

FROM VALUES TO ACTION: EQUITY BASED-BUDGETING IN HAMILTON



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DeGroot
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Why We're Here

- **YWCA Hamilton and Sisters in Sync** have partnered across two projects; the Gender-Based Safety Audit and the Sustainable Resilient Communities Initiative
- Our work continues to examine how urban systems impact equity deserving communities including: **women, gender-diverse people, newcomers, racialized residents, and people with disabilities** and how other cities performing well in these areas manage their needs.

What is Equity Budgeting

- An equity-based budget uses data, lived experience, and equity analysis to guide spending.
- It asks three core questions:
 - *Who benefits?*
 - *Who is burdened?*
 - *Who may be unintentionally excluded?*
- Applied across the full budget cycle
 - planning->allocation->implementation -> evaluation
- It turns equity from a value into a practice.

What Other Cities Show Us

Lessons from other cities demonstrate credibility and flexibility.

- **Vienna, Austria:** Inclusive planning improved access and safety without increasing budgets
- **Toronto, Canada:** Uses an equity lens in budget proposals to better match resources to community need and recently added a gender equity unit



What Other Cities Show Us

- **Seattle, USA:** Integrated racial equity into budgeting, improving data quality and public trust
- **Barcelona, Spain:** Participatory budgeting brought community voices directly into spending decisions



Key takeaway:

Each city started small, adapted tools locally, and built momentum through transparency and measurable outcomes.

A Sound Economic Case for Equity Budgeting

- Using data, lived experience and sound needs analysis enables cities to direct public dollars where they deliver greatest return.
 - ***Investment Efficiency*** - targeting resources effectively
 - ***Greater Economic Participation*** - creating the conditions for more residents to participate more fully in the local economy
 - ***Strengthened Public Trust*** - through clear decision-making frameworks
 - ***Effective Upstream Measures*** - fewer emergency/quick fix needs

Why it Matters

Connecting to City goals and priorities

- Ensures resources reach the populations they're intended to serve.
- Strengthens accountability by linking spending to **measurable community outcomes.**

Aligns with the City's commitments to:

- Diversity & inclusion
- Sustainability
- Community Safety & Wellbeing

Makes public investment more effective, transparent, and responsive.

A Path Forward for Hamilton

Practical, collaborative next steps:

- Start with pilot departments (e.g., housing, transportation, community safety)
- Use existing City data and our audit findings to identify priority areas.
- Create a simple equity lens template for budget proposals.
- Establish a cross-departmental working group for learning and accountability.

Questions?



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Thank you!



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