

HALIFAX

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Item No. 12.1.4
Executive Standing Committee
July 12, 2021

TO: Chair and Members of the Executive Standing Committee

SUBMITTED BY:

Original Signed by 

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: June 10, 2021

SUBJECT: GBA+ Training for All Regional Council Members

ORIGIN

April 26, 2021 Executive Standing Committee motion (item 12.2.2):

MOVED by Councillor Blackburn, seconded by Deputy Mayor Outhit

THAT the Executive Standing Committee request a staff report regarding the implementation of the Federal Government's Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) program as part of the Councillor training and orientation for all current and future members of the Halifax Regional Council.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Administrative Order 2019-004-GOV, the *Women's Advisory Committee Administrative Order*, section 6 provides:

The Committee shall advise Council, through the Executive Standing Committee, on matters related to women as follows:

...

(d) provide information and resources about women's gender-based issues to Council, including the use of Gender-Based Analysis Plus and

(e) advise and make recommendations about strategies designed to achieve the objectives of the Committee.

RECOMMENDATION ON PAGE 2

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Executive Standing Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer to:

1. Incorporate the Federal Government's Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) into future Councillor orientation programs; and
2. Circulate the Federal Government's (GBA+) training to all current members of Halifax Regional Council and provide any additional support required to those who complete the training program.

BACKGROUND

On April 26, 2021, the Executive Standing Committee considered a report from the Women's Advisory Committee recommending that a staff report be requested on the implementation of the Federal Government's GBA+ training for all current and future members of Halifax Regional Council. This GBA+ training program is a free, self-paced course¹ available on the Federal Government's website and takes approximately three to six hours to complete. The course includes several accessible components like the ability to stop and review material multiple time and videos with text transcription that may support a range of learning styles and needs. Upon successful completion, individuals are issued a dated certificate from Women and Gender Equality Canada. The objectives of the course are:

- Recognize how various identity factors can influence the experience of federal government initiatives;
- Learn to identify how GBA+ can enhance the responsiveness, effectiveness and outcomes of federal government initiatives; and
- Apply some foundational GBA+ concepts and processes.

GBA+ is an evidence-based process used by multiple levels of government in order to assess how diverse groups of women, men and non-binary people may experience policies, services, programs and initiatives. The process involves examining disaggregated data and reflecting on social, economic and cultural norms and biases related to gender. The "plus" also acknowledges that this process goes beyond biological (sex) and socio-cultural (gender) differences.

The Government of Canada began developing GBA in 1995. In 2011, the Federal Status of Women rebranded to "Gender Based Analysis Plus" (GBA+) in recognition of the need to include identities and social locations beyond sex and gender in the process. In 2016, the Government of Canada implemented the GBA+ process across all departments which included changes to the Employment Insurance Maternity and Parental Benefits program.

DISCUSSION

According to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities: "GBA+ gives municipalities an approach to further understand the unequal distribution of power and privilege within society and its implications for people across all diversities. It can inform an understanding of the complex and multi-levelled nature of barriers that prevent or discourage individuals from marginalized groups from participating in municipal life."² For example, an Indigenous woman living in the Halifax region with a physical disability may experience physical and attitudinal barriers related not only to her gender but her status as an Indigenous person, as well as her ability that could contribute to marginalization and exclusion from municipal services such as

¹ [Women and Gender Equality's Gender Based Analysis Plus Training Course](#)

² [Federation of Canadian Municipalities': Diverse Voices: Tools and Practices to Support All Women](#)

public transit or recreation programs.

The use of GBA+ aligns with the Municipality's commitment to evidence-based decision making and as the goal set out in the Diversity and Inclusion Framework to identify and addresses systemic barriers in our practices, policies, procedures and programs so that the Municipality can capitalize on the strengths and talents of our community."³ GBA+ offers a tool for members of Regional Council to expand their understanding and increase their ability to respond to the needs of residents with diverse identities beyond gender, including but not limited to: ability, age, ethnicity, geography, immigration status, income, language, race, religion, and sexual orientation.

Although it was developed by the Federal Government of Canada, the GBA+ training program is suitable for a wide range of public sector employees and members of all three levels of government.

In 2020, CBC announced that the City of Fredericton had directed committee chairs to take GBA+ training and that all Councillors will complete the same training after the next election which took place in May 2021.⁴

In March 2017, Edmonton's City Council passed a motion to implement mandatory GBA+ e-learning training for senior leaders in the Administration and City Councillors by the end of 2018. Additionally, Edmonton City Council directed staff in role-specific positions, predominantly in the areas of research, policy and program development, human resources and communication to participate in additional training on GBA+ which is customized to the City of Edmonton.⁵ As a result of the City of Edmonton's participation in this training and other GBA+ learning initiatives, it has been reported⁶ that data collection has been improved. For example, new gender identification options were added to the 2019 municipal census and questionnaires now provide Edmontonian with the opportunity self-identify under expanded gender options.

Halifax Regional Municipality's next Councillor Orientation program will be conducted after the municipal election in 2024. Councillor Orientation programs are developed by staff in the Councillor Support Office and conducted by staff members from across the different business units. As the Federal Government's GBA+ training is free and easily accessible on the Government of Canada's website, all current members of Regional Council who wish to take the training are able to do so and can be supported by staff in the Councillor Support Office.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial considerations associated with this recommendation.

RISK CONSIDERATION

There are no significant risks associated with the recommendations in this report. The risks considered rate Low.

The risks are related to the accessibility of online learning not being inclusive of all learners such as people with learning impairments, low vision or vision impairment without appropriate supports (e.g. accommodation). This risk could be mitigated by communicating with Council Members that they can contact The Office of Diversity and Inclusion/ANSAIO and the Councillor Support Office about individual

³ Halifax Regional Municipality's [Diversity and Inclusion Framework](#)

⁴ [City of Fredericton's progress on gender diversity slow and steady by](#) Lauren Bird, November 3, 2020, CBC News

⁵ [City of Edmonton's Report on Gender Based Analysis Plus \(2017\)](#)

⁶ City of Edmonton's Report on the [Implementation and Impacts of Gender-based Analysis Plus – Update \(2021\)](#)

accommodations to support accessibility.

The risks considered for the alternative rate Moderate due to the potential for reputational damage if Halifax Regional Council does not demonstrate a commitment to expanding their understanding of the diverse needs of residents. This risk could be mitigated by messaging with regards to why the Federal Government's GBA+ course was not identified as an appropriate training tool for members of Halifax Regional Council.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

No community engagement was required.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

No environmental implications were identified.

ALTERNATIVES

1. The Executive Standing Committee may recommend that Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer to explore alternative training programs for intersectional gender-based training for future Council orientation programs for future members of Halifax Regional Council.

ATTACHMENTS

None.

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

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