

Women and Gender Equity Board

Background

The Women's Advisory Board has been on pause since January 2022, with no current plans to reinstate it. The problems impacting women have not gone away, and there are broader gender equity issues not addressed or covered by any other boards or commissions. Additionally, there are currently no boards or commissions to advocate on behalf of other gender equity issues.

Fort Collins Women's Advisory Board - "Informs and advises the City Council on policy issues affecting women." Women's Advisory board has not held a meeting since at least early of 2021 (no minutes have been posted since [January 2020](#)). Recruitment for the board was held in December 2021, however in January a decision was made to officially "PAUSE" the board due to lack of quorum. ***The problems affecting women have not gone away since the pausing of the board.***

Why the Women and Gender Equity Board needs to be separate from Human Relations Commission

The HRC has a broad objective - "Promotes the acceptance and respect for diversity through educational programs and activities, and to discourage all forms of discrimination based on race, religion, age, gender, disability, etc.". We feel there is sufficient work related to women and gender equity that requires its own board fully dedicated to that topic. Additionally, it appears that the HRC has canceled meetings this year (March 9th, and May 11th meetings were canceled), and no minutes are available for any 2023 meetings.

Other places with gender equity boards:

- [NYC Commission on Gender Equity](#) - addresses issues of inequity and discrimination facing girls, women, intersex, transgender and gender non-conforming and gender non-binary persons regardless of age, disability, ethnicity/race, faith, gender expression, immigrant status, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status.
- [Pittsburgh Gender Equity Commission](#) - The mission of the Gender Equity Commission is to achieve equity for women and girls in the City of Pittsburgh. Our vision is a future in which everyone in the City of Pittsburgh, regardless of gender identity or expression, is safe in all spaces, empowered to achieve their full potential, and no longer faces structural or institutional barriers to economic, social, and political equality.
- [University of Minnesota Commission on Women and Gender Equity](#) - seeks to strengthen the entire community by improving the campus climate for all women and gender minority faculty, staff, and students, in order to create a campus working and learning environment that is respectful, inclusive, and productive.

Equity indicators

We know that both nationally and locally, women, non-binary and LGBTQIA+ individuals have worse outcomes compared to their heterosexual male counterparts. According to [Fort Collins Equity Indicators Final Report](#), Women and LGBTQIA have worse outcomes in Economic Opportunity, Public Health and services. Graphs of these equity indicators are shown on the next slide, and the key themes are noted below.

Key Themes -

- Social Exclusion (page 168)
 - "Interestingly, many community members across multiple focus groups (e.g., Asian and Pacific Islander, religious minority, people living with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ communities) specifically

named lack of inclusive programming/events in the library and other cultural centers such as Lincoln Center as indicators of exclusion.”

- Intersecting Areas (page 168)
 - “For example, members of the LGBTQIA+ community discussed the common difficulty members of their community have in finding LGBTQIA+-inclusive healthcare providers, and how transportation issues made access to inclusive providers even more challenging. After first commenting on the scarcity of inclusive health care providers in Fort Collins, they described how the few that did provide LGBTQIA+ affirming services were often too far from community members’ homes and/or not easily accessible by public transportation.”
- Policies as Drivers of Disparities (page 169)
 - As another example of policies driving inequities, members in the LGBTQIA+ focus group referenced City health care policies that do not recognize the needs of LGBTQIA+ individuals and drive disparities across the areas of public health and social inclusion. Participants in this group explained how healthcare coverage afforded to City employees, as an example, does not include care for transgender-related health needs despite statewide protections for to the LGBTQIA+ community; this exclusion from health care also intersected with a lack of feeling accepted or recognized in the community.
- Budgeting and Representation Within the City of Fort Collins (page 169)
 - Importantly, a handful of community members across multiple focus groups (e.g., LGBTQIA+, religious minority, Hispanic/Latinx groups, Black) raised concerns that their participation in the focus groups held regularly by the City of Fort Collins did not result seem to result in changes to policy and practice, and, more specifically, to the budget. Participants voiced the opinion that the City’s efforts in working towards equity would be more transformative if the budget reflected that commitment more strongly. For example, in the area of housing, community members across groups cited a lack of affordable housing as a driver of disparities, but felt that the City’s budget suggested it was moving away from investing in affordable housing, which may further exacerbate inequity.
 - Community members also named a lack of diverse representation across departments within the City of Fort Collins as a driver of disparities as this meant that their concerns and recommendations were not well understood or shared by those with governing power over their lives. For example, in one of the focus groups, participants named that the most diverse department was the Utilities Department, while in another, participants noted that there were no LGBTQIA+ specific positions in the City government.

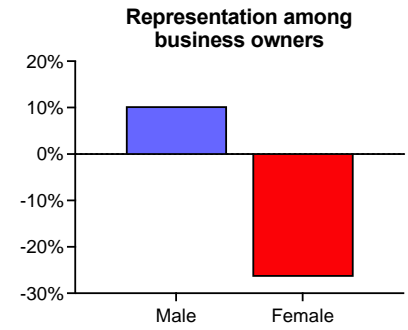
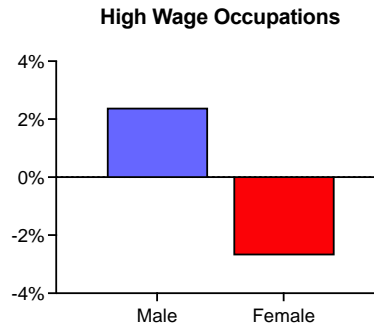
What would a Women and Gender Equity board do?

We can use the resources and tool kits from [CHANGE: City Hub and Network for Gender Equity](#) - whose mission is “Promoting gender equality and the social and economic empowerment of women and girls is essential, and yields benefits for everyone. All cities should strive to consider gender equity in every city policy, program, or initiative.”

Fort Collins Proposed Goals:

1. Free menstrual products in all city restrooms (city-owned/operated buildings) ([link](#))
2. Gender neutral language in city documents, websites, etc. ([link](#))
3. Map and signage of gender neutral restrooms throughout town ([link](#))

Sex differences in:



Sexual orientation differences in:

