

DIVERSITY EQUITY AND INCLUSION CHARTER





Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Charter

Pursuant to its mission, Safe and Well Oxford is committed to building an equitable, barrier-free, and inclusive society for people who live, work, visit, and invest in Oxford County.

Oxford County and Area Municipalities have a broad range of responsibilities that require an investment in organizational culture to counter racism and discriminatory behaviors and practices, and to ensure that a safe, welcoming, and accessible community exists for all citizens in a way that respects their dignity and independence.

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Charter sets out the commitments, calls to action, and shared responsibilities for achieving the vision of the Safe and Well Oxford Plan: “Communities where individuals and families feel safe, supported and included, and where they can access what they need, when they need it, to live fully.”

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Commitments

Development of Safe and Well Oxford's first Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Charter, led by the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Action Coalition with the support of Oxford County and Area Municipalities, is another step to address, prioritize, and advance diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives in all aspects related to internal and external interactions with staff and communities.

This Charter is grounded within the principles of Ontario's Human Rights Code and the Seven Grandfather Teachings, i.e., Wisdom, Love, Respect, Bravery, Honesty, Humility, and Truth. Therefore, commitment to this Charter further affirms and fosters the implementation of legislation and the principles of the Indigenous teachings within the governing structures.

The Safe and Well Oxford DEI Action Coalition calls upon Oxford County and Area Municipalities to recognize these commitments as best practices.



Employment

As employers, Oxford County and Area Municipalities should:

- Utilize transparent and inclusive recruitment, retention, and promotion practices that support employee attraction, retention, and empowerment.
- Remove non-essential credentials or qualifications that would hinder having a diverse pool of applicants and an equitable recruitment process.
- Actively work to attract a diverse and talented workforce that reflects the changing demographic makeup of Oxford County.
- Create an inclusive and equitable work environment that fosters mutual understanding, respect, and growth through education, awareness, and training opportunities for all staff, including management and councillors.
- Provide staff training, development, and ongoing learning opportunities that facilitate equity and inclusion at individual, organizational, and community levels.

Service Delivery

As service providers, Oxford County and Area Municipalities should:

- Ensure service delivery models are inclusive and accessible to all community members, not just those who have traditionally requested the service.
- Be open to exploring new ways of delivering services and review existing service delivery using an equity lens to engage historically underserved, underrepresented, and equity-impacted groups, recognizing those identities within the Ontario Human Rights Code as guiding principles around inclusion.
- Provide services that respond to the diverse needs of the community.
- Train staff on inclusive, accessible, and equitable customer service.
- Build transparent and accountable relationships and systems.



Economic Partnerships

As purchasers of goods and services, Oxford County and Area Municipalities should:

- Communicate procurement opportunities locally and broadly to promote equal and equitable opportunities.
- Ensure existing local purchasing relationships do not come at the expense of new and emerging supplier options.
- Hold suppliers accountable to a code of conduct that reflects diversity, equity, and inclusion, and addresses accessibility barriers and/or discriminatory practices, when engaged in activities on the County's behalf.

Community Partnerships

As community partners, Oxford County and Area Municipalities should:

- Support the efforts of diverse communities and community organizations to promote inclusive and accessible changes, equitable opportunity, and respect for all.
- Collaborate with groups, communities, other Action Coalitions, and external organizations within Oxford County to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.
- Recognize a diverse range of significant dates, holidays, and grassroots efforts that reflect the people of Oxford County.





Calls to Action

The Calls to Action listed below provide additional support to Oxford County and Area Municipalities in implementing the Inclusion Charter.

The Calls to Action represent best practices that the County and Area Municipalities can progress towards over time and as resources are available. The suggested Calls to Action are not exclusive and can be adapted, added to, or customized to meet the current needs and capacities of partners as they continue to prioritize and implement the values and principles of the Inclusion Charter.

Providing DEI best practices for each of the Oxford County and Area Municipalities' roles in their respective communities further supports the broad and ongoing efforts and progress on DEI across our communities.

Calls to Action as Policy-Makers

1. Develop, adopt, and implement the following policies: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging in the Workplace Policy; Indigenous Consultation Policy; and Flag-raising Policy.
2. Utilize anti-racism and intersectional policy development processes and frameworks, including Gender-Based Analysis Plus¹ and Anti-Racism and Anti-oppression Framework and Equity Tool², to review existing policies and develop new ones, e.g., Accommodation policies, Workplace Harassment Policy, Dress Code Policy, and Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy.
3. Promote public participation in policy development through broad-based engagement platforms, e.g., Speak Up, Oxford!, and Ingersoll's FlashVote platform.

¹ See Government of Canada resource, [Gender-based Analysis Plus \(GBA Plus\)](#).

² See Niagara Region resource, [Human Resources Best Practices Guidebook: How to Increase Diversity and Inclusion in Recruitment, Hiring, and Promotion](#).



Calls to Action as Employers

1. Develop internal DEI Action Plans that address systemic issues and eliminate barriers through a well-informed strategy to identify priorities and apply best practices.
2. Develop a DEI Human Resources Best Practices Guidebook¹ to support managers and supervisors in ensuring that they utilize fair, equitable, and inclusive employment and workplace practices.
3. Include DEI and vaccination statements in job descriptions with revisions to existing accommodation statements.
4. Include a DEI vision statement during orientation to demonstrate the organization's commitment to creating a work environment and culture where diversity, equity, and inclusion are reflected and valued.
5. Provide educational and awareness opportunities for all staff and members of councils by considering training on the following topics:
 - i. Addressing Racism in the Workplace
 - ii. Why Diversity Matters
 - iii. Embracing Gender and Sexual Diversity
 - iv. Evolution of Human Rights in Canada
 - v. Unconscious Bias
 - vi. Workplace Sensitivity
 - vii. Gender-Based Analysis Plus Training
 - viii. Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Anti-Racism Training (IDEAA)
 - ix. Indigenous Cultural Mindfulness Training
 - x. Indigenous Community Awareness Training
6. Advertise employment opportunities through enhanced outreach and communication with organizations that are affiliated with historically underserved, underrepresented, and equity-impacted groups.



Calls to Action as Service Providers

1. Develop accessible customer service toolkits for customer service counters that include:
 - o a Ubi-duo Machine
 - o personal amplifier
 - o hearing loops for service counters
 - o magnifiers
 - o pen grips
 - o a signature guide
 - o an iPad with Google Translator App to mitigate language barriers.
2. Ensure inclusion and equitable participation of employees, residents, and visitors with disabilities by continuing to embed and strengthen accessibility within Customer Service, Information and Communication, Employment, Transportation, Design of Public Spaces, and evaluating the impact of services and policies.
3. Continue consultation with the respective Accessible Advisory Committee (AAC) on the service delivery, programs, and initiatives.
4. Update public-facing forms with pronouns, salutations, and names to make them more inclusive.

Calls to Action as Purchasers

1. Incorporate provisions into procurement policies and procedures to encourage suppliers and service providers that engage on behalf of the County and Area Municipalities to train their staff in DEI, too.
2. Create and provide a general code of conduct for contractors about expectations of behaviors and consider working this into the procurement process itself.
3. Ensure equitable access to procurement opportunities in Oxford County through outreach and enhanced communication with organizations affiliated with historically underserved, under-represented, and equity-impacted groups.



Calls to Action as Community Partners

1. Support various cultural celebrations that reflect the diverse people and populations in Oxford County and demonstrate support through active communication channels, i.e., social media, newsletters, etc.
2. Dedicate resources to DEI initiatives, including people, time, and money.
3. Consider the use of a community flag pole to participate in flag-raising ceremonies, e.g.:
 - a. National Day for Truth and Reconciliation Day Flag
 - b. Pride Flag
 - c. Black History Month Flag
 - d. Every Child Matters Flag

Responsibilities for Implementing the Charter

Implementing the values and principles contained within this Charter is the responsibility of Oxford County and Area Municipal Councils, senior leadership and management, and employees. However, we encourage partner organizations to adopt or adapt to this Inclusion Charter and implement its values and principles according to their current needs and resources.

Communication among Area Municipalities and Oxford County is imperative to tracking progress on the Inclusion Charter comments. Safe and Well Oxford acknowledges that this Charter is a living document that may require timely revisions and review when needed.

www.safewelloxford.ca
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