

# **Opening the Potential Mentoring:** *For Women Interested in Municipal Politics*



**Participant Guide**  
2012/2013

## 2012 City Administration Program Partners

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**For more information** or copies of this booklet, go to the program web page at [www.edmonton.ca/mentorship](http://www.edmonton.ca/mentorship)

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## Message from His Worship **Mayor Stephen Mandel**



Edmonton is a city made rich, vibrant and energetic by the diversity of its citizens and communities. We need to think outside of the traditional ways of doing business and harness the energy and creativeness of all of our citizens. Deriving the greatest benefit from our diversity requires a deliberate, ongoing strategy of inclusion. Currently, women make up 52 percent of the Canadian population but constitute only 25 per cent of municipal councils across Canada. In order to encourage more women to consider running for municipal Councils and volunteering for our agencies, boards and commissions, we are championing – for the second year – *Opening the Potential Mentoring*, a program designed for women ages 18 to 35.

Edmonton has benefited from City Councils with more women than the national average for many years, and we have a unique opportunity in our city to raise the national standard. I look forward to more women running for public office in the next municipal election, and more women volunteering for our agencies, boards and commission to ensure City Councils and boards broadly reflect the communities we serve. Best wishes to all of the program participants.

## Mayor and City Council



Edmonton's City Council is made up of 13 elected representatives including one Mayor and 12 City Councillors. The Mayor is elected by all Edmontonians who vote in the civic election. Councillors are elected by voters in the wards they represent. Edmonton has twelve wards and each ward is represented by one Councillor who serves a three-year term.

The Office of the Mayor and Office of the Councillors are located on the second floor of City Hall, 1 Sir Winston Churchill Square.

You will find more information about City Council and its work at [www.edmonton.ca](http://www.edmonton.ca)

## Message from Councillor Karen Leibovici First Vice President of Federation of Canadian Municipalities



- I am delighted at the success of Edmonton’s 2011/2012 pilot program to mentor young women interested in municipal politics. So it is with great anticipation that we move forward into our second year of *Opening the Potential Mentoring*, building on the experiences of our wonderful group of 2011 participants. The Canadian Federation of Municipalities National Board of Directors has embarked on an initiative “to increase women’s participation in municipal decision making by the year 2026. To reach 30% female representation required for public policy to realistically reflect women’s concerns, as defined by the United Nations, Canadian municipalities need at least 2000 more women in elected office.”
- *Opening the Potential Mentoring* offers participants the opportunity to learn more about City governance, gain communication skills, build networks, and job shadow a City Council member to get a first-hand look at what is required to be on City Council.
- My personal experience as a mentor taught me that the skills, the networks, and the learning acquired through mentorship opportunities are invaluable in inspiring someone to consider running for municipal government. I wish all of the participants of *Opening the Potential Mentoring* a great experience, one that will foster new growth and creativity among the leaders who serve the citizens of Edmonton.

## INTRODUCTION

*Opening the Potential Mentoring* will partner City Council members with women (ages 18 to 35) aspiring to a political career. The inspiration for this program builds on the work of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), indicating that although women make up half of the Canadian population, they constitute only 25 percent of municipal councils. The development of *Opening the Potential Mentoring* would not be possible without the dedication and support of City Council members participating in this program as mentors. Thank you for encouraging and supporting women interested in pursuing a career in municipal government.

## OVERVIEW

### What is mentoring?

“Mentoring is often thought of as a process for the transmission of knowledge, social capital, and the psychosocial support perceived by the recipient as relevant to work, career, or professional development; mentoring entails communication, usually face-to-face and during a sustained period of time between a mentor and mentee” (p 731 Bozeman, Feeney, Theory of Mentoring 2007). People interested in a mentoring program are brought together through a matching process that ensures mutual understanding and goals will be met.

### What are the goals and objectives of *Opening the Potential* mentoring program?

The overall goal of *Opening the Potential Mentoring* is to support and encourage more women to consider running for municipal government. The program provides the mentee with a first-hand look at what it takes to be a City Council member – to create greater understanding about the roles and responsibilities of City Council members. The program provides opportunities for women with diverse backgrounds to forge relationships with leaders, to create necessary networks important in career development, and to obtain skills and knowledge through the job-shadowing experience that will help to prepare them for work in municipal government.

### Objectives for the mentee

- improve understanding of the political and governance systems and values
- develop communication skills and career objectives
- develop networking ideas and abilities
- increase self confidence and self marketing
- gain knowledge and experience through personal interactions

### Objectives for the mentor

- gain personal satisfaction from helping someone; develop coaching skills
- see fresh perspectives from the potential leaders
- enjoy an opportunity to connect with people who have different professional and life experiences
- pass along important information to the next generation of politicians

## Edmonton can also benefit in many ways

- transferral of City vision, goals and values to potential leaders
- development of potential leaders from diverse backgrounds
- sustaining leadership development: for example, participants may apply for City's agencies, boards, and commissions
- representation by a City Council that is broadly reflective of the community

## How does the program work?

This is a seven-month mentoring program, September through March, whereby women (ages 18 to 35) are matched with City Council members, who provide information and foster supportive relationships with women interested in learning more about the role of a municipal representative.

The program has three main elements:

- **Mentoring** - mentor and mentee have personal contact through face-to-face interaction and other forms of communication to foster relationships, offer insights and provide guidance
- **Job shadowing** - mentee may attend Council, Committee and community meetings, as well as other activities or events, providing a first-hand look at the day-to-day activities and roles of a City Councillor
- **Group Learning Sessions** – mentee attends workshops about city governance, civic affairs, media relations and campaigning.

## 1. Roles and Expectations

The structured mentoring relationship is considered a partnership, needing equal commitment from the mentor and the mentee, and commitment from the organization in order to succeed. Mentoring relationships require mutual trust and respect and agreed-upon levels of confidentiality. (Mentee will sign confidentiality agreement.) It is important for the mentor and the mentee to discuss and clarify expectations and agree on their respective roles.

### *Mentee*

- must volunteer for the mentorship commitment September through March, knowing that there is a requirement to participate in daytime meetings or activities two to three times per month (time commitment may vary based on participants' goals and objectives)
- takes initiative to organize meetings and activities, i.e., acts as "driver"
- follows up on activities suggested by mentor
- participates in open communication
- updates Program Coordinator regarding program activities and time requirements
- shares knowledge and insights

### *Mentor*

- is a current City Council member interested in volunteering for the program
- makes time for regular meetings with mentee and sets aside time to debrief what happened at a Council/Committee/Community meeting (time commitment may vary based on participants' goals and objectives)

- **The recommended minimum meeting time per month is two meetings (may include Council meeting and job shadowing the City Council member for the day) and weekly telephone contact.**
- shares a vision with mentee regarding what the mentor can provide
- assists mentee in identifying expectations and establishing goals and objectives
- shares expertise and knowledge regarding the roles and responsibilities of a municipal councillor
- encourages the mentee to share knowledge and insights
- provides feedback on activities undertaken as part of the action plan
- introduces mentee at events
- explores options with mentee, but leaves decisions and actions to the mentee
- participates in open communication
- meets with mentee for final evaluation of mentorship
- has knowledge of systemic barriers to women's participation in municipal government and/or boards

#### *Executive Assistant*

- explores possible mentorship opportunity with City Council member
- schedules and attends first meeting between City Councillor, Program Coordinator and mentee
- assists mentee and mentor to establish meeting dates
- ensures mentee receives reasonable priority in the scheduling of appointments with City Council member
- informs mentee if scheduling changes occur well in advance and rebooks appointment. Cancelled meetings can result in reduced learning opportunities
- provides mentee with the day's schedule, relevant documents, background information regarding meetings, such as web links and briefing notes regarding contentious issues

#### *Program Coordinator*

- coordinates program content, processes and delivery
- creates and schedules the line-up of learning sessions/workshops and organizes their delivery
- liaises with mentees, Executive Assistants and Councillors throughout the program
- provides ongoing support and troubleshooting as necessary to ensure objectives, as outlined in the agreement and action plan, are being achieved
- completes an evaluation at the conclusion of the program year
- organizes a year-end celebration and appreciation event

## **2. Selection Process**

### **Selection Criteria:**

- professional and volunteer accomplishments
- common goals
- factors that motivated mentee and mentor to participate in *Opening the Potential mentoring program*
- shared vision regarding what a mentorship opportunity can provide
- number of City Council members participating in the program
- interpersonal and communication styles



### *Mentee*

- applicants are 18 to 35 years of age
- applicants submit a current résumé and fill out an application form (Appendix 1) indicating their desire to participate in the program
- applicants participate in an interview with Council member, Executive Assistant, and Program Coordinator to determine suitability based on selection criteria

### *Mentor*

- reviews applications provided by Program Coordinator, and participates in short listing process with other mentors
- attends interview with applicant to determine suitability based on selection criteria

### *Program Coordinator*

- coordinates program promotion, recruitment process and short listing of applicants
- schedules and attends interviews with applicants and Councillors
- informs applicant of interview outcome

### *Executive Assistant*

- schedules and attends interview with applicant, Program Coordinator and City Council member

## **3. Orientation**

The Program Coordinator will facilitate an orientation for mentees, involving a tour of City Hall and overview of the program including the confidentiality agreement and corporate records information.

## **4. First Meeting**

The first meeting will involve mentee, City Councillor, Program Coordinator and Executive Assistant. Mentee and mentor should discuss the mentoring relationship, become familiar with their roles, set objectives and develop a mentor program agreement and action plan (Appendix 2).

## **5. Learning Sessions/Workshops**

The Program Coordinator will arrange for monthly learning sessions. Order and date will be determined prior to September program start; however, the themes are listed here:

- Governance (including FOIP and Corporate Records)
- City's Big Picture
- Communications and Media
- Campaigning
- Civic Agencies – Volunteering as a Stepping Stone
- Intergovernmental Affairs
- Tour of City Facility

## 6. Suggestions for Other Meetings/Activities

Many of these suggestions can be tailored to individual needs and interests.

- Discuss policy making
- Discuss speaking and media engagements and how to prepare
- Observe deliberations at Council/Committee meetings, such as rules of order, how the Councillor prepares for questions, remarks and motions
- Observe meeting protocols at advisory or decision-making board meetings and report back to City Council member about this experience
- Attend briefing meetings for Council or Committee meetings
- Attend community meeting – debrief and discuss strategy regarding meeting the needs of constituents prior to a community meeting and debrief after the meeting. (What worked? What didn't? Is there any follow up?).
- Tour City facilities, either through Coordinator or with Councillor
- Discuss how to lobby other City Council members
- Discuss each other's work philosophy
- Discuss factors outside the workplace that impact job performance (work-life balance and attending evening meetings)
- Discuss current projects the mentor is involved in, describing the rationale for particular work strategies
- Discuss barriers preventing women's participation. (See Appendix 3.) What are some solutions to address these barriers?
- Debrief meetings, issues or projects with the mentee
- Provide feedback to the mentee on observable skills and personal attributes, offering suggestions for improvement
- Discuss other useful work or volunteer experiences that will assist potential candidates, for example, union involvement, school board trustee
- Discuss the campaign process and any tips to pass on to mentees

## 6. Evaluation of the Program

The individual mentoring relationships will be evaluated at the end of the program period to determine if the program objectives and the needs of the participants have been met.

The criteria for success will vary, but some factors for consideration by mentees are:

- new experiences
- networking and career enhancement
- increased exposure to roles and responsibilities of a municipal councillor
- increased confidence to talk to reporters
- overall satisfaction with the program and suggested areas for improvement

Some factors for consideration by mentors are:

- opportunities for personal growth
- greater understanding of diverse points of view
- development of coaching skills
- overall satisfaction with the program and suggested areas for improvement

## Appendix 1 Application Form

### Opening the Potential *Mentoring for Women Interested in Municipal Politics*

The City of Edmonton's *Opening the Potential* program is a mentoring program for women (ages 18 to 35) interested in a career in municipal politics.

Ideally a mentee will:

- be goal-oriented with professional or volunteer aspirations of a political nature
- volunteer for the program and be available at least 3 times per month
- be willing to assume responsibility for her own growth and development
- be receptive to feedback and coaching
- share a vision with mentor regarding what a mentor can provide
- have good interpersonal and communication skills

To apply for the program, complete the following form and submit it **with a copy of your resume** to the Office of the City Clerk, by **May 15, 2012**.

#### Personal Information

First Name:
Last Name:
E-Mail address:
Home telephone:

#### Professional Information:

Company Name:
Work Location
Business Telephone

#### Academic History:

<input type="checkbox"/> Grade 12 <input type="checkbox"/> Post-secondary _____(Institution) Post-secondary Program _____ Credentials received: Diploma _____ Certificate _____ Degree _____ If currently still in school, anticipated year of completion _____
<b>Additional Academic Information (if applicable):</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Degree <input type="checkbox"/> Diploma <input type="checkbox"/> Certificate

## Opening the Potential – Application

City of Edmonton

What is your main goal in applying for the *Opening the Potential Mentoring* program?

What are your short, mid and long-term career goals?

What do you think is the best help a mentor can provide you with?

Would you prefer a female or male mentor? Do you have preferred Council member (if available) to serve as your mentor?

Please list your involvement in the community and/or volunteer experience.

How flexible are you in scheduling daytime meetings and activities for the mentorship program?

Please provide any additional information you would like to include regarding your interest in the Mentoring Program.

Your personal information is being collected under the Authority of Section 33(c) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*, and will be used to aid in the administration of the program, City Clerk's selection process, maintain accurate records of involvement in the mentoring program, and to provide contact information for the program. If you have any questions about the collection or use of your personal information by this program, please contact the Office of the City Clerk at 780-496-8178.

# Appendix 2 - Mentoring Program Agreement and Action Plan

## Mentoring Program Agreement and Action Plan

To be completed at the first meeting between mentor and mentee

**Mentor/City Council member:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mentee:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What are your expectations for the mentoring experience, and what do you hope to learn?**

Mentee:

Councillor:

**Mentee/Mentor review of expectations from first meeting. Changes?**

Date of Review \_\_\_\_\_

Mentee:

Councillor:

# Action Plan

To be used as an aid in scheduling meetings/activities

Start Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Meetings	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.
Person-to-person or Telephone Meetings							
Council Meetings							
Committee Meetings							
Community Meetings							
Board Meetings							
Tour of City Hall (Coordinator)	Sept.						
Review Expectations			Nov.				
Learning session	Sept.						
Learning session		Oct					
Learning session			Nov.				
Facility Tour				Dec.			
Learning session					Jan.		
Learning session						Feb.	
Learning session							Mar.
<b>Final Program Review Mentee and Mentor</b>							Mar.

Completion Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 3

### **Barriers to Women's Participation in Municipal Governance**

*Current research and literature describe systemic barriers that may inhibit women's involvement in politics and civic committees and boards.*

- male political environment not inclusive of leadership qualities typically ascribed to women
- adversarial nature of council deliberations. Actions to overcome this deterrent promote respectful debate
- limited numbers of women role models on decision-making committees and boards
- inflexibility of meeting times
- demands of family responsibilities and lack of childcare resources
- lack of awareness of information available about elected office and committee and board appointment process
- exclusion from informal political networks
- stereotyping of women's roles and responsibilities