



Senior Serving Organizations

A Toolkit for Inclusion



Senior Serving Organizations A Toolkit for Inclusion (2016)

Developed for the
City of Edmonton

by

Centre for Race and Culture

Zenev and Associates, Diversity and Inclusion Consultants



Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge that the content of this toolkit has been informed by the social inclusion project at the Mill Woods Seniors Association (MWSA)



Contents

Background Information

Who Is This For?	1
Why a Toolkit?	2
Who is a Senior?	3
What is Diversity?	6
Diversity and Inclusion in Edmonton's Senior Serving Organizations	10

Toolkit

Conduct a Needs Assessment	14
Form a Diversity and Inclusion Committee	18
Develop an Inclusion Action Plan	20
Develop an Inclusion Model	22
Apply an Inclusion Lens	24
Assess Your Organization	26
Conduct a Program Review	30
Create a Communications Plan	34
Deliver Education in Diversity and Inclusion	41
Develop and Implement an Ambassador Program	43
Promote Staff and Board Diversity	44
Evaluate the Level of Inclusion at Your Organization	49

References	52
------------------	----





Who is this for?

The City of Edmonton is pleased to present Senior Serving Organizations: A Toolkit For Inclusion. This Toolkit is meant to be used by senior serving organizations and other organizations that provide programs and services for seniors.

The Toolkit is a practical and easy to use resource that senior serving organizations can use to ensure that their facilities, programs and services feel welcoming and are inclusive to all seniors.

How do I use it?

You can use this Toolkit as a guide. The Toolkit provides a series of activities and supporting resources for each step of an inclusion process.

You can:

- Use this Toolkit as a step-by-step guide
- Select the steps that are useful to you
- Adapt the ideas and examples in this Toolkit to develop activities that would work for your organization.

Why a Toolkit?

The purpose of this Toolkit is to help senior serving organizations:

- Assess the needs of their organization with respect to Diversity and Inclusion
- Develop and implement strategies to ensure that the facility feels welcoming to all seniors, that programs are inclusive, and that the organization's policies and practices support a welcoming and inclusive environment
- Build capacity within board, staff and volunteers to address issues related to inclusion

By making use of this Toolkit, senior serving organizations will be better able to develop programs and activities that meet the needs of a diverse seniors population.





Who is a Senior?

The number of seniors in Edmonton is growing, but seniors are not a homogeneous group. There are many differences within the senior population. These affect when and how seniors participate in programs and activities, and the degree to which they feel welcomed in senior serving organizations.

What are some of the differences in the senior population that service providers need to think about when planning and delivering programs?

Age

The traditional view of seniors as being 65 and over is now broadening to include older adults over 55. Some senior serving organizations are beginning to offer programs for these younger “seniors”. Life expectancy continues to increase, resulting in a wide range of ages in the senior population. The needs and interests of younger seniors in their sixties may be different from that of older seniors in their eighties, making it necessary for senior serving organizations to offer a range of programs.

Gender

Men and women have different experiences as they age. These experiences are shaped by factors such as life expectancy, income and health status. Women live longer than men and may become isolated, especially if their health deteriorates and they lack support networks. Women have lower levels of income, and experience more poverty than men. They are at greater risk of some illnesses such as depression and dementia, and are more likely to experience elder abuse. All of these gender-related factors affect the degree to which seniors can access and participate in programs.

Income

We know that most seniors have fixed incomes after the age of 65, and for many seniors, income decreases as they age. Low incomes affect the lives of seniors and can increase their isolation and their ability to access and participate in programs. Membership and program fees, even if they seem minimal, can prove a barrier to low-income seniors. Transportation costs may make it difficult for seniors to get to a facility where programs are offered.

Health Status

Anyone’s health status can change over time, but seniors are more likely to have challenges with their physical and mental health as they age. Some of these may affect and restrict their ability to participate in programs. Many senior serving organizations offer programs that can accommodate health issues such as lack of mobility. Other health issues are more difficult to accommodate.

Sexual Orientation

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans/transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) seniors may face special challenges when trying to access programs and services. They may face homophobia and other forms of discrimination or marginalization, currently or in the past. LGBTQ seniors may be wary of how they might be treated in certain spaces, especially when these spaces do not feel welcoming or inclusive to them.

Aboriginal/Indigenous Identity

The aging experiences of Aboriginal seniors may be quite different from those of other seniors. Historically, Aboriginal communities have experienced significant levels of discrimination. Their lives have been disrupted by colonization and the traumatic impacts of residential schools. These experiences have had profound impacts on their health and quality of life. Aboriginal seniors could still be experiencing marginalization, and may require specific programs and services to meet their needs.

Immigrant Status/First Language

Many seniors in Edmonton were born outside of Canada, and some of them have a first language other than English. Immigrant seniors may have different levels of fluency speaking or reading English, and this will affect their ability to participate in programs. A recent study in Edmonton showed a need for more English language programs specifically designed for seniors.

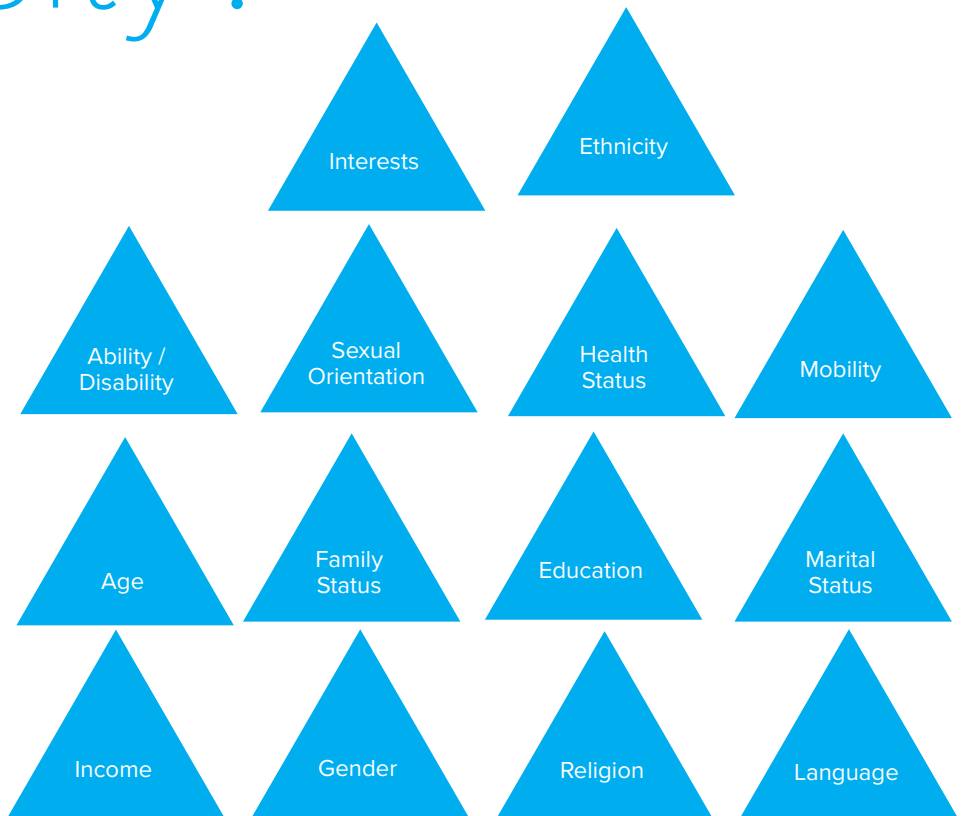
Religion

The current seniors demographic tends to have higher rates of participation in formal and informal religious activities than younger age groups. Providing a multifaith prayer room gives seniors of differing beliefs (or none at all) the opportunity to spend time in quiet contemplation or prayer and to follow religious practices in a comfortable setting.

What is Diversity?



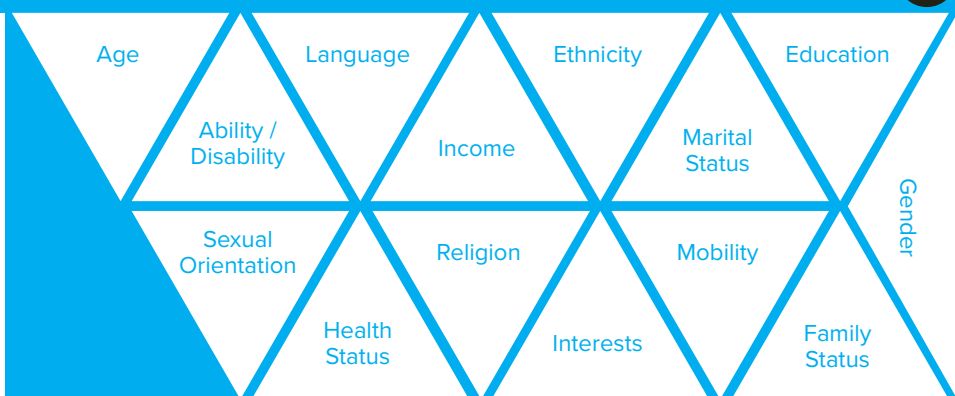
Diversity can be defined as the range of human differences, such as:



What is Inclusion?



Inclusion is valuing these differences and viewing them as strengths.



Diversity and Inclusion are linked. An inclusive organization is one that acknowledges and respects diversity, recognizes barriers to inclusion, and works to actively meet the needs of seniors with varied and diverse backgrounds.

Diversity and Inclusion

Diversity refers to the many differences between people. In addition to the differences mentioned in the previous section, seniors may have different educational and professional backgrounds, work experiences, family and marital statuses, interests, skills and abilities.

Diversity and Inclusion are linked. An inclusive organization is one that acknowledges and respects diversity, recognizes barriers to inclusion, and works to actively meet the needs of seniors with varied and diverse backgrounds.

Access and Barriers

Access can be defined as the opportunity or ability to participate in a program or use a service. Barriers can prevent, restrict or limit access, and may be based on a person's identity or individual circumstances.

For example, a senior with mobility issues may not be able to access a building that has stairs and no elevator, or a senior who is not fluent in English may not be able to participate in a program that requires seniors to speak fluent English. Seniors living on a low income may find membership and program fees too expensive, and an immigrant or Aboriginal senior may face discriminatory attitudes from other seniors. Some of these barriers are unintentional, and seniors who are, for example, able bodied or whose first language is English, may not think about or be aware of barriers that other seniors experience. Barriers can only be removed if we are aware of them. Organizations that are working towards inclusion have to intentionally set out to discover these barriers and address them in order to increase access.

It is important to become aware of the misinformation and biases that we carry so that we can remove the barriers that exist and keep us from achieving mutual respect and understanding.

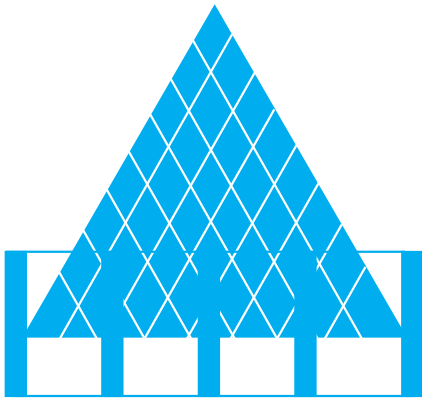
Assumptions About Seniors

Every day we develop views, beliefs, opinions and attitudes based on information that we pick up from a number of sources: family members and peers, the media, and brief personal meetings. These sources provide a mixture of information that may include myths, stereotypes and prejudicial and discriminatory attitudes. Some of this information causes us to misjudge those whom we perceive to be different from ourselves. As individuals going about our busy daily lives, we often consciously or unconsciously make two key assumptions. The first is that everyone who looks or sounds the same is the same. The second is that everyone who looks or sounds like us is like us. These assumptions are often incorrect.

Each of us also has personal preferences and sometimes we act on these preferences in a manner that excludes others and may be based on bias. A bias is a point of view or inclination that may develop itself through favouritism, dislike, prejudice and even fear because of a person's looks, behaviour, lifestyle or circumstances. Biases can be shown through verbal and physical actions. Given that each of us is a product of our time and our environments to a certain extent, it is unrealistic to expect that anyone is completely without bias.

It is important to become aware of the misinformation and biases that we carry so that we can remove the barriers that exist and keep us from achieving mutual respect and understanding. Since we are not always aware of these attitudes and beliefs, we need to pay attention to how we think and feel about other people, to examine the roots of our thoughts and analyze them for biases.

— Adapted from *Inclusive Community Organizations: A Tool Kit* (Page 17)



Diversity and Inclusion in Edmonton's Senior Serving Organizations

The City of Edmonton is committed to being an age-friendly city, and senior serving organizations play an important role in providing equitable access to a range of appropriate programs and services.

As we have seen, there are many differences within the senior population. Senior serving organizations need to be aware and learn about these differences, and the barriers that some seniors may experience when trying to access programs. Senior serving organizations may be very good at meeting the needs of some groups, but there may be segments of the senior population whose needs are being ignored or not fully met. Senior serving organizations should be able to identify seniors who are facing barriers, and actively reach out to them.

Creating more welcoming and inclusive senior serving organizations requires ongoing commitment and effort, and will take time. Some organizations may be quite ready to embark on the journey to becoming more inclusive, and others may need some preparatory work before beginning this process of change. It may take some effort to communicate the goals for inclusion, for everyone at your organization to be committed to the goal and to build capacity within your organization to become more inclusive.

Acknowledging diversity and working towards inclusion has to be an ongoing process within any group or organization, and will require changes in the attitudes and behaviours of existing members, board and staff. People may need to shift their perspectives and change their ways of working and interacting with others. This can be challenging, as it requires people to be aware of their attitudes towards others who are different from them, and open to new ideas and ways of thinking. Organizational policies and practices may also need to be developed or refined to support changes at the individual level.

The purpose of this Toolkit is to provide resources to help organizations build capacity and to support the ongoing and important work of making senior serving organizations more welcoming, accessible and inclusive for all seniors.

Creating change is not a straight forward process, and at times you might encounter some resistance to your inclusion initiative. Diversity has sometimes been framed in terms of certain demographic groups, and seniors may not see how inclusion work will benefit them personally or may not see the importance of it to their organization. Resistance can be caused by discomfort with some kinds of difference, a lack of awareness about barriers to participation for some groups or the belief that enhancing access and inclusion for some groups of seniors means less access for others. Board members and staff may also be worried about being marginalized within their organization, or of having less control when new groups start to access the organization. Some seniors may be unfamiliar with the language and concepts used in diversity and inclusion initiatives. The first step in addressing resistance is to understand the reason for the resistance. Having open conversations and dialogue about the intent of the initiative, providing opportunities for seniors to learn about and discuss diversity and inclusion concepts and emphasizing the benefits of inclusion to all seniors and to the organization will help to allay discomfort and fear, and to get support for organizational change.



Let's get started



This Toolkit is divided into twelve sections.

Each section is an important step your organization can take to become more inclusive. You can either start at the beginning and undertake each step in sequence or you can choose the section that best meet your needs and goals.

Possible pathways through the toolkit

If you work in seniors programming, try this route:



If you are a board member, Executive Director or manager in a senior serving organization, explore this pathway:



Board and Leadership Commitment

If you are delivering seniors programming or services in a larger organization, it is important that you have support from the board and/or leadership team to begin inclusion work. If you need to make the case for the importance of diversity and inclusion, then delivering education in diversity and inclusion can be an important first step to build awareness and to get people talking about the issues. Ask the facilitators who deliver the training to build in some discussion time for participants to consider how to make your space more inclusive for diverse seniors. This discussion can lead to other steps in this toolkit.

Conduct a Needs Assessment

Methods you can use

You can choose one method or a combination of these to collect the information you need.

Surveys

Surveys can be conducted by mailing questionnaires to selected people, by talking to people on the phone, by handing out hard copies of the survey at your organization or by posting questions on your website. Surveys have to be carefully designed to make sure the questions can be easily understood, answered in a short period of time, and accurately capture useful information.

Interviews

Interviews are useful for obtaining more in-depth information about one person's opinions and perspectives. Interviews can be conducted face-to-face or over the phone.

Focus groups

A focus group is a conversation with a group of people. The advantage of a focus group is that you can talk to more people, and participants can build on and add to each other's ideas.

So you want to work at becoming a more welcoming and inclusive organization.

Where should you begin? If you are not sure where to start or what issues you need to address, you might want to start by conducting a needs assessment.

A needs assessment can help you to determine the specific barriers that seniors at your organization or in your community may be experiencing when trying to access programs and activities. You may already be aware of some of these barriers, but unaware of others, or how best to reduce or minimize these barriers. Seniors who face barriers or who feel unwelcome may not express their needs - they may simply not come, or participate in a very limited way. It is important to ask diverse groups of seniors what they would like to see happening at your organization, and understand the factors that limit their ability to access the programs they need.

A needs assessment also gives you the opportunity to have a conversation with your board, staff and volunteers about Diversity and Inclusion. Through the needs assessment, you can gather information about how they understand the idea of a welcoming and inclusive space, how well they feel the programs are meeting the needs of seniors, barriers to access, as well as ideas for improving access.

In designing the needs assessment, it is important to include seniors from diverse groups and various levels of participation in your programs. It is also important to speak to seniors in your community who do not attend the organization, to understand their particular needs and barriers.

Steps in Creating a Needs Assessment

Here are the recommended steps to conduct a needs assessment:

- 1** Determine the key questions for the needs assessment and what information you would like to collect.
- 2** Decide which groups can best provide the information you need, and how many people from each group you need to speak to. Possible groups that you might want to include are board members, staff, volunteers, members, potential new members in the geographical community you serve or from other areas in Edmonton, seniors' family members, other community members, and representatives of specific communities (e.g. leaders of ethnocultural communities).
- 3** Determine the method you will use to collect information. These can include interviews, focus groups or surveys.
- 4** Select the people from each group that can provide the information you need. Make sure that the people you select include those from diverse backgrounds, and who can provide a range of opinions and perspectives.
- 5** Develop the questions appropriate to each method.
- 6** Schedule and conduct the interviews, focus groups or survey.
- 7** Analyze the information collected and develop the key themes.
- 8** Report the results of your needs assessment in a document.
- 9** Use the results of the needs assessment to develop and implement an inclusion action plan with strategies to make your organization more welcoming and inclusive.

What questions should you ask?

Here are some sample questions you can include in your needs assessment:

- Why did you become a member at this organization, and how long have you been a member?
- What does being welcoming and inclusive at this organization mean to you?
- Do you think it is necessary for this organization to work on becoming more inclusive? Why or why not?
- What is working well in terms of inclusion here?
- What are some barriers and challenges to inclusion that you have seen or heard about?
- Do new seniors here feel welcomed when they first attend this program/organization?
- Are the programs meeting the needs of all seniors who attend and other seniors in the community? If not, what programs would you change or add?
- Do the staff have the knowledge and skills to address issues of Diversity and Inclusion? Do you have the skills to resolve conflict when it arises?
- Is there a need for new policies to address issues of inclusion?
- How could barriers or challenges to inclusion be addressed?
- Whose responsibility is it to address these challenges?
- What other ideas do you have to make this program/organization more welcoming and inclusive?



Who should conduct the needs assessment?

The needs assessment can be carried out either by a staff member, a volunteer or an external consultant, depending on the resources available.

It is important to ensure that the person selected to conduct the assessment has expertise and experience in conducting research studies of this type. Conversations about issues of Diversity and Inclusion can be challenging, and the staff, volunteers or consultants selected should have the skills to design the needs assessment and to engage in these conversations.

The person conducting the needs assessment should have the skills and expertise to:

- Determine the scope and purpose of the needs assessment
- Select the right methods and develop appropriate questions for each method
- Conduct interviews and facilitate focus groups, while creating a safe space for participants to share their perspectives
- Analyze data, develop key themes, and report the themes in a document.

For example

The Mill Woods Seniors Association (MWSA) and the Strathcona Place 55+ Centre (SPSC 55+) both conducted inclusion needs assessments. The needs assessments collected information through interviews and focus groups with board members, staff, volunteers and program facilitators. The results of the needs assessments were used to develop strategies and plans that are being implemented at both organizations.



Form a Diversity and Inclusion Committee

What should the committee do first?

Any group that is going to work together over a period of time should have a shared understanding of their goal and purpose. To begin the work of the D&I committee, you might want to start by having a discussion about the purpose and goals of the committee. Members of the committee may have different perspectives on what Diversity and Inclusion means to them, and it would be useful to share these perspectives. The discussion could be facilitated by a committee member, or you could bring in an external facilitator with expertise in this area.

Once the committee has come to an agreement about their purpose, and how they will operate (e.g. Terms of Reference), they can begin the task of creating an inclusion action plan (see next section).

Creating a more welcoming and inclusive organization will require a sustained commitment to the goals of inclusion. A Diversity and Inclusion Committee can help to plan and guide this work.

The Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Committee should have representatives from all the different groups in your organization - the board, staff, volunteers and members. You may also want to invite some community members to be on the committee, especially if there are seniors in the community who are not accessing your programs.

The first step should be to create a terms of reference for the committee to help to clarify the role, structure and decision making processes for the committee.

Here are some things you may want to include in the terms of reference:

- The structure of the committee (e.g. role of the chair, number of members)
- The role, responsibilities and reporting structure of the committee
- Membership composition and the length of members' appointment term
- How decisions will be made
- Frequency of meetings and reporting requirements.

e.g | Sample Terms of Reference for a D&I Committee

Here is an example of what a Terms of Reference can look like. You can modify this template to suit your needs.

The D&I Committee assists the Board of Directors to:

1. Provide leadership in reviewing and exploring strategies to build a diverse and inclusive organization.
2. Make recommendations regarding these strategies to the Board of Directors.
3. Work with staff to develop an action plan, communications plan, and budget to meet the mandate of the Committee.
4. Engage the membership in supporting strategies and plans for building a diverse and inclusive organization.
5. Learn and share information on best practices regarding D&I.
6. Provide guidance and advice to the President and Executive Director on D&I matters.

Appointment Membership and Length of Service

The D&I Committee shall consist of between three and six members, excluding the President and Executive Director who are non-voting members. The Committee may include non-board members who are willing to share their knowledge and experiences to carry out the duties and responsibilities of the Committee. The Committee shall be approved by the Board. Board members may serve on the D&I Committee for the length of his or her term. Non-board members shall serve for one year, and their term may be extended for an additional year.

Chair of the Committee

The D&I Committee Chair shall be a board member and shall be appointed by the Board's President with the approval of the Board. If the Committee Chair is unable to attend a meeting, the Committee members will be polled prior to the meeting and a substitute chair for the purposes of that meeting will be identified from the members who have indicated they will be present.

Meetings

The Committee shall hold at least four meetings each year and any additional meetings as the Chair may deem necessary or appropriate. The Chair or any three members of the Committee may call a special meeting of the Committee. A majority of members present is sufficient to proceed with a meeting and make Committee decisions.

Communications and Minutes

The chair shall report orally or in writing to the Board on matters discussed at the most recent Committee meeting. Minutes of each Committee meeting shall be prepared and shall be provided to all members for their review and upon approval shall be made part of the official record of proceedings of the Board or the organization.

Resources and Authority

The D&I Committee may utilize staff as support for its work. Upon approval by the Board and Executive Director, it may retain the services of external advisors or consultants as necessary to support the Committees' work.

Develop an Inclusion Action Plan

Once you have completed a needs assessment, you will have a better sense of the inclusion related issues that need to be addressed, as well as some ideas for moving ahead. The recommendations from the needs assessment can be used to create an action plan that will help you implement these ideas. If you have already formed a Diversity and Inclusion Committee, the committee could take on the task of creating a plan.

Who should create the Inclusion Action Plan?

- External consultants who conducted the needs assessment
- Staff at your organization
- The Diversity and Inclusion Committee if you already have one (see previous section)

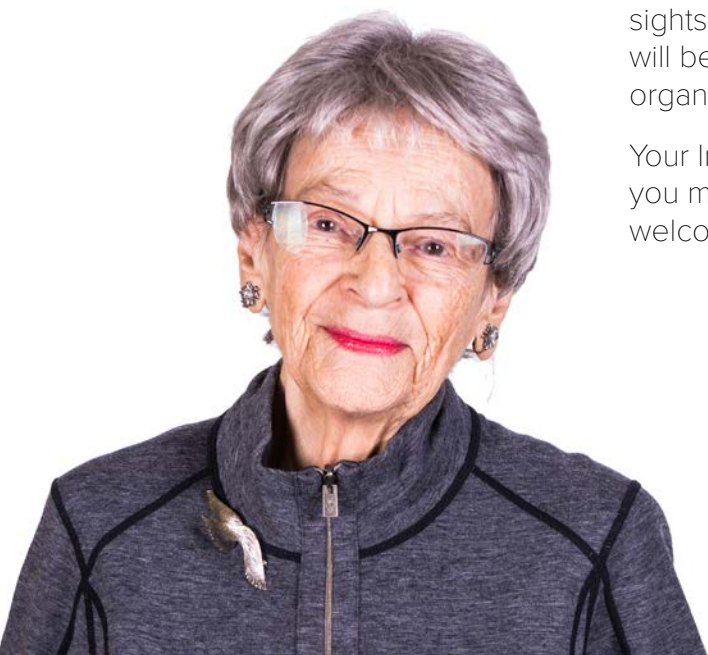
Why do you need an Inclusion Action Plan?

An action plan with tasks and timelines will help you define your goals for inclusion, the strategies you want to implement, the tasks involved in implementing these strategies, the resources you will need, and timelines for getting things done.

A plan can also help you to communicate your commitment to inclusion and to build support for your strategies from different groups within your organization. A plan can help you make sure that everyone is on the same page.

Make sure that your plan is realistic, and that it takes into account the resources you have available to you as well as people's readiness for change. Be as practical as possible about what you can achieve. Although it is great to set your sights high, a measured and steady approach to change will be more achievable than a plan that over-stretches your organization's resources and people's capacities.

Your Inclusion Action Plan can be a living document that you modify and add to as you work towards being a more welcoming and inclusive organization.



e.g | Sample Action Plan

Here is an example of what an action plan can look like. You can modify this template to suit your needs.

Establish a Diversity and Inclusion Committee

Rationale

Provide direction for initiatives related to inclusion, and guide the implementation of the initiatives

Timeline

Short-term

Actions/Notes

- Develop draft Terms of Reference for committee
- Have Terms of Reference approved by the board
- Find members for committee

Conduct a program review using the Inclusion Lens

Rationale

Assess whether current programs could be enhanced for greater inclusion

Timeline

Within the year

Actions/Notes

- Determine who will conduct the program review
- Select an appropriate meeting time to conduct the review
- Document discussion
- Implement any recommended changes

Incorporate Diversity and Inclusion-related competencies into job description positions

Rationale

Ensure board members, staff and volunteers have competencies to enhance inclusion at your organization

Timeline

Within the year

Actions/Notes

- Review job descriptions for all positions
- Determine the specific Diversity and Inclusion-related competencies required for each position
- Amend the position description

Develop an Inclusion Model

One of the first steps in becoming a more welcoming and inclusive organization is to develop a vision, values, goals and principles related to inclusion and equity. An inclusion model can provide a framework for thinking about issues of Diversity and Inclusion and help people come to a common understanding of what the organization is working towards. Clearly articulating your vision and commitment to inclusion and equity are important elements of your inclusion project.

Who should develop the inclusion model?

The model can be developed by the D&I Committee. You could also involve selected board members, staff, volunteers or members who have a good understanding of issues of Diversity and Inclusion. You may already have some policies or statements about inclusion at your organization, and you could include these in your model if appropriate.

A sample model is provided here, based on the City of Edmonton's Diversity and Inclusion Framework. You could adopt this model, or you could modify it to meet your needs.

Elements of an Inclusion Model

Choose the elements that you would like to incorporate into your Inclusion Model. Examples of these elements are:

- Definitions of Diversity and Inclusion
- A vision statement
- Values that would support this vision statement
- Goals of inclusion
- Diversity and Inclusion principles.

How you can use your Inclusion Model

- Use the model to have conversations about what inclusion means to different people and to gather a variety of perspectives on how it can be achieved.
- Create a poster of your Inclusion Model and post it in your space to communicate and remind people of the vision and goals for inclusion and the organization's commitment to equity.
- Deliver an education session on the different aspects of the model to board, staff, volunteers and interested members. Provide an opportunity for participants in the session to talk about how the elements of the model can be demonstrated in the programs and activities of your organization.

e.g | Sample Inclusion Model

Here is an example of what an Inclusion Model can look like. You can modify this template to suit your needs.

Vision for Inclusion

Our organization will reflect the diversity of the community it serves, and is inclusive in all respects. All members, staff and board feel a strong sense of belonging to the organization and are valued for their skills and perspectives. The organization's policies, programs and activities meet the diverse needs of the membership. The organization strives to continually respond to changes in community demographics and needs.

Diversity & Inclusion Principles

Recognize	We will recognize differences between individuals
Respect	We will ensure that each individual is respected and included
Respond	We will respond to the diverse needs of our membership
Reach Out	We will actively reach out to the community around us

Goals of Inclusion

- Have a membership broadly reflective of the community we serve
- Identify and address any barriers to inclusion at our organization
- Create policies and programs that meet the diverse needs of the membership and the community
- Attract and retain a diverse board, volunteers and staff to model inclusive practices



Apply an Inclusion Lens

A lens helps us to see something we might be missing, or provides a new perspective. An Inclusion Lens is a tool that can be used to review an organization's policies, practices and programs. It ensures that they support inclusion and meet the diverse needs of the membership and the community.

What can the Inclusion Lens be used for?

The Inclusion Lens can be used to assess and review:

- How welcoming and inclusive your organization/program feels to seniors
- Your organization's policies and programs
- Communication methods and materials
- Recruitment policies and practices.

This guide provides a number of different Inclusion Lenses in the next few sections. You can use the lenses as provided or you can modify the questions to meet your needs. There may be some questions that are not relevant to your organization, and there may be other questions you would like to change or add.

Select area to review

How to apply the Inclusion Lenses

The following process can be used when using the Inclusion Lens:

1. Determine which areas you would like to review (policies, programs, communication methods).
2. Gather a group of people who have relevant information and can respond to the questions in the Inclusion Lens you are working with. For example, if you want to review your policies, you may want to work with a group most familiar with the policies (e.g. the Executive Director or the policy committee). If you want to review your programs, it might be best to work with the staff member, program committee or whoever is responsible for making decisions about programming.
3. Apply the appropriate Inclusion Lens by responding to each question in the lens. Add any additional questions that are relevant or important to you.
4. Use your responses to the questions to help you identify any gaps that need to be addressed. Document these gaps so that the information is not lost.
5. Create a written action plan to address the gaps.
6. Implement the action plan.

The review can be repeated periodically to ensure that issues of inclusion are being addressed on an ongoing basis.

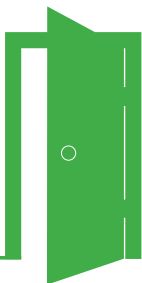
Identify who will
conduct the review

Apply the
Inclusion Lens

Identify any gaps

Create an
action plan

Implement
the changes



Assess Your Organization

One of the most important aspects of creating a welcoming and inclusive organization is ensuring that all seniors and community members experience a helpful, friendly and respectful environment. Seniors who are long-time members may feel quite comfortable, but may not be aware how the space feels to new members, or members who only attend events occasionally.

Inclusion Lenses can help you assess how welcoming and inclusive your space feels to seniors from different backgrounds, and with a variety of needs and interests. The assessment could be conducted by a group comprised of three to four people familiar with the activities at your organization. These could include board members, staff, volunteers or members. This group could informally chat with different groups of seniors over a period of a few weeks to gather their perspectives and involve them in the assessment.



INCLUSION LENS

This Inclusion Lens can be used to review how welcoming and inclusive your organization is in general.

		Comments
Are members and other visitors greeted warmly when they arrive? Are they given the help and information they need?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Not at All	
Do staff and volunteers generally treat members and visitors with respect?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Not at All	
Do seniors in your organization generally treat each other with respect, within the facility and when participating in programs and events?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Not at All	
Do members make an effort to be welcoming to new members?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Not at All	
Do members try to adjust their attitudes and behaviors to be more welcoming and inclusive to people of diverse backgrounds?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Not at All	
Are members respectful of the differences between them and other members?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Not at All	
Is there a regular process in place to ask members if they feel welcomed and included?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Not at All	

Review your policies for inclusion

Policies guide the day-to-day activities and decisions of an organization, and should support your goals of inclusion. A policy review allows you to check your policies for inclusion and can help your organization enhance inclusion in two ways: it can help you determine if your current policies are addressing issues of inclusion, and decide whether you need any new inclusion-related policies.

To review your policies, you can use the questions in the Policy Inclusion Lens. If you have a policy committee at your organization, the review could be conducted by some members of the committee in collaboration with the Diversity and Inclusion Committee. The review could also be conducted by board members and/or staff familiar with the organization's policies, and with your goals of inclusion.

Examples of how policies might have to be adjusted to be more inclusive

- You have a job description for board members and staff, but it does not have any competencies related to inclusion.
- You have a code of conduct for members and volunteers, but it does not include a process for addressing incidents of harassment or discrimination.
- Your membership and program fees do not consider the needs of low-income seniors who may need financial assistance to participate in programs.



INCLUSION LENS

Policy Inclusion Lens

		Comments
Are policies written in plain and inclusive language?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Not at All	
Do policies align with the vision and values of inclusion at your organization?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Not at All	
Does the policy address the diverse needs of seniors in your surrounding community?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Not at All	
Do the policies (or the manner in which they are implemented) unintentionally create barriers, exclude or impact any members unfairly?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Not at All	
Do the policies conform to human rights laws?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Not at All	
Are there policies to address harassment or discrimination among members, staff and the board?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Not at All	
Are board members, staff, volunteers and members made aware of existing and new policies?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Not at All	
Are policies being implemented effectively?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Not at All	
Are there barriers that prevent the implementation of policies?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Not at All	

Conduct a Program Review

Inclusive programs and activities are critical in ensuring that the needs of diverse groups of seniors are being met. Applying an Inclusion Lens to your programs can help you explore how inclusive your current programs are, whether there are barriers that prevent some seniors from accessing your program, and determining if new or different programs are needed to attract a broader demographic of seniors.

The program review could be conducted by anyone involved with developing, planning and implementing programs. This could include the staff member responsible for programming, the program committee (if you have one), or volunteers who deliver programs. Everyone involved with programming will have different information about how well programs are meeting the needs of your members and other seniors in the community. A team approach to conducting a program review will ensure that a variety of perspectives are included.

Everyone involved
with programming
will have different
information about how
well programs are
meeting the needs
of your members and
other seniors in the
community.



INCLUSION LENS

Program Planning Inclusion Lens

Conduct a
Program
Review

This Inclusion Lens can be used to review your program planning process.

		Comments
Do you have information about the seniors in your community (e.g. demographic information, different cultural groups, languages spoken, etc.)?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Not at All	
Are there processes in place (e.g. regular surveys) to ask members if programs are meeting their needs?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Not at All	
Do your programs and activities meet the needs of your current and potential diverse membership?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Not at All	
Do you ask about what prevents current and potential members from fully participating in your programs and activities?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Not at All	
When new program or services are being planned, are the various needs of the membership being considered?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Not at All	
Do you ask for input from seniors in your community who do not currently attend your organization when planning, developing and implementing new programs?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Not at All	
Do you consider the different needs of your members and other local seniors when planning programs and activities (e.g. transportation needs, respect for faith or spiritual practices, dietary needs, language barriers, mobility issues)?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Not at All	
Do staff and volunteers have the skills to plan and implement programs that are inclusive and meet the needs of diverse seniors?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Not at All	

INCLUSION LENS

Specific Program Inclusion Lens

This Inclusion Lens can be used to review each program, or a group of programs (e.g. all fitness programs).

Conduct a
Program
Review

		Comments
Do seniors have access to a clear description of this program, and details about how to participate in the program?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Not at All	
Does the program align with the mandate of the organization?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Not at All	
Are there sufficient resources available to deliver this program (e.g. staff, space, materials)? What additional resources would be helpful?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Not at All	
Are members participating in the program on an ongoing basis?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Not at All	
Does this program take into account the different needs of seniors in your community (e.g. respect for faith or spiritual practices, transportation needs, dietary needs, language barriers, mobility issues)?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Not at All	
Do you have a process in place (e.g. evaluations) to ask program participants whether they are satisfied with the program, and whether it is meeting their needs?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Not at All	
Do you know what prevents current or potential participants from fully participating in this program?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Not at All	
Do you make changes to this program to increase participation?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Not at All	
Do staff and volunteers have the skills to deliver this program in an inclusive manner?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Not at All	

Ideas for immigrant and refugee seniors programs

1. Provide senior-friendly English language programs that:
 - Are appropriate for seniors' learning pace
 - Recognize literacy challenges in the seniors' first language
 - Include an opportunity to socialize and engage in conversational English.
2. Provide recreational and other programs that do not require English language skills and that will minimize language barriers to participation (e.g. fitness and dance classes).
3. Offer more programs targeted to specific ethnocultural/linguistic communities. Start by offering a program that is targeted to a specific cultural and/or linguistic group to draw them to a facility they are not familiar with. For example, a group of South Asian seniors in a particular community play Carrom Board, a table game similar to billiards and table shuffleboard. A seniors centre purchased a Carrom Board and added it to their lounge, which brought in new South Asian seniors, who eventually became interested in other activities at the centre.

— Reference: AOW Report

How programs could be enhanced to be more inclusive

Here are some examples of how you can enhance your programs to be more inclusive:

- Use an application form that asks for demographic information. Ensure that information such as languages spoken, needs and interests, etc. is collected, reviewed, and made available to the program committee on an ongoing basis to help them design inclusive programs.
- Implement a process for evaluating programs on an ongoing basis.
- Provide program fee subsidies for seniors who cannot afford the full fees.
- Offer programs at the end of the day or in the evening for seniors who are still working, or looking after grandchildren during the day.
- Modify activities such as fitness classes to accommodate different levels of physical ability and mobility (e.g. chair exercises).
- Provide comfortable spaces and tea or coffee for seniors who may not want to participate in formal programs but would like to meet other seniors and socialize.

Create a Communications Plan

Effective communication can be key in promoting your organization as a welcoming place for all seniors.

The commitment to becoming a more inclusive organization needs to be communicated to your membership and community, as well as to your staff and volunteers. It is important to remind people that inclusion matters, and that you are actively working towards this goal.

A communications plan can help you to get your message across in a consistent way, using the method that would best reach your audience. A good communications plan will create support for your inclusion project, and motivate others to work towards the same goal.



Steps in creating a communications plan

You can either create a new communications plan or build on an existing one.

If you already have a communications plan, you can review it to ensure that it addresses issues of inclusion, and add the appropriate strategies to respond to any gaps.

The task of creating a communications plan could be taken on by the Diversity and Inclusion Committee, or by the communications committee if you have one at your organization.

Here are the steps you can take to create a communications plan:

1

Identify your current communication strategies

- What strategies do you currently use to communicate with your membership and volunteers (internal communication)?
- What strategies do you use to communicate with the community (external communication)? These can include program guides, brochures about specific programs, newsletters etc.

2

Review the effectiveness of your current communication strategies

- Are your current communication strategies effective? Use existing information or feedback you have received about your communication methods (e.g. surveys you have conducted, informal feedback from your members, staff knowledge of the needs of your members, outreach workers knowledge of the needs of isolated seniors, etc.) to determine if your strategies are working.
- Is the desired message reaching all your different target audiences? For example, do all seniors in your community have enough information about current programs, or only those members who frequently attend your organization/program? Do seniors in your community, as well their families and caregivers, know about the programs you offer?

3

Check your current communication strategies to ensure that they are inclusive

- Are your promotional materials (such as newsletters and program guides) appropriate for the diverse groups of seniors in your community? Do they take into account the information needs of various groups? Does all your communication content convey a message of inclusion? Is content on your website available in multiple languages?

4

Develop a plan

- Using the information from Steps 1, 2 and 3, determine which strategies need to be changed or enhanced, and any new communication strategies that need to be implemented.

The following pages provide tools and templates to help you with this process.

e.g | Sample Communications Strategy

Here is an example of what a communications strategy can look like.
You can modify this template to suit your needs.

Organizational brochure Content Information about our organization	Target Audience Community	Method(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Printed
	Frequency One time	
Monthly newsletter Content Information about programs and activities	Target Audience All seniors who are members or attend programs	Method(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Printed Website Facebook page Twitter account
	Frequency Monthly	
Information about specific events, programs and activities Content Upcoming events, programs and activities	Target Audience Members	Method(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Printed brochures Posters Fan out phone calls
	Frequency Monthly	
Membership drive presentation Content Information about your organizations programs and activities	Target Audience Seniors in the community	Method(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In person at various locations
	Frequency Twice a year	
Fundraising brochure Content Information about your vision, mission, and community impact	Target Audience Donors	Method(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In person at various locations
	Frequency One time (updated as necessary)	

e.g | Sample Communication Map

Here is an example of what a communication map can look like. A communications map helps you to determine who you need to reach and why it is important to communicate with them. You can modify this template to suit your needs.

COMMUNICATION CONTENT	Information about your organization and your programs	
TARGET AUDIENCE	Members	Your Community
	Seniors (non-members)	Edmonton Communities
	Funders & Donors	Senior Serving Organizations
COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Extend and enhance your reputation ● Increase membership from diverse communities ● Attract diverse board members, staff and volunteers ● Attract and retain donors 	

INCLUSION LENS

Communications Inclusion Lens

1 Do your communications materials and methods take into account the diversity within the seniors population?

<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Always	Comments
<input type="radio"/>	Sometimes	_____
<input type="radio"/>	Not at All	_____

For example: Are you considering the needs of isolated seniors who cannot access printed materials, seniors whose first language is not English, seniors who don't have access to a computer, seniors who are visually impaired, etc?

2 Do you consider the needs of other groups that may want information about your organization or programs?

<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Always	Comments
<input type="radio"/>	Sometimes	_____
<input type="radio"/>	Not at All	_____

For example: Have you thought about providing information to seniors' families, caregivers, social workers, outreach and community health workers?

3 Do you consider which groups may be missed by only using certain communication methods?

<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Always	Comments
<input type="radio"/>	Sometimes	_____
<input type="radio"/>	Not at All	_____

For example: Are you relying only on social media or online communications? That misses people who do not use computers or the Internet.

4 Is the information available in a variety of formats to make it as accessible as possible?

<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Always	Comments
<input type="radio"/>	Sometimes	_____
<input type="radio"/>	Not at All	_____

For example: Is information available in person at your organization, online, with printed materials, by phone (either answered by a person or through a voice mail recording)?

Communications Inclusion Lens Continued

5 Are materials and information presented in plain language? Is there any terminology that might be confusing for those with limited English language skills?

<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Always	Comments
<input type="radio"/>	Sometimes	_____
<input type="radio"/>	Not at All	_____

For example: Are all acronyms written out or explained?

6 Do you know the predominant languages spoken in your community and provide information in these languages?

<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Always	Comments
<input type="radio"/>	Sometimes	_____
<input type="radio"/>	Not at All	_____

7 Are there concepts or terms in written materials that may be culturally specific and need to be explained to make them easier to understand?

<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Always	Comments
<input type="radio"/>	Sometimes	_____
<input type="radio"/>	Not at All	_____

For example: Do you provide a brief explanation of what an “open house” or “meet and greet” means?

8 Do visual images such as photos on your program guide or your website represent the diversity in the seniors population?

<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Always	Comments
<input type="radio"/>	Sometimes	_____
<input type="radio"/>	Not at All	_____

For example: Do your images capture the diversity within specific communities of people? Will the people portrayed in the images relate to and feel included in the way they are represented? Is everyone portrayed in positive images that disrupt stereotypes?

e.g | Sample Communications Action Plan

Here is an example of what a communications action plan can look like. You can modify this template to suit your needs.

Establish a Communications Committee

Objective

Enhance communication by having a specific group take responsibility for communication

Actions/Notes

- Create Terms of Reference for committee
- Recruit committee members

Make information on your organization's website available in languages other than English

Objective

Make the website more accessible to non-English speakers

Actions/Notes

- Determine the 2-3 top languages other than English spoken by seniors in the community
- Have basic information about your organization translated into these languages
- Modify website to add this information

Develop a list of organizations and contacts and send out periodic updates about upcoming programs and activities

Objective

Reach a broader demographic of seniors through other organizations that seniors might be connected to

Actions/Notes

- Create a list of organizations and contacts that would be willing to share information about your activities
- Create a one page summary of upcoming programs and activities that can be emailed to the list of organizations

Ensure the materials reflect the diversity in the seniors demographic

Objective

Create a more welcoming image

Actions/Notes

- Review communication materials for inclusion and enhance where necessary

Create materials such as posters and postcards that convey a message of inclusion

Objective

Communicate your commitment to be welcoming and inclusive

Actions/Notes

- Compile information for the materials
- Design the materials
- Distribute the materials

Deliver Education in Diversity and Inclusion

Education about Diversity and Inclusion can be a key component of organizational change, and play an important role in increasing awareness and building capacity. It can also set the foundation for future work by providing an opportunity for people to share perspectives and come to a common understanding of what Diversity and Inclusion mean.

Who should deliver the training?

- If there are people within your organization who have expertise in Diversity and Inclusion, you can design and present the education internally.
- Hire a diversity consultant to provide training.
- Use a combination of the above and use a train-the-trainer approach and use a diversity educator to train staff or volunteers to provide training.

Delivering education in Diversity and Inclusion

Here are some guidelines for providing education and training:

- Use the results of your needs assessment to determine gaps in knowledge and skills, and design your training to address those gaps.
- Ensure the educator you select has a good knowledge of this area, and the skills to facilitate sensitive conversations and address resistance.
- To start with, focus on education to increase awareness. As you move ahead in your initiative, provide training that provides skills in areas such as communicating across difference, handling conflict respectfully and applying Inclusion Lenses to policies and programs.



e.g | Education Topics

Here are some ideas for training topics related to Diversity and Inclusion.

Diversity and Inclusion Education Topic	Training Objectives	Audience
Foundational concepts of Diversity and Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase awareness of the concepts of Diversity and Inclusion • Highlight the importance of being an inclusive organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity and Inclusion Committee • Board • Staff • Volunteers • Members
Knowledge and skills for becoming an inclusive seniors program/ organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an Inclusion Action Plan • Develop your own Inclusion Model • Apply inclusion lenses to your programs, policies and communication materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity and Inclusion Committee • Board • Staff
Ambassador program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn how to implement an Ambassador program at your organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity and Inclusion Committee • Volunteer Ambassadors
Program review for Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice applying a Program Inclusion Lens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff and volunteers responsible for programming • Program committee



Develop and Implement an Ambassador Program

An Ambassador Program can help make your organization more welcoming and inclusive.

Responsibilities of an Ambassador

- Commit to attending training to become an Ambassador
- Make a commitment to be an Ambassador for at least six months
- Attend meetings once a month with the Ambassador Coordinator and Ambassador Team
- Be available one or two half days a week, or take on other Ambassador roles outside the organization

What is an Ambassador Program?

The goal of an Ambassador Program is to contribute to an overall vision of inclusion so that senior serving organizations feel welcoming to all seniors and reflect the diversity of the community they serve.

What is an Ambassador?

An Ambassador is:

- An official representative of your organization
- A promoter and supporter of activities, events, and programs

Ambassadors can help to ensure that all current and new seniors feel welcomed and included at your organization.

Role of an Ambassador

The role of the Ambassadors will be to:

- Encourage current members to participate in ongoing programs
- Orient new seniors to existing programs and encourage them to participate
- Share information about programs and activities to seniors who are not currently attending
- Gather informal feedback on how programs and activities are meeting the needs of seniors, and provide this feedback to staff
- Reach out to the community and encourage seniors to become members or active participants.

Training to become an ambassador

For curriculum to deliver training for Ambassadors, please see the *Senior Serving Organizations: Ambassador's Curriculum*.

Promote Staff and Board Diversity

To create a truly welcoming and inclusive senior serving organization, all board members and staff have to understand the importance of being welcoming and inclusive, be committed to the vision, values and goals of Diversity and Inclusion, and have the competencies to put these into action.

Broaden your recruitment efforts

Board and staff should reflect the diversity of the membership and more importantly, the diversity within the community that the organization serves.

Not-for-profit organizations often rely on word of mouth efforts to recruit new board members and staff. Although this may feel like a safe and comfortable approach, the potential pool of people identified through personal contacts may not reflect the diversity of the community your organization is trying to serve.

Establish a formal recruitment process so that you can reach out and attract as many diverse candidates as possible. As a starting point, here are some ideas to help you broaden your recruitment efforts.

- **Get the word out.**
Advertise new board and staff positions in a wide variety of places to reach as many people as possible. Send out postings to other senior serving organizations, cultural community groups, local community centres, local ethnic and community newsletters or newspapers, and any other associations and organizations that serve the diverse demographic within your community. Allow yourself enough time to reach out as much as possible.
- **Highlight your commitment to Diversity and Inclusion.**
Potential candidates for staff and the board may have preconceived notions about whether their skills and talents would be welcomed in your organization. Include your vision and values of Diversity and Inclusion in the recruitment materials so that diverse candidates feel that they would be accepted, welcomed and valued.

Principles of Inclusion

Recognize

We will recognize differences between individuals

Respect

We will ensure that each individual is respected and included

Respond

We will respond to the diverse needs of our membership

Reach Out

We will actively reach out to the community around us

Minimize bias in the selection process

Each one of us has biases that can creep into the decisions we make. Overt biases are known and recognizable preferences (e.g. stating that only women make good nurses). Implicit biases are automatic associations in our minds that unconsciously influence our actions (e.g. associating black with danger, men with science, or non-English sounding names with an inability to communicate well).

We can minimize these biases (and make more valid, accurate and fair decisions), first by acknowledging that we may have them, and second, by using appropriate strategies to manage our biases.

Here are some strategies that can be used in the recruitment process:

Job descriptions

- In the job description for staff and board members, include general abilities and related work experience rather than specific knowledge. For example, instead of asking for knowledge about specific policies and procedures, ask about the ability to understand and apply policies and procedures. This does not provide an unfair advantage to "insiders" over "outsiders."
- Focus on the desired ability or skill for the job instead of a personal trait. Instead of requiring a 'mature, cooperative person', ask for 'ability to work effectively as a team member.' Personal traits are subjective whereas skills and abilities can be more objectively measured.

Screening candidates

- Consider hiding the names of candidates when screening resumes. Research shows that many Canadian employers show a bias towards traditional Anglophone names, likely making assumptions about language skills, values and experience. Replace names with candidate numbers for the résumé review phase to remove this name bias.
- Focus on the content rather than the style of the résumé, as stylistic differences in format and content can easily lead to qualified candidates being screened out at early stages in the process. In many countries, a résumé might be ten pages long and provide great detail on each experience, while in Canada, the preference is for very concise résumés.

The interview process

- Make sure that the interview panel has diverse team members who are aware of the organization's goals of Diversity and Inclusion and can conduct an interview that minimizes bias.
- Ask all interview candidates the same questions and evaluate their responses using a scoring grid. Encourage the interview panel to check their assumptions about a person based on accents, dress style, body language and other non-verbal communication, and to be aware of how these assumptions impact how they evaluate a candidate.

We can minimize these biases first by acknowledging that we may have them, and second, by using appropriate strategies to manage our biases.



Increase competencies

Staff and board members should have the competencies to work in a manner that reflects your values of inclusion.

Board and staff

Develop a set of Diversity and Inclusion related competencies for each staff position and for board members. Include a summary of these competencies in all job descriptions.

The recruitment process

Build into the recruitment process a means of assessing candidates' beliefs and values about Diversity and Inclusion, and ensure they have the skills to work in an inclusive manner.

INCLUSION LENS

Staff, Board and Volunteer Recruitment

Promote
Staff and
Board
Diversity

		Comments
Are open positions posted where they are accessible to a range of potential applicants?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Not at All	
Do the postings use inclusive language and make it clear that applicants from diverse backgrounds are welcome to apply?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Not at All	
Do job postings accurately state the qualifications necessary to do the job, and the duties of the job?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Not at All	
Are interviewers aware of and have experience in inclusive hiring processes?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Not at All	
Is staff aware of and have equitable access to training and development opportunities?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Not at All	
Is staff provided with training related to issues of Diversity and Inclusion?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Not at All	
Are competencies related to Diversity and Inclusion part of job requirements and competencies (e.g. "is able to show respect for differences in backgrounds and viewpoints", 'is able to adapt communication style", etc.)	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Not at All	
Do staff, board and volunteers have the skills and competencies to be inclusive of all kinds of diversity?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Not at All	

Board diversity

Organizations can benefit greatly from having boards that reflect the communities they serve. Some of the advantages of a more diverse board include:

- Diverse perspectives in decision-making lead to better decisions.
- A diverse board can help build networks and cohesion among diverse populations.
- A diverse organization can be more responsive to the community and clients.
- A diverse board can support fund raising and marketing/outreach more effectively.

Strategies for a more diverse board

- Assess who is on your board. Is the diversity within the community you serve reflected in your board?
- Consider your organization's priorities related to inclusion for the next few years. What are some important goals for your organization that you want to achieve? (See the section on assessing inclusion at your organization). What skills, experience and knowledge will you need at the board level to help you achieve these goals? What gaps will be created by retiring board members?
- Develop an appropriate outreach strategy that will help you find the kinds of board members you need. Get the word out to cultural community groups, community centres, local ethnic and community newsletters or newspapers, and any other associations and organizations that serve diverse demographics within your community.
- Allow enough time for recruitment of new members. For example, if your organization's AGM is scheduled for the fall, you may want to begin your outreach for new members as early as the spring to get word out.
- Recruit volunteers and board committee members from diverse communities. Ensure that their perspectives are valued and heard, and provide them with opportunities to take on leadership roles to build their capacity to become board members.
- Make new board members aware of your organization's vision, values and goals of inclusion and create opportunities for new members to participate in training and education related to Diversity and Inclusion.
- Have strategies in place to welcome and support new board members. Spend some time on orienting them to the people, policies and processes at your organization. Assign another board member as a mentor. Check-in regularly to ensure new members are feeling included and valued.

— Diversity in Governance: A Toolkit for Nonprofit Boards.

<http://diversecitytoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/Diversity-on-Non-Profit-Boards-Toolkit.pdf>

Evaluate the Level of Inclusion at Your Organization

Becoming a welcoming and inclusive organization is an ongoing process and can take some time. It can be helpful to pause along the way to assess what progress has been made, and to review your initiative and strategies to see if you are headed in the right direction.

The following chart can be used as an assessment tool to follow the progress you have made.

Here are some guidelines for the assessment:

Six Assessment Areas

1. Leadership Commitment
2. Board & Staff Diversity
3. Decision Making Process
4. Sense of Belonging
5. Programs
6. Communication & Outreach

- There are six areas to assess: leadership commitment, board and staff diversity, decision making process, sense of belonging, programs, and communication and outreach
- For each area, select the level that describes your organization (exclusion, diversity awareness, etc.)
- The assessment can be conducted by your Diversity and Inclusion Committee (if you have one), or by any group of people who are working on enhancing inclusion at your organization and have enough information to carry out the assessment.
- You may want to start with a baseline assessment at the beginning of your inclusion initiative and record your results. You can re-assess your organization every 6 months or so, and compare your results to those from your initial assessment.

	Leadership Commitment	Board, Staff and Volunteer Diversity	Decision Making Process
Exclusion	Board members and staff do not feel there are any barriers to inclusion, and there is no formal or informal commitment to enhance inclusion.	The organization has not made any effort to recruit board, staff or volunteers from diverse groups.	Decisions are made by a small group of people. Many feel excluded from decision making processes.
Diversity Awareness	There are few champions for Diversity and Inclusion, and they are trying to gather support for an inclusion initiative.	There is an awareness for the need for more diversity in the organization.	Effort is made to incorporate some diverse perspectives into the decision making process.
Working Towards Inclusion	Some board members and staff see the value of becoming more inclusive and have started to reflect on how to move ahead.	Efforts are being made to attract diverse applicants for board, staff and volunteer positions. Open and transparent recruitment processes are in place.	The board, staff and volunteers are working to create processes to invite and incorporate diverse perspectives.
Culture of Inclusion	The board has made a formal commitment to become inclusive, has approved an Diversity and Inclusion initiative, and has allocated resources to the initiative.	Members from diverse groups are equitably represented on the board and with staff. Volunteers represent the diversity within the community.	Everyone has opportunity to contribute their perspectives. Diverse perspectives are valued and appreciated, and used as input into the decision making process.

	Sense of Belonging	Programs	Communication and Outreach
Exclusion	A small group of individuals feel a sense of belonging, but many feel unwelcome or excluded in the day- to-day activities of the organization.	<p>Programs and services only meet the needs of a small group of members.</p> <p>There is a lack of awareness that programs may not be inclusive, or meet everyone's needs.</p>	Communication and outreach activities are targeted to a few groups within the community.
Diversity Awareness	People are more aware of the need to be inclusive, but still struggle to welcome and include everyone.	There is awareness of the need to adjust current programs or provide new programs, but there is uncertainty about how to meet everyone's needs.	Communication and outreach activities have been reviewed for inclusivity and gaps have been identified.
Working Towards Inclusion	People are adjusting their attitudes and behaviors to try and be more welcoming and inclusive.	Some programs are adjusted and a few new programs are introduced to meet the needs of diverse members.	Outreach messages and activities are modified to use inclusive and accessible language and content.
Culture of Inclusion	All individuals feel welcomed and included.	Programs and services are fully inclusive and meet the diverse needs of members and other seniors in the community.	Communication and outreach activities reflect the organization's commitment to inclusion, and are representative of and accessible to diverse seniors in the community.

MORE HELP

If you feel your organization has the capacity to conduct a more detailed assessment, you could use the following assessment tool:

Inclusive community organizations: A Tool Kit. (2004). Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition. Tool #8: Organizational Self-Assessment Tool, page 69.

References

A Toolkit for Serving Diverse Communities

U.S. Administration on Aging

Equity and Inclusion Lens Handbook

City of Ottawa

www.cawi-ivtf.org/sites/default/files/publications/ei-lens-handbook-2015_0.pdf

Inclusive Community Organizations: A Tool Kit. (2004).

Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition.

www.ohcc-ccso.ca/en/inclusive-community-organizations-a-tool-kit

Giving Voice to Edmonton's Immigrant Seniors and Identifying Their Needs (2015)

Age Friendly Edmonton.

aaisa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/AOW-DRAFT-Report-Zenev-and-Assoc-Aug-17-2015.pdf

