

Missing Person Investigations

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Process Overview

What?

The Independent Civilian Review into Missing Person Investigations (the “Review”) was prompted, in large part, by the tragic deaths of members of Toronto’s LGBTQ2S+ community and by deep concerns about how the Toronto Police Service (the “TPS”) conducted the investigations into their disappearances. The Review is designed to evaluate how the TPS has conducted and is conducting missing person investigations, particularly in relation to LGBTQ2S+ and vulnerable or marginalized communities, make recommendations to promote efficient, effective and bias-free investigations and better police relations with affected communities.

Why?

Questions have been raised about whether missing person investigations were tainted by systemic bias or discrimination against members of the LGBTQ2S+ community as well as marginalized or vulnerable communities generally. There are also concerns about whether current TPS policies and procedures adequately protect against such bias or discrimination and whether the police adequately inform or warn about safety concerns.

Who?

The Honourable Gloria J. Epstein, a recently retired Judge, is leading the Review. She will be assisted by Lead Counsel, Mark Sandler. A diverse group of community advisors (the Community Advisory Group) is working to ensure that the Review’s public outreach and engagement is robust, and that diverse voices within the community have the opportunity to be heard. The Review is also supported by a multi-disciplinary team.

When?

The Review began in September 2018 and is expected to be completed on or before January 31, 2021.

Where?

The Review’s outreach and engagement with the public will take place across Toronto. Meetings with groups, individuals and the public at large will be held in fully accessible locations close to public transit. A schedule of events open to the public will be posted on the project website (www.missingpersonsreview.ca).

Ways to Participate

The Review’s public outreach and engagement plan offers several ways for people to participate:

- all members of the public or groups can make written submissions to the Review;
- all are welcome to participate in an electronic survey that will be launched in early 2020;
- all are welcome to share their views anonymously through a portal on the Review’s website;
- all are welcome to attend a forum or town hall meeting and share perspectives, experiences and suggestions in a public setting;
- a broad range of community groups and service providers will be invited to offer insights and expertise at stakeholder’s meetings with Judge Epstein and members of her team; and
- individuals can request a confidential interview to share relevant personal experiences in a safe and supportive environment.