



Province of Prince Edward Island

**Diversity and Inclusion Policy  
2019**

Public Service Commission

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# DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

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## Introduction

The Government of Prince Edward Island recognizes employees as a valuable asset and aims to attract and retain the best talent to support the delivery of quality public services.

We are committed to being an organization representative of our diverse population, fostering an inclusive work environment that recognizes, respects, and accommodates the diversity of individuals, while making use of the full range of talents and perspectives available to government.

The PEI Public Service Commission (PSC) ensures the diversity and inclusion policy is rooted in our guiding principles and core public service values for the civil service: *respect, integrity, accountability* and *excellence*. These values and the following principles will also guide the development and implementation of an aligned diversity and inclusion strategy.

This policy has been informed by evidenced-based information including: consultations with external organizations, community groups and internal stakeholders; national and cross-jurisdictional diversity and inclusion program reviews and current trends; public service employee engagement survey data/results; and a comprehensive literature review on diversity and inclusion. Nationally and internationally there is recognition of the need for change and focus on factors that influence inclusion in our workplace. Population demographic trends are rapidly changing and it is critical for the Government of PEI to foster a public sector workplace and culture that is engaging, inclusive and diverse.

## Policy Statement

The Government of Prince Edward Island is committed to a highly competent public service that is representative of the population we serve. Our population continues to become increasingly diverse, and we are committed to identifying and removing barriers for employees in recruitment, advancement and retention and fostering a workplace culture that is welcoming and inclusive. Our Province is enriched through our acceptance and appreciation of many diversity dimensions including generation, gender, age, ethnicity, race, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, gender identity, immigration status, political beliefs, income level, geographic locations, physical / mental ability, Indigenous identity, national origin, first language, etc. By honouring these social and cultural identities, we create a better public service in the interest of all Islanders. We all share the responsibility to ensure diversity and inclusion throughout our public service.

## Principles

### ***Inclusion of All Builds the Capacity of the Public Service***

First and foremost, the PEI *Civil Service Act* states that one of the purposes of the PEI Public Service Commission is to foster the development of a public service that is representative of the province's diversity.

Employment equity programs often reference the designated groups listed in federal employment equity legislation, i.e. members of visible minority groups, Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities and women in leadership roles. While this policy recognizes the barriers and challenges faced by these

groups, our intention is to broaden the scope within the wider community and also focus on diversity and inclusion with the recognition of other social and cultural dimensions such as all genders in non-traditional occupations, sexual orientation, youth, geographical locations, political beliefs, religious beliefs, gender identity, gender expression, transgender, income level, marital status, language, immigration/ refugee status, etc.

The PEI Human Rights Commission notes that diversity programs are usually policies that promote respect for all peoples and lifestyles in the workplace. While diversity programs also emphasize proactive measures such as improving access for persons with disabilities or examining hiring practices for discrimination, they do not require employers to meet mandatory numbers of employees that fall into the referenced four designated groups. Diversity programs are also generally more inclusive by incorporating sexual orientation, age, and cultural background.

### **Cultural Competence Creates Respectful Workplaces**

The PEI Public Service respects people and their individual differences. Understanding these differences may take time as we must learn about different ideas, perspectives, cultural backgrounds and values. We need to enhance our awareness of the many diversity dimensions relevant to our workplaces. Diversity, inclusion and cultural competence training is important to support policy implementation. We will improve intercultural competence through awareness, education and training ensuring our public service has equitable understanding as it relates to all areas of diversity. That will result in better relationships among employees and relationship with our clients. We value the corporate concept of belonging, an experience in which people feel safe to be themselves and empowered to contribute their perspectives.

### **Diversity Management and Inclusive Practices Enhance Workplace Culture and Employee Well-Being**

The PSC is committed to cultivating a workplace culture that motivates employees to contribute their full potential and build a strong career in our public sector workplace. The PSC, working with departments and agencies, will implement a comprehensive and strategic approach to diversity management with the development and implementation of a Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. Departments and agencies will develop goals and action plans specific to their programs and services within their respective HR (human resources) and strategic plans in order to create an inclusive, diverse and welcoming workplace.

### **Fairness and Accountability Contributes to Excellence in the Public Service**

We maintain an open and fair recruitment process encouraging diversity and inclusion. This process is intended to remove employment barriers for diversity group members and create a welcoming and respectful work environment. In addition, part of being accountable is reporting on metrics related to diversity and inclusion initiatives, which includes better addressing how to collect and report on Diversity HR Metrics.

## **Objectives**

The Diversity and Inclusion Policy provides a framework for the Public Service to meet the following goals and objectives:

### **Building an Inclusive and Diverse Public Service**

- Improve employment and career opportunities for qualified members of diversity groups in the public service through specific programs and initiatives.
- Build a diverse and skilled workforce that reflects the diversity of our employees and the wider community, therefore, leading to continuous improvement in service delivery, as a result of improved understanding of the diverse needs of the population.

### **Establishing a Safe and Inclusive Culture**

- Create a culture at work that values and utilizes the contributions of employees with diverse backgrounds, experiences and perspectives through improved awareness of the benefits of diversity in the workplace for the benefit of all staff and clientele (internal and external).
- Ensure all staff are aware of their rights and responsibilities in both receiving and delivering public service that promotes fairness, equity and respect for diversity.

### **Ensuring Inclusive and Diverse Innovative Practice**

- Implement an accountability framework (within the Strategy) that requires all departments to embrace fairness, equity and diversity in the development of their policies and programs, as this positively impacts the delivery of their services.
- Eliminate barriers in the workplace and develop a work environment that promotes diversity and inclusiveness.

## **Roles and Accountabilities**

### **Public Service Commission**

- Ensure human resource policies, practices, and programs support the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy
- Assist senior managers and supervisors by providing technical support and guidance on departmental diversity and inclusion plans and evaluation mechanisms
- Review employment processes and identify areas of improvement and address barriers to inclusion
- Identify and build corporate diversity and inclusion training programs for the public sector
- Identify and incorporate diversity competencies into Government's overall leadership competency framework
- Cultivate and maintain organizational and community relationships that support the inclusion strategy

- Coordinate and lead the implementation of the Government Diversity and Inclusion Strategy
- Report on metrics and successes delivered from the strategy
- Maintain an active Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee that provides advice and oversees the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy
- Develop a mechanism to track and capture data on applicants from diversity groups and hiring of diversity employees
- Report annually to the PEI Deputy Minister's Council on progress and activities related to the strategy

## **Deputy Ministers and Senior Executives**

- Lead by example by participating as visible champions in recognizing diversity and inclusion
- Ensure the diversity and inclusion policy is implemented within the department
- Ensure the diversity and inclusion strategy is integrated into department business plan and strategic initiatives (management decisions, employee demographics, communication, staff training and education, etc.)
- Complete PSC annual departmental diversity policy progress report
- Create opportunities that encourage inclusion and diversity
- Implement practices to advance an inclusive, healthy organization, respectful of the diversity of people and their skills and ensure they are free from any form of harassment and discrimination
- Submit an annual report to the PSC Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee which communicates progress being made towards the Department's Diversity and Inclusion Plan

## **Directors and Managers/Supervisors**

- Lead by example by participating as visible champions of diversity and inclusion
- Develop a Diversity and Inclusion Plan which establishes organization-specific priorities which are aligned with the PSC's Diversity and Inclusion Policy. The PSC will work with departmental Human Resource team and Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee (DIAC) member developing the departmental plan.
- Ensure the diversity and inclusion policy principles are integrated into departmental HR and Business plans
- Support Government Inclusion strategy by identifying potential work opportunities for diversity group members that are currently under represented in our public service
- Support and encourage employees who request to participate in diversity training, cultural programs and events
- Remove barriers for employees who require support
- Implement practices to advance an inclusive, healthy organization, that is free from any form of harassment and discrimination
- Promote and respects the diversity of people and their skills

## **All employees**

- Help create and maintain an inclusive, diverse and supportive work environment for co-workers, clients and general public by demonstrating the values of the public service – accountability, integrity, respect, and excellence.
- Learn and apply knowledge and skills to work in an inclusive and respectful manner and to identify barriers to inclusion. All new employees are requested to review the Diversity and Inclusion Policy.
- Share innovative solutions with colleagues and supervisor that address barriers to an inclusive workplace.
- Support the policy by completing voluntary self-identification disclosure and employee engagement survey response on workforce demographics. The PSC will develop a communication plan to remind employees of the purpose and the importance of self-identification and the employee engagement survey diversity questionnaire. These are intended only for statistical, program development and human resource management purposes.
- Provide information through PSC surveys and other evaluation activities to help Government understand the impacts of the Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

## **Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee**

The Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee includes representatives from the PEI Public Service Commission, Indigenous Relations Secretariat, Inter-ministerial Women's Secretariat, Acadian and Francophone Affairs Secretariat, and Government departments. Where possible, composition of the committee should reflect representation from diversity groups and be gender balanced.

This committee is responsible to:

- Assist and advise the PSC regarding this policy and any other matters relating to workplace diversity and inclusion on an ongoing basis;
- Participate in the development of the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy;
- Oversee and monitor outcomes and results of the strategy; and
- Assist department teams to complete at least one diversity awareness meeting per year with direct reports to review the Diversity and Inclusion Policy and discuss opportunities to contribute to achieving its outcomes.

## **Application**

The Diversity and Inclusion Policy applies to all the staff in departments and agencies employed by the Government of Prince Edward Island which are covered by the *Civil Service Act*. All agencies covered by the various schedules of the *Financial Administration Act* can endorse this policy or develop a policy themselves. The spirit and intent of this policy should serve as a guideline for agencies in developing their own policies.

- Schedule A (Departments, Executive Council, Legislative Assembly, Office of the Auditor General, Public Service Commission)
- Schedule B (Health PEI, all crown corporations, commissions and agencies)
- Schedule C (Public Schools Branch, La Commission Scolaire de langue française)
- Schedule D (Island Regulatory and Appeal Commission, Human Rights Commission)

## **Policy Review**

The Diversity and Inclusion Policy, programs and outcomes will be reviewed and evaluated after two years to determine if Government has made progress to achieve our goals and also to assess its effectiveness, and efficiency. The PSC, partnering with the Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee and Departments, will develop a cultural competency survey / diversity audit system that would help to measure improvement in the areas of diversity and inclusion.

## **Definitions**

### **Diversity**

Diversity is the range of visible and invisible qualities, experiences and social and cultural identities that shape who we are, how we think and how we engage with, and are perceived by the world. These can be along the dimensions of age, skin colour, gender, national origin, ethnicity or physical/mental ability, and also includes other dimensions such as economic status, sexual orientation, gender identity, education level, family status, thinking styles, geographic location, first language, immigration/refugee status, socio-economic background, religious/spiritual beliefs, or political ideologies and many more. They can also include differences such as personality, style, capabilities, and thoughts/perspectives.

### **Inclusion**

Inclusion is an attitude and approach that embraces diversity in the workplace where all employees feel valued and have a sense of belonging within an organization that applies the principles of equity and fairness in all aspects of its policies, practices, procedures and service delivery. An inclusive environment enables individuals and groups to feel safe, respected, engaged, motivated, and valued, for who they are and for their contributions toward organizational and societal goals.

### **Diversity Groups**

The selection of the following diversity groups does not preclude the need to address any barriers and inclusion challenges faced by other employees from various diversity dimensions. The public service honors all social and cultural identities within our workplaces.

### **Indigenous Peoples**

The Indigenous peoples means those peoples identified as Aboriginal peoples pursuant to section 35 of the *Constitution Act*, 1982, and includes Indian, Inuit, and Métis peoples of Canada

### **Persons with Disabilities**

A person living with a disability is someone who has a severe and prolonged recurring medical condition, which may be physical, cognitive, mental, sensory, emotional, or developmental, which results in an impairment, activity limitation, or a participation restriction. An impairment is a problem in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or function; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations.

### **Members of Visible Minority Groups**

Members in a visible minority group are persons other than Indigenous persons, who are non-white in color/race regardless of place of birth. They are a diverse group. Examples of these groups include those whose ancestry is African, Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Korean, West Asian, Pacific Islanders, East Asian, South/Southeast Asian, and Latin American.

## **Women in Leadership and Management, and All genders in Non-Traditional Occupations**

Traditionally the distribution of women and men in the workforce generally revealed a pattern of women working in support and services roles and men in leadership and decision making roles. Occupational participation reveals similar clustered patterns of genders in technical and professional careers. Non-traditional occupations are jobs that have been traditionally filled by one gender.

## **LGBTQ2S+**

LGBTQ2S+ is an acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual Queer/Questioning, 2 Spirit and others. It refers to a population of people united by having gender identities or sexual orientations that differ from the heterosexual and cisgender majority.

## **Immigrants/ Newcomers**

**Immigrants** are persons residing in Canada who were born outside of Canada, excluding temporary foreign workers, Canadian citizens born outside Canada and those with student or working visas.

**Newcomers** to Canada who have established residential ties with Canada may be: protected persons (including refugees) within the meaning of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act; people who have applied for or received permanent resident status from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.

## **Youth**

Youth are defined as those age 16 – 29.

## Legislative Authorities Related to this Policy

- [PEI Civil Service Act](#)
  - Section 2.1 (b) of the *PEI Civil Service Act* outlines that the purpose of the Public Service Commission is to foster the development of a public service that is representative of the province's diversity;
- [PEI Financial Administration Act](#)
  - Section 80 of *PEI Financial Administration Act* outlines Schedules A,B,C,D of Public Service organizations and agencies
- [PEI Human Rights Act](#)
  - *The Prince Edward Island Human Rights Act* became law on September 11, 1976. The Act prohibits discrimination in certain areas on the basis of certain personal characteristics or "grounds".
  - Under the *PEI Human Rights Act*,
  - Discrimination means discrimination in relation to age, color, creed, disability, ethnic or national origin, family status, gender expression, gender identity, marital status, political belief, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or source of income of any individual or class of individuals;
  - *PEI Human Rights Act*, Section 20 - Commission may approve programs of government, private organizations or persons designed to promote the welfare of any class of individuals, and any approved program shall be deemed not to be a violation of the prohibitions of this Act
- [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#)
- [Employment Equity Act](#)

## General Enquiries

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