

Women's Program

Management Response and Action Plan

Context

The Women's Program at Status of Women Canada (SWC) advances equality for women in Canada, a Government of Canada priority. Its objective is to support action to advance equality between women and men in the economic, social and democratic life of Canada.

The Program provides funding to organizations to carry out projects that work to bring about equality between women and men. Funded projects occur at the national, regional, and local levels and work to address three priority areas: improving women's and girls' economic security and prosperity; ending violence against women and girls; and supporting the advancement and increased representation of women and girls in leadership and decision-making roles.

Founded in 1973, the Women's Program is a permanent program; funding is approximately \$19M annually. The Program is delivered regionally through four offices. SWC's regional offices are located in Montréal (serving Quebec), Moncton (serving New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador), and Edmonton (serving Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, Northwest Territories and Yukon). The National office, also serving Nunavut, is responsible for national as well as Indigenous focused projects and the Ontario regional office are located at SWC headquarters in the National Capital Region.

In order to fulfill reporting requirements for federal grants and contributions programs as per the Treasury Board Secretariat Policy on Transfer Payments and the Policy on Evaluation, SWC engaged Goss Gilroy Inc. to undertake an evaluation of the Women's Program from 2011–2012 to 2015–2016. Over the four years under study, the Program had a budget of \$89.6M. The final evaluation report was accepted by the Women's Program in March 2017. Based on the findings and conclusions of the evaluation which employed multiple lines of evidence, three recommendations were made to improve Program performance, and Program design and delivery.

In the table below, each of the three recommendations is presented accompanied by the Women's Program's management response, areas of responsibility for completion and associated timelines to support implementing recommendations.

Target Area	Recommendation	Management Response and Planned Action	Timeline
Program Design and Delivery and Performance	Recommendation 1: The program should continue to fund projects with a view to fostering systemic change. Key elements that were found in the evaluation to have the potential to support and increase systemic change include:	Recommendation accepted.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to embed and clarify program understanding and expectations for sustainability of project impacts and systemic change within calls for proposals; 	<p>Sustainability The Program will ensure expectations for sustainability of project impacts are clear to applicants. Sustainability expectations will be incorporated into Call for Proposal (CFP) communication materials including information and tools. Staff will emphasize sustainability expectations during CFP information sessions for potential applicants.</p> <p>Systemic Change The Program will continue to solicit proposals through targeted CFPs on specific themes. As above, this allows the Program to clearly identify expectations concerning systemic change through CFP communication materials and information sessions. It also allows SWC to fund a comprehensive suite of proposals and support the coordination of activities across projects to better achieve systemic change. Furthermore, as is currently being piloted with projects funded under the 2015–16 CFP on increasing women’s</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

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		<p>participation in the democratic and public life of Canada, this approach also allows the Program to document overall results and best practices including learnings about projects' collective impact to bring about systemic change.</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embrace new flexibility to fund advocacy activities to complement the multi-component approaches that are currently being used by many projects to influence policy and institutional change; 	<p>Advocacy Activities</p> <p>The eligibility of advocacy activities was restored by SWC in 2016. This change supports the advancement of gender equality issues and helps funded organizations implement initiatives with greater potential for deeper and lasting impact for women in Canada.</p> <p>In 2016–17, advocacy tools and training were developed for staff to better enable them to support organizations to capitalize on this new program flexibility. The Women's Program will continue to provide training to staff and will improve supporting tools annually as required.</p>	<p>Done</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider clarifying the Women's Program's logic model, and theory of change to support achieving sustainable systemic change; and 	<p>Logic Model</p> <p>The Women's Program will review the logic model to determine whether changes are required to more clearly articulate the Program's theory of change by, for example, better aligning the Program's activities, outputs and outcomes to reflect systemic change objectives and outcomes.</p>	<p>2018–19</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore opportunities to fund longer-term, higher value projects with multiple components to foster longer-term impact. 	<p>Longer-term Project Funding The Women’s Program will examine options for funding longer-term, higher value projects. As a key first step, the Women’s Program will review its Terms and Conditions, in particular, current limitations to project duration and maximum allowable funding levels.</p>	2018–19
<p>Program Design and Delivery</p>	<p>Recommendation 2: Increase energies in knowledge translation/dissemination at the program level.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted.</p> <p>Leveraging Project Results and Promising Practices SWC will continue to build knowledge resulting from funded projects by extracting and disseminating promising practices. This knowledge will be shared with funded organizations and stakeholders including other federal departments and the provinces and territories. As an example, promising practices from projects funded to address campus violence have been examined and a toolkit is under development for posting on the SWC website to support dissemination and uptake.</p> <p>Information sharing between funded organizations The Women’s Program will continue to facilitate the networking of funded organizations and other stakeholders. Networking takes place at both the national and regional levels via meetings, teleconferences and, more recently, through the testing of an online platform. This facilitation allows funding recipients and other stakeholders to exchange knowledge and</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

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		<p>expertise and discuss opportunities and challenges in advancing their work.</p> <p>Partnerships The Women’s Program will continue to develop and enhance partnerships with federal organizations to strengthen the Program’s networks and work horizontally on issues affecting women. In this capacity, the Women’s Program will look to establish a Government of Canada “funders table” with relevant federal departments to better coordinate programming and enhance access to funding for equality seeking organizations.</p> <p>The SWC regional offices will continue to meet regularly and pursue collaboration with the Federal Councils in their region.</p> <p>In partnership with SWC's Policy and External Relations Directorate, the Women’s Program will engage with provincial/territorial officials to discuss emerging issues and share promising practices.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Program Design and Delivery</p>	<p>Recommendation 3:</p> <p>Enhance capacity across the program to support funding recipients through the project lifecycle to optimize their approach and efforts to achieve sustainable and systemic change.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted.</p> <p>Calls for Proposals The Women’s Program will continue to provide training to staff in advance of the launch of every CFP to ensure they have a full and common understanding of the CFP objectives and requirements. This allows staff to provide, consistent, timely, and accurate information to organizations seeking funding.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

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		<p>Project Management In addition to the ongoing support provided by Program staff related to organization capacity building, partnership development and project administration, the Women’s Program will develop a suite of tools to further support funded organizations throughout the project lifecycle. This will include tools related to performance measurement and project reporting. It also includes tools currently in development to better support organizations to achieve systemic change and sustainable outcomes for women in Canada.</p> <p>Expanded Regional Presence Budget 2016 provided funding to expand SWC’s regional presence across Canada. This enhances the ability of staff to liaise with local stakeholders and organizations to increase potential for systemic change and sustainable project outcomes.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>