



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Niagara Region

Accessibility Advisory Committee

June 1, 2021

Cassandra Ogunniyi,
Diversity, Equity and
Inclusion Program Manager

Agenda

- Background
- Project Plan
- Goals with progress and next steps
- Discussion
 - Feedback on organizations selected that work with Individuals with Disabilities
 - Volunteers for a DEI focus group
 - Selection of representative for the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee

Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities



- Niagara Region and the 12 Local Area Municipalities (LAMs) signed the declaration to join the Coalition on Sept 18 2020
- Objectives of the Coalition:
 - Improve municipal practices to promote social inclusion
 - Establish policies to eradicate all forms of racism and discrimination
 - Promote human rights and diversity
- Creating a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan as part of joining the CIM

Project Plan

- **Purpose:** This plan outlines the work from 2020 to 2022 that will develop a DEI Action Plan to guide the work in the Region for the next five years, and the initial steps being taken to advance DEI in Niagara.
- **Draft Vision:** Niagara Region is an organization that has diversity in leadership and staff, involves people with lived experience in decision making, removes barriers to provide opportunities for all people to access services and resources, and has safe and inclusive spaces for all community members

Importance of DEI Work

- **Diverse Talent:** better represents the public we serve in all positions, including senior management
- **Inclusive Leaders:** equipped to respond to a changing workforce and community
- **Diversity of Thought & Experience:** thrive in an inclusive workplace, improving productivity, innovation, and quality of outcomes
- **Greater Collaboration:** enables creativity and innovation in the way we work
- **Responsive Public Service:** creates equitable policies, programs, and services

DEI Goals 2021-2022

- **Goal 1:** To develop a 5 year DEI Action Plan by April 2022
- **Goal 2:** To increase the diversity of job applicants and new staff hired
- **Goal 3:** To provide staff with the knowledge, skills, and resources to reduce racism and discrimination and improve inclusion and diversity
- **Goal 4:** To provide opportunities for community members to be heard and participate in decision making processes
- **Goal 5:** To improve collaboration with diverse community members and organizations in Niagara

Goal 1: To Develop a 5 year DEI Action Plan by April 2022

Step 1: Current Assessment

- Jan – Mar 2021
 - Environmental Scan
 - Pulse Survey analysis

Step 2: Develop Vision and Plan for Engagement

- Feb – July 2021
 - Draft Vision
 - Engagement plan
 - DEIAC Selection
 - Data collection questions and tools

Step 3: Identify Barriers and Critical Success Factors

- June – Nov 2021
 - Conduct staff and community focus groups
 - Conduct staff and community survey
 - Data analysis and summary

Steps 4 &5: Create Strategy, Monitoring Plan, and Write Report

- Nov 2021 – April 2022
 - Strategy sessions
 - Write report
 - Finalize report
 - Action Plan and Report to Council

Goal 2: To increase the diversity of job applicants and new staff hired

- Actions completed
 - How to Increase Diversity and Inclusion in Recruitment, Hiring, and Promotion: A Best Practices Guidebook
- Next steps
 - Review the best practices and select at least one area to work on in 2021

Goal 3: To provide staff with the knowledge, skills, and resources to reduce racism and discrimination and improve inclusion and diversity

- Completed actions

- Regional Councillors attended a two part Diversity and Inclusion training
- Leader's Edge two-part training called 'Addressing Bias and Discrimination' in February and March 2021
- Wrote Vine articles celebrating Women's History Month, Black History Month, International Women's Day
- Created a calendar of significant dates to recognize
- Created a communications plan

- Next steps

- June 2021 - Finalize a training options menu
- June 2021 – Provide recommendations for the Corporate Learning Calendar 2021-2022

Goal 4: To Provide Opportunities For Community Members To Be Heard And Participate In Decision Making Processes

- Completed actions
 - Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee (DEIAC)
 - 8 community members selected from 83 applications
 - Council approval of recommended members
- Next steps
 - June 2021 – First DEIAC meeting
 - Fall 2021 – Establishment of 2SLGBTQQIA+ Advisory Committee and Anti-Racism Advisory Committee

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee

- Mandate
 - Provide support to staff in the drafting and implementation of a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan
 - Provide recommendations, advice, and information to Regional Council and Regional Staff on matters pertaining to diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Goal
 - 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

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee

- Purpose

- Provide suggestions for improving the organization's activities to increase diversity and inclusion
- Collaborate with community groups to identify opportunities for supporting diverse residents' needs
- Work with other organizations and community groups to support opportunities to promote inclusion and reduce discrimination

- Membership

- 2 Regional Councillors – Councillor George Darte, Councillor Laura Ip
- 8 Community Members
- 1 Representative from the Women's Advisory Committee
- 1 Representative from the Accessibility Advisory Committee

Goal 5: To Improve Collaboration With Diverse Community Members And Organizations In Niagara


- Completed Actions

- Collaborated with 15 Indigenous related organizations or leads, Public Health, Community Services, and Economic Development to organize Indigenous specific Pop-Up COVID Immunization Clinics that vaccinated approx. 4500 Indigenous individuals, their household members or carers

- Next Steps

- June 2021 – Finalize update of Land Acknowledgement
- Continuous – Work with Indigenous organizations
- Continuous – Attend meetings and events hosted by local DEI related organizations or networks

Staff and Community Engagement

- Aim of engagement – to hear from diverse voices of Niagara
 - Experiences and perceptions of DEI in the Region
 - How can Niagara be more welcoming, diverse, inclusive, and equitable
 - Key areas of focus
 - Housing
 - Police
 - Labour force
 - Education
 - Municipal employer
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Staff Focus Groups


- Volunteer staff members
 - Racial or ethnic groups
 - People with disabilities
 - 2SLGBTQ+ community
 - Born outside of Canada
 - Different religious or spiritual affiliations
 - Diverse genders
 - Francophone
 - All departments, some divisions

Community engagement

- 12 Diversity related groups:
 - Ethnocultural and linguistic diversity
 - Racialized or People of Colour
 - Francophone
 - New immigrants
 - Indigenous communities
 - LGBTQ2S+ individuals
- Individuals with disabilities
- Seniors/older adults
- Individuals living with low income
- Individuals experiencing homeless
- Post-secondary students/youth
- Faith-based diversity



Organization selection

- Started with the list of over 500 organizations and networks, categorized them according to the top two diversity categories that they work with
 - If more than 11 organizations in a category, will select 8-12 based on various criteria:
 - Geography – urban/rural, different municipalities
 - Range of clients (considering intersectionality, age, gender, etc.)
 - Large and small organizations (budget, reach)
 - Range of services offered
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Individuals with Disabilities

- Speech Services Niagara
- Kristen French Child Advocacy Centre Niagara
- West Niagara Mental Health
- Oak Centre
- CAMH
- March of Dimes
- Community Care Access Centre
- NHS Addictions Outpatient Services
- Community Support Services of Niagara
- Coast Niagara
- Community Living
- Special Olympics Niagara
- ODSP
- Brain Injury Community Re-entry

Action Requested - Discussion

- Volunteers to participate in a 90 minute virtual focus group on DEI
- Selection of representative for the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee

Thank you!

- Questions can be sent to Cassandra.Ogunniyi@niagararegion.ca