



Ontario



THEN
NOW NEXT:

**Ontario's Strategy for
Women's Economic
Empowerment**

Spring 2018





2018

A PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER

While women have made great contributions in every sector of our economy, much work remains to be done for women to achieve full equality, and for our economy to fully benefit from everyone's talents and skills. It has been more than 30 years since Ontario first passed pay equity legislation, but we are still working to close the gap. We know that too many women still face systemic barriers to economic advancement.

Women in Canada make just 74 cents on the dollar, compared to men. That stubborn pay gap is even greater for Indigenous, immigrant and racialized women. As we work to tackle it, we must also address barriers including harassment, violence, poverty and discrimination.

That is why our government introduced *Then Now Next: Ontario's Strategy for Women's Economic Empowerment*. This is a comprehensive plan — the first of its kind in Canada — that aims to increase gender equity, challenge bias and eliminate barriers that women face at work, at home and in their communities. This plan will put forward measures to uncover and close pay gaps, empower women workers and leaders, develop ways to support women returning to the workforce after taking time to care for their children or other family members, and change perspectives to break down gender biases and stereotypes.

Progress has taken a lot of hard work and time and that makes "Then Now Next" such a fitting name for this strategy. It acknowledges all the work that came before us, our plan to take action now and the hard work that remains ahead.

Then Now Next shines a spotlight on compensation and improves conditions for everyone in Ontario applying for a job. Thanks to this first-of-its-kind strategy, we are building a fairer, more dynamic, forward-thinking and prosperous Ontario — for women and for everyone.

Because when women succeed, we all succeed.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathleen Wynne".

Kathleen Wynne
Premier



2018

A PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER OF THE STATUS OF WOMEN

It is time for economic empowerment for all women. This means equity and equality. It means fairness. And it means a stronger, more inclusive economy.

Women in Ontario represent 48 per cent of the labour force and more than half of university graduates, yet they continue to be under-represented in leadership positions. And women still earn, on average, 70 cents for every dollar earned by a man. Women often do more unpaid work around the home, especially when caring for children and loved ones. For far too long, the work that women perform has been taken for granted and undervalued.

What's discouraging is that these figures have remained virtually unchanged since the late 1980s. That's 30 years of missed opportunities for women, the economy and for society.

It's time to close the gender wage gap.

Then Now Next: Ontario's Strategy for Women's Economic Empowerment lays out our plan to remove the barriers and shift the attitudes in businesses, institutions and government that hold too many women back.

We are building on our work to create a society where women continue to innovate, inspire and build a brighter future for themselves, their families and their communities.

It is time for women to be recognized as equal partners in our businesses, communities and in our economy.



Harinder Malhi
Minister of the Status of Women



Women in the Economy

IT'S TIME FOR A CHANGE

Women in Ontario have long faced barriers to their success, including gender bias, discrimination and the undervaluing of female-dominated work. For generations, women have found ways to overcome these barriers – through collaboration, persistence and incredible tenacity. But barriers still exist. Far too many women have limited choices for the kind of work they do; or face limits on how far their careers can go. And in turn, they don't benefit equally from the economy and the economy doesn't benefit from the many and varied skills, qualifications and experiences that women have to offer.

It's time to change the story.

It's time to remove the barriers and empower women to achieve their full potential in Ontario's economy.

Building On

PROGRESS

Then Now Next: Ontario's Strategy for Women'sⁱ Economic Empowerment is a three-year, up to \$50-million commitment to break down barriers to women's full participation in the economy, create fairer workplaces, shift attitudes, support women's leadership, and improve their access to jobs and career advancement.

This strategy is the first of its kind in Canada.

i. While the term "women" is used in this document, the strategy acknowledges gender diversity, and is intended to support cisgender and transgender women, genderqueer and gender non-conforming individuals, non-binary persons who are feminine-aligned, and feminine-identifying spirits, and others.

It builds on progress already made in Ontario to support women's economic well-being and equity, including historic investments in child care, elder care, poverty reduction, skills training and education, and ending violence against women.

Economic inequality and gender-based violence are linked. Both are deeply rooted in harmful social attitudes, norms and behaviours that reinforce unequal and gendered distributions of power in society.

Women's economic success depends on a number of factors, including improving access to education, developing mentorship and training networks, and eliminating gender bias. However, women cannot achieve economic success without physical safety and freedom from violence.



ONTARIO IS...



Creating 100,000 new licensed child care spaces over five years to give women and their families more choice.



Providing more affordable, quality child care by making preschool child care free for children aged two-and-a-half until they are eligible for kindergarten.



Providing more affordable tuition to help more women pursue post-secondary education, and upgrade their skills to re-enter the workforce. More than 11,500 single parents are now receiving free average tuition – about 10,000 of those are single moms.



Increasing Ontario's minimum wage to \$15 per hour. Currently, over half of the workers in Ontario earning less than \$15 per hour are between the ages of 25 and 64, and nearly 60 per cent are women.

Listening to People **ACROSS ONTARIO**

Ontario consulted widely on women's equal inclusion in the economy. In 2015, the Gender Wage Gap Strategy Steering Committee was brought together. In 2016, the Committee released its report with 20 recommendations to help close the gender wage gap.

The Gender Wage Gap Strategy Steering Committee is made up of two volunteer external members, an Executive Lead from the Ministry of Labour, and the Pay Equity Commissioner.

The Gender Wage Gap Working Group was convened from April 2017 to September 2017 so that businesses and other stakeholder groups could have an opportunity to provide insight on these recommendations.

In addition, more than 1,400 people provided feedback in an online survey (and through written submissions) on what women's economic empowerment means to them, and 260 people participated in nine in-person discussion sessions across the province, including sessions dedicated to Indigenous and Francophone women's economic empowerment.

All of this input has been incorporated in *Then Now Next: Ontario's Strategy for Women's Economic Empowerment*.

THE STRATEGY

Ontario has been shaped by the hard work and exceptional contributions of women. A fair, equal, inclusive economy should recognize their innovations, work and leadership. This strategy contains actions in four areas to empower women:

Gender equality supports economic growth by giving the economy the resources and resilience to weather forecasted trends such as an aging population and shrinking labour force, as well as preparing Ontario for a changing economy and increasing productivity. Advancing women's equality in Canada has the potential to add \$150 billion in incremental GDP by 2026, with Ontario standing to gain between 0.7 and 0.9 per cent.

[The Power of Parity: Advancing Women's Equality in Canada, McKinsey Global Institute, 2017.]

Empowerment Through FAIRER WORKPLACES

Close the gender wage gap.

Women, on average, still earn about 30 per cent less per year than men. This number has barely changed over the past decade.

Ontario has passed pay transparency legislation, which will increase transparency in hiring processes and give women more information when negotiating fairer compensation that is equal to their male peers. Ontario is the first province in Canada to have pay transparency legislation.

The legislation will help ensure that compensation is based on a job's requirements and the candidate's qualifications. Specifically, it will:



Require all publicly advertised job postings to include the expected compensation rate or range



Bar employers from asking a job candidate about their past compensation



Prohibit reprisals against employees who discuss or disclose compensation



Establish a framework to require larger employers to track and report compensation gaps based on gender and other diversity characteristics. Specifically the Act:

- **Requires annual reporting, starting May 15, 2020 for employers with more than 250 employees, and starting May 15, 2021 for employers with more than 100 employees.**
- **Creates the ability to prescribe further employers in the Act.**
- **Specifically, the Act requires the reports to be published by the Ministry of Labour annually. Employers will be required to post the reports in their workplaces. There will be financial penalties and compliance measures to enforce the Act.**

Indigenous
women earn

43%

LESS

than non-
Indigenous men¹

Immigrant
women earn

34%

LESS

than non-
immigrant men¹

Racialized
women earn

42%

LESS

than non-
racialized men¹

Women with
disabilities earn

48%

LESS

than men without
disabilities²

¹ Statistics Canada - 2016 Census, average employment income, Ontario.

² Statistics Canada Canadian Survey on Disability, 2012, CANSIM table 115-0023, average employment income, Ontario.

Enhance Ontario's **PAY EQUITY OFFICE**

Consultations highlighted the importance of strengthening Ontario's Pay Equity Office to improve compliance with the Pay Equity Act. As a result, the province has increased resources to the Pay Equity Office by 25 per cent to promote and support compliance with new and expanded monitoring programs, as well as to develop materials to assist affected parties.

Invest in **WOMEN'S CENTRES**

Ontario's Women's Centres offer services that help women build safe and stable lives, and prepare them for employment. Ontario will expand annual funding to centres across the province and build a collaborative network, so more women from diverse communities are supported to transition to employment readiness. Ontario is planning to increase funding to up to \$250,000 per year to successful recipients of the Investing in Women's Futures program.

Funding under the Investing in Women's Futures program helps women's centres deliver a number of services:

- *Pre-employment supports such as employment counselling, computer training and life skills workshops*
- *Violence against women care and prevention, including counselling, peer support and developing safety plans*
- *Systems navigation supports, including resources and referral to housing, social assistance, health care and legal services*
- *Advocacy services, which provide support and accompaniment through complex challenges*

Empowerment Through **LEADERSHIP**

In January 2017, Ontario took an important step for women and girls by announcing a new stand-alone Ministry of the Status of Women to increase women's economic security and to end violence against women.

Increase the number of women in corporate leadership:

Women who sit on corporate boards improve business results and help shift cultural and organizational norms. As a government we're committed to making sure every public board - boards which oversee organizations like the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board and Legal Aid Ontario - has 40 per cent women on their boards by the end of 2019.

We expect the same commitment from the private sector. We've introduced "comply or explain" rules, meaning business that trade on the TSX have to put in place policies to get 30 per cent women on their boards, or else explain why they can't. Building on that, we issued a call to business to set a target by the end of 2017 of appointing 30 per cent women to their boards and achieve this target within 3-5 years.

As part of Then Now Next: Ontario's Strategy for Women's Economic Empowerment, Ontario launched Get On Board: Ontario's Implementation Plan to Promote Women in Corporate Leadership, which provides the groundwork and direction for the Ontario government's work to meet our targets on gender diversity, as well as to support private sector efforts to promote women on corporate boards.

Organizations with gender diverse boards and senior leadership teams exhibit higher returns on equity, higher valuations, and higher profits. Over an eight-year period, S&P/TSX companies with at least one woman on their board produced an annual 11 per cent compound return – outperforming their peers by more than 3 per cent.

[Canadian Gender and Good Governance Alliance, Directors' Playbook, 2017]

- *Women hold only 14 per cent of seats on the boards of TSX-listed companies.*
- *In Canada, women represent 35 per cent of managerial positions, 23 per cent of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) workers, and 29 per cent of elected officials.*

Support Female **INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP**

Ontario's Building Indigenous Women's Leadership Program supports skills training for Indigenous women in areas such as governance, leadership in a band council, and communications. An expanded program, co-designed with Indigenous partners, will empower more Indigenous women to move into leadership roles.

Encourage

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Women entrepreneurs are making their mark on Ontario's economy. Successful programs that are supporting women founders and women-led tech companies will be expanded or renewed. In addition, Ontario will establish a provincial Women's Entrepreneurship Association to increase opportunities for women to scale-up and expand ventures.

In 2015, Ontario had the highest female entrepreneurship participation rate in Canada, at 13.8%.

Focus on

YOUNG WOMEN & GIRLS

Mentoring young women can help change their futures.

Ontario will increase its support of mentoring and leadership programs for girls and women, including in areas of entrepreneurship and sports and recreation. The SheEO Clubs initiative, designed for-women-by-women, will develop an entrepreneurial mindset in young women. It will connect female students (16 and 17 year olds) with entrepreneur role models, mentors, and a network of well-connected women leaders to change the way young women learn about entrepreneurship as a career pathway.

Sport and its values can improve self-esteem and develop other leadership qualities. We developed the Advancing Opportunities for Women and Girls in Sport Action Plan in 2017 and as part of Then Now Next we are expanding mentorship programs for female coaches to help women succeed in sport. Ontario will also work with employers and community-based service providers to connect young women who identify as members of the Black community with meaningful career pathways in high-growth industries through the Industry-Led Career Initiative.

Additionally, Ontario will be increasing representation in apprenticeship and the skilled trades of all underrepresented groups, including women, Francophones, Indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, racialized people, and newcomers, by promoting apprenticeship and providing targeted supports to employers. The strategy will support changes in workplace culture that will create a welcoming, supportive environment for all apprentices, and will improve entry pathways into the apprenticeship system for learners from underrepresented groups.

Ontario is investing \$120 million over three years so school boards can hire 450 more guidance counsellors and other teachers to help Grades 7 and 8 students start career planning and transition successfully to high school.

Amplify the Voice of **EXCLUDED COMMUNITIES**

Ontario will also establish a program for groups of women who are underrepresented in different professions to help them connect, mentor and advance in their careers. This can include racialized women, newcomer women, women with disabilities, and members of the LBTTIQ2SAA+ community.

Empowerment Through **SHARING CARE**

Share the care:

Women spend about twice as many hours per week providing unpaid child care compared to men. When women have affordable and safe childcare options, they can make a real choice about whether or not they re-enter the economy.

Ontario will also explore ways to help women who have been out of the workforce return to work.



Offer **free preschool** childcare for children aged two-and-a-half until eligible for kindergarten, beginning in September 2020.



Increase operating funding for licensed child care to reduce fees, lower fee subsidy waitlists, and support system stabilization.



Create a **wage grid for program staff**, who are predominantly women, in licensed child care and EarlyON Child and Family Centres to assist those who work with children; and release a **workforce strategy** to support and grow the early childhood education profession and recognize the impact of the early years on children's development.



Continue to help **100,000 additional children**, aged 0-4 access licensed child care.



Launch a program to support the expansion of new licensed child care programs and to retrofit existing child care facilities in **First Nations communities**.



Continue to promote **EarlyON Child and Family Centres**, a newly integrated provincial system of child and family programs and services as a high-quality, seamless and accessible early years system for children and families.



Establish a **base funding approach** for licensed home child care agencies.



Create the **Early Years and Child Care Innovation Fund** to encourage growth and support flexible, unique and innovative solutions to pressing early years and child care needs.

Giving Caregivers More Support

Caregivers for people with mental health and addictions issues, who are often unpaid family members and friends, can themselves experience significant stress and poor mental health. Many of these caregivers are women. The province will provide \$35 million over four years to help them better care for themselves so they can continue to care for their loved ones.

It is also important that parents of all genders have real options when it comes to parental leave. Ontario will work with the federal government to develop a vision of parental leave that gives families choice, fights stereotypes, and benefits children.

Empowerment Through **CHANGING PERSPECTIVES**

Raise public awareness:

Challenging long-entrenched mind-sets is crucial to success. Ontario will raise public awareness through education to break down stereotypes, and recognize the value of labour frequently performed by women. Raising awareness will help to change attitudes and biases so we can achieve gender equality in workplaces.

Lead by example:

Ontario will develop policies using intersectional gender-based analysis so that government policies remove barriers instead of perpetuating them.

Share information:

Ontario will launch a dedicated web portal on women in the economy, to share and develop tools and resources for employers and workers.

Mark equal pay day:

Ontario will declare a yearly Equal Pay Day, to make sure the whole province remains aware of, and committed to, closing the gender wage gap.

Support businesses that support equality:

Procurement can be a key tool in achieving gender equity. Ontario contracts multi-millions of dollars' worth of services and supplies each year. It will leverage this purchasing power to encourage businesses to promote gender equality in the workplace and reach or exceed the goal of 30 per cent women on private sector boards.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Women represent more than half of Ontario's population. But barriers, some that are easy to see and others more subtle, prevent women's full economic participation. Supporting Ontario's women is a matter of fairness – every Ontarian should have an equal opportunity to succeed – but it is also an important factor in the increased economic growth and prosperity of the province. A recent McKinsey & Company study suggests that if women were fully engaged in the economy it would add \$60-billion to Ontario's annual GDP by 2026.

This strategy will remove barriers so that women can shape better futures – for themselves, for future generations for women, and for everyone in Ontario.



**THEN NOW NEXT: ONTARIO'S STRATEGY FOR WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT
SPRING 2018**