

Fort Erie Coalition on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Approved

Strategic Plan and Objectives for 2024-2025:

We, the members of the Fort Erie Coalition on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, are united in our commitment to fostering an environment that is welcoming and inclusive, where diversity is reflected and celebrated, and equity is valued and upheld. We recognize the profound importance of diverse perspectives, experiences, and identities for our organizations, communities, and society at large.

Our purpose is to create supportive and empowering spaces where individuals of all identities can come together to learn, share, and collaborate on initiatives that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion. Through education, sharing, networking, collaboration, and support, we strive to advance equity, build welcoming and inclusive communities and workplaces, while eliminating barriers and forms of discrimination.

By coming together as a diverse and inclusive community, we believe that we can collectively create positive and lasting impacts towards a more just and equitable world.

Guiding Values:

- **Inclusive, Brave Spaces:** We aim for meetings and engagement with the community to be places where we embrace and respect differences, build understanding of multiple worldviews, accept mistakes, take risks and lean into discomfort, and welcome difficult discussions.
- **Diverse Representation:** We aim for the members of the Coalition to reflect the diversity of our community and be welcoming spaces for people of all backgrounds and identities. We aim to hear the voices of underrepresented groups in Fort Erie.
- **Open Communication:** We aim to have transparent, open, and regular communication with all members of the Coalition and the Fort Erie community.
- **Cultural Humility:** We understand that everyone is the expert of their own experiences. We aim to interact with humility, respect, and curiosity with each other. We embrace critical self-reflection and learning about different people and ways of doing. We aim to challenge power imbalances and develop mutually beneficial partnerships. We commit to increasing awareness of cultural appropriation, lateral violence, and micro-aggressions, owning our fragility and treating others as they want to be treated.
- **Embrace Discomfort as Growth:** We view challenging conversations as opportunities for growth, recognizing discomfort as a catalyst for meaningful change and understanding.

Key Pillars:

1. **Education and Awareness:** We aim to raise awareness and deepen understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion issues through facilitating workshops, seminars, and discussions. By sharing educational resources and opportunities for self-reflection, we empower members of the community to become more informed and empathetic community members and allies.
2. **Best Practice Sharing:** We are committed to sharing best practices, strategies, and resources for creating inclusive environments and addressing systemic barriers. By leveraging the collective wisdom and experiences of our members, we seek to identify effective approaches and tools for advancing diversity and equity initiatives while addressing challenges and barriers in the community.
3. **Collaboration and Networking:** We facilitate collaboration and networking among members and the community to promote cross-sectoral partnerships and exchange of ideas. By connecting individuals with diverse backgrounds and expertise, we foster innovation and creativity in our efforts to drive meaningful change.
4. **Support and Community Impact:** We aim to provide a supportive and inclusive space where individuals can share their experiences, challenges, and successes. Through collaboration, peer support, referrals and sharing resources for personal and professional development, we aim to be catalysts for change within our own spheres of influence and increase collective impact in the community.
5. **Advisory to Mayor and Council:** We aim to provide the Fort Erie Mayor and Council with updated information on the pulse of the community as it relates to diversity, equity and inclusion and make recommendations for continuous improvements to ensure that Fort Erie is a Welcoming and Open Community for all as stated in its Corporate Strategic Plan.

Key Objectives:

1. **Community Engagement** – surveys, one on one engagement/interviews, visit community members in their own space. Prospect potential members to join the Coalition.
2. **Hosting Open Houses** – invite members of the community into brave spaces to engage with community leaders to express their concerns and offer suggestions for improvement.
3. **Mayor's Forum on EDI** – plan for another forum in 2025 to build on the success of the last one in 2023 and open the conversation with community leaders, organizations and businesses.
4. **Support Other Initiatives** – Support the Student Equity Alliance at GFESS with their cultural event and other student or community organizations wanting to work in this space.

5. **Tool Kits/Sharing Resources** – Create and share tools and resources with small and medium sized businesses wishing to start or continue their own EDI journeys.
6. **Referrals** – Create a database of resources for EDI issues from which Coalition members can refer individuals to when they need help.
7. **Advisory** – Continue to update the Mayor and Council on the activities of the Coalition and make recommendations where needed. Participate in activities with Town of Fort Erie staff to advise Senior Leadership on EDI initiatives within the Town.