

## **DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION (DEI) ADVISORY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**Appendix to Report CLK 1-2021**

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**Ratified by Regional Council on**

**Consolidated Version as of**

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## **1. PREFACE**

The Regional Municipality of Niagara and the 12 Local Area Municipalities affirmed their support for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) when they signed a joint declaration to join the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities (CIM) on September 18, 2020. The objectives of the Coalition are to improve municipal practices for social inclusion, establish policies to eradicate racism and discrimination, and promote human rights and diversity. There are ten common commitments to guide municipalities in developing policies and programs, which focus on challenging racism and discrimination and providing opportunities for community members from all backgrounds to have a voice and participate in decision making in areas including housing, police, education, employment, and the labour market.

A glossary of terms to assist with understanding diversity, equity, and inclusion have been provided at the end of the Terms of Reference.

## **2. MANDATE**

The Niagara Region Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee (DEIAC) is an advisory body established by the Regional Municipality of Niagara in accordance with the following Terms of Reference. The Committee will provide support to staff in the drafting and implementation of a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan and shall provide recommendations, advice, and information to Regional Council and Regional Staff on matters pertaining to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

## **3. GOAL AND PURPOSE**

The goal of the Committee is to address bias and discrimination and its negative impacts on quality of life, safety, health, and inclusion for the diverse communities in Niagara providing a safe place for all people to voice their opinions in order to work together to promote and foster understanding and inclusion in Niagara.

The purpose of the Committee is to:

- Advise and provide recommendations on the development and review of policies and procedures to ensure they reflect Niagara Region's commitment to fostering diversity and inclusion within the organization, and within the community
- Engage and facilitate discussions with community groups to achieve a greater understanding of the strengths and needs of residents of diverse backgrounds and abilities to identify opportunities for collaboration and support between groups, recognizing that each diverse group will require unique approaches and solutions

- Collaborate with other civic agencies and local community groups and partners including the initiation and development of relevant programs, services, events and projects identifying opportunities for education, collaboration, support, and engagement to promote equity, inclusion, and the elimination of discrimination

When matters benefit from input from more than one equity-seeking committee the DEIAC will be asked to provide input or may be asked to attend joint meetings with other Advisory Committees.

#### **4. REPORTING STRUCTURE**

The DEIAC will report to Regional Council through the Corporate Services Committee.

#### **5. BUDGET**

The DEIAC shall have an annual operating budget to be used for valid Committee purposes as detailed in the budget approved by Regional Council for the current year and aligned with the annual Committee work plan. Corporate Services and Innovation Division shall submit a budget request each year to Regional Council for consideration and approval.

#### **6. MEMBERSHIP**

##### **a. Term**

There shall be a maximum of eleven (11) members on the DEIAC. Membership for the DEIAC shall include:

- One (1) Regional Councillor
- The Chair or Vice Chair of the following Advisory Committees:
  - Accessibility Advisory Committee
  - Anti-Racism Advisory Committee
  - 2SLGBTQQIA+ Advisory Committee
  - Women's Advisory Committee
- Six (6) additional community members

One (1) designated staff member shall serve as staff liaison. Other staff may be requested to join meetings or support the work of this committee as need arises.

The members shall represent the diversity of the Region and broad cross-section of residents, including geographical and gender balance. An intersectional approach

should be taken to ensure representation by community members with lived experience or service in agencies related to one or more of the following areas:

- Ethnocultural and linguistic diversity
- Francophone
- New immigrants
- Indigenous communities
- LGBTQ2S+ individuals
- Individuals with disabilities, including mental health disabilities
- Seniors/older adults
- Individuals living with low income/homeless
- Post-secondary students/youth
- Faith-based diversity

All attempts will be made to stay within the guideline composition; however, if the applications received or the qualifications of applicants do not fully address the guideline composition criteria, the most capable and qualified applicants will be recommended for appointment to fulfill the membership composition.

**b. Term**

The term of membership shall be two years. Membership shall be approved by Council in accordance with membership requirements in the Terms of Reference.

**7. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

**a. Chair & Vice Chair**

A Chair and Vice Chair will be elected from Committee members on a biannual basis at the first meeting of the new year to preside over meetings and Committee business. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee shall be members of the public. Committee criteria considerations will be used during the selection of the Chair and Vice Chair.

It is the role of the Chair to preside over Committee meetings so that its business can be carried out efficiently and effectively, and to act as liaison between the Committee, Regional Council, and other committees. It is the role of the Vice Chair to preside over Committee meetings and act as a liaison in the absence of the Chair.

## **b. Committee Members**

All DEIAC members, including the Chair and Vice Chair, have the responsibility to help achieve the Committee's Mandate and Purposes. Committee members are also responsible for:

- Reviewing meeting materials in advance of the meetings and arriving prepared to provide a broad perspective on the issues under consideration;
- Contributing to the creation of an annual work plan;
- Working diligently to complete assigned activities;
- Participating on working groups, as appropriate;
- Agreeing to describe, process, and resolve issues in a professional and respectful manner;
- Providing input to help identify future projects or strategic priorities for future years' work;
- Communicating activities of the Committee to groups represented or those who may have an interest and offer information back to the Committee

## **8. WORKING GROUPS**

To fulfill its mandate and accomplish its goals, the DEIAC may establish working groups to deal with specific issues or projects. Working groups are considered to be time-limited, project specific sub-committees of the DEIAC in that they are convened to accomplish a specific task (or tasks) in a narrowly defined time period.

Working groups must be comprised of at least one member of the DEIAC and may include community members and other individuals with relevant knowledge and expertise.

Working groups shall be chaired where possible by a voting member of the DEIAC and shall provide regular updates to the DEIAC regarding recommendations on assigned projects. Minutes of the meetings of the working group shall be recorded and submitted to the DEIAC for proper directing through the approval process. Working groups may meet at a time and place as decided by the members of the working group.

## **9. RESOURCES**

Corporate Strategy and Innovation is the designated lead department providing resource support for the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee.

The DEIAC also has access to the technical expertise of staff from other Regional departments and is encouraged to collaborate with specific internal departments to implement specific initiatives within the Region through the initiation of the Committee Chair in conjunction with the Staff Liaison.

The DEIAC is encouraged to collaborate with the Accessibility Advisory Committee, and Women's Advisory Committee, and any other relevant Advisory Committee.

The DEIAC shall receive administrative support from the Office of the Regional Clerk for meeting and agenda management.

## **10. MEETINGS**

The DEIAC shall meet at least six times per year, and may meet more frequently if required. A meeting schedule should be set for the DEIAC and circulated to the members for approval each year. Should a time sensitive matter arise requiring immediate attention, the DEIAC may meet at the discretion of the Chair.

The DEIAC meetings will be held at Regional Headquarters or in a virtual format at a time as determined by the members. All meetings will be open to the public. The Region shall provide accommodations for those that have barriers to connecting to meetings virtually.

Meetings shall be governed by the Region's Procedural By-law, being a by-law to govern the calling, place and proceedings of the meetings of Council and its Committees, as may be amended from time-to-time.

A committee member who is unable to attend a meeting, shall forward their regrets to the Office of Regional Clerk as soon as possible. Should the Office of Regional Clerk not have confirmation of quorum 24 hours prior to the meeting, the meeting shall be cancelled.

## **11. ABSENTEEISM**

Members who miss three unauthorized consecutive meetings shall be deemed to have resigned from the Committee and will be notified of this in writing by the Committee Chair.

## **12. AMENDMENTS TO THE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Terms of Reference should be reviewed and refined at a minimum of every two years to ensure that they remain current and meaningful.

Proposals to amend the Terms of Reference shall require the approval of a majority of the members present. Proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference shall be submitted to Regional Council for Approval.

### **13. GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

**Discrimination:** The treatment or consideration based on class or category rather than individual merit and that can be used to privilege (special treatment in favour of) as well as disadvantage (special treatment against) a particular group or individual.

**Diversity:** The presence of differences in the lived experiences and perspectives of people that may include race, ethnicity, colour, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, marital status, family status, physical ability, mental disability, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, class, education, and/or socio-economic situations. Individuals affiliate with multiple identities.

**Equity:** The fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people. It involves striving to identify and eliminate unfair biases, stereotypes, or barriers that may limit the full participation of individuals or groups in society.

**Inclusion:** An active, intentional, and continuous process to address inequities in power and privilege, and build a respectful and diverse community that ensures welcoming spaces and opportunities for all to fully participate and flourish.