

GENDER EQUALITY THROUGH PUBLIC POLICY

Creating Gender-Responsive
Policy in Maine

mainewomen.org



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Gender is an essential part of everyone's health and well-being. It influences how people perceive themselves and each other, how they act and interact, and the distribution of power and resources in society. Gender stereotypes and norms are communicated through every aspect of our lives.

Rigid gender norms and stereotypes are harmful to everyone, and create dangerous power dynamics and inequalities. Population level data in Maine shows gender inequalities in economic security, freedom from violence, health and wellness, representation in government systems, and civil rights and freedom from discrimination.

Gender-blind and gender-neutral policymaking create unintended gendered consequences in our laws. When policies are created assuming policies impact all genders the same way, it results in laws that have a disparate impact on particular sex or gender groups - even if it seems like the law has nothing to do with sex or gender. For instance, when commissions are created by the legislature to address significant policy issues and we don't make a clear effort to include women, those commissions often end up being male-dominated. The resulting policy recommendations are also less likely to consider sex and gender. Gender-responsive policymaking is necessary to achieve equality through public policy.

Gender-responsive policy fulfills two basic criteria: (1) gender norms, roles and relations are considered and (2) measures are taken to reduce the harmful effects of gender norms, roles and relations, including gender inequality.

We propose that gender-responsive policy achieves four guiding principles, or the **CARE Model**. Those principles are: **C**onsensus-Oriented, **A**ccountable, **R**esponsive and **E**quitable.

Consensus-oriented processes ensure that stakeholders of all genders are involved throughout policy development. Policymakers are **accountable**: they explain and justify decisions and actions, and to ensure that the public can access and understand the relevant information behind the policy. Policymakers have the necessary data and information to understand and be **responsive** to how gender differences may create different impacts, and use those differences to inform every step of the policy development. Our ultimate goal of gender-responsive policy is that it is **equitable** and that goal should inform all stages of the process.

“Gender-responsive policymaking is necessary to achieve gender equality through public policy.”

Gender-responsive policy can be created through a process called **gender mainstreaming**. Gender mainstreaming asks policymakers to:

- Recognize differences in gender roles, norms, and access to resources.
- Remove any gender-neutral focus. Take gender differences into account when formulating policy.
- Recognize that their own gender, experiences, and background create personal bias that influence their decisions.
- Ensure the participation of citizens from diverse backgrounds in policy development.
- Collect and analyze data disaggregated by sex and gender.

Disaggregated data is crucial to the successful creation and implementation of gender-responsive policy. Gender analysis uses disaggregated data to examine the differences between genders, including those which lead to social and economic inequity. It looks at relationships, access to opportunities, and access to and control over resources. This provides a basis for thorough examination of gender differences which reduces the possibility the analysis is based on incorrect assumptions and stereotypes.

Gender analysis works best when it is applied throughout the policy development process to determine policy needs, avoid unintended consequences, ensure smooth implementation, and plan successful monitoring and evaluation. When gender analysis is integrated into every aspect of policy making it improves the design and planning of policies, prevents negative impacts on gender equality, and adapts the policy to make sure that any discriminatory effects, either direct or indirect, are removed or mitigated.

Budgets are also a crucial part of the development of gender-responsive policies. People of diverse genders have unique needs, priorities, roles, and responsibilities in society and the economy. Because of these differences, the ways policies are funded can have different and unequal impacts that perpetuate gender inequality. A gender-responsive budget works for everyone by ensuring gender-equitable distribution of resources and by contributing to equal opportunities for all. It recognizes that budgets are not neutral and works to ensure that the collection and allocation of resources are carried out in effective ways that contribute to advancing gender equity. Overall, the steps of creating a gender-responsive budget are the same as the creation of gender-responsive policy.

There is no right or wrong way to create gender-responsive policy as long as gender differences are taken into account throughout the process. Four overarching questions can help guide the process:

- Does the issue being addressed affect people of diverse genders in different ways?
- What is the policy trying to achieve?
- Who are the stakeholders or experts?
- Does the policy action/solution consider the potentially different impact on people of diverse genders?

Implementing gender-responsive policy is one of many steps to gender equality in Maine. Addressing gender equality issues is especially timely given how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted women, transgender people, and people who don't conform to rigid gender norms.

INTRODUCTION



“For our shared work to truly achieve gender equality, policymakers must understand gender and the way that it informs and impacts people’s everyday lives.

In Maine, we work every day for gender equality because we know that gender inequality creates harmful equity gaps in economic security, healthcare, and safety.

Our Policy Roadmap for Women’s Economic Justice (1) outlines the way gender inequality is still a significant issue here in Maine. The harmful effects of gender-based discrimination, harassment, and biases are experienced by all women and girls, as well as those who do not conform to gender roles or norms that align with their assigned sex. This includes transgender people, gender expansive people, and LGBTQ+ people who have different gender roles in their intimate and familial relationships.

For our shared work to truly achieve gender equality, policy-makers must understand gender and the way that it informs and impacts people’s everyday lives.

Many of our laws - or places where our laws are silent - have unintended consequences that continue to reinforce “social power imbalances that overwhelmingly favor cisgender men.” (2) For example, for decades health insurance coverage considered basic reproductive care to be an additional health need - although almost everyone with a uterus will need access to birth control and pap smears over their lives.

We have the tools to address this issue: simply recognizing important gender differences and keeping them top of mind throughout the entire policy making process can make a big difference in the inclusiveness and effectiveness of public policies. This is known as implementing a gender-responsive approach to policy development. This approach helps expose hidden inequalities so they can be addressed before the policy is enacted and the inequalities are reinforced.

DEFINITIONS

This section broadly defines terms to help inform the lens we use in this work. For more information about gender, genderspectrum.org is a great resource.

Gender: socially constructed characteristics such as norms, behaviors, and roles. (3) This traditionally includes how a girl/woman or boy/man is supposed to act in the world. However, gender is not binary or static and is more of a continuum. Gender is not visible to others and cannot be assumed based on appearance, anatomy, social norms, or stereotypes. Gender is key to how people perceive themselves and each other and how they act and interact. It also relates to how our society distributes power and resources. (4)

Gender identity: the way people name their gender.

Gender expression: how someone presents and communicates their gender to others. Everyone does this through pronouns, clothing, hairstyles, and behavior (5) which may or may not conform into society's masculine and feminine definitions. (6)

Gender roles & expectations: norms used by our society to "try to enforce conformity to current gender norms." (7) Gender roles are arbitrary and change over time and across cultures.

Cis/cisgender: a term describing person whose sex is the same as their gender.

Trans/transgender: a term describing a person whose gender identity isn't the same as the sex they were assigned at birth.

Nonbinary: a term describing a person whose gender is not male or female.

WHY GENDER MATTERS

Our society communicates gender expectations across "every aspect of our lives, including family, culture, peers, schools, community, media, and religion," (8) which results in gender stereotypes and rigid gender norms.

Gender stereotypes affect all people. Stereotypes and rigid gender norms are harmful and create dangerous power dynamics and inequalities. Women experience a high burden of unpaid care work, increased violence, and barriers to decision-making power. People with diverse gender identities experience violence, stigma, and discrimination, (9) putting them at a higher risk mental health problems and a range of resulting health issues, including suicide.

Stereotypes and rigid gender norms also have grave implications for cisgender men, including poor mental health and substance use and not seeking healthcare. (10) Such norms also contribute to men perpetuating and experiencing violence, such as homicide and sexual violence. (11)

Gender stereotypes and norms lead to harmful behaviors that are often reinforced by policy decisions which result in population level outcomes. In Maine, men are 3.5 times more likely to die by suicide than women. (12) Firearms account for 60% of all suicides among men. (13) Maine has some of the most lenient gun laws in the country, and the ready availability of firearms has made them the most common suicide method.

Our policymakers live in the same society, surrounded by these gender stereotypes and norms and more. This often leads to unconscious bias, which can impact their decision-making and ultimately shape inequitable policies.



GENDER EQUALITY & GENDER EQUITY

“Equality” and “equity” are often used interchangeably, but the terms have two different meanings. Knowing the difference is important in determining gender-related policy goals and outcomes.

GENDER EQUALITY

WHAT IT MEANS

people of all genders are equally able to achieve their goals without complications caused by oppressive social structures and norms. (14)

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

people of all genders have the same opportunities to apply and be considered for a job. This approach ignores systemic gender-based oppression and does not require examining potential unconscious biases and stereotypes.

GENDER EQUITY

WHAT IT MEANS

people of all genders have the same opportunities to achieve their goals while considering effects of systemic gender-based oppression. (15)

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

people of all genders have the same job opportunities while also considering gender-based reasons for employment gaps (i.e., to care for a family member or different educational and employment pathways).

Oppression has cemented white, cisgender, heterosexual men as the neutral default across our lives, including research and policy. For example, women have poorer outcomes than men across every facet of the medical system because it is based on research and observation of white, cisgender men. (16) To that end, the Maine legislature acknowledged race as a critical consideration in public policy development with the passage of LD 2, which requires racial impact statements on a range of bills that aren't specifically about race. We must take a similar approach with gender and policymaking.


GENDERED CONSEQUENCES

Laws can have a disparate impact on particular sex or gender groups even if it seems like the law has nothing to do with sex or gender. Unfortunately our systems generally engage in gender-blind and gender-neutral policymaking. This creates unintended gendered consequences in our laws.

Gender-blind policies “ignore the different situations, roles, needs, and interests” of people of different sexes and genders and perpetuate gender inequality. (17) For example, gender-blind healthcare policies meant that prior to the Affordable Care Act, key women's health services were not covered by mainstream insurance. In 2010, the lack of coverage and resulting high costs of women's health services resulted in 48 percent of women aged 19-64 reporting that they could not afford - and therefore did not get - necessary healthcare. (18) That number dropped to 38 percent in 2016. (19) Without access to critical healthcare services, people are diagnosed at more advanced disease stages and have higher mortality rates.

Gender-neutral policies are not not meant to be affected by or affect different sexes' or genders' "situations, roles, needs, and interests." (20) However, most laws that claim to be gender-neutral are actually gender-blind. These laws don't take into account unconscious biases about gender and sex and as a result, their effect is not neutral. It's harmful.

We once thought that we could achieve gender equality by giving everyone the same opportunities regardless of their gender. (21) But, as demonstrated, the same or similar treatment has not been found to produce equal results. (22) As a result, more policymakers are acknowledging that sometimes different treatment is necessary for true equity.



“Gender-blind and gender-neutral laws don't take into account unconscious biases about gender and sex and as a result, their effect is not neutral. It's harmful.”

CREATING GENDER-RESPONSIVE POLICY



“Gender-responsive policy is necessary to ensure gender equity and to make substantive strides toward gender equality.

Gender-responsive policy fulfills two basic criteria:

- Policymakers consider gender norms, roles and relations.
- Policies address the causes of gender-based inequity by considering gender norms, roles and relations for people of all genders and how they affect access to and control over resources. (23) This also includes pathways to transform harmful gender norms, roles, and relations, as well as strategies to promote changes in power dynamics between people of all genders. (24)

We propose that gender-responsive policy making follows the CARE model, which is:

- **C**onsensus-Oriented
- **A**ccountable
- **R**esponsive
- **E**quitable

These four guardrails help ensure that policymakers consider gender differences in every stage of policy making.

Consensus-Oriented

Stakeholders of all genders throughout the policy development process are crucial to effectiveness and equity. Voices of all genders must be heard and respected in the decision making, planning, implementing, and monitoring phases.

People who may be affected by the policy, directly or indirectly must be active participants in the process. Policymakers must work toward increased awareness and participation by empowering people of all genders to get involved at all levels of policymaking. Special attention should be given to people who are most vulnerable. (25)

In hearing the viewpoints, needs, and interests of all genders, policymakers must consider both short-term and long-term perspectives (26) to determine the full effect of the policy.

Accountable

The public must have the ability to hold policymakers accountable for their decisions and actions. Those who are impacted by policies must have complete access to relevant and valid information about the policy and related decision-making. This means that information must be easily accessible and understandable.

Policymakers must explain and justify decisions and actions (or inaction) to those affected. (27)

Policymakers must (or task another body to) monitor the direct and indirect effects of the policy and make changes if it is found to cause harm to specific genders.

Responsive

To ensure that a policy will not perpetuate gender inequalities, it is crucial to recognize existing differences in the needs, priorities and current status of people across the gender spectrum. These differences should inform every step of policymaking to ensure that the policy is responsive to those differences.

Policymakers must determine what information and data they need and how to best collect it. Preliminary meetings with gender advocacy groups are also important in identifying priority points for discussion and decision making. (28)

Equitable

Gender-responsive policy is a tool for gender equity. Therefore, equity as a goal should inform all stages of policy development. Identifying policy measures that address structural inequalities should be a high priority. (29) Deliberate steps must be taken to make sure that the policy will not carry out or reinforce any discriminatory practices by benefiting certain groups at the expense of others. (30) Ultimately, people of all genders should be equally empowered with the ability and opportunity to make meaningful choices in and about their lives.

GENDER-RESPONSIVE POLICY: CRITICAL FOR MAINE PEOPLE

Problematic gender power dynamics are embedded in social and cultural practices. Policymakers have their own experiences, values, and biases that affect how they recognize, prioritize, and address these issues. In most cases, people approach situations in a way that would yield the best result for themselves or others who are similarly situated because those are the experiences they are familiar with. As a result, many state and federal laws have unintended consequences that continue to reinforce social power imbalances and gender inequality.

Additionally, the language used in a policy has the power to determine the inclusiveness and effectiveness of the policy. For example, An Act to Provide Women Access to Affordable Postpartum Care which became law in 2021 was written to extend the eligibility window for MaineCare services after the delivery of a baby. (31) Affordable postpartum care is extremely important, and it is an issue that does not only affect women. Trans men and non-binary people also become pregnant, and the law's current language excludes them. By simply changing "women" to "persons," the policy can provide life-saving postpartum care to everyone who needs it.

The lack of state and federal policies regarding access to affordable childcare and paid family leave has a harmful impact on Mainers. At first glance, the consequences may appear to affect all genders equally. However, that is not the reality. Once we consider the potential - and actual - impacts on different genders, it is clear that our lack of these policies disproportionately impact women. Women have historically been viewed as the child rearers and caregivers, which contributes to unequal pay both for equal work and over a lifetime of earning. This then becomes a cycle: this lack of policy protection perpetuates those roles by limiting women’s ability to participate in the workforce in any meaningful way.

The ongoing COVID-19 crisis has further exposed significant levels of gender inequality. Women in Maine and across the U.S. make less, on average, than their male counterparts. Their smaller salary (in heterosexual, two-parent households) is more likely to take a backseat as families struggle with the additional demands of childcare during the pandemic as childcare facilities close and schools close or turn to remote learning. Economists expect that the wage gap between men and women will continue to widen in the aftermath of COVID-19.

The disparities between men’s and women’s income vary by age group. In 2021, Maine women trailed men in average total wage and salary earnings in most age groups (includes all work, full-time and part-time).

2021 Maine Average Annual Total Wage & Salary Earnings by age & sex

AGE GROUP	MEN	WOMEN	DIFFERENCE
16-29	\$ 24,959	\$ 22,406	\$ (2,553)
30-39	\$ 50,527	\$ 35,678	\$ (14,849)
40-49	\$ 44,535	\$ 32,301	\$ (12,234)
50-59	\$ 52,018	\$ 37,102	\$ (14,916)
60-69	\$ 43,922	\$ 26,870	\$ (17,052)
70-79	\$ 2,260	\$ 5,598	\$ (3,338)
80+	\$ 4,639	\$ 1,577	\$ (3,062)

Source: U.S. Census Annual Social and Economic Supplement of the Current Population Survey, March 2021.

If not addressed, the lasting effects of COVID-19 coupled with the lack of affordable childcare and paid family leave will continue to perpetuate gender inequality in Maine and set us back years of progress.

It helps all Mainers to consider the differences between genders and the implications those differences have on people’s lives. It leads to better strategic decisions, greater efficiency in policy implementation, and enduring positive impacts on the lives of people of all genders. (32) Gender-responsive policy also “ensures that all members of a community are equally valued, policies are more effective, and the world is a more just, productive and peaceful place.” (33)

DATA & GENDER-RESPONSIVE POLICIES

As we work to center Maine’s most marginalized and disenfranchised communities when creating policy, we must do so using the highest quality data available. Using disaggregated data to guide our policy decisions and surveying practices is key to creating impactful legislation that avoids unintentional harmful consequences and helps those who need it the most.

Disaggregated data is data broken out by subpopulations. This requires an investment in technology, updated surveying practices, and data analysis. Data used to create gender-responsive policies must be disaggregated by gender because aggregated data may obscure real impacts of an issue.

It can also be very informative and beneficial to include a range of other intersecting identities including age, education, language, geography, income, and race. (34) This helps identify the implications and impacts of policies on different groups and individual people. (35)

One of the best examples of publicly available disaggregated data is the Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey. (36) This data includes several indicators of health and wellbeing, disaggregated by gender identity, sexual orientation, age and grade, race, ethnicity, and region. As a result, the public can access meaningful information about risk and protective factors for young Mainers, and identify where there are significant gaps between different sub-populations or sub-communities.

“We must use the highest quality data available to guide our policy decisions. It is key to creating impactful legislation that avoids harmful consequences and helps those who need it the most.”



USING GENDER ANALYSIS

Gender analysis uses disaggregated data to examine the differences between genders. This includes differences that lead to social and economic inequities and the underlying causes. (37) Gender analysis looks at relationships, access to opportunities, and access to and control over resources. (38) A quality gender analysis also “removes the possibility of the analysis being based on incorrect assumptions and stereotypes.” (39)

It is also important to involve gender experts in the policy process. This helps ensure that the policymaking process is based on deep understanding of gender-related issues and will have a genuine social impact.” (40)

When working through gender analysis start by assessing: (41)

- How the gendered division of labor and patterns of decision-making affects the policy. And conversely, how the policy affects the gender division of labor and decision making.
- Who has access to and control over resources, assets, and benefits, including policy benefits.
- How the complexity of gender relations in the context of social relations constrains or provides opportunities for addressing gender inequality.
- The barriers and constraints to people of all genders participating and benefiting equally from the policy.
- Capacity for gender-responsive planning, implementation, and monitoring, and develop strategies to strengthen capacity.
- The potential of the policy to empower women, people who are transgender, and people in LGBTQ+ communities.

Additional Questions to Guide the Process: (42)

- Does the issue being addressed affect people of diverse genders in different ways?
 - What do different gender groups have at stake?
 - What are the opportunities and constraints faced by different gender groups?
- What is the policy trying to achieve?
 - Does the goal include a broader commitment to improving gender equality?
 - What might the wider consequences be of failing to adopt a gender-responsive option?
 - Can the conflicts between the interests of gender groups be addressed?
- Who are the stakeholders/experts?
 - Do they include individuals or groups with a “gender perspective”?
 - Are people of all genders equally participating in the decision-making?
 - Are people of all genders treated with equal respect, as decision-makers, implementers, and participants?
- Does the policy action/solution consider the potentially differential impact on people of diverse genders?
 - How will the policy affect the livelihoods of diverse gender groups?
 - What benefit (financial, human) will the policy bring to different gender groups?
 - What cost (financial, human) will the policy bring to different gender groups?
 - Who are the affected people and who suffer the most?

GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGETS

Budgets are crucial in developing gender-responsive policies. People of diverse genders have unique needs, priorities, roles, and responsibilities in society and in the economy. Because of these differences, the ways in which policies are funded can have different and unequal impacts (43) that perpetuate gender inequality.

When this approach is applied to budgets, policymakers and stakeholders have the power to address “deep-rooted gender inequalities, and can transform social and economic relations of power, inequality and exclusion.” (44)

Gender-responsive budgeting looks at “how governments raise and spend public money, with the aim of securing gender equality in decision-making about public resource allocation.” (45) It also looks at gender equality in the distribution of the benefits and burdens of the budget’s impact. A gender-responsive budget works for everyone by “ensuring gender-equitable distribution of resources and by contributing to equal opportunities for all.” (46) The unifying goal of a gender-responsive budget is “to improve accountability to women, [transgender people, and LGBTQ+ people], and to give gender equality objectives a greater weight in decision-making.” (47)

Overall, the steps of creating a gender-responsive budget are the same as the creation of gender-responsive policy. Policymakers must avoid assuming that the “default” allocation of resources is gender-neutral while:

- Recognizing differences in gender roles, norms, and access to resources.
- Ensuring the participation of citizens from diverse backgrounds.
- Collecting and analyzing data disaggregated by sex and gender identity.

Policy-makers must also keep in mind that unpaid care work is still unequally shared between the different genders, and identify the impact on unpaid work.

GENDER-RESPONSIVE FRAMEWORKS

There is no right or wrong way to create gender-responsive policy as long as gender differences are being taken into account throughout the process. Several countries around the world and cities across the United States have implemented a gender-responsive approach into their policy making. The approaches that they have taken are helpful examples.

New Zealand

In 2002, the New Zealand Cabinet started requiring a Gender Implication Statement with all Cabinet papers (what we call a bill). The purpose of the statements was to address gender inequalities. The statements had to analyze the direct and indirect effect of the policy on people of all genders, whether a different approach was needed to address the issues of people of diverse genders, and confirmation that data disaggregated by gender was being collected and utilized. (48)

New Zealand’s focus on equity in its laws has given more women the support they need to be able to participate in politics. As a result, the country’s 2021 election resulted in a parliament with women’s representation at 48.3 percent. (49)

Additionally, New Zealand furthered women's ability to meaningfully participate in the workforce by unanimously passing an Equal Pay Amendment Bill. This bill goes further than ensuring that people of diverse genders receive equal pay for equal work, which has been law since 1972. (50) The bill considers gender differences in the industries and types of work and ensures that "women in historically underpaid female-dominated industries receive the same [compensation] as men in different but equal-value work." (51)

Iceland

Iceland ranks as the most gender-equal country and has closed 89.2 percent of their gender gap. (52) The country has achieved their success by writing gender equality protections into their laws, ensuring equal pay for equal work (53) and establishing a generous paid parental leave policy that benefits all parents. (54)

Iceland's Act on Equal Status and Equal Rights Irrespective of Gender requires that all public company boards, government councils, and committees have at least forty percent gender equality. (55) This law led to women holding 48 percent of Parliament seats in 2016 and 43 percent of board seats for the largest publicly listed companies in 2019.

United States

Several cities in the United States have started implementing a gender-responsive approach to their policy development. One of the largest and most established is Los Angeles, which passed a Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (56) ordinance in 2003. (57)

In 2013, LA's commitment to equality led to a comprehensive study "detailing data on the specific manifestations of gender inequality in the city." (58) The results of that report helped officials recognize the gender differences in key policy areas and in the development of gender-responsive solutions. For example, the Gender Equity Coalition was created and requires the leadership of each city department to prepare a Gender Equity Action Plan to measure and address disparities in the workforce. (59) As a result, the city achieved gender parity on its forty-one boards and commissions for the first time, and 40 percent of department heads appointed since 2013 have been women. (60)

The increased representation in leadership roles has also led to a stronger female presence throughout Los Angeles City Hall, including their Information Technology Agency (ITA) which has seen a 300 percent increase in women hired. Nearly 50 percent of ITA's managers are women, and 40 percent of ITA's programmers are women. Their Bureau of Engineering is forty-three percent female. (61) The mayor's office has also closed their gender wage gap. (62)

Finally, Los Angeles established a professional development program to encourage women's civic engagement. The program teaches civic and leadership skills and has resulted in 45 percent of neighborhood council seats being filled by women, and women representation in all neighborhood council boards. (63)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Building Bridges, Not Walking on Backs: A Feminist Economic Recovery Plan for COVID-19](#)

Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women

This publication highlights the opportunity policy-makers have to repair and rebuild with a focus on gender equality in their response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It provides great examples of what gender-responsive policies can look like across different sectors. The authors note that, while recovery funds are supposed to be neutral, the systemic gender issues in our society do not allow that neutrality. They reiterate the importance of the inclusion of diverse stakeholders and disaggregated data and recommend the use of gender impact statements.

[Gender Mainstreaming: 10 Steps for Integrating Gender into the Policy-Making Process](#)

Astrida Neimanis

This handbook was designed to guide policymakers who are not gender issue experts. Part one focuses on practical guidance and breaks down the process of developing gender-responsive policy into ten steps. It addresses how to incorporate a gender perspective into each step. Part two includes briefs that highlight gender issues in certain policy areas.

[OECD Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality](#)

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

This toolkit was created to help guide policymakers in developing gender-responsive public policies. Self assessment tools throughout the document help policymakers identify gaps, opportunities, and strengths in their current system and approach. The toolkit includes helpful examples from other countries that have successfully implemented gender-responsive policy. The toolkit also points out common pitfalls to avoid to help ensure the success of gender-responsive policies.

[Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate: Gender Budgeting in OECD Countries](#)

OECD

This handbook dives into gender-responsive budgeting. It addresses the positive impacts of a gender-responsive approach to budgeting and lays out a framework for policymakers in developing a budget. The handbook also analyzes the results of a 2016 Gender Budgeting Survey and shares best practices from countries that have successfully integrated a gender-responsive approach.



END NOTES

- 1 Download the Policy Roadmap for Women's Economic Justice at: <https://www.mainewomen.org/mwlef-roadmap>. The roadmap also stresses that disaggregated data is necessary to identify gaps in systems and policies that may otherwise be hidden by aggregate data and seemingly gender-neutral policies.
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END NOTES CONTINUED

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- 31 Title 22, MRS §3174-g: *Medicaid coverage of certain elderly and disabled individuals, children and pregnant women; transitional Medicaid.* (2021). Retrieved from <https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/22/title22sec3174-G.html>
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APPENDIX: GLOSSARY

Cisgender: a term describing people whose gender identity aligns with their assigned sex at birth

Gender: a complex interrelationship between a person's body, gender identity, and social gender that is an intrinsic deep-rooted aspect of a person's make up

Gender Analysis: concerned with the underlying causes of inequalities and aims to achieve positive change for those disadvantaged by policies by using disaggregated data to examine the differences between genders

Gender Binary: classification systems that organize gender or sex into two mutually exclusive categories (such as male/female, man/woman, or masculine/feminine)

Gender Equality: people of all genders are equally able to achieve their goals without complications caused by oppressive social structures and norms; ignores the historical and lasting effect of gender-based oppression

Gender Equity: people of all genders have the same opportunities to achieve their goals; takes the historical and lasting effects of gender-based oppression into account

Gender Expression: the way an individual presents and communicates their gender to others through pronouns, clothing, hairstyles, and/or behavior, etc.; an element of a person's social gender

Gender Identity: the way people name their gender; may or may not correspond to a person's assigned sex; not binary or static; not visible to others and cannot be assumed based on appearance, anatomy, social norms, or stereotypes; the second dimension of gender

Gender Norms: societal rules and expectations that dictate the behaviors considered appropriate or desirable for people based on their gender; created by society and can change over time

Gender Roles: the expected roles and behaviors attached to the genders; created by society and can change over time

Gender Stereotypes: widely accepted judgment or bias about a person or group – even though it is overly simplified and not always accurate

Gender-Blind: approach that ignores the different situations, roles, needs, and interests of people of different sexes and genders

Gender-Neutral: approach that is not affected by and do not affect the different situations, roles, needs and interests of people of different sexes and genders

Gender-Neutral Pronouns: not stereotypically or culturally categorized as male or female; used by both cisgender and transgender individuals to convey who they are and how they want to be referred to

Gender-Responsive: approach where gender norms, roles and relations are considered; and measures are taken to reduce the harmful effects of gender norms, roles and relations

Gender Fluid: a term for someone whose gender identity changes over time.

Intersex: an umbrella term describing people born with reproductive or sexual anatomy and/or a chromosome pattern that can't be classified as typically male or female

GLOSSARY CONTINUED

Misgender: the act of referring to someone using a gender pronoun or gendered language that is incorrect, inaccurate, or not inclusive of the person's actual gender identity; can be intentional or unintentional

Nonbinary: term used by some people who experience their gender identity and/or gender expression as falling outside the categories of man and women

Sex: refers to anatomical and physiological differences; based on a combination of bodily characteristics; often seen as binary but is best described as a continuum

Sex Assigned at Birth: refers to the act of assigning or designating a particular sex to a person based on their chromosomes, hormones, internal and external reproductive organs, and secondary sex characteristics; typically done by medical professionals during pregnancy or immediately after childbirth; does not determine or indicate anything about a person's authentic gender experience or identity

Social Gender: the way individuals, communities, and society perceive, interact with, and try to shape our gender; consists of three elements: gender expression, social gender, gender rules and expectations; the third dimension of gender
Transgender: an umbrella term for people whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth

Transition: commonly used to refer to the steps a person takes to find congruence in their gender; a complex process that occurs over a long period of time

Unconscious Bias: what happens when we act on subconscious, deeply ingrained biases, stereotypes, and attitudes formed from our inherent human cognition, experiences, upbringing, and environment

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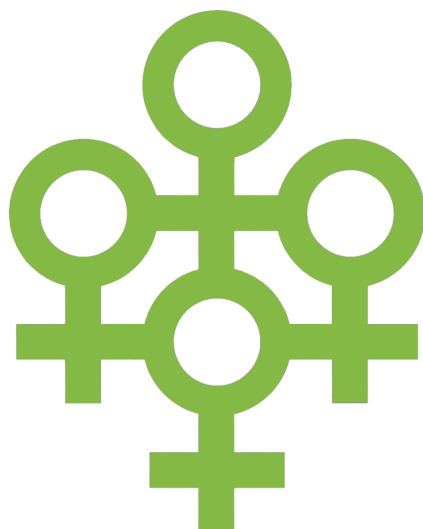
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