

Six Elements of Successful Affirmative Action

1. Education to prepare women to compete successfully for advancement and to prepare school administrators to encourage women and to accept and work comfortably with women in leadership roles in education.
2. Identification of women who are qualified, experienced and wish to seek promotion.
3. Fair and objective promotion procedures ensuring that all candidates are given appropriate and serious consideration.
4. Numerical goals and timetables to increase the representation of women within specific job categories where they are underrepresented.
5. Accountability for the effective implementation of an affirmative action program required from the chief executive officer.
6. The right to appeal a hiring or promotion decision made by the board.

A number of Canadian teacher organizations are actively involved in pursuing affirmative action programs. Information about these activities, sources of further information and the specific references for this brochure may be obtained by contacting CTF.



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CTF endorses the concept of affirmative action as a set of strategies initiated by an employer to give women the same opportunities in the labour marketplace as men, to eliminate job ghettos, to encourage women to go into non-traditional jobs, and to increase their numbers in management.*

A decade of awareness of the desirability of altering gender-based inequity in employment has not significantly changed the long-standing patterns of the Canadian labour force. In all employment areas, and particularly in education, women are confronted by systemic discrimination which has denied them the opportunity to experience fair and equal employment practices.

Affirmative Action moves beyond awareness and good intentions; it is less concerned with individual attitudes than with the barriers to equitable practices posed by entrenched employment systems. These systems must be understood and revised if unintentional discrimination and self-imposed limitations are to be addressed. Affirmative Action is the route to employment equity.

In speaking to equality rights, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms specifically does not preclude "any law, program or activity that has as its object the amelioration of conditions of disadvantaged individuals or groups..." [15(2)]

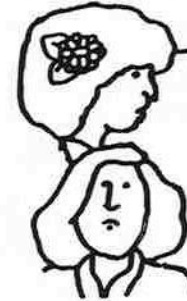


The purpose of affirmative action programs is to ensure equal opportunity for females and males in education and in the labour force.*

Despite an increased understanding of gender inequality and many attempts to legislate and enforce equality, statistics suggest that our education systems both model and perpetuate disparate treatment. For example, in Canada:

- there are now fewer women in school administration than there were ten years ago.
- although the number of positions in school administration has declined by 5% since 1975, the number of women in these positions dropped by 10%.
- in 1982-83, women accounted for only 13% of all school principals.
- at the same time as women are entering and advancing in other professions, they are losing ground in educational administration.
- it has been repeatedly warned that young women's lack of training in science/technology excludes them from key workforce roles.
- most young women students, and particularly those who are working class, plan to choose traditional and low-paid employment.
- women with university degrees earn only \$1600 more per year than men with high school educations.
- a typical woman working full-time earned \$16,000 in 1982, \$9,000 less than her male counterpart.
- collective bargaining issues of particular concern to women teachers such as paid parenting leave, benefits for part-time teachers and non-teaching time at the elementary level remain largely unresolved.

Affirmative Action programs offer more than good will to resolve these problems — they offer strategies which oblige organizations and employers to plan for success.



Effective affirmative action programs require philosophical and organizational commitment, clear assignment of responsibility and accountability, goals, timetables and an evaluation process.*

Affirmative Action goes beyond seeking equality of opportunity as its goal; it obliges us to view equality of results as the most important indicator of equity.

Organizations which become Affirmative Action employers typically undertake a sequential analysis of their workplace. This analysis includes the collection of internal data on personnel practices such as recruitment, salary structure, training and promotion and job evaluation systems. Using this information and external data on the labour pool as a whole, realistic and measurable goals for increased mobility and/or participation by women in the employee group can be set. Strategies for meeting these goals, and plans for informed and co-operative implementation are then developed. Diligent review and revision of the plans are necessary to its long-term effectiveness. No single affirmative action plan will fit every institution; each plan must be unique and be derived from its specific employment context.

Affirmative Action is more than a personnel plan. It is concrete evidence of a belief system that rejects discrimination and holds equity and the enhancement of opportunity for all as key organizational values.