

PUBLIC SECTOR LEADERS

While public sector leaders are not as well-known as elected officials to the general public, they play a critical role in contributing to a government that is both democratic and representative. A representative bureaucracy ensures that a wide range of viewpoints informs the decision-making process, including the perspectives of historically under-represented groups. A diverse public service is a symbolic commitment to equal access to power and draws on the widest possible pool of candidates when making public service appointments (Evans et al., 2008).

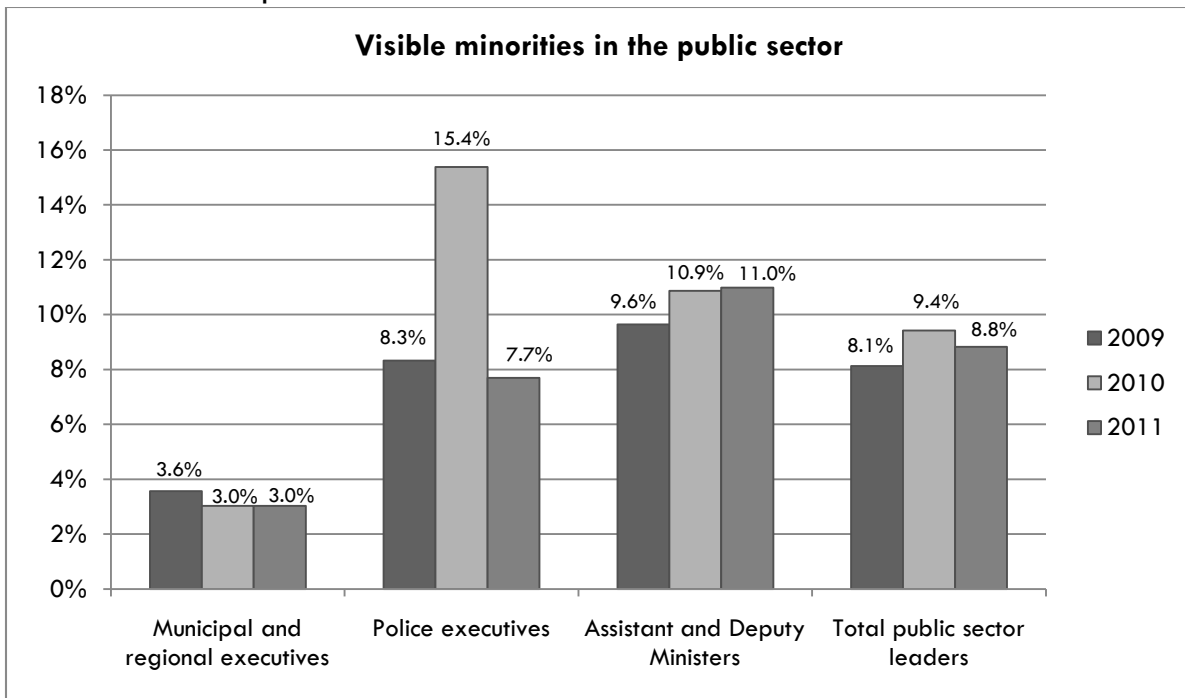
Methodology

As in previous years, this year’s analysis examines public service leadership in GTA municipalities and in the provincial government. It focuses on the executive committee in municipalities (usually the chief administrative officer, city manager, deputy city manager, and commissioner), police executives (chiefs and deputy chiefs), and deputy ministers (DMs) and assistant deputy ministers (ADMs) in the Province of Ontario.

Findings

In 2011, 8.8%, or 12 of 137 public sector leaders analysed are visible minorities. This represents an overall increase of 7.7% from 2009, when visible minorities held 8.1% of positions (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Visible minorities in the public sector



Among municipal and regional executives, the percentage of visible minority leaders has remained steady at 3%.

In 2011, 11% of DMs and ADMs are visible minorities. This represents an increase of 14% since 2009, when the total proportion of visible minority DMs and ADMs was 9.6%. In 2011, the most diverse departments are the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (33.3%) and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (30%).

Practices that Work in the Public Sector

Specific strategies can improve the diversity of public sector leaders so they better reflect the population they serve.

Count: What gets measured gets done

Employee engagement surveys can help track rates of diversity. Surveys designed with careful attention to data collection methods will result in increases in staff self-identification, because they believe it will make a direct and positive difference in their working culture.

Set targets

A number of deputy ministers in the Ontario Public Service (OPS) (2009) have included diversity targets in their performance plans.

Lead: Make diversity a strategic priority

Senior managers in the OPS communicate their commitment to diversity, inclusivity, accessibility, and representativeness by applying a diversity lens to all policy development. An OPS diversity office was established and the first chief diversity officer was appointed, who has the power and authority to be an active agent of change within the organization.

Develop the pipeline

By providing targeted outreach to specific communities, the Toronto Police Service (2011) believes that informal relationships between officers and members of immigrant communities have led to a significant increase in recruits from visible minority backgrounds in recent years. Over a number of years this has increased the pool of candidates for leadership positions.

Develop and sustain excellent human resource practices

Good human resource practices are essential to identify and attract qualified visible minority candidates. Organizations must undertake succession planning, skills gap analyses, targeted recruitment, and strategic hiring.

Professional development, including training and mentoring programs, develop employees from traditionally under-represented groups for leadership positions. For example, the Ontario Public Service has implemented the Diversity Mentoring Partnership Pilot Program, partnering 30 deputy ministers with 85 OPS employees from five target groups under-represented in leadership positions (Ministry of Health, 2002).

Communicate to influence: Mainstream diversity

Senior leaders should also communicate the value of diversity to their stakeholders and the entire supply chain, including educational institutions, the media, and other partners. The Government of Ontario not only has strategies to address diversity in the workplace and in service delivery but also applies a diversity lens to the policy development process.