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8-30-2022

## Leadership of Diversity in the Ontario Fire Service

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### Recommended Citation

Chambers, C. (2022). Leadership of Diversity in the Ontario Fire Service. *The Organizational Improvement Plan at Western University*, 313. Retrieved from <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/oip/313>

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) is to interrogate the problem of leadership and change management as related to addressing the problem of gender diversification in Ontario's municipal fire departments. The goal is to identify appropriate leadership approaches and attributes that are helpful in cultivating a high-performing, respectful, and collegial environment in which qualified females can be accepted and successful in working alongside male firefighters. The current situation is fraught with complaints, premature resignations, illness, and highly publicized experiences of women encountering negative experiences while working in municipal fire departments. My Problem of Practice is focused on the need for leaders' attributes and actions that serve to support women in the fire service and, in turn, influence the mindset of legacy male firefighters toward embracing the benefits of a cohesive and effective workforce in this critical community service. This OIP considers solutions that can be useful in ensuring that fire service leaders (namely male) are appropriately positioned and prepared to support and cultivate a high-performing workforce that embraces and respects gender diversity within the firefighting ranks.