

# **Workforce Diversity Policy**

## **Province of Prince Edward Island**

### **Introduction**

**The Government of Prince Edward Island recognizes that its employees are a valuable asset, and aims to attract and retain the best talent to support the delivery of quality public services. The Workforce Diversity Policy is intended to support this commitment and to create a workplace that represents the diversity of the population it serves, and to foster a work environment that recognizes, respects and accommodates the “diversity of individuals”. The purpose is to make use of the full range of talents and perspectives available to government.**

### **Policy statement**

The Government is committed to creating a positive work environment that provides quality services that meet the diverse needs of the population. The intent is to integrate diversity into all management practices and to leverage the skills, abilities, experiences and contributions of every employee by recognizing, respecting and accommodating their diversity. Government understands that diversity encompasses dimensions such as age, skin color, gender, national origin, ethnicity and physical/mental disability as well as economic status, sexual orientation, political beliefs, education levels, family status, thinking styles, geographic location, first language and others. With this clear understanding and appreciation of individual uniqueness, Government must continually strive to value and incorporate the differences of each employee in building and maintaining a strong public service that is representative of the growing diversity in the province.

### **1. Government Commitment**

- 1.1. The PEI Public Service respects people as individuals and values their differences. It is committed to creating a work environment that is fair and flexible, promotes personal and professional growth, and benefits from its diversity.
- 1.2. The Workforce Diversity Policy provides guidance for the development and implementation of relevant plans, programs and initiatives to recognize and promote workforce diversity across the Government.
- 1.3. The PEI Public Service Commission (PSC), as the lead agency to oversee diversity management, is committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive organization that delivers excellent public service and supports all employees to achieve their full potential.

- 1.4. The PSC is also committed to promoting diversity employment practices to recruit and promote employees from designated diversity groups that are currently under represented in the provincial public service (please refer to Designated Group definitions).
- 1.5. The PSC will implement a comprehensive and strategic approach to diversity management which will assist departments to achieve their diversity goals and to create a respectful work environment.

## **2. Definitions**

### **Bona Fide Occupational Requirements**

These are occupational requirements that do not constitute discrimination or violate human rights laws, which employers are allowed to consider when making decisions on the hiring and retention of workers.

### **Designated Employment Opportunities**

These are positions that are identified preferably for designated group members under the Workplace Diversity Policy as determined by the departments.

### **Designated Groups**

For the purposes of the Workforce Diversity Policy, the Government of Prince Edward Island has identified Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities, and members of visible minority groups and women in leadership and women and men in non-traditional occupations, as designated groups. The selection of these four groups does not preclude the possibility of addressing barriers faced by other identifiable groups.

### **Aboriginal peoples**

An Aboriginal person is a North American Indian or a member of a First Nation, Métis, or Inuit. North American Indians or members of a First Nation include status, treaty or registered Indians, as well as non-status and non-registered Indians.

Status Indians: are persons of Aboriginal ancestry who are registered as Indians according to The *Indian Act*.

Non-status Indians: are Indian people or those who are descendants of Indian people, who have lost the right to be registered as Indians (as defined by the *Indian Act*), but who identify with the Indian community culturally and/or linguistically.

Métis: are people who have Aboriginal ancestry, those who self-identify as Métis, and those who are recognized by the Métis Nations.

Inuit: are the Aboriginal inhabitants of Northern Canada.

### **Members of Visible Minorities**

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

**Persons with Disabilities**

A person with a disability is someone who has a long term or recurring condition or health problem which limits the kind or amount of activity that he/she can do in the workplace; or believes that he/she is perceived by others as limited in the kind or amount of work which he/she can do because of a physical, mental, sensory, psychiatric or learning impairment.

**Women in Leadership and Management, and Women and Men in Non-Traditional Occupations**

The distribution of women and men in the workforce generally reveals a pattern of women working in support and services roles and men in leadership and decision making roles. Occupational Participation reveals similar clustered patterns of men and women in technical and professional careers.

**Diversity**

Diversity refers to the recognition and acknowledgment of individual differences. An organization participating in diversity management seeks to provide equitable treatment for all employees. The organization does this by moving past an equal treatment approach where differences are ignored, to equitable treatment where differences are recognized, acknowledged and valued. Diversity encompasses more than the common major dimensions like age, skin colour, gender, national origin, ethnicity or physical/mental disability, and also includes other dimensions such as economic status, political beliefs, sexual orientation, education level, family status, thinking styles, geographic location, first language, immigration/refugee status, socio-economic background and many more.

**Diversity Employment Practices**

These are employment practices developed and implemented by the PSC and departments to assist in the recruitment and training of talents from designated groups that are currently under-represented in the public service workforce.

**Diversity Plans**

These are strategic qualitative or quantitative plans (preferably with timelines, evaluation tools and accountability) developed and implemented by departments based on the needs and unique situation of each individual department. For practical purposes, Diversity Plans are a subset of the Departmental Human Resource Plan.

**Fairness**

An accessible, consistent transparent process that is based on the cornerstone of merit and equity, and that is also impartial and free from bias.

**Respectful Work Environment**

This is a workplace or environment that continually strives to value and incorporate the differences of each employee by respecting, recognizing and accommodating their diversity.

### 3. Objectives

The Workforce Diversity Policy provides a framework for the Public Service to meet the following objectives:

- 3.1. Build a diverse and skilled workforce that reflects the diversity of our employees and the wider community, therefore leading to continuous improvement in service delivery, as a result of improved understanding of the diverse needs of the population.
- 3.2. Increase opportunities for qualified members of the designated groups to obtain meaningful employment within the public service.
- 3.3. Build a workplace culture characterized by inclusive practices and behaviours for the benefit of all staff and their clientele (internal and external).
- 3.4. Improve employment and career development opportunities for people who are currently under represented in our workforce through specific programs and initiatives. Please refer to the **Departmental Diversity Planning Guide and Diversity Employment Program**.
- 3.5. Create a work environment that values and utilizes the contributions of employees with diverse backgrounds, experiences and perspectives through improved awareness of the benefits of workforce diversity and successful management of diversity.
- 3.6. Raise awareness in all staff of their rights and responsibilities with regards to fairness, equity and respect for all aspects of diversity.
- 3.7. Implement a framework that requires all departments to embrace fairness, equity and diversity in the development of their policies and programs, as this positively impacts the delivery of their services.
- 3.8. Eliminate barriers in the workplace and develop a work environment that promotes diversity and inclusiveness.

### 4. Application

The Workforce Diversity Policy applies to all the staff in departments and agencies employed by the Government of Prince Edward Island. All departments and government funded organizations covered by the *Civil Service Act* and the various schedules of the *Financial Administration Act* are requested to have a diversity policy. They can endorse this policy or develop a diversity policy themselves that meets the requirement of this policy. **The application of this policy is referenced in the schedules of the *Financial Administration Act* - please refer to the list.**

- 4.1. Schedule A (Departments, Executive Council, Legislative Assembly, Public Service Commission)
- 4.2. Schedule B (Health PEI, all crown corporations, commissions and agencies)

- 4.3. Schedule C (School Boards - Eastern, Western, French)
- 4.4. Schedule D (Island Regulatory and Appeal Commission, Human Rights Commission)

## 5. Legislative Authorities

*Civil Service Act. Chapter 83, Section 2.1 (b)*

**“The purpose of the PEI Public Service Commission is to foster the development of a public service that is representative of the province’s diversity”** and is consistent with the key legislation including:

*PEI Human Rights Act. Chapter H - 12. 6 (1).*

**“No person shall refuse to employ or to continue to employ any individual on a discriminatory basis including discrimination in any term or condition of employment.”**  
“Discrimination” under the Act, is defined as discrimination in relation to race, religion, creed, color, ethnic or national origin, family status, marital status, physical or mental disability, political belief, age, sex, sexual orientation, or source of income of any individual or class of individuals.

*PEI Human Rights Act Section 20.*

**“The Commission may approve programs of government, private organizations or persons designed to promote the welfare of any class of individuals, and any approved programs shall be deemed not to be a violation of the prohibitions of this Act”.**

## 6. Roles and Accountabilities

- 6.1. The **PEI Public Service Commission’s CEO, Director (Staffing and HR Planning) and Diversity Consultant** are responsible for implementing and monitoring the overall progress of the Workforce Diversity Policy objectives through the mechanisms listed below. The effectiveness of this policy will be evaluated annually by the CEO, PSC, and measured by all work areas undertaken by the Departmental Diversity Plans. This information will be presented in the PSC Annual Report. The PSC is also accountable to report to its Minister and keep the Executive Council advised of the Workforce Diversity Policy review as requested.

In addition, they are responsible to:

- 6.1.1. Provide leadership and guidance to departments on the implementation and administration of the Workforce Diversity Policy.
- 6.1.2. Promote a general understanding of the Workforce Diversity Policy, through an appropriate mix of communications, training and advisory services.

- 6.1.3. Assist departments in formulating diversity plans.
- 6.1.4. Analyze workforce profile information and share information with departments.
- 6.1.5. Conduct research, training and provide expertise as determined by the public service corporate Human Resource and Diversity Plan.
- 6.1.6. Develop and update as required, hiring practices and procedures for diversity group members, and work with departments to identify Bona Fide Occupational Requirements and Designated Employment Opportunities.
- 6.1.7. Work with internal stakeholders such as the PEI Population Secretariat, Aboriginal Secretariat, Acadian and Francophone Affaires, Disability Support Program, and Interministerial Women's Secretariat in developing programs to identify potential candidates from designated diversity groups, and design training programs on cultural diversity.
- 6.1.8. Coordinate and lead the Government Diversity Advisory Committee.
- 6.1.9. Consult with (internal and external) stakeholders on policy requirements, as this would help the PSC to further identify employment concerns and needs from external organizations representing diversity groups.
- 6.1.10. Maintain a government wide communication strategy for the Diversity Policy.
- 6.1.11. Conduct government wide workforce profile and diversity self identification surveys as required.
- 6.1.12. Monitor the progress of the outcomes of the public service diversity policy and make any changes to the policy as deemed necessary.
- 6.1.13. Prepare an annual Diversity Progress Report that is presented to the Minister responsible for the Public Service Commission.

**6.2 Deputy Ministers/CEO/Executive Directors are responsible to:**

- 6.2.1. Implement the departmental diversity action plan, monitor and evaluate the progress of the Workforce Diversity Policy.
- 6.2.2. Annually report to the CEO of the PSC on mechanisms listed in the Annual Departmental Progress Report.
- 6.2.3. Designate a representative to serve as a department member to the Provincial Diversity Advisory Committee.

**6.3. Directors and Managers are responsible to:**

- 6.3.1. Support and incorporate diversity strategies consistent with this policy within their departmental planning, and ensure that their plans are available to all staff.
- 6.3.2. As appropriate, consult with the PSC Diversity Program staff on practices related to the Diversity Employment Program, diversity training, and diversity promotional activities etc.
- 6.3.3. Develop annual diversity action plans that communicate and support the objective(s) of the Diversity Policy.

**6.4 Human Resource Managers are responsible to:**

- 6.4.1. Encourage all employees (including interns, summer students, permanent, temporary and casual staff) to complete the Workforce Diversity Self-Identification Survey Form, which is an important mechanism for capturing the data on workforce diversity.
- 6.4.2. Work with the departmental diversity representative and the PSC Diversity Consultant on the Strategic Plan, and progress reports on diversity initiatives.
- 6.4.3. Implement mechanisms outlined in the Collective Agreement to utilize the PSC inventory of diversity candidates for casual, temporary and project based work opportunities.
- 6.4.4. Consult PSC Diversity Staff to consider qualified diversity candidates for open competitions, if the position is not filled through an in-service competition.
- 6.4.5. Conduct a departmental workforce profile scan and identify areas needing improvement with respect to diversity group representation.
- 6.4.6. In consultation with the PSC and departmental diversity trainers, enroll employees in potential diversity training programs.
- 6.4.7. Encourage employees to attend diversity promotional activities, organize diversity celebration events and develop relationships with external organizations that promote diversity and inclusion.

**6.5 Union(s) is/are responsible to:**

- 6.5.1. Designate a representative to serve as the union liaison to the provincial Diversity Advisory Committee.
- 6.5.2. Implement programs to educate members about the value of diversity.
- 6.5.3. Partner with the Employer in supporting the implementation of the policy and strategic initiatives to promote workplace diversity.

## **6.6. Employees are responsible to:**

All public sector employees have an obligation to support and respect workplace diversity and help to create a welcoming and inclusive workplace that is free from all discrimination and harassment.

In addition, they are responsible to:

- 6.6.1. Complete the (voluntary) diversity self-identification form by indicating the designated diversity group(s) to which they belong.
- 6.6.2. Enroll in diversity and cultural awareness training opportunities by consulting the human resource manager, or departmental diversity trainer (if available), or the PSC.

## **6.7. PEI Diversity Advisory Committee**

The Diversity Advisory Committee is comprised of representatives from the PEI Public Service Commission, departments, the Union of Public Sector Employees and the Inter-ministerial Women's Secretariat. Where possible, composition of the committee should reflect representation from each of the designated groups and be gender balanced.

This committee is responsible to:

- 6.7.1. Assist and advise the PSC regarding this policy and any other matters relating to workplace diversity in the public sector on an ongoing basis.
- 6.7.2. Oversee and monitor outcomes and results of the provincial diversity policy.

## **7. Monitoring and Reporting**

- 7.1. The Public Service Commission is required to provide leadership and coordinate the implementation of the Government Workforce Diversity Policy. Under this policy requirement, all departments and agencies (as outlined under policy application) are required to comply by submitting annual progress reports on diversity commitments, plans, objectives, initiatives, activities and results.
- 7.2. The Public Service Commission is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness and consistent application of the Workforce Diversity Policy. The Commission may enquire and periodically conduct inventories of department practices and require data with respect to this policy.

## **8. References**

- 8.1. *PEI Civil Service Act*
- 8.2. *PEI Financial Administration Act*

8.3. *PEI Human Rights Act*

8.4. *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*

## **General Enquiries**

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