



Office of the CAO

Prepared for: Council-in-Committee

Report: CAO-08-2024

Meeting Date: July 8, 2024

1. Title

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Workplan 2024 - 2025

2. Recommendations

That: Council receives Report CAO-10-2024 regarding the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Training Workplan and proposed next steps for information purposes.

3. Relation to Council's Corporate Strategic Plan

Priority: Quality of life and community well-being

Initiative: 2.1 Develop, approve and implement a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Policy and Plan and complete applicable training

4. List of Stakeholders

- 1) Mayor and Council of the Town of Fort Erie
- 2) Employees of the Town of Fort Erie
- 3) Members of the Fort Erie Diversity and Inclusion Coalition

5. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide an information update on the status of the EDI training workplan and facilitated next steps to strengthen EDI competencies of all Town employees, Town Council, with support from the Fort Erie Diversity and Inclusion Coalition. As part of the facilitated training, the creation of an on-going training plan and an EDI Action Plan for embedding inclusion will be developed for all facets of the organization.

6. Analysis

In early 2024, TOFE staff were given the opportunity to participate in a voluntary staff survey answering 21 questions surrounding Equity, Diversity and Inclusion along with demographic related questions. This is the first EDI survey that has been undertaken by the Town, and will now serve as our baseline to measure EDI progress and improvements.

A total of 130 surveys were completed between February 27th, 2024– April 4th, 2024 in both paper copy and digital formats. There were 342 active staff that were eligible to participate in the survey, making the response rate 38%. Not all questions were answered by all survey

participants so some scores do not reflect 130 responses.

As a preliminary measure of diversity, survey participants identified with 14 different religious or spiritual affiliations and with 17 different racial or ethnic distinctions.

This survey was designed to gauge the current degree of knowledge and understanding of EDI in the workplace as well as set a benchmark for how employees perceive the present condition of EDI culture within the Town of Fort Erie. The results of this survey has helped identify employee education, training, needs and opportunities.

In order to strengthen equity, diversity and inclusion competencies for all TOFE employees, there are 6 goals of the EDI Workplan that will help achieve this target.

- 1) Formal rollout of the TOFE EDI policy to all employees through ADP by August 26, 2024 to be followed up by a CAO-led town hall style meeting for all employees in September 2024.
- 2) Sharing EDI survey results at CAO-led town hall style meeting with all employees.
- 3) Further EDI knowledge of all employees of TOFE by implementing initial baseline EDI workshops.
- 4) Execute subsequent on-going EDI micro-learning opportunities, based on recommended practices, for all employees on a quarterly basis.
- 5) Ensure all new employees are trained in TOFE EDI policy and practices, as well as incorporated into proposed on-going EDI micro-learning opportunities
- 6) Provide monthly learning opportunities to staff through an in-house resource that focuses on a specific topic each month.

As part of the facilitated training sessions, the CAO, Senior management, Town Council Members will be guided through the development of an “embedding inclusion” action plan for sustainable EDI practices and changes. The facilitated sessions will include representatives from the Fort Erie Diversity & Inclusion Coalition, as community participants and advisors, to assist with a comprehensive action plan.

7. Financial, Staffing and Accessibility (AODA) Implications

The cost for staff training will be accommodated within the approved 2024 budget.

AODA best practices will be considered as part of the roll out of this workplan.

8. Policies Affecting Proposal

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy – See Appendix 1

9. Comments from Departments, Community and Corporate Partners

All departments have been involved in the development of the training plan, as outlined. The Fort Erie Diversity & Inclusion Coalition will remain actively involved in this work.

10. Alternatives

The EDI training and workplan development was previously approved by Council.

11. Communicating Results

Communication surrounding the EDI workplan, and training/learning opportunities will be via email and communication boards at Town facilities and EDI survey results will be communicated during interactive CAO-led town hall meetings with employees.

12. Conclusion

The Town of Fort Erie is committed to developing a healthy workplace environment that fosters a climate of openness and allows every employee to be treated fairly, with respect, and have the opportunity to contribute to the success of the Town and the community. The goals of the EDI workplan strive to increase the EDI competencies of all employees and enhance the inclusive culture of the organization.

13. Report Approval

Prepared by:
Meagan Bates
Human Resources Assistant

Reviewed by:
Lorraine Daymond
Director, Human Resources

Approved by:
Chris McQueen, MBA
Chief Administrative Officer

14. Attachments

Appendix 1 – EDI Policy

Appendix 2 – Draft EDI training Plan

	Title:	Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion		
	Number:	ER-018		
	Revision Date:		Approved by:	
	Revision Number:	0	Area:	Corporate
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EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION POLICY

1. OVERVIEW

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) at The Town of Fort Erie is committed to developing a healthy workplace environment that fosters a climate of openness and allows every employee to be treated fairly, and have the opportunity to contribute to the success of the Town and the community. This is expressed through the Town's commitment to equality and the treatment of all individuals with dignity and respect. The Town will continue to develop a rich culture, a diverse workforce, and ensuring that each person will be supported to achieve their full potential as individuals.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at The Town of Fort Erie refers to all the characteristics that make individuals different from each other. All humans have been created equal, and they all require equal opportunities and treatment. All people have the same basic capacities, and that the physical differences, are superficial and do not make one ethnic group superior to another. This includes characteristics or factors such as religion, race, ethnic origin, language, gender identification, sexual orientation, disability, age, or any other potential factor of difference.

The Town of Fort Erie understands that the wide range of experiences and perspectives resulting from such diversity promotes innovation and business success. EDI contributes to a productive, responsive, competitive workplace which creates value for our community.

2. SCOPE

This Council-endorsed policy applies to all employees of The Town of Fort Erie, regardless of their employment status. This includes but is not limited to, full-time and part-time, permanent, and temporary employees, and further applies to job applicants, committee members and volunteers.

3. PURPOSE: Town of Fort Erie's Commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Principles

This EDI commitment builds on the core values and framework already in place to foster an environment of openness, and unity in diversity that allows free and open dialogue to discuss and address issues of inequity, diversity, inclusiveness, harassment and

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bullying in the workplace. We are opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair treatment in any form. This policy strives to preserve and honour diversity without making differences a cause for conflict and requires a new way of thinking, based on respect for the rights of every individual. All employees, whether they are part-time, full-time, or temporary, will be treated fairly, equitably and with respect. When the Town of Fort Erie selects candidates for employment, promotion, training, or any other benefit, it will be based on their aptitude, skills and ability.

This policy complements other existing policies by providing the foundation, intent and principles for developing, revising, evaluating and auditing other policies, practices and processes to remove systemic barriers and ensure alignment with the Town's core value of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

The Town of Fort Erie's EDI commitment is to:

- a) **Foster an environment of openness regarding equity, diversity and inclusion**, where anyone who witnesses or experiences inequitable treatment are encouraged to speak freely and openly so that inequities can be heard, addressed and/or appropriate action can be taken.
- b) **Create an environment** in which the individual differences and contributions of all team members are recognized and valued, while promoting dignity and respect for everyone. The Town will promote opportunities to learn and educate employees about EDI principles, and issues related to equity, diversity and inclusion, in an effort to promote this core value, increase awareness and understanding.
- c) **Ensure proper selection criteria** based on diverse skills, experience and perspectives are used when hiring new staff. Job specifications, advertisements, application forms and contracts will not hold any direct or inferred discrimination or systemic barriers.
- d) **Ensure that applicants and employees of all backgrounds** are encouraged to apply for and have fair opportunity to be considered for all available roles.
- e) **Provide**, to the greatest extent possible, **universal access to safe, inclusive, and accessible premises** that allow everyone to take part and work to their full potential.

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- f) **Follow all enacted legislation** intended to support EDI principles, but further, ensure that the Town aim to achieve a higher standard by adopting EDI leading principles and best practices.
- g) **Increase learning, awareness and understanding** of EDI principles to eliminate any form of intimidation, bullying, victimisation, vilification, or harassment and to take appropriate action to address issues that arise.
- h) **Regularly review** all our employment practices and procedures with an EDI lens to ensure leading EDI principles & practices are in place to remove any systemic barriers.
- i) **Develop an Action Plan with measurable goals for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion** which can be monitored and reviewed annually against the effectiveness of this policy and associated procedures.
- j) **Provide training and orientation** for all Town employees to increase awareness and understanding the importance of EDI core values, this policy, and the importance of openness and equality in the workplace. The Town of Fort Erie 's equity, diversity and inclusion policy is fully supported by Town Council and senior management. The policy will be monitored and reviewed annually to ensure equity and diversity are continually promoted in the workplace.

Values and Code of Conduct

- a) It is a **shared responsibility** of all Town employees, as outlined above, to role model the values of equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- b) **Value equity, diversity and inclusion** and the benefits that it brings the people and the organization to create a diverse, open workplace.
- c) **All efforts of EDI will be made in good faith and not tokenism**, and that they will be properly resourced and reviewed to continue a path of progress and staying current with best practices.
- d) The Town of Fort Erie is committed to ensuring an open, **inclusive and safe environment**.

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- e) All **inappropriate behaviour** such as harassment, discriminatory and offensive comments **will not be tolerated**.
- f) Treat each other with **dignity** and **respect** and be open to others' thoughts and opinions.

Recruitment:

The Town of Fort Erie will ensure job postings directly focus on the abilities needed to fill the position balanced with the importance of experience. This policy is to mitigate historical and systemic barriers, as well as unconscious biases, that have adversely affected minorities who have been prevented from gaining experience, which may include:

Advertisements for open positions placed on a variety of digital platforms of public places to maximize the applicant pool. This can include discipline and industry specific associations, conferences of underrepresented groups, and relevant research organizations.

Encouraging the Town's agencies and stakeholder groups to approach job seekers of underrepresented groups to consider applying for positions.

Extending the application deadline, or review the job posting for potential barriers where the applicant pool is not large and/or does not represent a sufficiently diverse list of candidates for consideration.

Ensure that job postings use language that promotes openness for all candidates to apply, including language that is unbiased, neutral and adheres to EDI principles.

Selecting a diverse search committee, including a member with Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) expertise, whose role is to ensure EDI is considered in all aspects of job development and recruitment.

Offer translation services, for those with first languages other than English, to be used throughout the online application process. This will minimize language barriers and will help foster an inclusive environment.

Allow for application forms online to have the possibility to be read aloud by an automated voice for those who may be visually impaired.

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Ensure that language in job postings and advertisements informs applicants that the Town of Fort Erie is an equal opportunity employer, that reasonable accommodations are available during the interview process and that the organization is actively committed to a culture of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Selection:

The Town of Fort Erie will refrain from requiring unnecessary work simulations that may create barriers for candidates. If or when simulations must be completed, accommodations will be provided.

The Town of Fort Erie is open to electronic means of communication for interviewing and reference checks to allow contact to be made with candidates and their references who are located outside the area and outside of Canada. This will provide non-local candidates and contacts with the ability to properly share candidate's strengths, skills, abilities and work history so they are fully considered. Electronic contact allows for those completing the reference checks to use a translator to ensure communication can be completed.

The Town of Fort Erie will use a predetermined rating tool during the interview and assessment process. This is to mitigate issues surrounding the employment of personnel who reflect personal biases of committee members. Standardized questions related to skills, abilities and organizational needs will be used as the basis for the selection process.

The Town of Fort Erie will not view the need for an accommodation during employment as a negative during the assessment and selection process in alignment with the duty to accommodate policy.

4. EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

All employees at The Town of Fort Erie, commit to learning, understanding and demonstrating respect, fairness, caring, equity, and self-esteem. The EDI core values and principles of mutual respect and acceptance of others will be discussed openly, promoted and supported without biases based on differences of any kind. The Town acknowledges and honors the fundamental value and dignity of all individuals and is committed to creating and supporting an environment of openness that respects diverse traditions, heritages, and experiences. The Town of Fort Erie strives to model diversity throughout the organization and encourages community awareness toward Equity,

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Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI).

All employees at The Town of Fort Erie are expected to exhibit conduct that reflects inclusion during work, at work functions on or off the work site, and at all other company-sponsored and participatory events.

All employees must also attend and complete annual training to enhance their awareness, understanding and knowledge of equity, diversity and inclusion principles and values.

5. MANAGER AND SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Managers and supervisors are responsible for understanding their role in promoting openness to discuss and address Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI), communicating, and implementing policies and procedures effectively and working with staff to integrate the values of EDI into employment practices. They are also expected to lead a work environment that encourages openness to discuss issues that arise, and also supports opportunities for skills development and career advancement, and further EDI learning and development. Executive management and Human Resources will lead and approve policy review and revision as necessary and ensure the implementation of an EDI Action Plan.

6. COMPLIANCE, TRAINING, REVIEW & BREACH

All directors, managers, supervisors, and employees are responsible for following this Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) policy and for ensuring that any reported or alleged violations are properly reported. Managers and staff will receive the resources, training, and support necessary to promote and implement this policy. This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to reflect changing legislation, best practices, demographics, and organizational priorities. Any breach of this EDI policy must be reported directly to their manager/supervisor or Human Resources, if required.

Training Guidelines

Training and development opportunities will be made available equally to all employees of the Town. Training evaluations and environmental scans will be done regularly to identify and address any barriers that may prevent members from accessing training opportunities or reaching their full employment potential.

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The Town of Fort Erie will make a long-term commitment to continue its Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) training and research even after the first training that is provided. The organization is committed to its members staying up-to-date with the continued changes and best practices that are involved with EDI.

Keeping track of an employee's progress and promotions to refer to for future promotional opportunities should be fair and should help to ensure underrepresented groups are progressing at the same rate as their fellow employees.

7. EMPLOYEE AGREEMENT ON EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION (EDI) POLICY

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the Town of Fort Erie Equity, Diversity and Inclusion policy. I am committed to support an environment of openness to discuss and address issues related to equity, diversity and inclusion. I will participate in training and learning opportunities to increase awareness and understanding to ensure that EDI principles and practices are supported. I further understand that I will contact my manager/supervisor if I have any questions about any aspect of the policy.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Revision History

Date	Description of Change	Initials
	Policy Updates	

Appendix 2 – Draft EDI training Plan

Project	Goal	Milestone	Related Document	Responsible Manager	Deliverables	Action Items	Owner and Responsibilities	Start Date	End Date	2024-01	2024-02	2024-03	2024-04	2024-05	2024-06	2024-07	2024-08	2024-09	2024-10	2024-11	2024-12
Strengthen equity, diversity and inclusion competencies for all TSDs employees through education and awareness.	6.1 Formal rollout the TSD EID policy to all employees through 400 by August 24, 2024 to be followed by a C&A-led town hall equity meeting for all employees by the week of September 3, 2024.	Ensure all employees are provided with the current and accessible version of the TSD EID policy and have acknowledged their review and understanding of the policy through 400 sign-off or approved signature	Achieve 100% policy acknowledgment by employees by TSDs on or before September 3, 2024	Number of employees who complete policy acknowledgment	Town hall style meetings executed for all employees and staff to include a review of policy, Q&A and a call to action to support EID initiatives.	Updated approved EID policy to be used and to create staff for acknowledgment with an email opportunity to sign consent form	M. Dene? & C&A/Quinn														
						Plan and execute town hall style meeting for all employees	M. Dene?														
						Execute readiness version of the policy to ensure staff that require signing off on a checklist	M. Dene?	01-Apr-24	30-Sep-24												
						Post readiness version of policy on 400 boards in TSDs work area	M. Dene?														
						Ensure that policy is included in onboarding package for new staff	G. Dene?														
6.2 Run 400 survey results to all employees by October 24, 2024 to include next steps in EID training implementation	Provide high level summary of all survey results to Council by September 3, 2024 to include next steps in EID training implementation	Provide accountability to all staff, provide transparency, and ensure the survey results are used to inform communication work in EID training throughout the organization	Number of employees who attend town hall meetings Participation rate in facilitated communication work Number of EID Town Team action plan	Final high level report on survey results completed and approved by July 31, 2024 Execute final high level report for distribution Distribute high-level report to all staff	Final high level report for survey results completed and approved by July 31, 2024 Execute final high level report for distribution Distribute high-level report to all staff	M. Dene? L. Dymond J. Dymond M. Dene?															
6.3 Further EID knowledge of all employees of TSDs by implementing initial baseline EID workshops, delivered by 3rd party experts by TSDs	Engage the services of a 3rd party 400 expert and all EID training workshop data to provide a baseline training for all employees and provide a "kick-off" for EID training	Achieve 100% initial EID training participation rate for all employees of TSDs including PTE, PTE, casual and students	Number of Senior Leaders, Mayor and Council members that complete the baseline EID training	Confirm budget for training	Execute EID training information to be included in the annual budget (2025)	L. Dymond/C. McCauley?															
						Secure 3rd party experts and hold alternative	A&B Team														
						Number of PTE, PTE, casual and student employees that complete the baseline EID training	M. Dene?	01-Sep-24	30-Sep-24												
						Track attendance and determine completion rate compared to desired outcomes	M. Dene?														
						Workshops executed with pre-pilot survey for participants to gauge level of knowledge learned	M. Dene?														
						Conduct post-pilot survey with all training participants	M. Dene?														
6.4 Develop subsequent on-going EID micro-learning opportunities for all employees quarterly beginning 2024 and beyond.	Keep EID momentum and cultural learning and awareness moving forward to ensure a "new and alive" mentality for EID training	Achieve 100% completion rate of each quarterly micro-learning initiative for all employees of TSDs including PTE, PTE, casual students, Mayor and Council	Number of employees who complete quarterly micro-learning initiatives	A minimum of 3 micro-learning programs completed or designed based on pre-identified topics to be completed by year 1	Identify micro-learning topics Develop on or enhance related resources Determine training schedule Pre-pilot survey for training participants	A&B Team L. Dymond M. Dene? M. Dene?															
						The content of a micro-learning opportunity would be working on staff in the words "Learn, Share, Engage" (www.engage.ca/en/learning) to ensure high level engagement and ensure additional learning resources on the topic	M. Dene?	01-Sep-24	31-Oct-25												
						Develop on or enhance EID training for new employees that is based on the 400 survey results, current that will be a mandatory orientation check before any employees begin work at TSDs	A&B Team	01-Sep-24	31-Oct-25												
						Achieve 100% inclusion rate for new employees who complete ongoing micro-learning initiatives	M. Dene?														
						Develop on or enhance EID training for new employees that is based on the 400 survey results, current that will be a mandatory orientation check before any employees begin work at TSDs	A&B Team	01-Sep-24	31-Oct-25												
						Develop on or enhance EID training for new employees that is based on the 400 survey results, current that will be a mandatory orientation check before any employees begin work at TSDs	A&B Team	01-Sep-24	31-Oct-25												
Develop "Onboarding Induction" action plan	As part of facilitator workshops, Senior Managers will be guided through training as action plan to establish EID practices and changes.	Identify policy changes, ongoing action items to ensure systems, policies to include are reviewed or corrected.	Achieve 100% completion rate of Senior Managers in facilitated workshop training	Number of Senior Managers that complete facilitated workshop training	A facilitated "onboarding induction" action plan for the TSDs	Action items, action dates, social training topics, action dates Creation of action plan via facilitated workshops	C&A/Quinn, Mayor, Council members, Senior Managers	01-Sep-24	31-Oct-24												