement, a baseline perception survey on gender-based violence with 600 Edmontonians was completed (April 2017).

Outcome #2: City employees have increased awareness of and understanding about gender based violence and sexual assault.

- Administration is working to implement a strategy for a three step training that includes: general awareness, more-in-depth understanding for employee champions, and training with a policy focus for organizational leaders.

Outcome #3: Increased engagement of men and boys as allies in ending gender-based violence and sexual assault in our community.

- Co-hosted the 'Mask You Live In' screening and panel discussion with 325 participants.
- Successful grant applicant for the Alberta Human Rights Commission Project Men As Agents of Change: Peaceful Families, Harmonious Communities.

Outcome #4: Increased commitment to end gender based violence and sexual assault by Edmonton public, private and nonprofit organizations.

- November, 2016 a Commitment to Action signing was held in conjunction with the City's proclamation of Family Violence Prevention month.
- February 2017, about ten partners attended a Commitment to Action Partners orientation.
- Partners continue to work towards their individual commitments with Administration's support.

Outcome #5: Enhanced support for, and collaboration with, initiatives that strengthen a multi-disciplinary, coordinated community response to the prevention of gender-based and sexual violence.

- Administration worked with Indigenous Relations and Status of Women Alberta to mentor an intern as part of the Institute of Public Administration Canada program.
- Administration to work collaboratively to, share information, and discuss collaborative possibilities within the Corporation and community to advance the goals of the Initiative.

Future Steps

Gender Based Violence & Sexual Assault Prevention Work Plan

Outcome #1: *Increased awareness of and understanding about Gender-based violence and sexual assault.*

- Complete the United Nations Scoping Study Phase II and develop recommendations for priority areas.
- Development of a website with resources, including a "What is Gender-based Violence" video.
- Use the perception survey, completed by Leger as a benchmark to develop awareness campaigns, specifically, the creation of a public awareness campaign aimed at bystanders

Outcome #2: *City employees have increased awareness of and understanding about GBV and sexual assault.*

- Coordination of a Domestic Violence and Your Workplace training for City employees and developing a Gender-based Violence awareness campaign aimed at City employees.

Outcome #3: Increased engagement of men and boys as allies in ending gender-based violence and sexual assault in our community.

- Work with key partners such as Men Edmonton, the Father Involvement Network, and the Government of Alberta Engaging Men & Boys Committee to foster mentorship and peer support.
- Develop and support public education to support men in becoming effective allies.

Outcome #4: Increased commitment to end gender-based violence and sexual assault by Edmonton public, private and nonprofit organizations.

- Support the development and implementation of project plans for each of the Commitment to Action partners and generate additional partnerships.
- Enhance and target commitment from a variety of partners, to advance the goals of the United Nations Women Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces Program.

Outcome #5: Enhanced support for and collaboration with initiatives that strengthen a multi-disciplinary, coordinated community response to Prevention.

- Increased partnerships and linkages with community partners.
- Intentional integration with other City of Edmonton Initiatives and areas.

Evaluation

The Gender-based Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention Initiative was launched in 2015, there is a demonstrated need and opportunity to work on reducing and ultimately eliminating gender-based violence and sexual assault in Edmonton. This is a complex social problem, which impacts everyone. Citizens are looking to the City of Edmonton for leadership and support as the conversation has not changed.

It is recommended that this work continue, as more Edmonton specific data becomes available, the pervasiveness of gender-based violence is apparent.