Paving the Way

A Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility Guide to Support Immigrant and Racialized Women in the Canadian Labour Force

Achēv's Advancing Equity and Women and Girls (AEWG)Toolkit for Employers

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PAVING THE WAY; ACHĒV'S ADVANCING EQUITY AND WOMEN AND GIRLS (AEWG)TOOLKIT FOR EMPLOYERS

GLOSSARY: ACRONYMS

AI – Artificial Intelligence

DEIA – Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (can also appear as IDEA, DEI or EDI)

EAP – Employee Assistance Program

ERG – Employee Resource Group

GBA Plus – Gender-based Analysis Plus

HR – Human Resources

KPI – Key Performance Indicator

For the full glossary of terms please see page XX.

Introduction

IMMIGRANT AND RACIALIZED WOMEN IN THE CANADIAN LABOUR FORCE

Canada has experienced some positive shifts to growing more diverse and inclusive workplaces in recent years. However, despite policy initiatives, programming, and funding by different levels of government and not-for-profit organizations, immigrant and racialized women continue to face barriers and inequities in the Canadian labour force (Block & Galabuzi, 2018; Ng & Gagnon, 2020; Hudon, 2015).

> *Racialized women are over-represented in... sectors (that) tend to be relatively poorly compensated and include accommodation and food services, health care and social services, administrative and support, and waste management and remediation services.*
>
> (Gagnon & Ng, 2020, p. 8)

Here are other examples of some challenges experienced by immigrant and racialized women in the Canadian labour market:

- Research by the University of Waterloo found that "even when women immigrants are employed, they are more likely to be underemployed, part-time, precarious, and poorly remunerated" (Momani et al., 2021, p. 2).

- Pay inequities exist.
  - A 2019 Statistics Canada report found that the weekly earnings of newcomer immigrant* women were over 20% less than those of Canadian-born women (Robitaille, 2023).
  - On average, a racialized immigrant woman earns 78 cents for every dollar earned by a non-racialized immigrant woman (Block & Galabuzi, 2018, p.15).
  - Second-generation** racialized women only earn 64 cents for every dollar that is earned by second-generation racialized men (Block & Galabuzi, 2018, p.5).

- A recent public engagement by Achēv with immigrant and racialized women in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) found that only 60% are currently employed in a field that matches their education or previous career prior to immigrating to Canada (Gonzales Miners et al., 2022).

LEARN MORE »

Read Achēv's public engagement with immigrant and racialized women in the GTA, Addressing Barriers to Employment for Immigrant and Racialized Women and Youth, HERE.

Notes:
* A newcomer immigrant is defined as someone who had been in Canada between one to ten years.
** Second-generation immigrant is a person who was born in Canada with one or two parents who immigrated to Canada.

APPLYING DEIA IN THE WORKPLACE TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANT AND RACIALIZED WOMEN

The benefits of the full and equitable participation of immigrant and racialized women in the Canadian workforce are experienced by individuals and their families, employers and workplaces, the labour market and the Canadian economy. Gaining meaningful employment is a crucial element in the integration process for immigrant newcomer women, and a source of economic security for both immigrant and racialized women which also safeguards against gender-based violence.

The application of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) principles and practices in Canadian workplaces is one approach to improving the employment outcomes for immigrant and racialized women. DEIA encompasses a multitude of concepts and initiatives to create meaningful and systemic change in the workplace, especially for equity groups (YW Boston, 2019).

HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

The toolkit aims to provide information that can be easily translated into action, either for leaders to implement in your organizations or for allies and advocates to inform how to raise awareness and buy-in for the types of initiatives to recommend to your senior management. The toolkit includes examples of how to integrate DEIA into workplace policies and practices, which can influence positive and welcoming work environments. Although the information can be beneficial for all readers, the toolkit's primary audiences are employers, managers (including hiring managers), and HR professionals. The goal is that the information provided can inform decisions and actions to better support immigrant and racialized women.

Employers can use different components of the toolkit, based on what's most applicable to your organizational context. For example, if your organization is at the beginning of your DEIA journey, then consider starting with an organizational priority-setting exercise, an awareness campaign, or completing a baseline study of your current workforce. If there is DEIA awareness in your workplace, then consider developing a corporate DEIA Action Plan, or introducing the use of a DEIA lens or Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) to inform the development of policies, procedures, or programming. Worksheets, checklists, and additional resources have been provided, as well as additional resources, for each of the DEIA strategies outlined below.

DEVELOPING A DEIA FRAMEWORK FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION

DEIA is an ongoing process, and there is no 'finish line' but rather a continuous application and integration of diversity, equity, and inclusion as principles. Pursuing them is not a short-term project and is often not an easy road for it to be meaningful and transformative. Embedding DEIA in organizational structures provides an opportunity to identify and address the barriers and disparities experienced by employees from equity groups, including racialized and immigrant women.

The following strategies are ways to integrate a DEIA framework in your organization:

1. Cultivate senior management buy-in for DEIA

2. Conduct an organizational DEIA assessment

3. Develop a DEIA Action Plan

4. Establish a Respectful Workplace Policy

5. Provide Accessibility and Accommodations Supports

6. Make DEIA training available for all employees

7. Integrate DEIA in Employee Engagement and Workplace Culture

8. Apply DEIA in communications

9. Introduce the use of a DEIA Lens

10. Apply DEIA in the hiring process
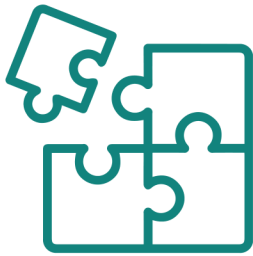
Strategy 1

CULTIVATE SENIOR MANAGEMENT BUY-IN FOR DEIA

If your organization is at the beginning stages of your DEIA journey, it is crucial to engage with your organization's leadership to cultivate their buy-in and commitment toward DEIA efforts. This can include creating awareness and understanding of what DEIA means, its benefits to the organization and its employees, and the risks of not cultivating a diverse and inclusive workforce. For example, consider creating the awareness and understanding that DEIA practices can create an open and rich atmosphere within the workplace, bringing in new ideas and perspectives and sparking innovation (Canadian Construction Association, n.d.).

Before engaging with senior leadership develop a plan or business case for DEIA in your organization. One approach is to present DEIA not just as an HR strategy but as an ongoing business tool that can improve the attraction and retention of diverse talent and maximize workforce potential (The Building Industry and Land Development Association, 2021). A way to highlight the organizational benefits of DEIA initiatives is to make connections of how these initiatives support or are aligned with the current or future goals of the organization (Ibid; PowerToFly, 2023).

Be prepared to respond and address questions from management about:
- What DEIA is and the scope of the DEIA initiatives you are proposing,
- The costs and benefits associated with DEIA, including the cost of inaction,
- Overview of the plan such as the 10 strategies outlined in this toolkit,
- Estimate time and effort that will be required, as well as milestones and expected results on this timeline,
- The structure that will support the implementation of the DEIA intiatives,
- Who will be involved and how including the requirements for employees' and management's time throughout the process, and
- Expectation management including risk management and regulatory / legislative obligations.

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR APPLYING DEIA IN THE WORKPLACE

Consider using the following statements to present your DEIA initiatives to receive support from the senior management team:

A workforce that is representative of the population and its diverse backgrounds can bring innovation, insights to expand to new markets, and business growth (ESDC, 2019).

Companies with gender-diverse leadership outperformed their competitors (Hunt et al., 2018b).

A diverse and inclusive workforce is an important factor in attracting and retaining new talent (Hunt et al., (2018a).

Diverse talent can bring new skills and ideas that can further improve productivity (Cole, 2020).

"Employee perceptions of their organisation's diversity practices were directly related to their levels of engagement", including employees' level of trust at work (Downey et al., 2015).

As you engage with senior management, a next step could be to find an executive sponsor who can be the corporate DEIA champion. Attributes of a successful executive sponsor include, most critically, having the capacity and resources to take on this role, as well as understanding DEIA (The Building Industry and Land Development Association, 2021, p.14-15). Having an executive sponsor who can be the corporate DEIA champion, both in the organization and at decision-making tables is one way that you can ensure sustainability in your DEIA efforts, including the allocation of resources needed to complete DEIA initiatives.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following human rights legislation supports DEIA across Canada:

- The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982)
- The Canadian Human Rights Act (1985)
- Human Rights Code, RSBC 1996, c 210 (British Columbia)
- Alberta Human Rights Act, RSA 2000, c A-25.5 (Alberta)
- Saskatchewan Human Rights Code, 2018, SS 2018, c S-24.2 (Saskatchewan)
- The Human Rights Code, CCSM c H175 (Manitoba)
- Human Rights Code, RSO 1990, c H.19 (Ontario)
- Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, CQLR c C-12 (Quebec)
- Human Rights Act, RSNB 2011, c 171 (New Brunswick)
- Human Rights Act, RSNS 1989, c 214 (Nova Scotia)
- Human Rights Act, RSPEI 1988, c H-12 (Prince Edward Island)
- Human Rights Act, 2010, SNL 2010, c H-13.1 (Newfoundland and Labrador)
- Human Rights Act, RSY 2002, c 116 (Yukon)
- Human Rights Act, SNWT 2002, c 18 (Northwest Territories)
- Human Rights Act, SNu 2003, c 12 (Nunavut)
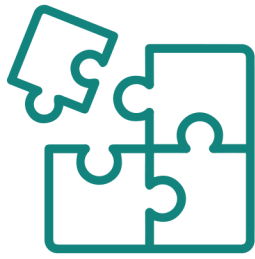
Strategy 2
CONDUCT AN ORGANIZATIONAL DEIA ASSESSMENT

Completing an organizational DEIA assessment is one way to start or assess the current status of your organization's DEIA efforts. Some organizations may also call an Organizational DEIA Assessment as an "equity assessment". As this is a self-assessment tool, organizations and workplaces can use the questions and responses to facilitate ongoing DEIA dialogue, as well as inform what areas to focus your DEIA efforts toward organizational change.

The following table outlines some areas that are covered by an organizational DEIA assessment, and potential approaches on how to complete the assessment:

AREAS OF ORGANIZATIONAL DEIA ASSESSMENT	POTENTIAL APPROACHES TO CONDUCT A DEIA ASSESSMENT
WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATE OF THE ORGANIZATION'S OPENNESS AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS DEIA INCLUDING ITS WORKPLACE CULTURE?	• What are the results of employee engagement surveys? Do they include specific DEIA-related questions? • What has been the feedback from employees from equity groups? • Is there support and buy-in about DEIA from senior management? • Is there a demand for DEIA-related training, and what has been the feedback from this training?

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ORGANIZATIONAL DEIA ASSESSMENT

AREAS OF ORGANIZATIONAL DEIA ASSESSMENT	POTENTIAL APPROACHES TO CONDUCT A DEIA ASSESSMENT
WHAT DEIA-RELATED INITIATIVES OR INFRASTRUCTURES EXIST IN THE ORGANIZATION?	• Take an inventory of policies. Identify what currently exists that aligns with DEIA and what's missing. This can include a Respectful Workplace Policy, Code of Conduct, or Employment Equity Policy. • Are there procedures and/or practices that align with DEIA and accessibility such as requesting for accommodations, parental leave, or clear reporting mechanisms to address workplace harassment or discrimination? • Are there supportive networks such as employee resource groups, mentoring opportunities for employees from equity groups, or EAP supports? • Are DEIA and accessibility-related training available?
WHAT IS THE CURRENT WORKFORCE COMPOSITION INCLUDING REPRESENTATION LEVELS FROM EMPLOYMENT EQUITY AND DIVERSITY GROUPS?	• Does the organization collect socio-demographic information on its employees either as part of the organization's HR data or through an employee survey? • Is there support to create baseline information about the current workforce from HR and your database coordinators? • What is the current workforce composition as it relates to employment equity groups including women, Indigenous People, racialized employees, and persons with disabilities? Is there an opportunity to collect more information about diversity groups including ethnic/race data, language, immigrant background, or age for example? • How does your organization's workforce composition compare with labour market availability? Are equity groups over or underrepresented, and in which occupations?

WORKSHEET 1
Organizational DEIA Assessment

This organizational DEIA assessment can be done through informal and formal conversations with employees of all levels to establish DEIA priorities to inform the next steps, including your organization's DEIA Action Plan. Additional resources include the Meyers DEI Spectrum tool, which provides assessment criteria for 12 aspects of DEIA work.

Consider completing Worksheet 1 as part of your organizational DEIA assessment by reviewing the following statements rating where your workplace is currently on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

STATEMENTS My organization….	RATING 1-5	AREAS OF STRENGTHS	AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT
1. Promotes and practices respectful work environment principles			
2. Offers flexible work schedules and locations when able to accommodate care responsibilities			
3. Offer professional and social networking opportunities to foster professional development and strengthen work relationships			
4. Provides accommodations as much as possible, working with the individual to find the best solution			
5. Offers continued and up-to-date DEIA and cultural competency training to all employees			
6. Has leadership and management actively involved and committed to DEIA initiatives			
7. Uses clear, plain, and inclusive language in policies and communications as much as possible			
8. Has DEIA policies such as: Respectful Workplace; Diversity and Inclusion; Accessibility; Anti-racism / Anti-discrimination; Anti-Indigenous and Anti-Black racism; Workplace sexual harassment and violence prevention			
9. Has diverse and representative leadership and management			
10. Offers programs and/or supports to address equity concerns and/or barriers such as the need for childcare or language training			

REFLECTIONS

Reflect on the reasons why you rated your organization in this way. What is the total score? The higher the number, the closer you are to an ideal state where there is much support towards DEIA in the workplace.

In addition, think about the current strengths of your organization, and areas that could be improved. Consider including these areas in both your baseline information and in planning your DEIA Action Plan.
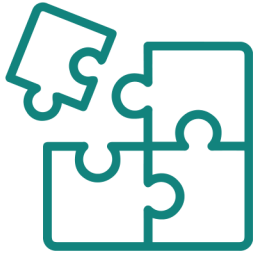
Strategy 3
DEVELOP A DEIA ACTION PLAN

One common tool that is used by organizations is the development and implementation of a DEIA Action Plan. A DEIA Action Plan outlines the organization's commitments to DEIA in practical terms, including:

- Strategic commitment statements and goals,
- Tangible actions and tasks,
- Numeric targets, and
- Resources including human and financial resources.

DEIA Action Plans also include an evaluation and accountability framework, with timelines and key performance indicators (KPIs) if done well. A DEIA Action Plan is a road map, to ensure that everyone in the organization knows where they are headed with regards to achieving DEIA in the workplace.

The foundation of the DEIA Action Plan is the vision, mission and scope,** setting up the who, what, when, where and why of your action plan and providing a source of focus (SHRM, n.d). It can be a simple statement that encompasses what you want this plan to achieve, how it will be achieved, and where the action plan applies (Niagara Region, 2022). There is no one set method for developing a DEIA Action Plan. It is important that your plan works in the context of the organization and is supported by management and employees.

Here are some examples of DEIA Action Plans:
- Niagara Region DEI Action Plan Framework

- Tides 2019 Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) Action Plan

- Tuck DEI Action Plan

** Other terms such as "vision, mission and strategy" are used and refer to the same basic concepts.

Review Checklist #1 which outlines key considerations when developing a DEIA Action Plan.

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Checklist 1
Developing a DEIA Action Plan - Ten Key Considerations

KEY CONSIDERATIONS	REFLECTIONS
#1. Is your DEIA Action Plan in compliance with local, provincial/territorial and federal laws, specifically those regarding human rights, employment equity, and safety in the workplace?	
#2. Does it outline your overall commitment to DEIA and strategic goals for the organization? Does it include relevant guiding principles and a glossary of terms?	
#3. Is your DEIA Action Plan informed by your baseline information, and does it include numeric DEIA targets based on both baseline and labour market availability trends?	
#4. Are the lived experiences and needs of your employees, especially those from underrepresented groups, reflected in the Action Plan?	
#5. Does the Action Plan have specific actions, tasks, and human and financial resources?	
#6. Are there ways for employees to engage and support your plan implementation?	
#7. Is there an evaluation plan and process, showing key timelines, metrics, and KPIs?	
#8. Does it include training and awareness-raising activities to communicate the Plan, and gather support and buy-in?	
#9. Does it include structural pieces such as changes and/or introduction of DEIA-related policies and practices, that change your organization in the long-term?	
#10. Is your DEIA Action Plan clear, easy to understand, unbiased, and accessible?	
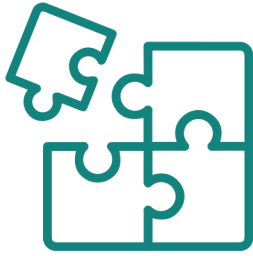
Strategy 4
ESTABLISH A RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE POLICY

A Respectful Workplace Policy is foundational to integrating DEIA in the workplace as this policy establishes the expectations and standards for acceptable and respectful behaviours and conduct in the workplace. The principles within the policy also foster a respectful, equitable and inclusive work environment for all employees (Build Force Canada, n.d).

In addition, a Respectful Workplace Policy or any other policy or procedural instruments in the workplace such as a Code of Conduct for employees can be used to address and prevent workplace harassment and discrimination, where everyone is safe from emotional, psychological and physical harm.

The global pandemic has changed the nature of work with the emergence of a remote work, or hybrid workplace structure. It's important that organizations also revise your DEIA-related policies such as Respectful Workplace Policy to ensure that it includes interactions online, such as email, group chats, text messages, and social media. In addition, consider additional policies such as a Disconnecting from Work Policy, to maintain work-life boundaries and promote psychological safety.

Consider Checklist #2 when developing your organization's Respectful Workplace Policy.

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CHECKLIST 2
Five Core Components of a Respectful Workplace Policy

COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION
✔ **POLICY STATEMENT**	This section provides background information on why this policy has been created and implemented. It can include a commitment statement to DEIA in the workplace, and how the policy complies with workplace requirements such as occupational health and safety, provincial, territorial, national human rights codes, psychologically safe workplaces, anti-discrimination and anti-racism, and prevention of workplace harassment and violence.
✔ **DEFINITIONS**	Include definitions of key terminologies that are used in the policy such as "harassment", "discrimination", "racism", "sexism" and "power dynamics". Even if the terms are common and well known, it is beneficial that there is a common shared understanding of what these terms mean in the context of this policy and their workplace (City of London, n.d).
✔ **APPLICABILITY AND/OR SCOPE**	Who does this policy apply to and where? With remote work becoming increasingly common, it should be taken into consideration when determining scope such as online interactions and communications. In addition, in Canada, human rights and OH&S legislation affords protections against harassment and ensures safety in the workplace. As such, it's important to explain what constitutes the "workplace" and/or "work-related" such as what occurs during a conference or online, when addressing workplace harassment, especially considering the changing nature of work with regards to remote work.
✔ **THE POLICY**	The policy description should include roles and responsibilities on how to cultivate a respectful workplace and the procedures to address any issues that may arise, The policy outlines the standards of conduct, expected behaviours and conversely behaviour that is prohibited. Expectations regarding workplace relationships, especially romantic relationships in the workplace are also outlined (Law Society of Alberta, 2021). Clear steps on how workplace harassment, discrimination and/or violence will be effectively addressed should be laid out, including steps on how the individual affected can report or file a complaint, as well as additional resources and support that can be accessed.
✔ **IMPLEMENTATION**	Have a guide, plan or processes in place to implement the policy to its fullest. This can include the steps that will be taken to appropriately respond to and investigate a report or complaint made by an employee (Ibid). The policy can also be implemented through workplace training on diversity, equity and inclusion and communicated expectations and procedures whilst ensuring the confidentiality of parties involved.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE

Maintaining a psychologically safe workplace is an important aspect of DEIA, and can contribute to employee retention, innovation and an overall positive workplace culture (The Benefits of Psychological Safety, 2020). There are several resources available for employers, including the National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace which was first launched in 2013 by the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC). This resource is the first of its kind not just in Canada but globally. The Standard is a set of voluntary guidelines for employers, as well as tools and resources, on psychological safety in the workplace.

In addition to the Standard itself, there is a 2017 case study report on the implementation of the Standard by the MHCC, which includes lessons learned and best practices relating to psychological safety from 40 organizations. Best practices identified in the report include commitment throughout the organization whilst emphasizing the importance of commitment from leadership and allocating adequate resources (p. 17, 22). The report notes that enacting a respectful workplace policy and related education initiatives were the top actions implemented by participating organizations (p.13).

While there is currently no legislation that explicitly states an employer's responsibility to ensure psychological safety in the workplace, there are still legislative requirements for employers that encompass psychological safety. For example, Part XX of the Canada Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, "Violence Prevention in the Workplace" defines violence in a way that encompasses physical and psychological (Pang, 2013; The Shain Reports, 2010; Employment and Social Development Canada, 2016).

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE

HOW DO WE ASSESS PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE?

Adapted from the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (2023), there are many ways to assess the state of your organization's psychological safety such as:

- Reviewing administrative (internal) data such as complaint reports, related grievances, absenteeism, employee turnover rates, and resource usage rates such as EAP.

- Auditing existing structures for its availability, accessibility, and effectiveness such as the workplace harassment and violence prevention policies and procedures, mental health-related policies and programs, management practices, training programs, and job descriptions.

- Gathering firsthand feedback from employees, including managers, through pulse surveys, employee engagement surveys, formal and informal discussions, observations, anonymous feedback, and group discussions.

Before engaging in this assessment, consider the readiness of your organization for change. This includes:

- Understanding the context of your environment,

- Having senior management buy-in,

- Having the resources in place to engage in the work which includes time, funds, and human resources,

- Managing expectations from and demands on employees,

- Having a process in place for any serious employee considerations such as issues that could be uncovered or disclosures as the work progresses, and

- Establishing a change management plan that includes a risk management plan, trauma-informed, and aligned with DEIA principles (adapted from Canada Life, 2023).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

RESOURCES FOR CREATING INCLUSIVE WORKPLACES

- Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council. Inclusive Workplace Competencies.

- A Practical Toolkit to Help Employers Build an Inclusive Workforce

- Delivering through Diversity, 2018 Report Review, McKinsey Global Institute

- Guide to Developing a Strategic Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan

RESOURCES PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE

- Psychological Safety Tool Kit, 2020

- The National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace, Mental Health Commission of Canada

- Case Study Research Project Findings, The National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace 2014-2017.

- Psychological Health in the Workplace, Employment and Social Development Canada

- Guarding Minds at Work (GM@W)

- Psychological Health and Safety, Canadian Centre for Occupational Healyh & Safety
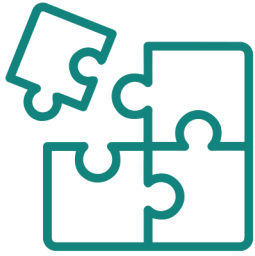
Strategy 5
PROVIDE ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATIONS SUPPORTS

Having a workplace that is accessible and has the flexibility to make necessary accommodations is an important aspect of DEIA. Often, accessibility and accommodations are thought of in the context of specific types of physical disability such as having ramps and elevators in the workplace. While these are certainly important elements of an accessible workplace, there is much more to consider such as an applicant or an employee who self-identifies as neurodivergent or an employee with a chronic health condition.

Accessibility is about an interaction between a person and their environment, and a person with an impairment experiences disability when they are faced with a barrier which prevents their inclusion. This is why accessibility and accommodation are important aspects to consider when applying DEIA in the workplace.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF DISABILITIES

Statistics Canada's Canadian Survey on Disability (2017) includes the following 10 disability types:

1. Seeing
2. Hearing
3. Learning
4. Developmental
5. Mental-health related
6. Mobility
7. Flexibility
8. Dexterity
9. Pain-related
10. Memory

DID YOU KNOW?

"The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) requires businesses and organizations in Ontario to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to accessibility. The goal of the law is for Ontario to be accessible by 2025 so that people with disabilities can participate more fully in communities. To reach this goal, the Government of Ontario is developing and enforcing mandatory province-wide accessibility standards in key areas of daily life including customer service, information and communications, employment, transportation, and design of public spaces" (Government of Ontario and The Conference Board of Canada, n.d., p. 3).

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It is important to note that accessibility and accommodations in the workplace are not always related to disability. For example, a qualified candidate who is a newcomer to Canada and for whom English is a second language or an employee who is a primary caregiver could benefit greatly from having access to resources and reasonable accommodations such as language training and flexible work options respectively. Including accessibility considerations can help foster a more diverse, equitable and inclusive workplace where everyone feels welcome and has the resources and support to reach their full potential.

There are certain circumstances when incorporating DEIA in the workplace will have a financial cost, such as in the case of certain employee accommodations and supports. Examples of this include employees with disabilities who may need additional tools or time to complete a task and employees who are primary caregivers and may need equipment to work from home while caring for a sick child or relative.

While these accommodations and supports may have an upfront cost, there is also an economic benefit. A study on the return on investment (ROI) of employers who made accommodations for employees with mental illness found that all four case studies saw an economic benefit ranging from 2-7 times the cost of the accommodations (Gewurtz et al., 2019). It is also important to note that the benefits go beyond costs and ROI. It also makes business sense from an employee engagement, risk mitigation, and legislative compliance perspective.

The Government of Ontario and The Conference Board of Canada (n.d., p. 3) suggests the following actions listed in Checklist #3 to ensure employers align with the accessible employment standards set out by the AODA.

CHECKLIST 3

Actionable Accessible Employment Standards Considerations for Employers

- [ ] Develop an accessibility (accommodations) policy covering various workplace areas; recruitment, hiring, workplace programs, employee engagement, etc (for examples see Checklist 7)

- [ ] Make it clear that people with disabilities are welcome and that accommodations will be addressed, during all stages of the hiring process and throughout their employment.

- [ ] Consider the needs of employees with disabilities with regards to career development and performance management.

- [ ] Cultivate staff awareness of relevant policies to support employees with disabilities, including the availability of job accommodations.

- [ ] Provide information in a format that is accessible, depending on the specific needs of employees with disabilities when requested.

- [ ] Provide individualized workplace emergency response and occupational health and safety information for employees with disabilities.
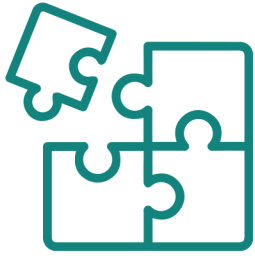
Strategy 6

MAKE DEIA TRAINING AVAILABLE FOR ALL EMPLOYEES

DEIA training can be an effective tool to build the individual and corporate capacity of staff and the organization on how to integrate and implement DEIA in the workplace. Training can have numerous benefits within the workplace, such as employees' personal and professional growth to create positive changes to workplace culture and performance, including fostering respect and inclusivity, and positively impacting productivity and thus, increased profitability (InStride, 2021).

It is important not to let the conversation fizzle out once training is completed, and to build on the momentum. While facilitating conversations can be challenging, it is an important aspect of ongoing DEIA work in the workplace. Consider making the conversation more of a discussion with a common goal or issue to address, fostering a sense of unity amongst colleagues (Coach Diversity Institute, n.d.). These conversations should be safe places for everyone, where diverse perspectives can be expressed while people still feel safe; that doesn't necessarily mean these conversations will be comfortable or easy, but participants should not feel that their identity is being targeted or that they have been intentionally embarrassed somehow (Ibid).

There are many ways that DEIA training can be introduced in the workplace. Consider incorporating it throughout the employee's professional and career development; starting at orientation and onboarding, to core training, and ongoing and specialized training options based on various themes including their respective occupational groups and competencies, to the changing nature of DEIA, and in alignment with the diversity calendar.

CHECKLIST 4
Considerations for DEIA training

When developing DEIA training for your organization, reflect on the following considerations:

○ Review the current workplace environment and determine what types of training would be the most appropriate and effective.

○ Determine which specific DEIA competencies to focus on, and how to connect it to your organizational values, mission, and vision and DEIA Action Plan if it exists.

○ Consider making the training voluntary, and being creative to incentivize employees who are reluctant to volunteer.

○ Develop leadership-specific training that includes the HR department.

○ Integrate DEIA principles in how the training is designed and delivered. For example, training can be self-led e-learning or in-person group presentations with experienced facilitators.

EXAMPLES OF DEIA TRAINING TOPICS

DEIA TRAINING	BRIEF DESCRIPTION
UNDERSTANDING DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY	Define Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility and how they relate to the workplace; ways to embrace and incorporate DEIA in the workplace.
UNCONSCIOUS BIAS	Define unconscious bias; identify ways that bias shapes personal views.
ALLYSHIP AND BYSTANDER INTERVENTION IN THE WORKPLACE	Role of an ally; techniques for effective bystander intervention. .
CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING AND AWARENESS	Foster understanding, respect and empathy for diverse lived experiences; challenging potential prejudices and biases within the organization and personally (InStride, 2021).
INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP	Bias awareness for leaders and decision-makers, and how to lead diverse teams, and serve diverse client groups.
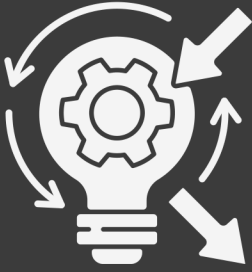
REFLECTIONS

Take a moment and reflect on the following questions:

- What DEIA-related training currently exists in your organization?
- What is working well?
- What areas can be improved upon?

Strategy 7

INTEGRATE DEIA IN EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND WORKPLACE CULTURE INITIATIVES

The inclusion of DEIA in the workplace is beneficial to employee engagement and workplace culture. In fact, employee engagement is a necessity to create sustainable and effective change in workplace culture. Clear communication is an important aspect of fostering initial buy-in and employee engagement, as well as leaders and management setting an example by actively making DEIA a priority. Recent reports have shown that when leaders and management make DEIA a priority, there are significant financial benefits for both the organization and its employees, and the organization is more effective at responding to change (Fuchs & Leaman, 2022). Overall, implementing DEIA initiatives in the workplace can be beneficial to the workplace culture and performance of an organization.

DEIA INITIATIVES IN THE WORKPLACE CAN INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- Creating opportunities to increase cultural understanding through fun social activities such as important cultural events and celebrations

- Offering opportunities for meaningful and effective DEIA training

- Ensuring that the workplace is accessible for all and that accommodations are available

- Actively engaging employees by creating employee resource groups and identifying DEIA champions

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REFLECTIONS

Take a moment and reflect on the following questions:

- What are some ways that you can integrate DEIA into your workplace culture?

- What currently exists, and what creative and innovative ways can be implemented in the future?

ACKNOWLEDGE AND CELEBRATE DIVERSITY WITH DIVERSITY CALENDARS

Creating a diverse and inclusive workplace requires representation and recognition. A diversity calendar is one way to celebrate diversity and foster a more accepting and inclusive workplace through shared experiences, learning, awareness, understanding, and acceptance.

A diversity calendar includes important historical dates, the dates for religious and cultural celebrations as well as important commemorative days such as Pride Month, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence.

Having a diversity calendar can be an entry point to raise awareness about DEIA and invite tangible actions from employees. It can also be an effective tool to engage everyone in the workplace by creating a living calendar where employees can make suggestions for new additions or updates to existing entries.

EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUPS, MENTORS, CHAMPIONS AND ALLIES

Integrating DEIA in the workplace is a journey that requires the support of champions and allies, including organizational leaders, management, and employees of all levels and backgrounds for DEIA initiatives to be more sustainable and workplace culture to be more welcoming, diverse, and inclusive. The following table shows three examples of workplace initiatives that exemplify different considerations when developing DEIA workplace initiatives depending on the target participants.

DEIA WORKPLACE INITIATIVE	TARGET PARTICIPANTS AND CONSIDERATIONS	DESCRIPTION AND CONSIDERATIONS
EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUPS (ERG)	Employee Resource Groups (ERG) are voluntary groups formed by employees, often around social identities, that can serve a variety of purposes. For example, there could be a general diversity committee or specific ones such as the Pride Network or an ERG for immigrants and newcomers, or Black employees.	The main purpose of ERGs is to provide a safer space for employees to network and raise awareness about the issues that their community is facing in general and within the workplace (Test; Catalino, Gardner, Goldstein & Wong, 2022). These groups provide employees an opportunity to connect with fellow employees with whom there are similar lived experiences and understanding. It is important that ERGs are actively supported by leadership which can include providing management approvals for employees to participate during working hours, space to meet, access to communicate to all employees through official work communication channels, and resources such as funds to support any planned activities. Consider having a management sponsor or champion for ERGs, to provide access to decision-makers in the organization such as senior management teams and HR.

EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUPS, MENTORS, CHAMPIONS AND ALLIES

DEIA WORKPLACE INITIATIVE	TARGET PARTICIPANTS AND CONSIDERATIONS	DESCRIPTION AND CONSIDERATIONS
MENTORSHIP	Although workplace mentorships are typically open for all employees, ensure that equity group members have equitable access to participate as either a mentee or mentor.	Mentorship initiatives provide opportunities to build relationships and understanding between employees, especially those who are newer to the workplace. An important consideration is representation. Ensure that employees from equity groups have access to both being a mentee and mentor. Be mindful as well of considerations such as cultural safety, to ensure that the pairing of mentors and mentees is culturally appropriate and that there is bias awareness training provided to all participants.
DEIA CHAMPIONS	DEIA Champions are typically senior leaders within the organization. It can be someone from the C-suite or a senior HR leader. The key is that the champion believes and advocates for DEIA and has the influence and decision-making authority to support DEIA initiatives.	The DEIA Champion is there to support DEIA initiatives across the organization including championing them within management and providing visibility and backing to DEIA initiatives and employee groups. As mentioned within the ERG, the DEIA Champion can also provide the tangible supports needed for DEIA initiatives to be resourced, including gathering support from other leaders who have access to resources and budgets across the organization.

EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUPS, MENTORS, CHAMPIONS AND ALLIES

DEIA WORKPLACE INITIATIVE	TARGET PARTICIPANTS AND CONSIDERATIONS	DESCRIPTION AND CONSIDERATIONS
ALLIES	Allyship is something that can be embraced and practised by all employees on an ongoing basis, especially employees with a different socio-demographic background to the group they are supporting.	There are numerous ways an employee can be an ally, but a key aspect is that it is the colleague(s) in need of allyship who identify them, not the other way around (He, 2022). According to the Ontario Public Service Employees Union, to be an ally is to unite oneself with another to promote a common interest… Being an ally is more than being sympathetic towards those who experience discrimination. It is more than simply believing in equality. Being an ally means being willing to act with and for others in pursuit of ending oppression and creating equality (OPSEU, 2015). Engaging in bystander intervention is a tangible way to demonstrate allyship, as well as championing a person from a traditionally marginalized and underrepresented group. In addition, allyship is a balance between: Supporting DEIA actions that are led by and informed by equity groups, and Being responsible for their own learning and response about DEIA issues to not overburden equity group members for transformative change within the workplace.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For more information about addressing bias, systemic barriers, or discrimination refer to the following resources

- Reducing Implicit Racial Preferences: I. A Comparative Investigation of 17 Interventions (Lai et al., 2012)

- Ontario Human Rights Commission (2013). Policy on Removing the "Canadian experience" barrier

- Addressing Barriers to Employment for Immigrant and Racialized Women and Youth What We Heard Report

- Bridging the Gap: Immigrant Women and Their Labour Market Integration in the Greater Toronto Area

- Public Service Commission of Canada. 2020. Foreign Credential Validation against Canadian Standards

- Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC). (2020). Respect@Work: National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For more information about addressing bias, systemic barriers, or discrimination refer to the following resources

- Build Together. (n.d.). Creating a Safe and Welcoming Work Environment. Preventing and Addressing Workplace Harassment and Discrimination Together.

- Catalyst. (2021). Women in Male-Dominated Industries and Occupations (Quick Take).

- Daley, L. P., Travis, D. J., & Shaffer, E. S. (2018). Sexual Harassment in the Workplace: How Companies can Prepare, Prevent, Respond, and Transform their Culture.

- Hango, D., & Moyser, M. (2018). Harassment in Canadian workplaces.

- Employment and Social Development Canada. (2021). Making an accessible Canada for persons with disabilities.
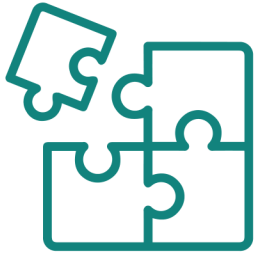
Strategy 8
INTEGRATE DEIA IN COMMUNICATIONS

Integrating DEIA in communications is important because it:

- ✔ Contributes to positive, safe, and respectful work environments.

- ✔ Enhances employee engagement, wellbeing, and innovation.

- ✔ Affirms that every employee belongs and is valued.

- ✔ Promotes respectful and appropriate relationships in the workplace.

- ✔ Avoids false assumptions and minimizes the influence of bias and stereotypes.

- ✔ Considers intercultural competencies and increases understanding.

- ✔ Encourages empathy and restorative relationships amongst colleagues.

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DEIA IN COMMUNICATIONS

One way to integrate DEIA in communications is by using inclusive communications. Here are some ways to foster inclusive communication:

1 **Create awareness:** Develop engaging initiatives that promote inclusive language throughout the organization

2 **Understand your audience:** Leadership, including HR, should be mindful of group interactions and individual needs to create an inclusive environment

3 **Highlight inclusive language:** Encourage everyone within the organization to use inclusive language in written and verbal communication, using gender-neutral terms and avoiding gendered words such as "chairman"

4 Include leaders and employees

5 **Learn what matters most for employees:** Create ways for employees to voice their needs and provide feedback on implemented initiatives

6 **Develop a training program:** Training programs on inclusive communication can support employees to understand the importance of inclusion in written

7 **Lead by example:** Leadership within the organization should be encouraged to demonstrate inclusive behaviour

8 **Create a safe space (Scott, 2023).**

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CHECKLIST 5
How to integrate DEIA in communications

To integrate DEIA in communications, answer the questions in Checklist #5 when designing communication products, whether printed or electronic, to reach and engage with diverse populations including immigrant and racialized women and youth.

Questions to Consider	YES	NO	NEXT STEPS
1. Is the content in plain and inclusive language?			
2. Is it culturally appropriate and contributes positively to DEIA and in particular, your organization's commitments to achieving reconciliation with Indigenous peoples?			
3. Recognizing that language is important and is ever-changing, does the content reflect the current DEIA discourse?			
4. Is it best to present the content as gender-neutral, gender-inclusive, or gender specific?			
5. Are the communication products accessible, such as being available in multiple formats, compatible with assistive technology, available in multiple languages, and considered colour swatches accessible for individuals with colour deficiency**?			
6. Is the visual representation diverse and representative of the diversity of the Canadian population, ensuring authenticity rather than tokenism?			
7. Is the content free from jargon or acronyms?			

** For more information, see https://opto.ca/eye-health-library/colour-deficiency

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

RESOURCES FOR INTEGRATING DEIA IN COMMUNICATIONS

- Egale Canada.Affirming and Inclusive Language

- Government of Canada (2022).Guide on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Terminology

- Simon Fraser University.Inclusive and Antiracist Language

- Government of Canada Communications Community Office (2022). Plain language, accessibility, and inclusive communications

- Queen's University.Style Guide: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

- Barna, L. (n.d.)Stumbling Blocks in Intercultural Communication
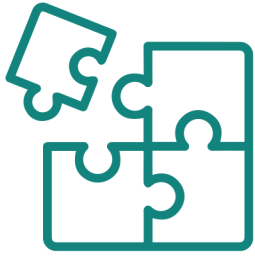
Strategy 9

INTRODUCE THE USE OF A DEIA LENS

The use of a DEIA lens to inform decision-making and the development of programs and policies is one tangible way to apply DEIA principles in your organization. Specifically, a DEIA lens can be used as a tool to help identify and understand the positive and negative impacts of procedures, policies and programs within the workplace for diverse groups of employees with differing lived experiences and socio-demographic backgrounds (Albright College, 2021). Its use can help address systemic barriers and inequities that various individuals and communities may face (City of Ottawa, 2015, p. 6).

In addition, a DEIA lens can also be used for personal and professional growth by facilitating self-reflection, ongoing learning and knowledge building (Town of Newmarket, 2021). It can help us to become more aware of our own diversity and diversity around us, and to incorporate a diversity of perspectives and lived experiences around us (City of Ottawa, 2015, p. 6).

EXAMPLES OF DEIA LENS

DEIA LENS	STEPS
CITY OF OTTAWA'S EQUITY AND INCLUSION LEN	• Consider your diversity • Check assumptions • Ask about inclusion • Apply to your work • Be an ally. Take action. (City of Ottawa, 2018, p. 9)
CITY OF TORONTO'S EQUITY LENS	• Equity-seeking/Vulnerable Populations: Identify the communities potentially affected by the initiative. • Needs and Barriers: Identify needs, barriers, and root causes addressed by this initiative by population group. • Potential or Actual Impacts: Identify the direct and indirect impacts of the initiative on affected communities by population group. • Level of Potential or Actual Impacts: Is it positive or negative, and to what extent: low, medium or high - by population group? • Action Taken/Recommended: Identify the ways to remove known barriers, reduce negative impacts and/or enhance positive impacts by population group. • Equity Impact Analysis and Assessment
GOVERNMENT OF CANADA'S GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS PLUS (GBA PLUS)**	• Identify the issue • Identify people and their needs • Identify differences and inequalities • Develop options • Implementation, monitoring and evaluation **The Government of Canada's Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) is an analytical tool based upon intersectionality analysis to assess how diverse groups of women, men, trans and non-binary people may experience policies, programs, and initiatives.

AREAS WHERE A DEIA LENS CAN BE APPLIED IN THE WORKPLACE

There are several ways that a DEIA lens can be applied in the workplace and is dependent on the needs and priorities of the organization. Having buy-in from leadership and HR capacity to apply a lens also helps support the effective application of a DEIA lens in the workplace.

Did you know that you can apply a DEIA lens to various functions and areas in the workplace? Here are some of the areas that it can be applied to:

- Communications
- Training
- Research
- Service Delivery
- Procurement
- Human Resources

- Public consultation
- Policy Development
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Employee Engagement
- Event Planning
- Program Development

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION WHEN APPLYING A DEIA LENS

Socio-demographic information from candidates and employees can be vital to creating and maintaining a diverse, equitable and inclusive workplace and when applying a DEIA lens. It can aid in the promotion of DEIA and measuring initiative progress, identifying and addressing systemic barriers, developing new policies or procedures, and more (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2009). However, the personal nature of this data requires careful consideration when it comes to the collection and use of data. Consider the application of DEIA when collecting personal data and ensure alignment with principles such as informed consent and privacy.

BEST PRACTICES FOR SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA COLLECTION IN THE WORKPLACE

1 **Communication:** Provide as much information as possible prior to beginning this process. Explain how the data will be collected, the reason for it and what it will be used for, how privacy and the confidentiality of data will be protected, etc.

2 **Developing data collection methods:** Centred around informed consent, voluntary participation, anonymity, and non-intrusive design (such as observation or questionnaires that respect an individual's privacy) are key approaches to collecting personal information from applicants and employees.

3 **Question type:** Consider the use of multiple-choice questions with the option to select all that apply, self-identify, or not respond so that every individual would feel included and represented by your data collection tools (ORARC, 2020).

4 **Inclusive language:** Consider the terminologies to ensure that they are inclusive and align with best practices and current DEIA discourse. Consider consulting relevant stakeholders if there is uncertainty, including individuals with lived experiences and from equity groups.

5 **Analysis and reporting:** Use aggregate data for analysis and subsequent reporting to avoid unintentionally identifying any participants and be strategic when using disaggregated data in alignment with minimum cell counts to protect the confidentiality of applicants and employees who shared their personal information (Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers, n.d).

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Strategy 10

APPLY DEIA BEST PRACTICES IN THE HIRING PROCESS

Applying DEIA in your organization's hiring strategy "is the process of intentionally cultivating a diverse, balanced, and inclusive recruitment process", where every applicant from all backgrounds has an equitable opportunity to compete and is designed with a deliberate approach to minimize the influence of bias (Watson, 2023).

This section, therefore, outlines recommendations and best practices for employers to integrate and implement DEIA in the hiring process. These recommendations are based on research that align with feedback from immigrant and racialized women from the focus groups conducted by Achēv and SEASONOVA. In particular, Strategy 10 includes a variety of DEIA approaches such as: reducing the influence of bias, DEIA in job postings, inclusive language, examples of how to apply accessibility and accommodations in the hiring process, and unique challenges that immigrant and racialized women encounter in the Canadian labour market such as foreign credentials accreditation and surmounting the lack of Canadian experience.

REDUCING BIAS IN THE HIRING PROCESS

Employers have the opportunity to reduce bias and make the hiring process more equitable, making the workplace more diverse and inclusive for immigrant and racialized women and youth.

Bias is a preconceived judgement that can influence a person's views of and actions towards another person or group of people. Bias is not always overt and can take different forms, such as conscious and unconscious bias (Government of Canada, 2023). While anyone can be the target of bias, people and communities who already experience marginalization are disproportionately the targets of bias. This was a recurring theme in conversations with the immigrant and racialized women and youth who participated in the Achēv focus groups where participants discussed their experiences of bias while navigating the Canadian labour market.

HOW CAN EMPLOYERS MINIMIZE BIAS IN THE HIRING PROCESS?

WAYS TO REDUCE BIAS IN THE HIRING PROCESS	DESCRIPTION AND CONSIDERATIONS
REMOVE SOCIAL IDENTIFIERS DURING THE REVIEW AND SCREENING OF APPLICATIONS	Seen as a best practice to minimize the influence of bias, when reviewing resumes and screening candidates, consider removing social identifiers such as gender, age, country of origin, and race (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2019; Tannian, 2022).** Removing social identifiers, including the removal of the candidate's name, has been supported by several studies as a bias mitigation approach. The studies found that unconscious bias during the recruitment and screening phase can be activated by assumptions or stereotypical associations with the names of candidates and is a barrier for equity groups (see Case Study: Bias & Hiring). However, it's important to keep in mind that this approach needs to be held in conjunction with another best practice of enabling applicants to self-identify if they are a member of one or more of an equity group, in order to pursue equity goals during the hiring process. For example, the removal of socio-demographic information may not be the most appropriate approach if the competition is designated for an equity group or will be used to accomplish DEIA targets for the organization. As such, consider developing a clear process that separates the different stages in the recruitment and hiring phase, to be able to apply self-identification and bias mitigation strategies simultaneously. ** This approach is often referred to as a "blind review". However, this language is not inclusive and can suggest ableism. Therefore, we suggest considering alternate language when implementing this approach.

HOW CAN EMPLOYERS MINIMIZE BIAS IN THE HIRING PROCESS?

WAYS TO REDUCE BIAS IN THE HIRING PROCESS	DESCRIPTION AND CONSIDERATIONS
BE AN ENGAGED USER OF HIRING TECHNOLOGY SUCH AS AI OR OTHER AUTOMATED TOOLS	Hiring technology such as the use of AI to screen applicants, or automated and electronic forms to collect and stream job applicants are increasing. They also hold the greatest potential as it is possible to objectively monitor and evaluate biases in these automated processes. However, to fully realize this potential, employers need to be an active and engaged user of hiring technology. This includes monitoring who are screened in and screened out to identify any potential patterns that may be based on bias that remain in the system's programming. Consider developing a clear monitoring and audit process, so that bias is minimized in the deployment of hiring technology in your organizations.
DEVELOP AN "OUTSIDE THE BOX" POINTS-BASED EVALUATION CRITERIA	Another approach employers can use is to develop a points system to evaluate the skills, abilities and transferable skills of candidates according to the job description and the position requirements. In A Practical Toolkit to Help Employers Build an Inclusive Workplace, the Mental Health Commission of Canada recommends "thinking outside the box" when it comes to skills and qualifications and adopting "a strengths-based approach when identifying skills and accomplishments" (2019, p.37). The toolkit emphasizes how "people with atypical educational backgrounds and personal histories can have unique approaches or skill sets that complement what you now have" (2019, p.37). Consider candidates with different lived experiences and unique perspectives, as well as how their transferable skills can bring new ideas and innovations into the workplace (Gewurtz et al., 2019). For the interview process, in addition to developing a points system ahead of the interview, consider preparing a set of standard interview questions, so that all candidates interviewing for the position will be asked the same questions. This will, in turn, make the using of a points system more effective.

HOW CAN EMPLOYERS MINIMIZE BIAS IN THE HIRING PROCESS?

WAYS TO REDUCE BIAS IN THE HIRING PROCESS	DESCRIPTION AND CONSIDERATIONS
APPLY DEIA IN THE INTERVIEW PROCESS, INCLUDING THE USE OF INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATIONS	Ensure that the language used in the interview questions is clear, easy to understand, inclusive, and culturally appropriate. Consider having questions that speak directly about DEIA, which then requires the development of DEIA-related questions in your bank of interview questions that hiring managers can pull from. Ensure that accommodation supports are provided during the interview and assessment process, to clearly demonstrate your organization's commitment to DEIA from the beginning.
HAVE DIVERSE AND REPRESENTATIVE HIRING COMMITTEES	Consider having more than one interviewer; this can mitigate the influence of personal bias (whether conscious or unconscious) and promote a more objective assessment of a candidate (Tannian, 2022). Similarly, a best practice for the interview process is having a diverse representation of the interviewer(s) and the hiring committee (Ibid). This can help with this intercultural interpretation and safeguard against misinterpretation and misevaluation of candidates' behaviours in the interview process.
PROVIDE DEIA TRAINING	One way to reduce the influence bias in the hiring process is to ensure that everyone involved in the hiring and recruitment process, such as staff who screen applicants, individuals who program the parameters for the hiring technology, staff who coordinate the logistics of the interviews, and members of the hiring panel including the hiring manager and HR supports, are all aware of DEIA principles. Consider providing additional DEIA training to every staff involved in the hiring process, to increase awareness and encourage the integration of DEIA in their hiring decisions. For example, intercultural communication training can provide a more nuanced understanding of cultural differences in verbal and non-verbal (eye contact, facial expressions) communication.

Additional Resources

RESOURCES FOR REDUCING BIAS IN THE HIRING PROCESS

- Reducing Implicit Racial Preferences: I. A Comparative Investigation of 17 Interventions (Lai et al., 2012)

- Addressing Barriers to Employment for Immigrant and Racialized Women and Youth What We Heard Report.

- Build Together. (n.d.). Creating a Safe and Welcoming Work Environment. Preventing and Addressing Workplace Harassment and Discrimination Together.

- Daley, L. P., Travis, D. J., & Shaffer, E. S. (2018). Sexual Harassment in the Workplace: How Companies can Prepare, Prevent, Respond, and Transform their Culture.

- Hango, D., & Moyser, M. (2018). Harassment in Canadian workplaces.

- Employment and Social Development Canada. (2021). Making an accessible Canada for persons with disabilities.

- Public Service Commission of Canada. (2017). The basics of assessment accommodation.

Additional Resources

RESOURCES FOR DEIA IN HIRING, RECRUITMENT, AND RETENTION:

- Creating an Equitable, Diverse and Inclusive Research Environment: A Best Practices Guide for Recruitment, Hiring and Retention (Canada Research Chairs, 2021)

- Blueprint for Gender Equality Recommendations for Recruitment, Retention, and Promotion

- Atlantic Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women. Guide to Gender Diversity in Employment

- Recruitment of persons with disabilities: a literature review / prepared by Equity and Diversity Directorate

- Public Service Commission of Canada. (2021) Audit of Employment Equity Representation in Recruitment

- Gender-related differences in the career advancement of women in Canada. (Deng, 2021)

Source: Public Service Commission of Canada. 2020. Foreign Credential Validation against Canadian Standards

CASE STUDY: BIAS & HIRING

Philip Oreopoulos, a professor of economics at the University of Toronto, implemented a field experience where he submitted over 6,000 resumes with similar qualifications to online job postings in Toronto. Resumes were constructed to represent recent immigrants from China, India, Pakistan and the United Kingdom as well as non-immigrants, including a mixture of foreign and non-foreign-sounding names, and foreign education and/or work experience (2009, p.1).

While this experiment aimed to investigate the struggles Canadian immigrants face in the labour market, the results revealed systemic discrimination that directly impacts many Canadian-born racialized women as well. Oreopoulos found that applicants with Canadian education and experience who had English-sounding names received callbacks 40% more often than applicants with "foreign-sounding" names (2009, p.7). He also observed that applicants with "foreign-sounding"** names who had Canadian education and experience received roughly 40% more callbacks if they attended a highly ranked Canadian university, a pattern that was not observed for similar applicants with English-sounding names (p.25).

This finding suggests different standards for similar applicants based on employers' biases and assumptions of their racial/ethnic identity.

** "Foreign-sounding" in this context is intrinsically connected to racial bias as it is based on Euro-western standards of what's considered normal versus what's considered as foreign. Oreopoulos makes note of two similar studies: one comparing "Canadian", Slavic, West-Indian/Indo-Pakistani accents (1985), and another comparing Middle-Eastern and Swedish sounding names (2007). In the first study, jobs were available 85% of the time when the caller had a Canadian accent, with that number dropping to 47% of the time when the caller had an Indo-Pakistani accent. A similar pattern was observed in the second study, with 50% higher callback rates for equivalent resumes that had Swedish names (2009, p.6).

DEIA IN JOB POSTINGS

It is also important to consider how DEIA approaches may apply to the application process. Developing job postings is one area where DEIA principles can be integrated. Consider Checklist #6 on how to develop inclusive job posters.

WAYS TO DEIA IN JOB POSTINGS	DESCRIPTION AND CONSIDERATIONS
KEY COMPONENTS	- Job descriptions should be written in gender-neutral language, avoiding gendering specific job positions or characteristics of ideal candidates. - Clearly list the skills and requirements of potential candidates, including transferable skills. - Provide a clear description of the duties and responsibilities of the position. - Clearly state if this position is in-person (in-office or on-site), remote or hybrid, as well as whether there are options for flexibility. - Include the salary/wage and any benefits (such as healthcare or parental leave). - Include clear and detailed instructions for how to apply for the position, including if cover letters or additional documents are required and the deadline (day, month, year and time).
CONSIDER INCLUDING	- A statement on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. - A realistic snapshot of the daily responsibilities of this role.
REVIEW FOR	- Word choice, and use of clear and inclusive language. - Accessibility, such as having alternative text on online job postings and machine-readable documents.

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EXAMPLES OF HOW TO APPLY ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATION IN HIRING

Having an accessible hiring process with access to accommodations can be important to ensuring that all candidates have an equal opportunity and that there is a larger talent pool to draw from including persons with disabilities.

To integrate DEIA in communications, consider Checklist #7 which lists ways to make the hiring process more accessible and accommodating.

CHECKLIST 7

Ways to make the hiring process more accessible and accommodating

✓ Use **plain and inclusive language** on job postings and avoid overly complex occupational jargon unless it directly relates to an aspect of the job posting

✓ **Simplify and streamline** the application process as much as possible to make it more accessible for candidates with disabilities and candidates who do not speak English as a first language.

✓ If asked by the candidate, **provide interview questions in advance** of the scheduled interview** or consider providing them in advance for all candidates as a practice, relieving the pressure to disclose in order to access accommodations.

✓ **Be transparent** about accommodation measures available during the interview process and any other assessments.

✓ Review **algorithms and AI systems** used in the hiring process to ensure that there is no implicit bias embedded in the system that excludes potential candidates based on criteria unrelated to their qualifications (McQuillan, 2023).

** There is no set amount of time recommended, however it should be long enough for the candidate to be able to thoroughly go over the questions and be prepared to answer them. This could range from an hour prior to the interview to providing the question the day before the interview.

CONSIDERATIONS TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANT AND RACIALIZED WOMEN

RECRUITMENT & OUTREACH

For employers who are looking to promote recruitment and outreach for immigrant and racialized women, building relationships and partnerships with employment service providers, post-secondary institutions, and community associations can be an important first step. These organizations are in direct contact with immigrants and newcomers, racialized women and youth including students and new graduates who can help during the recruitment process.

Online tools are another great resource employers can use to access a large number of capable and qualified candidates. Start with a clear and accessible company website to showcase your work and attract diverse candidates, as well as welcoming social media posts and engagement.

Employers can also think of creative ways to reach immigrant and racialized women and youth. For example, consider community centres, places of worship, cultural media, and cultural grocery stores. Ensure that your job postings are distributed widely.

CONSIDERATIONS TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANT AND RACIALIZED WOMEN

CAREER ADVANCEMENT & PROMOTIONS

Although promotion pathways varies, immigrant and racialized women face multi-layered challenges when navigating career progression in the workplace. The lack of social and professional networks and challenges surrounding cultural adaptation and perceived lack of language proficiencies attributed to having an accent contribute to either a slow climb on the career ladder, if at all.

Often, the factors that influence the promotion of immigrant and racialized women that are beyond their control such as the availability of professional development opportunities, mentorship, or often subjective preferential treatment for some and not others.

As promotion rates can have an impact on the engagement and retention of employees, as well as the overall workplace culture, employers are encouraged to review their HR flow with a DEIA lens to ensure that there are no systematic barriers entrenched in the organization's HR processes either consciously or unconsciously. For example, what are the prevailing attitudes towards immigrant workers, or colleagues with "foreign" accents? Are they accepted and welcomed in the workplace, and how are their foreign credentials and competencies assessed, especially when it comes to mentorship or leadership opportunities, that could positively influence their prospects for promotion in the future?

CONSIDERATIONS TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANT AND RACIALIZED WOMEN

CAREER ADVANCEMENT & PROMOTIONS

Employers can use a DEIA lens, or complete either a workforce analysis or a GBA Plus analysis to identify if there are any patterns of who is and is not getting promoted, or if certain groups are receiving promotions more or less than others. Supplement workforce data with interviews or focus groups, to hear directly from employees. If workforce data doesn't exist or outdated, develop a plan to close the information gap to better understand if career progression is equitable in your organization, and for whom.

The results from your analysis can then be used to develop strategies and design potential programs or supports for employees who have not been able to progress in their careers, including individuals from equity-deserving groups such as immigrant and racialized women.

Looking at who is being put forward or applying for promotions is important data as well, bearing in mind the role of social identities, social norms, and prevailing attitudes and organizational norms. First, consider your leadership composition. Is it representative of the communities you serve, and your workforce? For example, if most of your workforce are women but the leaders are all men, then this creates the perception of who is fit for leadership in the organization and can influence people's decision to apply or not apply when a promotion opportunity comes up.

Consider the **male hubris, female humility effect,** where men on average measure their intelligence or skills highly, while women tend to underestimate their intelligence or skills (Reilly et al., 2022). Awareness of these gender dynamics are critical to ensure that DEIA efforts in the areas of hiring and promotion are as equitable as possible.

ORGANIZATIONAL SELF–ASSESSMENT
Applying DEIA in Recruitment, Retention and Promotion

As a continuation of the DEIA organizational assessment, reflect on the areas of recruitment, retention, and promotion using the following three self-assessments (see below). Review the following statements, per group, and rate where your workplace is currently on a scale of

1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree)

Reflect on the reasons you've assigned this number. Think about the current strengths of your organization and areas that could be improved specifically in the areas of recruitment, retention, and promotion. Consider including these areas in both your baseline information and in planning your DEIA Action Plan.

RECRUITMENT

STATEMENTS My organization....	RATING 1-5	AREAS OF STRENGTHS	AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT
1. Has policies and procedures to address and mitigate bias and discrimination during the recruiting, screening and hiring processes			
2. Reviews potential job postings for language or prerequisites that are not absolutely necessary and may be exclusionary			
3. Ensures that job postings are accessible, clear and transparent regarding the position and salary or wage			
4. Takes steps to promote job openings and encourage applicants from underrepresented groups, such as submitting job postings to newcomer services and women's professional networks for recruitment and outreach			
5. Builds accessibility into the recruitment process when possible and discusses accessibility and accommodations with every applicant			
6. Gives applicants an opportunity to self-identify in a meaningful way and with informed consent			
7. Has processes to validate international experience and to onboard newly hired employees who have international experience or may not have Canadian experience			
8. Offers co-op and mentorship opportunities for youth and students, including mature students			

ORGANIZATIONAL SELF-ASSESSMENT
Applying DEIA in Recruitment, Retention and Promotion

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1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree)

Reflect on the reasons you've assigned this number. Think about the current strengths of your organization and areas that could be improved specifically in the areas of recruitment, retention, and promotion. Consider including these areas in both your baseline information and in planning your DEIA Action Plan.

RETENTION

STATEMENTS My organization….	RATING 1-5	AREAS OF STRENGTHS	AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT
1. Promotes work-life balance, and supports employees when there is a conflict between work and personal demands			
2. Promotes an environment of safe and open communication amongst employees and with management			
3. Encourages employees to share opinions and ideas, and contribute to decision making			
4. Is committed to the ongoing work of creating and maintaining a respectful and inclusive workplace that is free of stigma and discrimination			
5. Provides workplace training and professional development opportunities, and takes suggestions from employees for opportunities for professional development			
6. Provides accommodations and resources so that every employee can perform to the best of their abilities and grow professionally			

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ORGANIZATIONAL SELF–ASSESSMENT
Applying DEIA in Recruitment, Retention and Promotion

As a continuation of the DEIA organizational assessment, reflect on the areas of recruitment, retention, and promotion using the following three self-assessments (see below). Review the following statements, per group, and rate where your workplace is currently on a scale of

**1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree)**

Reflect on the reasons you've assigned this number. Think about the current strengths of your organization and areas that could be improved specifically in the areas of recruitment, retention, and promotion. Consider including these areas in both your baseline information and in planning your DEIA Action Plan.

PROMOTION

STATEMENTS My organization....	RATING 1-5	AREAS OF STRENGTHS	AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT
1. Provides professional development and mentorship opportunities			
2. Ensures that all employees have equitable access to professional development opportunities			
3. Tracks promotion rates including of socio-demographic groups and for those who have had to take medical leave or parental leave			
4. Seeks input about employees' professional development goals and ways that they can be achieved			

CONSIDERATIONS TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANT AND RACIALIZED WOMEN

BEST PRACTICES FOR EMPLOYERS

✓ **Employers should** review job requirements and descriptions, recruitment/hiring practices, and accreditation criteria to make sure they do not present barriers for newcomer applicants.

✓ **Employers should** take a flexible and individualized approach to assessing an applicant's qualifications and skills, using competency-based methods.

✓ **Employers should** consider all relevant work experience – regardless of where it was obtained.

✓ **Employers should** provide an applicant with the opportunity to prove their qualifications through paid internships, short contracts, or positions with probationary periods.

✓ **Employers should** implement special programs, corrective measures, or outreach initiatives to address inequity or disadvantage affecting newcomers.

✗ **Employers should not** require applicants to have prior Canadian work experience or qualifications that could only be obtained by working in Canada to be eligible for employment.

✗ **Employers should not** discount an applicant's foreign work experience or assign it less weight than their Canadian work experience.

✗ **Employers should not** make assumptions about an applicant's success or if they are a good "fit" because they lack Canadian work experience.

List adapted from the Policy on Removing the "Canadian experience" barrier, Ontario Human Rights Commission (2013)

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CONSIDERATIONS TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANT AND RACIALIZED WOMEN

CANADIAN EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS

The lack of Canadian work experience is one of the obstacles often mentioned by many immigrant women and racialized youth seeking employment. But what does it really mean beyond having past employment experience in Canada?

Canadian experience is used as a broad requirement in occupations requiring some kind of formal or technical training such as accounting or medicine. Factors behind the broad requirement for Canadian experience can include insurance regulations or liability of the employer and certain government regulations. However, as noted in a report by the Toronto Regional Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC) in 2022, "even for occupations that do not have professional gatekeepers, the lack of Canadian experience could dim career prospects for immigrants" (2022, p. 46).

The reason for this is not related to public safety or specialized knowledge but rather to workplace socialization and cultural capital (Toronto Regional Immigrant Employment Council, 2022). The idea of a jobseeker having Canadian experience implies that the individual is aware of the social cues and the workplace etiquette and norms of a Canadian workplace. This emphasis on Canadian experience becomes a way for employers to "screen out candidates presumed not to have an understanding of 'Canadian ways'" (2022, p. 46).

CONSIDERATIONS TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANT AND RACIALIZED WOMEN

CANADIAN EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS

"Canadian experience" requirements place a higher onus on newcomers to demonstrate that their foreign experience, prior learning, and skills are equivalent if gained within Canada (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2013). It is important to note, however, that

> (t)he Ontario Human Rights Commission's (OHRC's) position is that a strict requirement for "Canadian experience" is prima facie discrimination (discrimination on its face) and can only be used in very limited circumstances. The onus will be on employers and regulatory bodies to show that a requirement for prior work experience in Canada is a bona fide requirement, based on the legal test this policy sets out
>
> (OHRC, 2013).

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CONSIDERATIONS TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANT AND RACIALIZED WOMEN

"CANADIAN EXPERIENCE" REQUIREMENTS FOR CANADIAN–BORN RACIALIZED WOMEN

"There are commonalities in the experiences of and barriers faced by immigrant racialized women and Canadian-born racialized women in the Canadian labour market including experiences of bias, microaggressions, and racism. Requiring Canadian-born racialized women to have "Canadian experience" is a manifestation of this bias, unconscious or not, and their lack of social capital, access to networks, power, and privilege.

A trend of who you know rather than what you know, also known as **preferential hiring**, has been observed in the Canadian job market for several decades. A study by Dr. Andrew Chamberlain (2015) found that having a referral from a current employee increased the odds of a successful job match. While there are several reasons for this practice, the result can be the exclusion of other equally qualified candidates, particularly those who do not have the same social capital and networks. Another way that preferential hiring occurs is through nepotism which effectively "institutionalizes barriers to employment and promotion" (Wilks, 2021). The effects of nepotism can be disproportionately felt by racialized persons including racialized women, as nepotism inhibits fairness and impartiality in the workplace (Ibid).

Quotation marks are used to emphasize the differences in how this is understood and how it implies and impacts immigrant women and Canadian-born racialized women differently.

CONSIDERATIONS TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANT AND RACIALIZED WOMEN

"CANADIAN EXPERIENCE" REQUIREMENTS FOR CANADIAN-BORN RACIALIZED WOMEN

Recognizing and acknowledging barriers, gaps and areas of improvement is an important first step. Oreopoulos states that "[i]f discrimination is unintentional, then employers gain from realizing they do it" (Ibid p.29). Addressing and amending procedures and practices to remove barriers is a positive step towards a more diverse, equitable and inclusive workplace and can lead to a more innovative and productive workplace as well. Implementing a DEIA Action Plan and conducting a review of hiring practices are two ways that employers can implement to improve fairness and equity in hiring.

HERE ARE SOME WAYS TO ADDRESS BARRIERS ENCOUNTERED BY CANADIAN-BORN RACIALIZED WOMEN:

✓ Develop ways to reach applicants who are outside of the typical network of potential employees.

✓ Build collaborative and sustainable partnerships with diverse community groups and organizations supporting racialized women to create networking opportunities.

✓ Provide job shadowing and/or mentorship opportunities for potential applicants and new hires.

✓ Provide accessible and compensated internship opportunities for potential applicants with targeted programs for racialized women and youth.

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Additional Resources

**RESOURCES TO SUPPORT NEWCOMERS
AND IMMIGRANT WOMEN**

- Policy on Removing the "Canadian experience" barrier

- Breaking Down Barriers to Labour Market Integration of Newcomers in Toronto

- Labour Market Implications for Racialized Youth

- Black Talent Initiative

- Black North Initiative

- Toolkit on Effective Mentoring for Youth Facing Barriers to Success

- Leadership Program for Racialized Youth

CONSIDERATIONS TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANT AND RACIALIZED WOMEN

SUPPORTING NEWCOMERS GAIN THEIR FOREIGN CREDENTIALS

"Newcomers to Canada bring with them new ideas and perspectives, and a wealth of knowledge that are valuable assets to the Canadian labour force. The challenge lies in having their skills validated through the accreditation of foreign credentials. Even though this process is not done directly by the employer, there are several ways that employers can support newcomers through this process.

First, it is important to be aware that not all professions require foreign credentials to be accredited. For occupations requiring foreign credentials to be accredited, different processes depend on the profession, regulatory body, and jurisdiction in some cases.

In Canada, there are regulated professions such as engineering, pharmacy and social work, and skilled trades including plumbers, industrial electricians, and ironworkers which require accreditation. In some cases, non-regulated professions such as sales, marketing or research can require accreditation, but this is dependent on the professional body governing that profession. As noted in Section 3.1, for an accreditation requirement to be legitimate under the Ontario Human Rights Code, an employer must show that they have made the requirement as inclusive as possible and have taken steps to make accommodations (OHRC, 2013).

CONSIDERATIONS TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANT AND RACIALIZED WOMEN

SUPPORTING NEWCOMERS GAIN THEIR FOREIGN CREDENTIALS

"Highlighted in a 2008 study by the Institute for Research on Public Policy, accreditation requirements and processes are a source of concern for both newcomers seeking employment and employers. For newcomers, these concerns centred around fees for licensing, exams and upgrading, the non-recognition of experience and requirement for Canadian experience** to gain credentials, and a lack of easily accessible information on joining professions and trades (Weiner, 2008, p.8). It's important to also keep in mind the financial and psychological impact professional newcomers experience during this transition period.

Checklist #8 lists several steps that employers can take to help and support newcomers going through the process of accreditation of their foreign credentials.

** Note: In October 2021, the Ontario provincial government announced a series of changes to processes regarding foreign credentials, such as eliminating the requirement that Canadian experience is necessary to be licensed (Arce, 2021). As of April, 2023, Bill 30, Foreign Credentials Advisory Committee Act, has made no progress since its first reading on October 26, 2021 (Collard, 2021).

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Checklist 8

Ways for employers to support newcomers gain their foreign credentials

- [ ] Become familiar with both provincial and federal regulations regarding foreign credentials that may apply to your sector and/or occupations you typically hire for.

- [ ] Be aware that assessments made at the federal level for immigrants will be different than those made at the provincial/territorial level for work purposes.

- [ ] Understand the requirements for your sector and/or occupations you typically hire for including the relevant professional and accreditation bodies.

- [ ] Build partnerships with foreign credential assessment agencies to enable direct connection during the recruitment process.

- [ ] Consider covering the costs associated with licensing fees and examinations to recruited individuals, similar to how employers can support the reskilling and educational upgrading of their employees.

- [ ] Develop hiring standards where experience and knowledge, both Canadian and international), carry more weight than credentials during the screening and evaluation phase of the hiring process.

Additional Resources

RESOURCES FOR FOREIGN CREDENTIAL ACCREDITATION

NATIONAL

- International Credential Assessment Service of Canada*

- World Education Services - Canada*

- The Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials, Learn about qualifications recognition

- Settlement.org, Where can I get my international credentials evaluated for employment?

- Newcomers Canada, Foreign Credential Recognition

- Government of Canada, Get your credentials assessed in Canada

PROVINCIAL/TERRITORIAL

- International Qualifications Assessment Service (Alberta)*

- Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et Intégration du Québec*

- Ontario Immigration Act 2015

Source: Public Service Commission of Canada. 2020. Foreign Credential Validation against Canadian Standards

Additional Resources

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION/PROFESSIONAL BODIES

- Comparative Education Service (University of Toronto – School of continuing studies)*

- International Credential Evaluation Service (British Columbia Institute of Technology)**

** Note that members of the Alliance of Credential Evaluation Services of Canada are "authorized to conduct and validate academic assessments of foreign credentials for the purpose of satisfying Treasury Board of Canada qualification standards for employment in the core public administration" (Public Service Commission of Canada. 2020. Foreign Credential Validation against Canadian Standards)

Source: Public Service Commission of Canada. 2020. Foreign Credential Validation against Canadian Standards

Additional Resources

Employers can learn about and partner with bridging programs that "enables newcomers to "bridge" their international training and experience by helping them connect with local professional peers and industry experts to receive career guidance" (Arrive, 2020). The following are organizations that offer bridging programs to newcomers as compiled by Arrive:

- Federal Internship for Newcomers (FIN) Program by the Government of Canada

- JVS Toronto

- Skills for Change

- Ontario Bridge Training Program

- ACCES Employment

- Humber College Bridging Programs

- Seneca College Bridging Programs

- Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (Qtd in. Arrive, 2020)

GLOSSARY

Accessibility – refers to the "degree of ease that something (e.g., device, service, physical environment, and information) can be accessed, used and enjoyed by persons with disabilities" (ONHRC, 2022).

Accommodation – describes the duties and responsibilities of a specific person, group of persons or organizations (such as an employer or service provider) to provide the means necessary (within a certain scope, dependent on the situation) for everyone to have equitable access and treatment. Examples of accommodations include additional time to complete exams, access to assistive technologies and modified work schedules (Government of Canada, 2022).

Barrier – an obstruction that impedes a person's ability to participate fully and equitably in society. Barriers can be physical, structural, technological, socioeconomic or cultural; they can also be "related to information, communication, attitudes or mindsets" (Government of Canada, 2022)

Bias – a prejudice or favouritism of one thing, person or group of people compared to another; these views and feelings are generally considered unfair, and can exist on a personal and systemic level (University of British Columbia, 2021)
- ·**Unconscious or Implicit Bias** – a type of bias that is held unknowingly and can be expressed automatically, without conscious awareness, and can affect a person's attitudes and actions. Unconscious or implicit biases can "trump individuals' stated commitments to equality and fairness, thereby producing behavior that diverges from the explicit attitudes that many people profess" (Staats, 2013 qtd. In MP Associates et al., 2021; Canada Research Coordinating Committee, 2023)

GLOSSARY

Disability - a broad concept that covers a range of conditions, such as physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, sensory and learning, that impact a person's ability to participate fully and equitably in society. Disability can be visible or invisible and permanent, temporary or episodic in nature (Government of Canada, 2022; Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2012).

Discrimination – "unjust or prejudicial treatment of a person or group of people that deprives them of or limits their access to opportunities and advantages that are available to other members of society." Discrimination can occur on various grounds including race, national or ethnic origin, gender identity, age and religion (Government of Canada, 2022).

Diversity – refers to the variety of social identities that exist in a group or society, including the differences in lived experiences and perspectives. "Diversity is expressed through factors such as culture, ethnicity, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, age, language, education, ability, family status or socioeconomic status"(Government of Canada, 2022; University of British Columbia, n.d.).

Equality – "the principle of treating everyone in the same manner by ensuring they have access to the same resources and opportunities". Because equality does not consider people's unique lived experiences and differing situations, it does not necessarily result in fair outcomes for all (Government of Canada, 2022).

Equity – focuses on justness or fairness rather than straightforward similar treatment; this means that equitable treatment can at times differ from equal treatment. An equitable approach accounts for underrepresented and/or marginalized people and groups(Ontario Human Rights Commission , 2022; University of British Columbia, n.d)

GLOSSARY

Gender-based Analysis (GBA) Plus – an analytical approach developed by the Government of Canada used "to assess the potential effects policies, programs and initiatives may have on diverse groups of people". The word "Plus" refers to the inclusion of intersectionality; how different social identities (such as race, disability, and age) intersect and can have unique impacts beyond those considered when only looking at gender (Government of Canada, 2022).

Gender-based violence (GBV) - an umbrella term for an act of violence committed based on "socially ascribed" gender differences; while anyone can experience GBV, women and gender-diverse people are disproportionately victimized. Examples of GBV include sexual or gender-based harassment, sexual violence and interpersonal (domestic) violence (UNICEF, 2017).

Harassment – behaviour such as comments or actions that are either known or reasonably ought to be known to be unwelcome. These actions or comments can be or should reasonably be known to be offensive, embarrassing and demeaning to the person(s) targeted, in addition to being unwelcome (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2022).

Inclusion - "The practice of using proactive measures to create an environment where people feel welcomed, respected and valued, and to foster a sense of belonging and engagement" (Government of Canada, 2022).

Inclusive language – using words and expressions that are not considered to be discriminatory, offensive or exclusionary, and do not stereotype a specific group of people. Examples of this include being mindful of gendered language, using phrases such as "chairperson" instead of "chairman" (Government of Canada, 2022)

GLOSSARY

Inclusive workplace – a work environment where differences of employees, such as social identities, cultural backgrounds, lived experiences, skills and perspectives, are not only recognized by valued and engaged to foster a sense of belonging and involvement for everyone (Government of Canada, 2022).

Intersectionality - developed by American lawyer and law professor Kimberlé Crenshaw in the late 1980s, intersectionality is a concept and analytical framework for "understanding how aspects of a person's identity (e.g. sex, gender, age, ethnicity, class, religion, sexual orientation, physical ability) combine to create particular forms of discrimination and privilege". This aids in a better and more nuanced understanding of the "cumulative effects of different forms of oppression (e.g. racism, sexism, homophobia)" (Government of Canada, 2022).

Racism – an ideology based on the unfounded concept of race and a hierarchy between races. This ideology can lead to both conscious and unconscious prejudice, discrimination and hostility, and even violence, against people who are of a specific racial or ethnic background. Racism can be overt and subtle, as well as systemic (Government of Canada, 2022).

Sexism - Discrimination, prejudices or stereotyping based on sex and gender. Typically rooted in the gender-binary (men and women) and presumed inherent biological differences in men and women, which subsequently define the role of each in society. Sexism can be overt, subtle, and systemic in nature. Sexism disproportionately affects women and gender-diverse individuals. (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2023; Government of Canada, 2022)

This glossary was adapted from the *Research on Canadian Municipalities and Inclusive Services* report by SEASONOVA Group Inc.

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