It's Time Network

OVERVIEW

MAYORS GUIDE: Accelerating Gender Equality

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES BY ADVANCING WOMEN AND GIRLS

MAY 2016
ADVANCING WOMEN AND GIRLS, ONE CITY AT A TIME
It’s Time Network’s **Mayors Guide: Accelerating Gender Equality** is the first comprehensive guide for accelerating gender equality at the local level. The guide provides mayors with a “toolkit” of readily accessible resources, model programs, and checklists for supporting the advancement of women and girls in their communities.

The Mayors Guide emerged from a dynamic roundtable of mayors, activists and women leaders on the eve of the annual U.S. Conference of Mayors in June 2015. Sponsored by It's Time Network in partnership with the San Francisco Department on the Status of Women, the roundtable forum engaged approximately 150 experts across a variety of sectors related to the empowerment of women and girls.

The result of their work, as well as subsequent interviews with experts and model practitioners, is this first-of-its-kind “how-to” guide specifically for mayors.

### Why a Mayors Guide?

Despite vast gains for women over the past century, significant gender inequality persists in society. By focusing on gender equality, local governments can ensure that women and girls are fairly treated and represented in their cities.

**Mayors in particular, are in a unique position to impact the success of women and girls. In their roles as leaders and conveners, mayors can address the many systemic challenges women face by engaging the community in partnership and across political lines to forge policies and procedures that prioritize women and girls. For example, cities can address workplace conditions and pay, train police officers to respond effectively to domestic violence, and make diversity a priority in hiring and political appointments.**

**Many mayors and communities are already working to reduce inequities confronting women and girls. As a result of these efforts, successful models and a growing body of knowledge are emerging throughout the country. This guide aims to give voice to those efforts by synthesizing current knowledge, models and resources for easy access and implementation.**

Engaging the whole community in partnership and across political lines is essential for achieving gender equality.
How To Use The Guide

The Mayors Guide: Accelerating Gender Equality is not an academic treatment, nor is it an exhaustive account of all available resources. Rather, it is meant to be a “living” document that will support a continued sharing of best practices and feedback from mayors and communities nationwide.

The guide starts with a set of general recommendations for mayoral leadership to create the structural support needed to address the complexities around the issues that affect women and girls. The second part of the guide offers a toolkit of recommendations in 11 key issue areas that include models and resources that will help guide implementation.

General Recommendations
The general recommendations found on pages 13-14 of the guide can be synthesized into three practical steps:

1 PROVIDE LEADERSHIP
Mayors can lead by setting a tone that women and girls are a priority and ensuring that gender equality is embedded in the culture and goals of the administration and in messaging. Mayors can also utilize their influence throughout municipal government, with local business and grassroots leaders, across party lines, and with the media. Additionally, mayors can set annual improvement goals and create high profile events that publicly acknowledge and reward those who help to achieve them.

Above all, mayors can employ their tools of governance, including: executive orders, direct appointments, policies and procedures, public-private partnerships, public education policies, city ordinances, funding, proposed legislation, and programs and convenings.

2 ESTABLISH A PERMANENT COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
A fully funded commission on the status of women will determine a data baseline for deciding which areas to prioritize and which measurable goals and actions to pursue. Additionally, the commission will examine existing policies that affect women and girls.

3 PROMOTE COLLABORATION ACROSS SECTORS
The systemic issues that hinder the advancement of women and girls cut across sectors. Mayors can facilitate cross-sector engagement through collaborative models such as the development of a city task force for women. Composed of private sector, nonprofit and government representatives, this task force will strengthen relationships between NGOs and government agencies, and establish public-private partnerships to explore incentives to encourage the private sector.
Issue Recommendations: Models, Resources and Checklists
The Mayors Guide provides cities with easy access support in 11 key issue areas. For each issue you will find a summary of the challenge, examples of specific recommendations for addressing the challenge, models, resources, and an action checklist.

To learn more: www.itstimenetwork.org/mayors-guide
The Issue Areas

1. Economic Security
   Mayors can take concrete steps to improve women’s economic security by providing family leave and childcare to city workers, enacting “just hours and scheduling,” ensuring fair pay, and adopting planning, community and business initiatives, such as public private partnerships that help women entrepreneurs succeed and grow.

2. Ending Violence Against Women
   Violence against women continues to be a major and pervasive issue. In many U.S. cities, there are too few services which protect women, and those that do exist are often fragmented and underfunded and lack sufficiently trained personnel. Mayors can begin to address the service inadequacies by fostering an understanding of the connections between poverty, violence, human trafficking, domestic violence, oppression and abuse. In making these connections, mayors can begin to help support a systemic response by their communities, criminal justice systems, schools and other institutions.

3. LGBTQ and Human Rights
   Issues affecting the full spectrum of gender identity and sexual diversity have come to the forefront in recent decades. Mayors increasingly find themselves on the frontlines of rapidly changing federal law to protect LGBTQ rights. To effect change, mayors can provide sensitivity training for staff at the municipal level and engage their communities in bipartisan and interfaith conversations that help to inform, humanize and personalize gay rights, sexual diversity and gender identity.

1 in 5 women in the U.S. has survived rape

(Bureau of Justice Statistics)
4. Women and Civic Engagement
Recent research done by the Women Donors Network demonstrates the dramatic underrepresentation of women in elected office and at all levels of government. To change this, mayors can diversify their appointments and staffing, ensure fair representation on boards and commissions and adopt measures that support women’s involvement and leadership.

“Women are powerful agents of change that mayors can engage in community solutions; they network, build community organizations and control over 80% of the purchasing power of families. It’s imperative to have women and girls at decision-making tables...” p. 100

5. Girls Leadership and STEM
The biggest opportunities for high-quality, well-paying jobs in the coming years will be in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), yet only 24% of STEM jobs are currently held by women. Mayors can support girls’ and women’s preparation to lead and grow in this sector by developing public-private partnerships that train and hire more women, amplifying technology and engineering curricula at the elementary level, and funding public STEM education.

6. Workplace Policies
Women still experience pay inequity, low wages and lack of access to workplace policies and supports which contribute to quality of life at home and at work. Mayors can make wages transparent and work to implement policies such as paid sick days, fair pay, and minimum wage requirements.
7. Women’s Health/Reproductive Rights
Good health is vital in order for women to thrive in all dimensions of life. Yet, many women still lack access to viable health care, particularly during experiences common to many women’s lives where access to care is critical, including giving birth, dealing with life-threatening illness, domestic abuse and aging. Mayors and local governments can increase visibility around women’s health care needs, and address the economic and racial disparities in access to quality care in their cities and communities.

8. Housing and Homelessness
Families account for approximately 37% of the homeless population. Mayors across the country are playing a positive role in meeting housing needs and addressing the homelessness affecting the lives of many women and girls. This work can deepen as models for success are shared more broadly between municipalities. Mayors are critical in fostering the important work needed across structures to address related issues of mental health, poverty, economic inequality, domestic violence, drug addiction and veterans’ access to services.

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37% of the homeless population

9. Human Trafficking
Human trafficking can be found in a variety of forms in all 50 states. Most of those who are trafficked are women and girls. This crime also impacts teen runaways, foster youth, LGBTQ youth disowned by their families, and other homeless youth. Mayors can adopt strategies for differentiating responses to each of these issues and work with communities to provide support to survivors.
10. Women and the Environment
The increasing frequency of extreme weather events wrought by climate change affects women specifically in a number of ways. Mayors can provide public incentives and efficiency-related programs in the community and establish relevant departments, buy environmentally sound products for all levels of government, and initiate and promote solar and de-carbonization programs.

11. Cities for CEDAW
In addition to the ten issue areas listed above, the guide makes a general recommendation around the expanded adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) adopted by the United Nations in 1979.

CEDAW is a set of universal standards for eliminating gender discrimination ratified by 189 countries. Mayors can adopt the framework or draft a resolution that incorporates the CEDAW principles in their cities to help prioritize changes in local governance on behalf of women and girls.

In 1998, San Francisco became the first city in the world to enact a local ordinance reflecting the principles of CEDAW.
This guide is the beginning of a national effort to support gender equality by providing a “living” resource to mayors and municipalities. It is our hope that access to resources and constructive solutions will continue to grow as mayors and communities embrace this guide as a vehicle for the continued sharing of best practices and achievements.

Because this work cannot be achieved in isolation, It’s Time Network will continue to support ongoing collaboration and resource sharing within communities, and between mayors and cities through continued research and active discussion among mayors, civic leaders, policymakers, experts and advocates.

Additionally, It’s Time Network is launching our Network City Program in May of 2016, which offers a model for creating sustainable infrastructure that supports mayors and municipalities in implementing recommendations that improve the status of women and girls in their cities. To find out more about the Network City Program, visit: www.itstimenetwork.org/about-network-city-program.

It’s Time Network would like to thank the many mayors across the nation who are working courageously to support gender equality, those who will take up the work to make improvements with the help of this guide, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the participants in the June 2015 Mayors Roundtable discussion and everyone who subsequently contributed their expertise and knowledge to the development of this guide. We look forward to continued collaboration and dialogue in service to women, girls and our communities.
It’s Time Network is a growing community of people, organizations and leaders nationwide working to accelerate the full empowerment of women and girls to achieve gender equality.