Building an Equitable New Normal: Responding to the Crises of Racist Violence and COVID-19

Gender Equity Commission Recommendations to the City of Pittsburgh

Note From the Commission Chair …

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused enormous misery and harm to people across the globe and here in Pittsburgh. We grieve the lives lost and mourn the economic and social toll of the virus. We also acknowledge that the impact of the crisis has not been equal on all: in many ways, the pandemic has split wide-open the long-standing inequalities in our city. The virus did not create new inequalities, but it has disproportionately impacted our most vulnerable and marginalized communities.

At the same time, the much older "virus" of white supremacy and structural racism has infected our country for more than 400 years. We denounce the brutal police killing of George Floyd. We denounce the recent murders of Breonna Taylor, Nina Pop, and many other Black and women of color. And we condemn the historical erasure of Black women and girls, including trans and gender diverse people, killed by violent practices and policies that have been normalized for far too long in our culture.

In Pittsburgh, those protesting police violence in this moment have been forced to risk contracting the corona virus while facing additional police violence. We also see that our frontline and "essential" workers are so often women and people of color who are jeopardizing their lives, frequently because they can't jeopardize their livelihoods. The pandemic has exposed the massive quantity of unpaid care-giving and domestic labor that falls disproportionately on women. It has deepened the crisis of gender and sexual violence, including for trans women of color who were already experiencing some of the highest rates of assault and murder. Compounding the legacy of violent racism, the virus has placed additional burdens on single mothers with children and those with disabilities, and has exacerbated housing instability, food precarity, and access to education, while disrupting support networks.

To address all of these issues, Pittsburgh will need to be unflinchingly honest about both its past and present. The city must be bold, creative, and committed above all to those most impacted by the dual crises of racist violence and the pandemic. We can't just "get back to normal," because that reality was harming far too many people. Our city has an opportunity to create something new. Pittsburgh can lead the way in

Building an Equitable New Normal. As a guide to what that should look like, the Gender Equity Commission is pleased to present eleven policy recommendations to Pittsburgh's City Council and the Office of the Mayor.

The recommendations detailed here range from the specific to the broad. Some will require new resources and others will not; some will entail collaboration and partnerships across the public sector and beyond. All of the recommendations rest on best practices, lessons learned from other cities, and the latest research (including from scholars right here in Pittsburgh). Collectively, this document offers a case statement for intersectional gender and racial equity in our city.

Some of our recommendations can and should be implemented right away, while others will take more time. However, the Gender Equity Commission is bringing forward this policy vision now, emphasizing the urgency of this moment and the imperative to act. We cannot wait to dismantle local systems of oppression that disproportionately harm Black communities.

We look forward to working with the city to create the equitable new normal that all Pittsburghers deserve and that will help our city to thrive for generations to come.

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Pittsburgh Gender Equity Commission

Mission and Vision

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.

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Executive Summary

In the fall of 2019, the Gender Equity Commission released a report on "Pittsburgh's Inequality Across Gender and Race." This report was the city's first to look at both gender and race together, and it compared Pittsburgh with 89 other cities across more than 40 factors. The findings were stark, and revealed what many in the Black community have known, and have been working to address, for years: that while Pittsburgh has been named "Most Livable" on many national lists, it remains especially *unlivable* for Black women, men, and children. The most recent manifestation of racist violence and police brutality has again urgently called for the dismantling of structural oppression.

The commission's report offers several contributions to the city's efforts to take apart structures of inequality. First, it demonstrates that an intersectional approach to equity is critical – that gender *and* race *and* other identities such as age, ability, and sexual orientation exist together and cannot be tackled separately. For instance, talking about race alone too often obscures the particular challenges facing women and girls of color. Second, the report places Pittsburgh in comparative context for the first time across specific outcomes of inequality, so that we can see where other cities are faring better and draw policy lessons from them.

Third, the report introduces a new analytical tool to visualize each factor of inequality – such as health related outcomes – so that we can see not only where Pittsburgh stands on each, but also the variation across cities. (See page 58 of the report.) This is critical, because where there is wide variation on a factor – such as Black women's pregnancy related death rate, which is astonishingly high in Pittsburgh, and much lower in other cities – we can surmise that something is happening to impact that factor that is particular to our city. That means Pittsburgh has an opportunity to address that inequality at the local level and that we should focus on it.

After the Gender Equity Commission released its report, it spent several months meeting with community organizations and leaders who have been working for many years and bring invaluable knowledge and expertise to address some of the most pressing issues, including Black women's health, women and children's poverty, and workforce issues. The commission co-hosted a symposium attended by 300 people who provided feedback and several groups of community members organized

meetings and responded to the report, helping the city think about next steps and policy recommendations.

In 2019, the Commission also launched its Workforce Equity initiative, recognizing that many of the largest inequalities facing women, and especially Black women, in Pittsburgh cluster around income, poverty, and the proportion of women out of the labor force. These are areas where the City potentially has the greatest legislative purview and can make impactful policies (whereas many of the health and education disparities will also require deep commitments from school district, county, and state officials). Therefore, many of the policy recommendations in this document have a dual focus on racial and economic justice.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the long-standing inequalities identified in the report, shining a spotlight on the vulnerabilities of our most marginalized communities. On April 15, 2020, the Gender Equity Commission hosted a virtual Town Hall meeting with 250 participants to hear directly from community leaders and community members about what is happening on the ground in our city. (Following the event, the Commission shared out the recording as well as resources and answers to questions posed to our speakers.)

The Gender Equity Commission heard clearly from the community that in our quest to "get back to normal" following this pandemic, Pittsburgh must create a "new normal." Because the "old normal" has harmed too many in our community, the new normal needs to be built within an equity framework. Equity means that people have the resources and opportunities they need in order to be successful; this includes freedom from racist violence and police brutality.

Therefore, the Gender Equity Commission makes the following recommendations to the City of Pittsburgh for 'Building an Equitable New Normal." These policy and legislative recommendations align with the commission's Principles on Gender Equity as well as the United Nations' UN Women guidelines for governmental responses to COVID-19. Crucially, these recommendations center the voices, needs, and expertise of actual Pittsburghers and are designed to move us towards the Commission's vision of a future in which everyone in our city, 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.

Overview of Policy Recommendations

1. Address **police violence** immediately.

2. Mandate the collection of **disaggregated data**, including about gender, for all City department functions, programs, and initiatives.

3. Build **gender expertise and embed gender analysis** in budgeting decisions, response plans, and expertise of teams.

4. Prioritize resources for women, girls, trans and gender diverse people, such as federal emergency relief grants, for **essential health services**, including sexual and reproductive health services and **gender based violence prevention** programs.

5. Fully implement and update the City's "**Rooney Rule with Results**" to further equity goals in hiring and promotions.

6. Promote pay equity in hiring by requiring **pay transparency** and banning **prior salary history** questions.

7. Strengthen existing **paid sick leave** legislation and implementation.

8. Legislate **paid safe leave** to protect Pittsburghers experiencing gender based violence.

9. Expand access to **quality, early childhood education**.

10. Support local, **women-owned businesses**.

11. Pilot a **Universal Basic Income** program.

Policy Recommendation Details

#1. Address police violence immediately.

We denounce the killing of George Floyd at the hands of police officers, which is sadly only one of many examples of institutionalized racial injustice in the United States. The timing of this terrible incident, and that of all the other Black people killed by police in recent months, deepens the collective trauma caused by the global COVID-19 pandemic.

The GEC also condemns the historical and ongoing erasure of Black women (including trans and gender diverse people) who have been killed by racism. We remember Breonna Taylor, Nina Pop, and many other Black and other women of color who have been gravely harmed by practices and policies that our national culture has too often normalized.

Our commission demands a new, equitable normal that recognizes the dignity and respect due to every person, without exception. Structural racism — in conjunction with other systems of oppression such as sexism and ableism — should no longer over-determine quality or safety of American life.

Recent events around the country and the world reaffirm the importance of the Commission's intersectional equity work. We rededicate ourselves to amplifying the voices and following the lead of local groups most impacted by systemic exclusions based on categories such as gender, race, LGBTQ+ identities, disability, and others. Therefore, we lift up here specific recommendations from the community – including those from the eleven organizations in the Allegheny County Black Activist/Organizer Collective (presented to the city June 15, 2020) – as we continue to commit ourselves to positive change and dismantling local systems of oppression that disproportionately harm Black communities:

> A. Shift the Pittsburgh Police Department **to a culture of "guardian policing,"** with an emphasis on the motto "To Serve and Protect." Guardian policing requires acknowledging that the police are not at war with civilians, eliminates warrior metaphors and related trainings, requires high-quality de-escalation and anti-racist and anti-bias training offered by outside experts following best practices, and places the

responsibility for calling out bad behavior on other officers. The commission supports legislation that would create a "duty to intervene" policy such as the one recently introduced in [City Council by Reverend Burgess](#) and an end to no-knock warrants. In addition, the commission supports a renewed commitment to the diversification of the police force.

B. **Demilitarize the police and ban the use of "less lethal devices"** such as chemical weapons (tear gas), concussion grenades, and rubber bullets. Under [federal programs](#), Pittsburgh has acquired U.S. military equipment at discounted prices including armored vehicles that have been deployed against peaceful protestors. When police departments have equipment, they tend to use it. In 2009, police used a Long Range Acoustic Device (sonic weapon) for the first time against U.S. civilians at the G-20 protests in Pittsburgh, causing [permanent hearing loss and damage](#) to bystanders. The commission recommends adopting legislation banning "less lethal devices" to mirror [bill 11516-20](#) recently introduced into County Council.

C. **Create transparency and accountability**. This might include a publicly accessible database of every use of force by police, including all circumstances and outcomes. The Mayor has [stated his commitment](#) to the "[8 Can't Wait](#)" and "[My Brother's Keeper](#)" pledge, which we fully support. Full transparency and accountability will help the community track the City's progress on these goals, such as the ban on the use of chokeholds. The City also needs to prioritize police accountability and revised disciplinary procedures in the collective bargaining agreement negotiations with the police union.

D. Advocate for **changes to critical state and federal laws**, including the proposed [HB1664](#) (on deadly use of force) and [HB1551](#) (on mental health evaluations of police officers), that have been blocked from coming to a vote in the Pennsylvania legislature. Local political leaders also need to advocate for reform of [qualified immunity](#) at the federal level.

E. **Decriminalize minor offenses** that do not need to be classified as crimes, and often lead to unnecessary police interventions, such as: sleeping in public areas, minor traffic offenses like

failure to use turn signals, and drug offenses tied to addiction, such as possession for personal use. Many of these issues are best dealt with by other professionals, such as those with mental health crisis intervention training, shifting the focus from public safety to public health.

F. Rebalance the city's operating budget, by **divesting and reinvesting resources**. Defunding the police does not mean eliminating all police funding. It means asking what kind of safety support we want in our communities and what else our community needs in order to thrive. Police are not mental health providers, social workers, medical professionals, or education specialists, but are too often being called to perform these tasks. Since 2015, the Pittsburgh Police budget has grown 49% – from $76,815,050 to $114,787,000 – and represents 19%, or almost one-fifth of the city budget. (The current operating budget allocates 40% to Public Safety, but only 10.5% to Public Works and 7% to the Neighborhood and Community Development Fund.) As a first step, the commission supports the City Council proposal to freeze police hiring and re-direct 10% of the budget to social and violence prevention programs.

2. Mandate the collection of disaggregated data, including about gender, for all City department functions, programs, and initiatives.

Emerging evidence from cities across the U.S. is exposing how long-entrenched inequities are showing up during the COVID-19 crisis. But to really understand who is being most impacted, policy makers must have disaggregated data -- so that reports break down, or "dis-aggregate" the data, by sub-groups, such as race, gender, citizenship status, disability, and sexual identity.

For example, recent reports from Louisiana, where just over 30% of the population is African American, indicate that almost 60% of the deaths come from these communities. In Milwaukee, early data reveals that African Americans have died of coronavirus at an alarming rate and a

county dash-board is reporting mortality and infection statistics for sub-groups. In an excellent example of illustrating such disaggregated information, *New York Times* magazine reporter Nikole Hannah Jones used [social media to map](#) how COVID-19 impacts Black Americans disproportionately. These crucial efforts supporting the collection and analysis of disaggregated data focus on race and socioeconomics. Yet we know that within vulnerable communities, gender inequality is a critical exacerbating factor.

The Gender Equity Commission's recent report on [Pittsburgh's Inequalities Across Gender and Race](#) demonstrates just how extreme the inequality is for certain groups, especially Black women, when compared to 89 other U.S. cities. In addition, gendered divisions of labor continue to leave women with the majority of care-taking responsibilities, while historically unequal access to resources and wealth leave them vulnerable in other ways. We also know from global historical experience that pandemics impact women and girls differently and disproportionately: sexual abuse and intimate partner violence increase, the risk of homelessness and housing insecurity increases, and it becomes more difficult to access menstrual products, healthcare, and contraception.

As scholar Caroline Criado Perez notes in her 2019 book, previous epidemics such as H1N1 in 2009 and the Ebola outbreak in 2014 demonstrated that a "belief that gender doesn't matter is a dangerous position which can hinder preventative and containment efforts, as well as leaving important insights into how diseases spread undetected." [*Invisible Women: Data Bias in a World Designed for Men,* 299] She concludes, "the existence of sex-disaggregated data would certainly make it much harder to keep insisting, in the face of all the evidence to the contrary, that women's needs can safely be ignored in pursuit of a greater good." [309]

The Gender Equity Commission recommends that the Office of the Mayor mandate the collection of disaggregated data in all City departments. Data needs to be collected such that all City functions, programs, and initiatives track their service provision, impact, and resource allocation using gender, as well as other intersectional categories (race, ability, sexual identity, immigration status, etc.). In addition, the Commission recommends that City Council mandate the inclusion of disaggregated data collection in all new City contracts, programs, and initiatives that it approves.

3. Build gender expertise and embed gender analysis in budgeting decisions, response plans, and expertise of teams.

Every City department, strategy group, or response team working right now on COVID-19 and post-pandemic planning needs to include gender as one of the dimensions of its work. As required by the Pittsburgh City Code, section 177C.03(d): "A.) Gender equity must permeate every level of City operations as leaders, employers, and service providers. B.) City services shall be considered and deployed using a gender equity lens." There is no such thing as a "gender neutral" response plan. The United Nations recent policy briefing on "The Impact of COVID-19 on Women," concludes:

> "Women will be the hardest hit by this pandemic but they will also be the backbone of recovery in communities. Every policy response that recognizes this will be the more impactful for it. … Evidence across sectors, including economic planning and emergency response, demonstrates unquestioningly that policies that do not consult women or include them in decision-making are simply less effective, and can even do harm. Beyond individual women, women's organizations who are often on the front line of response in communities should also be represented and supported."

The Gender Equity Commission recommends that every City response effort take advantage of the gender expertise within the Office of Equity and the Gender Equity Commission, as well as the numerous community organizations that work with women, girls, and gender identity diverse Pittsburghers. The Commission also recommends that the City strengthen its formal participatory budgeting process to authentically engage all sectors of the community in collective decision-making about how public monies are spent; this might mean issuing a new request for proposals (RFP) to partner with new community organizations. The City should also make it a priority to send employees to professional development opportunities and conferences to enhance gender equity knowledge and understanding.

#4. Prioritize resources for women, girls, trans, and gender diverse people, such as federal relief grants, for essential health services, including sexual and reproductive health services and gender based violence prevention programs.

When the City is providing resources to address COVID-19 related issues, it must prioritize the needs of women and girls, including trans women and gender non-binary individuals. This includes resources that serve the community such as City-sponsored programs, personnel deployment, and budget allocations as well as resources controlled by the City such as pass-through dollars in federal emergency relief grants. For example, on April 28, 2020 the Office of the Mayor announced that it plans to issue more than $12 million in new federal funds to organizations supporting residents and small businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Those proposed to receive $50,000 allocations include the Women's Center & Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh, the Center for Victims, and Pittsburgh Action Against Rape.

The Gender Equity Commission recommends that the City continue to prioritize community organizations -- such as these and others -- that provide essential health services, including sexual and reproductive health services, and those working on gender based violence prevention programs. All organizations that receive funds, including those without a direct gender-focused mission, should be required to report disaggregated data on the impacts of their service provision, in keeping with recommendation #1 above. For example, the Urban Redevelopment Authority is slated to receive $5 million for its Small Business Emergency Loan fund, to issue bridge loans to businesses losing revenue during the pandemic. Given the critical importance of women's entrepreneurship to families and communities, it will be imperative to understand the extent to which those funds support small, women-owned businesses. Similarly, the $2 million proposed for the URA Housing Stabilization Program COVID Response will help renters and home-owners affected by the pandemic, which has crucial gendered implications.

#5. Fully implement and update the City's "Rooney Rule with Results" to further equity goals in hiring and promotions.

Adopted in 2003 by the National Football League, the Rooney Rule requires every team searching for a head coach to interview at least one or more diverse candidates. Named after Pittsburgh's own beloved Dan Rooney, the late former owner of the Pittsburgh Steelers and chair of the league's diversity committee, the policy was expanded in 2009 and again in 2020 to cover other senior management and front office positions. Pittsburgh's Corporate Equity and Inclusion Roundtable (CEIR), which the City participates in, promotes a 'Comprehensive Rooney Rule with Results,' advocating "that African Americans be considered for *all* positions from entry-level through the 'C Suite' and for *all* contracting/procurement opportunities. The rule embraces an *intentional* commitment to achieve *new, meaningful, and measurable* levels of diversity, equity and inclusion throughout the *entire* organization." While the Rooney Rule is most associated with efforts to increase racial diversity in hiring, in 2016, the NFL's policy was updated to require that at least one woman is interviewed for executive positions (up through, but not including, head coaching positions).

In an April 2017 Executive Order, Pittsburgh Mayor William Peduto announced that the City would be using the Rooney rule for senior hiring to promote multiple dimensions of diversity, including gender. That order required the creation of a policy and a status report to be presented to City Council and the Mayor's Office within 30 days. The order also required the "Adoption of hiring and recruitment policies for all other City positions," with final recommendations within 90 days. And it required the "Development of policies and programs that help to increase internal advancement and leadership opportunities." This provision mandated the creation of a Task Force, with final recommendations presented within 6 months. The Gender Equity Commission recommends that the City's Rooney Rule be fully defined and put in writing, along with an enforcement and accountability mechanism so that it is clear: Who is tracking the information? What are the specific responsibilities of hiring managers? Who is responsible for collecting data and how often (for instance, quarterly? In annual reports?)?

But simply including gender in a Rooney Rule will be insufficient to reach equity and inclusion goals for any organization. While interviewing women

or candidates of color is crucial, this step alone does not yield diverse hiring. For example, researchers who have analyzed NFL hiring could "find no evidence that the Rooney Rule has increased the number of minority head coaches." What's more, the Rooney Rule alone can be too limited in scope if employers use it only as a box checking exercise and tokenize minority applicants, or if the fail to use best practices to ensure fair interviewing and recruiting techniques to address implicit bias, and neglect to consider the pipeline problem by deploying the rule low enough in the organization to cultivate talent.
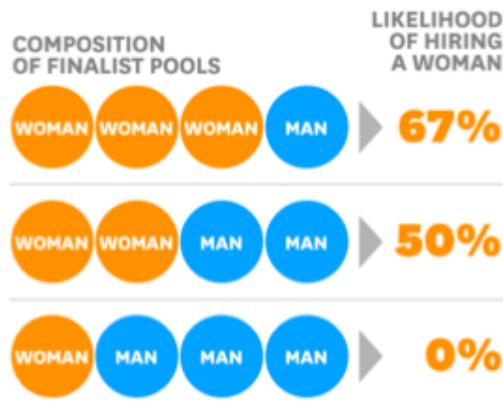
To address these concerns, the Gender Equity Commission recommends four specific additional implementation measures to ensure the Comprehensive Rooney Rule with Results is both *comprehensive* and secures *results*:

A. Require an **intersectional pool of at least 50% diverse candidates**. For example, inspired by the Rooney Rule, the legal profession has created the [Mansfield Rule](#), named after Arabella Mansfield, the first woman who was licensed to practice law in the United States 150 years ago. The Mansfield Rule requires participating law firms and corporate legal departments to include at least 50% women, LGBTQ+, lawyers with disabilities, and racial/ethnic minority lawyers in their candidate pools for senior positions. In addition to these areas of diversity, the City of Pittsburgh currently also actively recruits veterans and formerly incarcerated individuals. The current Executive Order "requires the City to interview at least one external and one internal diverse candidate." This should be updated so that 50% of the candidate pool is diverse.

B. Include at least **50% diverse candidates in final candidate pools**. Research by scholars at Carnegie Mellon University has demonstrated that when a [final candidate pool](#) includes only one woman out of four finalists, she statistically stands a 0% chance of being hired. One would presume she would have a 1 in 4, or 25% chance, but because she is the solo candidate in the final pool, she sticks out and appears to not belong, triggering implicit biases. The addition of just one more woman or minority leads hiring decision makers to consider those candidates. Ensuring at least 50% diversity in the final round of hiring (not just in the general candidate pool at large), increases the likelihood of a "diverse" hire to even odds. The City should update its policy to require at least half of every

final candidate pool is diverse.

The Relationship Between Finalist Pools and Actual Hiring Decisions

According to one study of 598 finalists for university teaching positions.

COMPOSITION OF FINALIST POOLS

LIKELIHOOD OF HIRING A WOMAN

WOMAN WOMAN WOMAN MAN ▸ **67%**

WOMAN WOMAN MAN MAN ▸ **50%**

WOMAN MAN MAN MAN ▸ **0%**

Source: Johnson, Stephanie K. et al., *Harvard Business Review*, April 2016.

C. Build in **tracking and data collection** to ensure accountability and results. By putting in place structures and processes that may not already exist at every level and within every department, the Comprehensive Rooney Rule with Results creates objective measures and transparency. By monitoring progress, the City can determine where additional changes need to be made. For example, recruiting materials may need to be rewritten or internal promotion procedures revised. Legal firms using the Mansfield Rule have tracked their own data to show that the rule is working and exactly where progress is being made.

Mansfield Rule 2018-2019 Outcomes

65% Promoted a higher percentage of diverse lawyers into equity partnership.

53% Reported a higher percentage of diverse attorneys elected or appointed to the Management/ Executive Committee.

92% Reported a higher percentage of diverse attorneys participating in formal pitches.

57% Elected or appointed a higher percentage of diverse lawyers into Office Head positions.

Source: Mansfield Rule, Boosting Diversity in Leadership (DiversityLab, 2019).

D. Extend the Rooney Rule to **every level of hiring**. The City has pushed the rule beyond just senior hiring, but it must implement it at every level. Although much has been made of the "glass ceiling" effect, holding women back from reaching the most senior positions, recent research analyzing 590 companies with over 22 million employees demonstrates that the biggest obstacle women face on the path to leadership is the "broken rung" at the very first step up to manager. And Black women and Latinas are more likely to be held back by the broken rung. McKinsey & Company's 2019 report, Women in the Workplace, concludes:

> "For every 100 men promoted and hired to manager, only 72 women are promoted and hired. This broken rung results in more women getting stuck at the entry level and fewer women becoming managers. Not surprisingly, men end up holding 62 percent of manager-level positions, while women hold just 38 percent. This early inequality has a long-term impact on the talent pipeline. Since men significantly outnumber women at the manager level, there are significantly fewer women to hire or promote to senior managers. The number of women decreases at every subsequent level. So even as hiring and promotion rates improve for women at senior levels, women as a whole can never catch up. There are simply too few women to advance."

REPRESENTATION IN THE CORPORATE PIPELINE BY GENDER AND RACE

% OF EMPLOYEES BY LEVEL IN 2019[2]   MEN ■   WOMEN ■

	ENTRY LEVEL	MANAGER	SR. MANAGER/ DIRECTOR	VP	SVP	C-SUITE
WHITE MEN	35%	45%	51%	57%	64%	68%
MEN OF COLOR	16%	17%	14%	12%	10%	10%
WHITE WOMEN	30%	27%	26%	24%	21%	18%
WOMEN OF COLOR	18%	12%	9%	7%	5%	4%

% WOMEN OVERALL

	ENTRY LEVEL	MANAGER	SR. MANAGER/ DIRECTOR	VP	SVP	C-SUITE
2019	48%	38%	34%	30%	26%	21%
2018	48%	38%	34%	29%	23%	22%
2017	47%	37%	33%	29%	21%	20%
2016	46%	37%	33%	29%	24%	19%
2015	45%	37%	32%	27%	23%	17%
% CHANGE FROM 2015–2019	+6%	+3%	+8%	+9%	+9%	+24%
% POINT CHANGE FROM 2015–2019	+2.6pp	+1.2pp	+2.6pp	+2.4pp	+2.0pp	+4.2pp

Source: Women in the Workplace (McKinsey & Company, 2019).

#6. Promote pay equity in hiring by requiring pay transparency and banning prior salary history questions.

One of the key findings in the Gender Equity Commission's [2019 report on inequality](#) in Pittsburgh, is the extreme economic disparity facing Black women. In Pittsburgh, both Black and white women are more likely to live in poverty than their male counterparts. But Black women are *twice as likely* as white women to live in poverty and *five times as likely* as white men to live in poverty. In total, over one-third of the city's Black women live below the federal poverty line. Compared to other cities, Black women's median income in Pittsburgh is near the bottom: Black women in ninety-percent of cities do better. In Pittsburgh, Black women's median annual income is only $20,082.

The wage gap is a significant contributor to economic inequality. In Pittsburgh, white women are earning 78 cents compared to a white man's dollar. Black women are making only 54 cents to the white man's dollar. This pay gap for Black women in Pittsburgh is even larger than the overall national figure of 61 cents for Black women. Clearly, pay equity is crucial to Pittsburgh's efforts to be livable for all of its residents. To promote pay equity in hiring, the Gender Equity Commission recommends requiring pay transparency and banning prior salary history questions.

When employers asking job candidates about their prior salary histories, they can use that information to adjust a salary offer. This has the effect of locking in earnings at the rate of what a person earned at a previous job, regardless of qualifications or job responsibilities in the new position. The practice disproportionately impacts women and people of color. For this reason the City of Pittsburgh has already instituted a ban on asking about prior salary history when hiring city employees. The City of Philadelphia has a similar ban on prior salary history for both its city employees and for all job searches within its city limits. (On February 6, 2020, the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the city may enforce [its pay history ban](#), vacating a lower court's injunction.)

Similarly, lack of transparency around salaries correlates with a significant and pernicious gender pay gap. The good news is [recent data](#) shows that companies that are transparent with their compensation may completely close their gender wage gap. An analysis of 1.6 million workers demonstrated that pay transparency closes the wage gap across

job levels and eliminates the gap in most industries. [Many municipalities and states](#) -- including [Pennsylvania](#) -- promote pay equity by both banning prior salary questions and requiring the posting of salaries (or salary ranges). The Gender Equity Commission recommends that Pittsburgh extend its ban on prior salary history questions to all employers in the City of Pittsburgh and that it also require pay transparency.

#7.   Strengthen existing paid sick leave legislation and implementation.

Pittsburgh City Council passed the Paid Sick Days Act on August 3, 2015 and it went into effect on March 15, 2020, after winning a key legal battle at the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. The ordinance guarantees an opportunity for covered employees to acquire paid sick time hours and is [administered](#) by the Mayor's Office of Equity. Because paid sick time allows workers to care for themselves or others, such as sick children, the benefit is [crucial for women](#), who continue to bear the disproportionate burden of care-giving responsibilities. While Pittsburgh's ordinance will have many positive impacts, there are several ways that the law can be strengthened to benefit working women, especially those on the front lines of the COVID-19 response.

The Gender Equity Commission supports the following suggestions to strengthen the implementation of the existing Act:
- Deepen outreach to working families by working with community groups and small businesses to spread the word, including outreach efforts in multiple languages. Consider paid advertising, including with the Port Authority as a cost-effective and efficient way to reach workers through ads on buses and bus shelters.
- Fully fund enforcement and simplify the complaint process by hiring and training qualified investigators to handle complaints. Create more accessible online tools for filing violation complaints with the Office of Equity.
- Front load paid leave for emergencies. During a public health crisis like COVID-19, workers cannot wait to accrue paid sick leave to access their benefits. The City should encourage businesses to front load sick time.

The Gender Equity Commission recommends the following amendments to strengthen the existing legislation:

- Raise the cap on accrual of paid sick leave. As this pandemic has demonstrated, 3 to 5 days of paid sick leave may not give enough time for those on the front lines of a public health emergency to rest and recover. City Council should raise the caps on how much paid sick leave workers can accrue in a given year.
- Increase compensation for tipped workers. City Council should amend this legislation to set the compensation rate for tipped workers to the minimum wage plus an average of their tips over a given period of time. Tipped workers, as well as commission-based workers like nail techs, deserve to be compensated at a rate closer to their actual wage.

Nota bene: The Gender Equity Commission is not including a recommendation for paid <u>family</u> leave at this time because there is a [campaign](#) working on crucial state-level legislation, which we support, to create a Pennsylvania "Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance Fund."

#8. Legislate paid safe leave to protect Pittsburghers experiencing gender based violence.

In June 2018, the City of Pittsburgh adopted a Paid Safe Leave policy to establish guidelines for non-union City employees to take a paid leave of absence due to a critical safety issue involving the employee, their family member or a household member. The policy addresses paid safe leaves of absence for non-union City employees to assist with balancing work and family matters, by providing Paid Safe Leave. This policy provides eligible employees with a period of paid time off for activities related to a critical safety issue. Paid Safe Leave supports workers experiencing gender based violence by giving them time to seek legal or law enforcement help, and to ensure their own safety and the safety of household members. The law also allows workers to seek healthcare treatment, obtain services from a domestic violence shelter or rape crisis center, or take time needed to relocate to a safe space.

Because women, especially trans women, are disproportionately impacted by gender based violence -- including domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking -- paid safe leave is crucial to gender equity for workers. The Gender Equity Commission recommends that City Council extend Paid Safe Leave legislation to create a city-wide program to protect all workers in Pittsburgh.

#9. Expand access to quality, affordable childcare.

The closing of childcare centers and out-of-school programs during the COVID-19 crisis has brought the issue of childcare into sharp relief for many families. But the Gender Equity Commission recognizes that access to quality, affordable childcare has been a longstanding and crucial unmet need for Pittsburgh families. Because of the disproportionate burden of childcare responsibilities placed on women, and because of the high poverty rate for single-parent households headed by women, childcare remains a critical gender equity issue. As we build an equitable new normal, Pittsburgh must prioritize access to quality, affordable, and flexible early learning and out-of-school programs for all families. The Gender Equity Commission recommends a renewed commitment to the goal of universal early childhood education available to all Pittsburgh children, birth to age four.

Many of the issues related to the quality and capacity of early learning and out-of-school programs (collectively referred to here as childcare) necessitate state and county level interventions. However, the City of Pittsburgh should consider ways in which it can specifically target expanding quality and capacity of existing centers and programs. For example, the pandemic has made it abundantly clear that front-line workers, such as nurses working overnight shifts, require flexible childcare scheduling. Often those childcare providers that can best meet these needs are small, family based centers. These small centers -- largely run by women entrepreneurs, with a large percentage of Black women owned businesses -- may struggle to meet state certification standards for quality. Grants and other directed resources to help home-based providers meet standards would help expand the number of quality centers, especially in the communities with the highest need.

The city could also consider a program such as the one run by Early Head Start that sends coaches into centers to work with teachers and to

provide professional development and mentoring. These efforts can help small providers who might have special skills, such as supporting children with disabilities or providing multilingual services. Small childcare centers also need supports such as leadership development, business planning, long term business planning, and increased awareness of small business loans and grant programs that are available to them. For example, the URA will be launching a micro-loan program geared towards small business child care facilities and will include some technical assistance for applying for those loans. The URA and other organizations that work with small businesses must continue to prioritize programs geared towards child care facilities.

The single largest issue facing the expansion of quality childcare in the city is staffing. Childcare centers face extremely high turnover rates, and operate on razor thin margins that rarely permit them to pay much more than minimum wage. Early childhood educators with college degrees frequently stay in the profession for only a few years, resulting in a persistent talent drain and disrupted relationships with children. The Gender Equity Commission recommends that Pittsburgh consider outside-the-box solutions to support childcare staff: student loan forgiveness programs, minimum wage requirements, and tax incentives should all be explored. Pittsburgh has an opportunity to provide innovative leadership in addressing one of the most persistent, pervasive, and pernicious gender equity issues.

#10. Support local, women-owned businesses.

Women's entrepreneurship is a cornerstone of economic prosperity for women, families, and our community. Women owned businesses tend to be smaller, are often sole enterprises, and face disproportionate hurdles in financing and other resources, particularly for women of color. The Gender Equity Commission recommends that the City of Pittsburgh prioritize women owned businesses in recovery and response planning to COVID-19. For example, the federal government has deferred tax payments and the City should consider this approach for local small businesses, such as providing a six-month delay for those impacted by the pandemic. Many women are reporting that access to affordable childcare will be indispensable as they try to get their businesses back up and running. Entrepreneurs are also looking for guidance and a step by step plan on how businesses should implement social distancing when

reopening, and need access to personal protective equipment, including face masks for employees and hand sanitizer. The City of Pittsburgh could also help by expediting and streamlining outdoor permits to help businesses offer services outside to meet health and safety guidelines. And the City should explore the option of creating a Female Business Enterprise (FBE) designation that is defined as 100% owned, operated and controlled by women (the current designation requires only 51% ownership and is too easily evaded).

#11. Pilot a Universal Basic Income program.

One of the highly troubling findings from the Gender Equity Commission's report on [Pittsburgh's Inequalities Across Gender and Race](#), is the rate of Black women's poverty and unemployment. Although Black women in Pittsburgh are similarly educated to Black women in other cities, they are much more likely to be under or unemployed. And while they are applying for jobs, employers are not hiring them, contributing to very high rates of poverty, and extremely high rates of poverty for their children. Many of the report's findings related to health and educational outcomes correlate with Black women's poverty, making economic security for Pittsburgh's most marginalized communities a top policy priority.

Due to structural inequalities inherited from the past, women still face gender-based barriers and are much more likely to live with economic hardship, if not poverty. Women are also more likely to occupy part-time work than men and to work in the lowest paid sectors, including service and restaurant work. Reproductive work (i.e., maintaining families and homes; being primary carers for children and the elderly) is mainly accomplished by women for free or very little money, while labor laws and social security systems have continued to be based on the model of the "male breadwinner," linking economic security to remunerated work.

Nationally and locally, most households with children rely on women's income and are disproportionately likely to live in poverty. The gendered wage gap means that these households will be at an even greater disadvantage when financial crises develop. Without targeted and systematic interventions, those most disadvantaged by gender-based inequities will face intense economic hardship, be unable to maintain critical expenses that come due, and may have to make choices between

health, safety, housing, and basic needs. Rates of eviction and homelessness are eventually likely to hit these groups particularly hard.

The Gender Equity Commission recommends the implementation of a pilot Universal Basic Income (UBI) program in the city of Pittsburgh. UBI has been referred to as: unconditional income, a citizen wage, a guaranteed subsidy, existence income, a universal dividend, or income entitlement, all referring to systems that provide each citizen a financial grant either monthly or annually. UBI proposals have a long history and broad support across political ideology, discipline, and geography. In the American context, beginning in the late 18th century, prominent leaders and thinkers like Thomas Paine advocated for a citizens' dividend. Similarly, decades later, Martin Luther King proposed a guaranteed minimum income as a means of abolishing poverty. In the late 1970s, the Alaska Permanent Fund was created to pay residents a dividend based on oil revenues.

UBI programs are being tested all over the world, including the United States, and are poised to take on even greater urgency with the devastating economic impact of COVID-19. Hamilton, Ontario -- the Steel City of Canada -- is running a three year pilot for 1,000 participants who receive C$1,900 per month, with an additional supplement for those with a disability. Barcelona launched their pilot in 2017 funded by the city council and a grant, to guarantee 1,000 households in the city's poorest area with a monthly income.

In the U.S., Stockton, California, once known as America's foreclosure capital, has struggled with a 20% unemployment rate and one in four residents living in poverty. That city has launched an 18 month pilot to grant 130 adults living in its poorest

What "basic income" gets spent on

In February, 125 randomly selected Stockton families began receiving $500 per month in "basic income"– cash with no strings attached. Researchers have tracked most of what that free money got spent on during the first five months of the project. (Note: 40% of expenditures – cash purchases, transfers to savings – were not tracked)

Category	%
Food	38%
Home goods/clothing	24%
Utilities	11%
Gas	9%
Other	18%
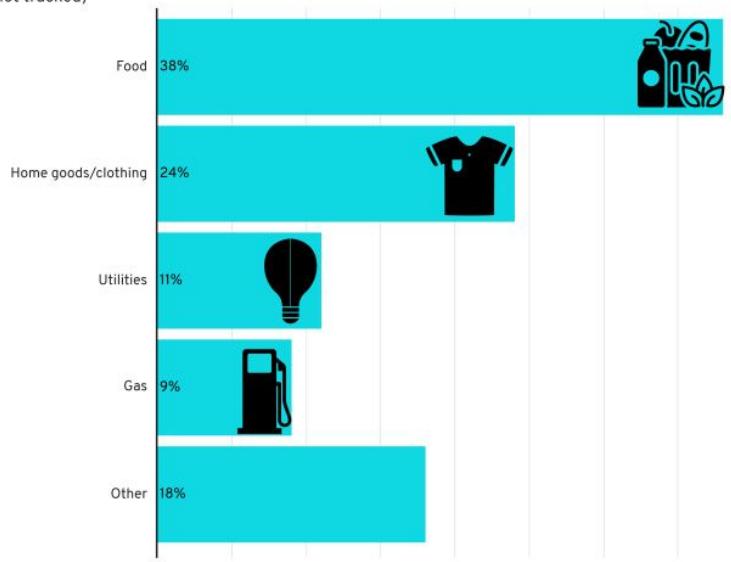
Source: Stockton Economic Empowerment Demonstration

neighborhoods with $500 per month. The funding for the initiative came from a $1 million grant from the Economic Security Project, a network organization that has raised [$10 million to fund and explore](#) universal basic income programs, as well as $2 million from foundations and individual donors. Researchers have released [initial findings](#) showing that Stockton's recipients of the UBI are spending the money on basic needs: food, rent, utilities, home goods and clothing. Following the Stockton model, [Chicago](#) has recommended starting an 18 month [pilot effort](#), granting 1,000 people $1,000 per month.

A UBI links economic security to other human rights by enabling people to meet basic human needs, regardless of social identities or inheritances. UBIs can support the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG #1: ending poverty; #2: reducing inequality; and #5: gender equality. Because a UBI does not require qualification procedures, it makes the administrative process faster than other relief programs.

COVID-19 necessitates sheltering in place for public health and safety reasons, resulting in extreme employment disruption and job losses. Financially, the most vulnerable people are low-wage workers in low-income households, for whom loss of income may deter them from self-isolating. And remote work is not possible for workers in retail, food industries, personal services, consultancies, and informal sectors, where employment is already often precarious, wages are low, and there may not be any access to paid sick leave or healthcare insurance.

A UBI may be particularly effective for those most vulnerable to rapid social change and disorder, including older populations, people with disabilities, immigrants, and others. It also offers the possibility of deflecting the stigmas that have become attached to welfare and affirmative action programs in the U.S., because it is unconditional and universal.

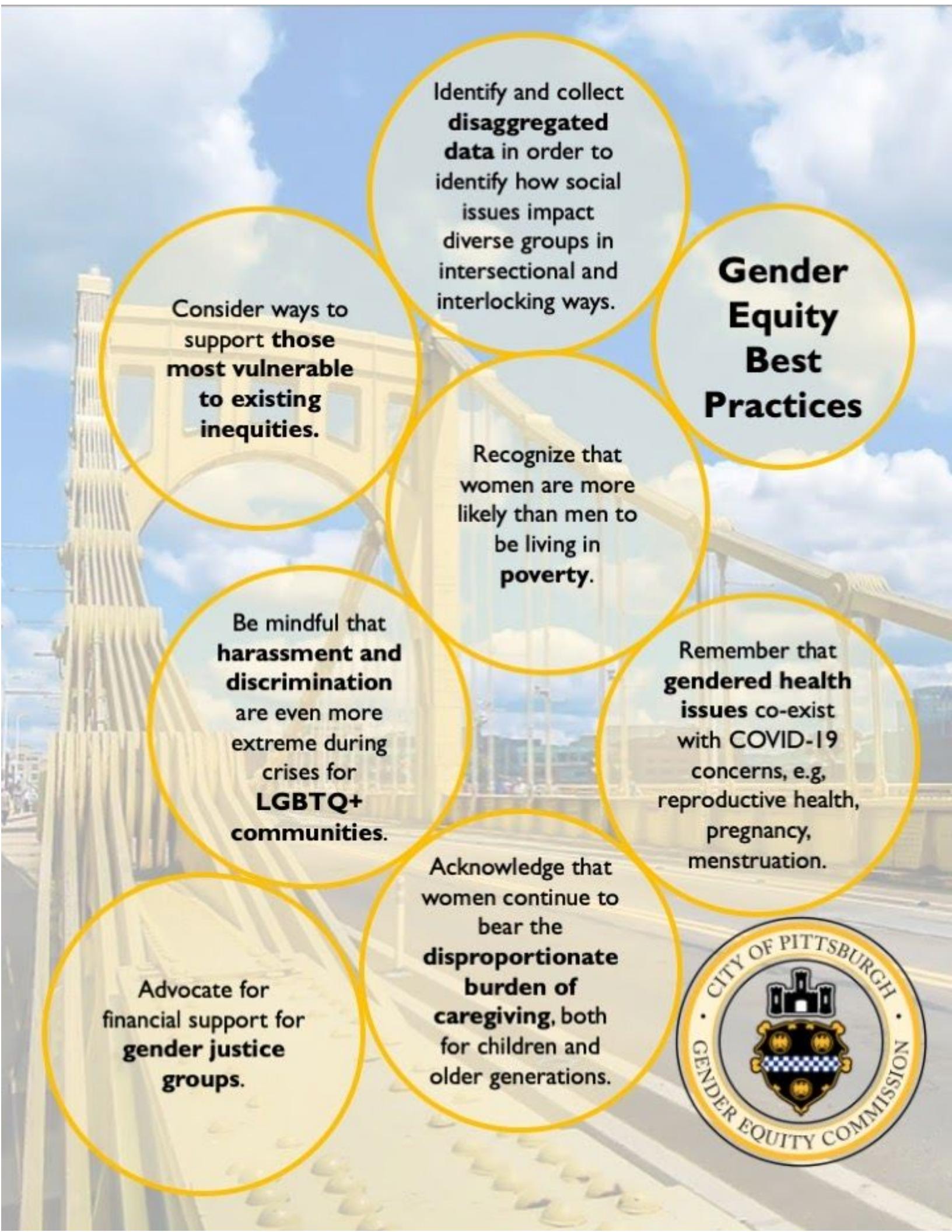Goals of a Pittsburgh UBI program include:
- Covering people's basic needs through a fundamentally different approach than poverty-alleviation methods, (failed) neoliberal 'trickle down' economics, or limited-term unemployment support.
- Universal social protection, regardless of individuals' circumstances, activity, employment, household composition, or potentially arbitrary tests for worthiness.

- Basic needs are viewed as human rights and attention can be paid to other critical concerns in the aftermath of the pandemic.

Potential outcomes of a pilot initiative include:
- A UBI should be administratively efficient because it does not require "means testing" to determine who qualifies.
- Funds can be made available immediately, such as a flat sum of money transferred in cash directly to every adult, or as a negative income tax that impacts only workers who earn less than a specified amount.
- Work and income: supplementing poverty wages or insecure employment, reducing job lock, increasing worker autonomy, compensating for unpaid home labor, (disproportionately done by women), and anticipating job losses that are predicted to accompany increasing automation and replacement of workers by new technologies.

Like all of these pilot efforts, Pittsburgh's UBI program should evaluate its impact holistically, considering participants' health and well being, including: economic security, savings, physical and mental health outcomes, housing and job stability, and school attendance and other educational impacts. The Universal Income Project reports that very few people who receive a UBI leave the workforce and there can be increases in entrepreneurship. Given the significant rate of women's entrepreneurship in the Pittsburgh region, and the crucial role of women owned businesses to family and community welfare, the gendered impact of entrepreneurial pursuits will be another important factor to track.

Identify and collect **disaggregated data** in order to identify how social issues impact diverse groups in intersectional and interlocking ways.

Gender Equity Best Practices

Consider ways to support **those most vulnerable to existing inequities**.

Recognize that women are more likely than men to be living in **poverty**.

Be mindful that **harassment and discrimination** are even more extreme during crises for **LGBTQ+ communities**.

Remember that **gendered health issues** co-exist with COVID-19 concerns, e.g, reproductive health, pregnancy, menstruation.

Advocate for financial support for **gender justice groups**.

Acknowledge that women continue to bear the **disproportionate burden of caregiving**, both for children and older generations.

CITY OF PITTSBURGH · GENDER EQUITY COMMISSION