

# Lunenburg County Strategy for Belonging Anti-Racism & Diversity Action Plan

DRAFT

~~Perfection~~  
progress

April 2025-28



# Acknowledgements

We want to recognize this work is both a multigenerational journey and community effort, which drives us to deliver some heartfelt acknowledgments:

To be included in final approved version.

# Introduction

The five municipalities in Lunenburg County are working together to improve and develop equity within our region. The five municipalities include: Municipality of Chester, Municipality of the District of Lunenburg, Town of Bridgewater, Town of Lunenburg, and Town of Mahone Bay.

## Background

In 2021, we developed the Lunenburg County Accessibility Plan. The plan outlined the overarching commitments for improving accessibility in all of Lunenburg County and some of the actions we would take to reach those commitments. In 2024, we expanded the efforts and created an intermunicipal agreement to develop a Lunenburg County Anti-racism and Diversity Plan.

## Objective

We know that inclusive communities are stronger communities and we are committed to working individually and as a region to make our municipal programs, services, initiatives and facilities more accessible, equitable and inclusive.

The focus of this document looks ahead to the next three years (April 2025-March 2028), in which the first Anti-Racism & Diversity Plan is developed to increase Belonging in Lunenburg County. The Anti-racism & Diversity Plan outlines the commitments and approach for continuous community centred plan development.

## Provincial Legislation

Similarly, under the *Accessibility Act (2017)*, we had to develop and now must update the Lunenburg County Accessibility Plan. Similarly, under the *Dismantling Racism and Hate Act (2022)*, requires government to create and support an anti-racism strategy that will identify and address racism in public policies, programs and services.

## Key strategies

We commit to taking actions to encourage a culture of equity in our organizations and communities. We believe in supporting staff, Councils, and the people in our communities to not only become aware of inequities but become educated and equipped on how to remove and prevent barriers, while creating a culture of continuous learning.

**Note:** We recognize that language around equity work is always evolving and that people have different preferences about how to describe themselves. Although we intend to be respectful and inclusive, we know our language choices may not fit for everyone. If you have feedback about our choices, please let us know.

# What We Believe

The first Lunenburg County Accessibility Plan was created using some key principles. We have continued to use and add to the list of these principles as we do our work around equity development. We plan to use them as we implement the 2025-2028 Lunenburg County Anti-Racism and Diversity Action Plan

# 1

## Equitable Access

Working towards equitable access for everyone in our community means that every person has access to opportunities and is treated fairly. Equitable access means understanding that a person's individual circumstances will impact what barriers they might face and what we can do to remove those barriers. Creating equity doesn't mean treating everyone the same.

# 2

## First Voice

It is essential to include first voice perspectives of people who have lived experience in our work. That means hearing first voice perspectives on our plans, the work we have already done, and our decision-making processes.

It also means working to make our processes more accessible and equitable so we hear from persons from equity deserving groups about all our work, not only related to Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility (EDIA). This work is a lens to all the work, not its own separate project.

# 3

## Flexibility

We know that things change and that we need to be flexible to respond to changes. Various Acts and Standards will come into effect and legislation may change in the coming years. Things like technology and world occurrences will also change. We understand that this plan must be flexible to make sure we can respond to these changes, take advantage of opportunities and respond to the emerging needs of community. We consider this strategy to be a living document.

# 4

## Collaboration

It is essential to continue to collaborate with other municipal units, the regional committees, organizations at the provincial level, and community partners to advance this plan and work towards a community of belonging.

# 5

## Intersectionality

We know that people have multiple identities and that can mean they face multiple barriers to feeling belonging in our communities. These might be related to cultural or ethnic background, gender, disability, sexuality, or other identities people may have. When these identities overlap, it can magnify the impact of the barriers that person faces overall. We must consider intersectionality and align our plans for broader equity, diversity and inclusion work.

# Lunenburg County Strategy for Belonging

# Glossary of

# Terms

We recognize that language around equity work is always evolving and that people have different preferences about how to describe themselves. Although we intend to be respectful and inclusive, we know our language choices may not fit for everyone. If you have feedback about our choices, please let us know.



## Glossary of Terms

**Anti-Discrimination:** Non-discrimination is an integral part of the principle of equality. It ensures that no one is denied their rights because of factors such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property or birth. (ag.gov.au)

**Anti-Racism:** the practice of actively identifying and opposing racism. The goal of anti-racism is to actively change policies, behaviors, and beliefs that perpetuate racist ideas and actions. (Boston University)

**Barrier:** Something that makes it harder for some people to participate. Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act defines a barrier as "anything that hinders or challenges the full and effective participation in society of persons with disabilities, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy, or a practice."

**Disability:** As defined in Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act: "a physical, mental, intellectual, learning or sensory impairment, including an episodic disability that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders an individual's full and effective participation in society."

**Dismantling Racism and Hate Act:** The Dismantling Racism and Hate Act, developed by an all-party committee following extensive engagement with Nova Scotians, outlines the government's approach to addressing systemic racism, hate and inequity. The Act's focus is on a commitment to work with underrepresented and underserved communities to create a community network and develop data standards to monitor and address systemic hate, inequity and racism. ([Dismantling Racism and Hate Act](#))

**Diversity:** Diversity is the range of human differences, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic, physical ability or attributes, religious or ethical values system, national origin, political beliefs, geographic, and academic/professional backgrounds. This includes people with different opinions, backgrounds (degrees and social experience), heritage and life experience.

**Equitable/equity:** A commitment to fairness. Equitable access is different from equal access. Equality means everybody is treated the same; equity means everybody is treated fairly, based on their needs and abilities. Equity recognizes and values differences, removing systemic barriers and accommodating individual differences, as needed.

**Equity Deserving Groups:** A group of people who, because of systemic discrimination, face barriers that prevent them from having the same access to the resources and opportunities that are available to other members of society, and that are necessary for them to attain just outcomes (Canada.ca)

## Glossary of Terms

**Intersectionality:** How a person's identities, such as their gender, ethnicity, and sexuality, affect their access to opportunities and privileges.

**Lunenburg County Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination Advisory Committee (ARADAC):** The committee established by the five municipalities in Lunenburg County that is responsible for advising the municipal councils on identifying, preventing, and removing barriers to people underserved and underrepresented groups in municipal programs, services, initiatives, and facilities. The ARADAC is made up of one elected official from each of the five municipalities, six community members and two indigenous members (1 each from Acadia and Sipekne'katik First Nation). A matrix is used to have wide diversity of representation from equity deserving groups.

**Meaningful:** In the context of our work, the term meaningful is used to ensure the efforts being made are deemed valuable by those affected by the efforts.

**Plain language:** Clear, conversational communication that makes sense to the intended audience. The goal of plain language is to communicate so clearly that the intended audience can easily find what they need, understand what they find, and use the information ([plainlanguagenetwork.org/](http://plainlanguagenetwork.org/)).

**Prescribed:** The *Accessibility Act* and *Dismantling Racism and Hate Act* enables the government to use the regulations to identify which organizations must comply with certain requirements. The use of the word "prescribed" in legislation is intended to give wide authority for regulations to be made that set down a specific rule or direction.

**Safe Brave Space:** A safe space is meant to be comfortable, supportive, and non-threatening where all participants can feel comfortable to express themselves and share experiences without fear of discrimination. Whereas, a brave space encourages dialogue, curiosity, and accountability. In a brave space, we can explore controversial issues by growing and learning together, with people being rewarded for their courage and for taking accountability for their words and actions. Safe spaces and brave spaces are often confused for one another, and while they are similar and can exist at the same time, they are both unique in how they hold space for people to authentically share and be themselves. We aim to create spaces where they co-exist. (Cloudinary.ca)

We also recognize there may be additional terms we may have missed, so we suggest also checking out EDIA Glossaries, for example, the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion's Glossary of Terms: <https://ccdi.ca/media/3150/ccdi-glossary-of-terms-eng.pdf>

# Letter from Mayors & Warden

# Evaluation

In our approach, each of our municipalities will take action towards increasing accessibility and combatting hate and racism within our community. We will track our progress on these actions and update on progress to the community every year.

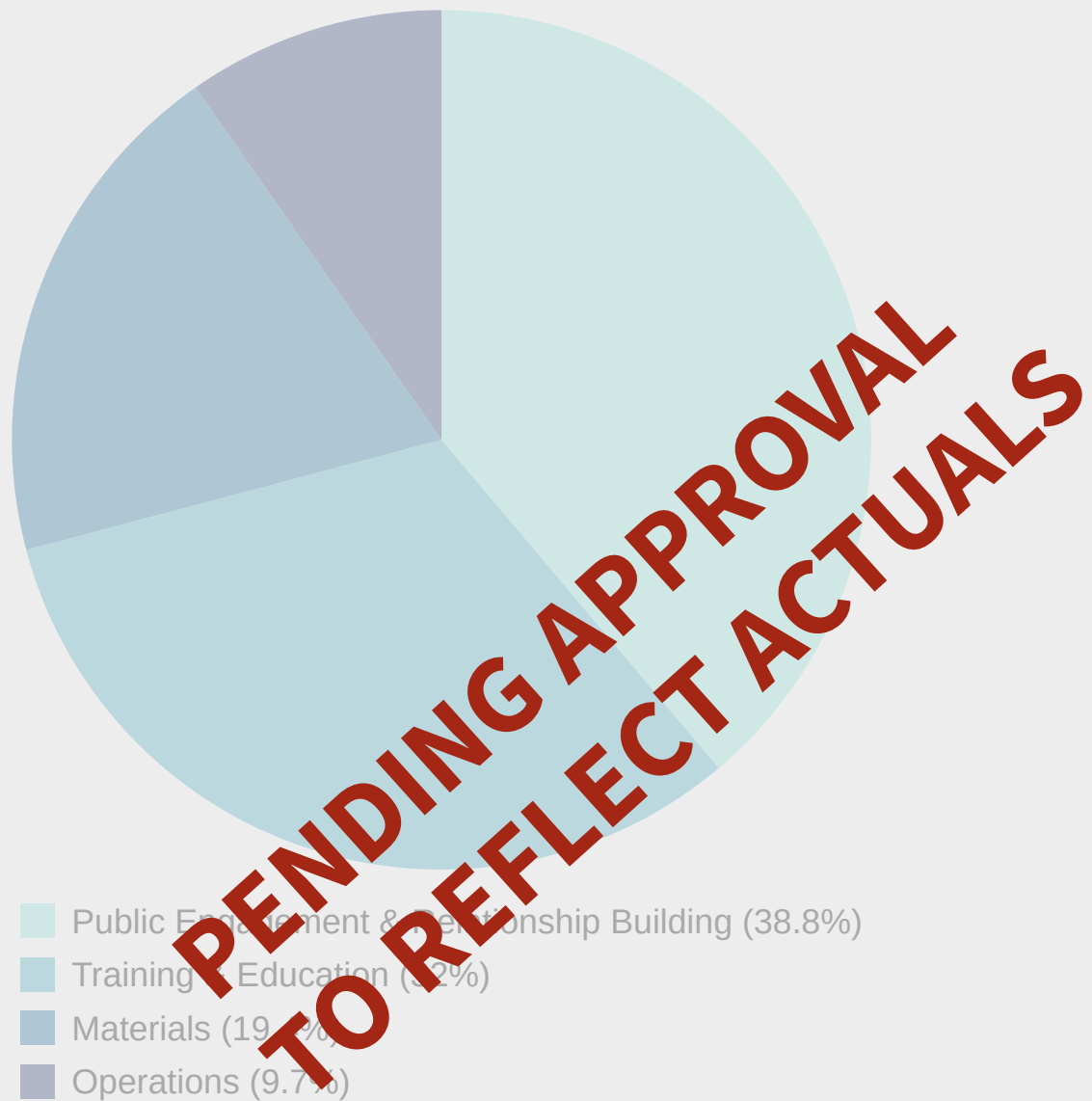
We will continue to connect with the community, especially persons from equity deserving communities, to learn about their experiences and if what we are doing is making a meaningful difference. We will do this through community engagement sessions, surveys, and monitoring complaints and comments from the public.

We will also ask municipal staff, volunteers and elected officials about equity in our organizations to make sure we are increasing understanding over time.

As this work is both change focused and human-centred, we will continue to partner with organizations that specialize in data and evaluation. This makes sure we are not duplicating efforts and we engage with organizations that specialize in this area.



# Budget Breakdown



As this work is focused on developing equity in the spaces they currently are not, along with ensuring first voice is amplified. This approach is also reflected in how we distribute our budget, to ensure we prioritize engagement and education financially.

# Diversity in our Community

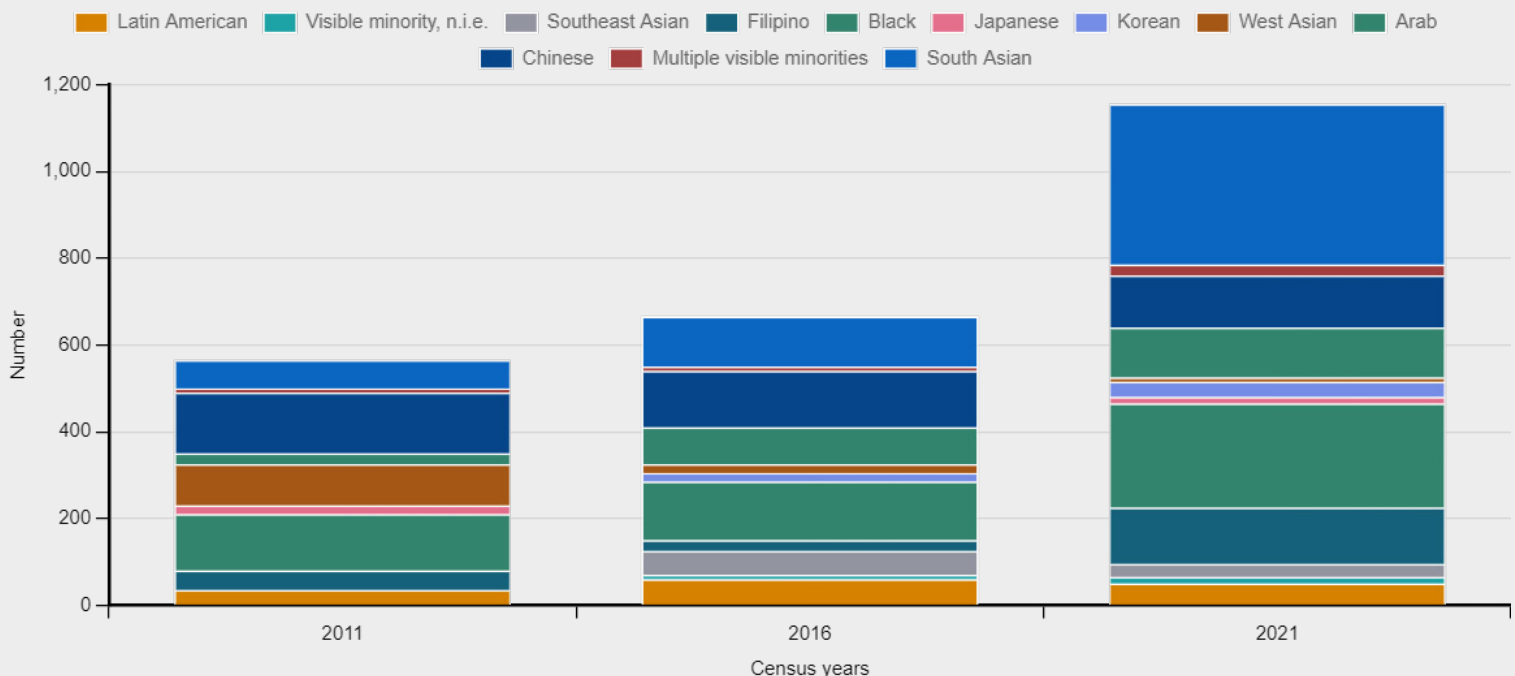
## Trends in the past 5 Years

This will encompass stats around current diversity in our community along with emerging trends. We are working with organizations to get updated data since 2021.

## Our current community

Diversity is so much more than just where you're from or visible traits, but the below chart is just an example of a way our community has begun to diversify over the years. (Note: In 2021 Census analytical and communications products, the term "visible minority" has been replaced by the terms "racialized population" or "racialized groups", reflecting the increased use of these terms in the public sphere.)

Counts of visible minority groups[2], Lunenburg (County), 2011, 2016, 2021



## Target audience

As our community grows and diversifies, our target is not one specific group. This work is for all of us so that our neighbours feel included, safe and like they belong.

# Lunenburg County Anti-Racism and Diversity Committee

Name	Relationship to Community
Person 1	Community Member
Person 2	Community Member
Person 3	Community Member
Person 4	Community Member
Person 5	Community Member
Person 6	Community Member
Person 7	Community Member from Acadia First Nation
Person 8	Community Member from Sipekne'katik First Nation
Person 9	Councillor, Municipality of the District of Lunenburg
Person 10	Councillor, District of Chester
Person 11	Councillor, Town of Mahone Bay
Person 12	Town of Lunenburg
Person 13	Town of Bridgewater

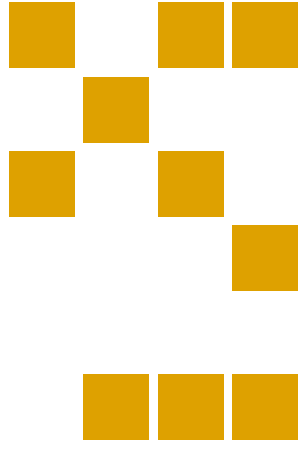
## Committee Development in Progress

To ensure we had a diversity of demographics, with prioritization of equity deserving groups, we developed a matrix to anonymize applicants and to ensure members were selected unbiasedly. Additional factors we took into consideration are service sectors important to have representation from (eg. Public Health and the regional School Board)

# Progress

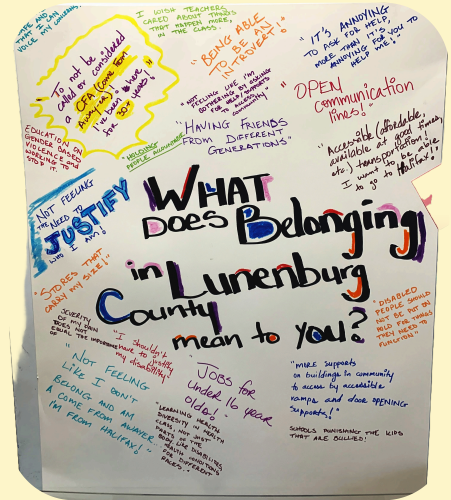
## Current Status and Insights

We have been working towards development of an action plan guided by community voices, our regional committee and our Anti-Racism and Diversity Coordinator. As work towards an equitable community starts from not only hearing from equity deserving groups, but also developing trust, this is just the start of the journey together.



### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

To guide us during plan development, we went out into community at accessible community spaces such as cafes, libraries, schools and community centres to hear directly the needs, wants and experiences of members within our County. This was done through the main question of "What does belonging in Lunenburg County mean to you?", where we were able to hear from over 40 members of community. This engagement will continue to capture first voice and trends.



### INTERNAL MUNICIPAL ENGAGEMENT

Work has been on the go.

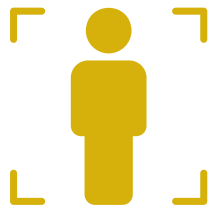
As we have agreed, this work is both out in community, but also within our own municipalities. Through initial conversations with departments, council members and staff, possible action items have been identified for further review. This has helped to inform the key areas of focus within the plan.

### COMMITTEE DEVELOPMENT

For diverse voices and municipal decision makers to be in constant conversation with each other, the Lunenburg County Anti-Racism and Diversity Coordinator has been developed with representation from each municipal council, members from sectors that serve community regularly (eg. Public Health and the School Board) and members from equity deserving groups (eg. 2SLGBTQIA+ and newcomers).

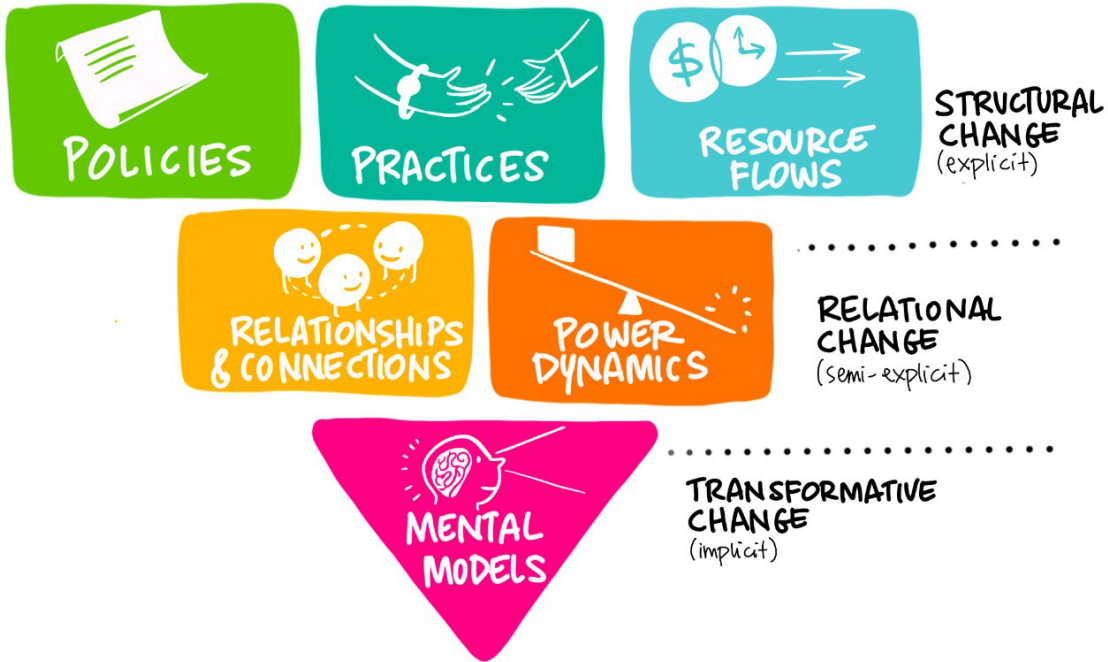


# Our Approach



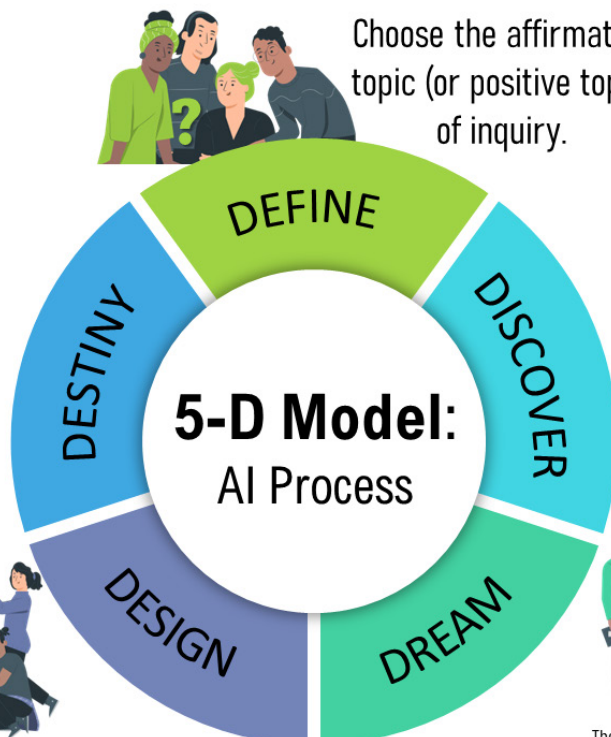
As we determine specific actions in this work, we recognize to develop a strategy of change, it should be focused and informed by first-voice, but also with an understanding of foundational frameworks. **Our Areas of Focus are built upon the Six Conditions of Systems Change and the design of how and when actions are presented is based on the 5D's of Appreciative Inquiry.**

## SIX CONDITIONS OF SYSTEMS CHANGE



By John Kania, Mark Kramer, Peter Senge

Frameworks Collection by finegood@sfu.ca | Illustrated by sam@drawingchange.com | © CC BY-NC-ND



Choose the affirmative topic (or positive topic) of inquiry.

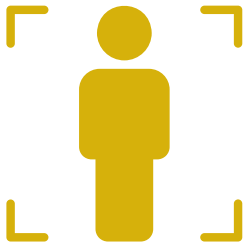
Live out your design and make changes as needed.

Inquire into positive moments and share stories.

Innovate ways to create the ideal future.

Create shared images of a preferred future.

# Areas of Focus



Through both initial public engagement and internal staff and council conversation, the main areas we plan to develop actions within and set goals for ensure we are moving towards creation of equitable practices. These areas also capture the various layers needed to continuously create and track meaningful change.



# Areas of Focus



## Recruitment & HR

Focus on actions to create working environments and cultures where every individual can feel safe, experience a sense of belonging, and is empowered to achieve their full potential.

### Core Themes

- **Person-Centred Processes & Procedures**  
As there is so much diversity between each of us, using a person-centred approach helps to identify desired personal outcomes based on the individual's life goals, interests, strengths, abilities, desires, and preferences. as opposed to adhering to systems with inequitable practices.
- **Recruitment and Retention Strategies that focuses on equity and inclusion**  
With history of systemic barriers, representation is often limited across levels of organizations. ensuring we are developing recruitment and advancement that supports underserved and underrepresented groups is key.
- **Solutions informed by barriers**  
Continuous engagement with community and staff to ensure any responses and change decided on is also not introducing new barriers or not responding to the root issues.
- **Creation of practices to foster a work culture of belonging**  
Focus on the unseen elements in the workspaces, so employees feel they belong and are encouraged to not only be themselves but encourage colleagues to also fully be themselves.
- **Awareness of representation, experiences and gaps present**  
To ensure we are creating goals that are feasible and first-voice focused, being aware of current representation, the experiences of various groups and the gaps present to inform next steps is crucial in initial years.

# Areas of Focus



## Awareness

Equality and diversity awareness plays a crucial role in shaping societies and creating culture shift. This area focuses on actions that aims to promote and encourage a general understanding of barriers and challenges people within our community face.

## Education & Training

Focus on actions that work towards ensuring community members and staff understand the importance and foundations of equity and inclusivity. Learning is continuous, so actions will always include ways for growth in understanding. Understanding diverse perspectives, cultures, and backgrounds through education and training increases cultural competence.

## Core Themes

- **Learning and Growing Together**  
People and organizations need opportunities to learn about equity and inclusion. This means sharing information in ways that are easy to understand, offering space for reflection, helping people see how these issues affect their community, and understanding we are continuously learning.
- **Listening to and Sharing Local Diverse Voices**  
Everyone's experiences matter, and awareness grows when we hear directly from people in our community who face barriers. By sharing stories and perspectives, we can build empathy, understanding, and a stronger sense of belonging for all.
- **Making Inclusion Visible**  
It's important for communities and workplaces to show their commitment to inclusion in clear ways. This could mean using welcoming signs and symbols, making spaces more accessible, or ensuring policies and practices reflect a dedication to equity.
- **Preventing Performativity and Tokenism**  
With many approaches being focused on numbers and representation, without true understanding increase or perspective widening, ensuring we develop solutions or make decisions that don't tokenize individuals or are solely performative is a priority.
- **Creating Space for Conversation and Connection**  
Awareness and education isn't just about information—it's also about bringing people together. Open discussions, community gatherings, and opportunities to ask questions all help build understanding and encourage people to take action.



# Areas of Focus



## Policies & Procedures

Focus on actions around current policies, practices and procedures through an EDI and intersectional lens to identify potential gaps, areas for improvement and areas of strength in the recruitment and retention of underrepresented groups.

### Core Themes

- **Policy Exploration**  
Identification of where barriers may already be present, the trends, and groups affected allows for us to plan and create actions based on our current state.
- **Shared Lense and Approaches**  
With learnt behaviours from systemic barriers and possible biases, creation of approaches and practices to introduce equity in policy and procedure review supports and increases staff capacity.
- **Continuous Learning**  
Creation of practices to continuously shift policy based on the change in need of the community, instead of shaping community based on policy.
- **Understanding the True Impact of Systems**  
Identification of the decision making processes and power distribution. Efforts around understanding "how" we may not take into account the diverse needs, perspectives, and experiences of all individuals and groups in our community helps us to understand how to avoid and not repeat the same mistakes.

# Areas of Focus



## Safe Brave Space

Focus on developing environments as change occurs for individuals involved, especially those that are equity deserving, throughout engagements, programming, in community and internally organizationally. Ensuring we dedicate a focus to safe space creation for emotion regulation to be fully present for the community we serve to minimize/mitigate further harm, rest from possible discrimination or trauma, and supporting individual and community well-being while still addressing and having needed difficult (and brave) conversation.

## Core Themes

- Welcoming Difficult Conversations

In order to move forward in shared understanding, we must invite discomfort and curiosity to create a space that encourages learning. Development of efforts for sharing honestly and equally, and growing individually supports us in learning how to face change as a community.

- Safety of Underrepresented and Underserved Communities

Although change is needed and there will be discomfort, we have a responsibility to minimize further harm to those who have continuously faced inequity. Designing with autonomy and risk mitigation for these groups, moves us closer to justice within our community.

- A Community of Care

So that everyone benefits, everyone contributes, and everyone feels they belong, designing with a community of care is essential. A Community of Care is a living, breathing, virtual gathering place where every relationship is built on intention, trust, and deep care. This is where people commit to showing up for each other in meaningful ways. It's not just about working on projects together —it's about building relationships where care is the priority. (Community of Care Organization)

# Areas of Focus



## Data, Evaluation & Reporting

In order to improve and ensure work is effective, this area focuses on actions that informs us of the diversity of community and the varied experiences, identify barriers to inclusion, development and evaluation of inclusive programs, supports, and services, and track progress.

### Core Themes

- People over Performance

Setting one standard of achievement often doesn't capture the whole picture of the impact. As there large differences between us in community, setting metrics that are focused around people and individual experience to report on, makes sure we are not focusing on numbers and singular perspectives.

- Progress over Perfection

Equity work is always evolving. Achieving perfection on the first, second or third attempt, is not possible. Making sure we develop and monitor efforts focused on the shifts closer to a more equitable society is important. With each step, we learn and are able to apply those learnings to next steps.

- Adapting to Changing Needs

Equity work is always evolving. As communities grow and challenges shift, efforts to stay aware should continue to respond to new issues, reflect emerging voices, and encourages ongoing learning.

# Proposed Actions

Through initial engagement we have developed some draft action items, but are subject to committee review and submission to council for final reviews.

As we conducted engagement and continue to do so, we have partnered with many community organizations to implement actions and have wider community impact. Some of these partners are:



We understand as this is community work, we need to grow in collaboration. We anticipate tracking the additional partners we engage with over the years to capture larger community ownership and awareness of equity work

If you are interested in working with us, please connect with the regional coordinator: [groberts@chester.ca](mailto:groberts@chester.ca).

PARTNERS

# Next Steps & Action Items

As we have identified opportunities to begin this work, it is only the start...



- ➔ Continue community engagement to inform further plan development.
- ➔ Conduct committee review of draft action items for final plan development, then submit final plan for Council approval.
- ➔ Develop regional stance for equity efforts.
- ➔ Develop implementation plans for each municipal unit based on agreed upon action items.
- ➔ Begin action, do the work!

ACTIVITY	AREAS of FOCUS	DETAILS
Stigma Reduction: Development of a Lived Experience Library (for public)	Awareness	Opportunity for community members to engage with equity deserving individuals from our community. This is a way for individuals to share their lived experiences and others to become both aware of inequities present and educated from a first-voice approach by also asking questions.
Co-creation of equity statement to equip municipal staff/councillors on the region's stance of justice and equity	Awareness	This is a co-created and agreed upon approach to municipal/regional dedication to equity and behaviours in relation.
<u>Making municipal spaces identifiable as community partners in the equity journey</u>	Awareness	Learning from community the things that help them identify if a space is inclusive and identifying ways this can be shared/done across municipal units and organizations (i.e.. Accreditations, Door Stickers, Flags)
Monthly Drop-In Sessions for community to access coordinator and equity specific information	Awareness	Currently ongoing to share resources & connect with community to inform and guide the work and decisions.
Forming of Youth Sub-Equity Committee	Awareness	To make sure youth voice is included in planning and solution creation for now and the future generation, a youth committee will be created.
Accessible Community Equity Showcase ("What Does Belonging Mean in Lunenburg County?")	Awareness	Sharing of learning and data from community in a gallery space via recordings, quotes and art pieces that speak to "What Belonging in Lunenburg County Means". We would promote this programming.
Continuous development and adjustment of Glossary of Terms in EDIA	Awareness	Community informed and sharable glossary of terms that speak to current and emerging words in equity work.
Develop regional website for Equitable best practice and resource sharing	Awareness	Unified place with regional plans, guides and resources for not only municipalities, but also local organizations to ensure adoption of equitable practices. Also a place to celebrate diversity in the region
Identification of new member to the community welcome experience	Awareness	Mapping and identification of new individuals in community to ensure they're aware of resources and feel welcomed
<u>Assess Municipal/Town spaces opportunities to display signs of inclusion and belonging</u>	Awareness	
Plan development for translation of emergency documents to most common and indigenous languages in our area	Awareness	
Regional communications strategy in response to continuously support EDIA work	Awareness	Statement development
Regional strategy in response to national political climate of EDIA buy-out for safety development	Awareness	Municipal co-developed facilitation of trauma intervention groups to support community post-
Develop cross-municipal agreement	Core	Agreement between all 5 municipal units on developing a regional approach
Co-creation of implementation strategy for each municipal unit with staff/community	Core	
Municipal EDIA Working Groups	Core	
Budget for 2025-26	Core	
Budget for 2026-27	Core	
Budget for 2027-28	Core	
<u>Mapping and review of internal review process to ensure EDIA lens is added</u>	Data/Reporting/Evaluation	RACI Matrix of what parties should be Responsible, Accountable, Consulted and Informed when changes are made.
<u>Mapping of committees and groups that work within the region's equity space</u>	Data/Reporting/Evaluation	Data to make community of aware of equity serving groups and how they serve the community + work with each other.
Development of human-centred approach to capture diversity present within municipal units	Data/Reporting/Evaluation	This can be through surveys, to capture the current baseline of diverse representation within units.
Development of human-centred approach to capture experiences of equity deserving groups within municipalities	Data/Reporting/Evaluation	After capturing data of diversity within units, understanding their current barriers and experiences to ensure solutions are developed with everyone in mind and inequities are identified.
Identification of areas of growth internally, based on reported experiences from equity deserving groups	Data/Reporting/Evaluation	Employee shared experiences and data will help inform needed shifts.
Exploration of possible approach to regional reporting for equity specific complaints/comments/barriers (Public)	Data/Reporting/Evaluation	Temperature checking
Surveying of municipal staff/councillors readiness levels on equity journey	Data/Reporting/Evaluation	This is capturing of how equipped staff/council are in their roles to work towards equitable spaces. This will inform identification of needed trainings and/or supports.
Identification of approaches on how to evaluate programming and resource equitability	Data/Reporting/Evaluation	Development of plan on how to review and "audit" the current programming and resources provided to ensure they are equitable/accessible to equity deserving groups.
Identification of equity deserving groups within each municipal space	Data/Reporting/Evaluation	Identification and determination of key groups that need to be engaged with within each municipal space.
<u>Begin discovery process to track, manage &amp; report equity issues in goods and services provided by municipalities (Internal)</u>	Data/Reporting/Evaluation	
Co-create human centred metrics for tracking EDIA efforts to ensure actions are effective, safe and meaningful	Data/Reporting/Evaluation	Efforts to move away from traditional Key Performance Indicators that are focused on outputs and numbers. This is a focus to track work to ensure it is not box-checking.
Stigma Reduction: Development of a Lived Experience Library (for Council/Staff)	Education/Training	Opportunity for staff/council members to engage with equity deserving individuals from our community. This is a way for individuals to share their lived experiences and staff/council to become educated from a first-voice approach by also asking questions and learning trauma informed communication.
Development of engagement plan at each level of management and/or department with	Education/Training	Development of how to engage or what engagement can look like with equity deserving groups in community from a multilayered (organizationally) and department perspective.
Development of Municipal Mocktail Mindshift Hours	Education/Training	Relaxed "mocktail" events for learning opportunities for municipal staff. (i.e.. Queer Mocktails, ASL Amaretto Sours, Dialect Daiquiris)

ACTIVITY	AREAS of FOCUS	DETAILS
<u>Introducing an equitable layer or lens in decision making processes</u>	Policies/Procedures	<i>After mapping current decision making process so it is accessible, ensuring EDIA committee/trained individuals are within the stream of the decision making process/procedure shifts/policy reviews</i>
<b>Create and adopt a guide to be used by staff that provides guidance on how to plan a meeting or event using equitable best practices</b>	Policies/Procedures	<i>Guide for staff &amp; council members of municipal units on how to plan/deliver events and meetings with equitable best practices lens.</i>
<b>First development of Anti-Hate &amp; Anti-Discriminatory Policy</b>	Policies/Procedures	<i>Policy to support regional municipal units for anti-hate and anti-discriminatory efforts until all policies are able to be reviewed with EDIA lens.</i>
<b>First development of Policy &amp; Procedure Review Guide</b>	Policies/Procedures	<i>Guide for staff &amp; council members of municipal units on how to review and update with equitable best practices lens.</i>
<u>Create a scent free policy for municipal review and consideration</u>	Policies/Procedures	
<u>Exploration of initial development of an accessible accommodation request form for public for programs/services/meetings</u>	Policies/Procedures	
<b>Provincial EDIA Lens Procurement Policy</b>	Policies/Procedures	
<b>Identification and strategizing around policy gaps around employment practices</b>	Policies/Procedures	<i>Identification of needs around accommodations policy, flex-work policies, etc.</i>
<b>Hire Regional Coordinator</b>	Recruitment/HR	
<b>Develop Regional Advisory Committee</b>	Recruitment/HR	
<b>Development of Diversity Representation Matrix</b>	Recruitment/HR	<i>A template to guide recruitment or review board or staff makeup to ensure diverse representation.</i>
<b>Identification of gaps in representation at all levels of organization &amp; areas of growth</b>	Recruitment/HR	<a href="#"><u>With awareness of current representation and opportunities to develop a more inclusive environment, we can begin discovery of representation target setting at different levels of the organization. See Canada Research Chairs Equity Target Setting</u></a>
<b>Staff focus group development: Equitable Hiring Practices</b>	Recruitment/HR	<i>Understanding of barriers employees faces during first week(s), month(s) and year of employment to identify key changes needed.</i>
<b>Review and Development of an Onboarding Package</b>	Recruitment/HR	<i>This is creation of a guideline to package for new staff/council. This will be identification of key resources, helpful trainings, and additional supports needed for inclusive and equitable hiring procedures.</i>
<u>Exploration of initial development of an accessible accommodation request form for staff during employment journey</u>	Recruitment/HR	
<b>Development of procedure for staff to choose holidays that support differing cultural and religious backgrounds</b>	Recruitment/HR	
<b>Safe Space Creation for Committee Members through Trauma Informed Facilitator</b>	Safe Brave Space	<i>Safely Brave Space for facilitating difficult conversations for understanding, but also doing this safely to ensure we don't create more harm.</i>
<b>Surveying of Needs for Development of Groups for shared/similar lived experiences (staff)</b>	Safe Brave Space	<i>This is the development of curated safe spaces informed by community and/or staff needs/wants to connect with others with similar lived experiences (i.e.. Parents of Kids with DiverseAbilities, BIPOC Youth in Bridgewater, etc.)</i>
<b>Surveying of Needs for Development of Groups for shared/similar lived experiences (community)</b>	Safe Brave Space	<i>This is the development of curated safe spaces informed by community and/or staff needs/wants to connect with others with similar lived experiences (i.e.. Parents of Kids with DiverseAbilities, BIPOC Youth in Bridgewater, etc.)</i>
<u>Having emergency documents accessible in plain language and plan for translation to most common and indigenous languages in our area</u>	Safe Brave Space	
<b>Surveying the need and supporting co-creation of groups for connecting with persons of similar identity</b>	Safe Brave Space	<i>This will be informed by community need and will be in most accessible method feasible. (I.e. Facebook group for Black Individuals in the Lunenburg County). This is a space for connecting and resource sharing.</i>

# Acknowledgements

We want to recognize this work is both a multigenerational journey and community effort, which drives us to deliver some heartfelt acknowledgments:

First, we acknowledge the Mi'kmaq, the First People of this land they've nurtured, that experienced the first and continuous inequities. As we acknowledge the Peace and Friendship Treaties signed, we recognize that as we do this work as Treaty People, we have a responsibility to intentionally, thoughtfully, and deeply engage to move forward this work of truth, reconciliation, diversity, equity and inclusion.

Often in the presence of inequity lies resilience. We acknowledge the resilient African Nova Scotian community we also serve, that has been in Nova Scotia for over 400 years. We not only honor and offer gratitude to those ancestors of African descent who came before us to this land but also continue to work to dismantle the centuries long hate and racism that has created present day inequities. We acknowledge that, to do this work and move forward, one must acknowledge true history, which is often unwritten. So, we continuously work towards respectfully engaging with and hearing the experiences of the descendants of these communities.

We also want to express gratitude to Kings County for their thoughtful naming approach to this work. Through our engagement, the underlying shared desire of individuals in the community was that they felt they belonged. For that, we've adopted the overarching approach as the Strategy for Belonging.

As equity is not new work, but rather a new approach to work already being done, we acknowledge the staff who have been dedicated to supporting this work and having the needed uncomfortable conversations needed to create change.

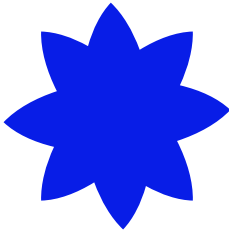
To our neighbors in community, we thank you for sharing "you" with us. We acknowledge the bravery it takes to share your stories and lived experiences. This is what continues to guide our work and motivate us.

A special thank you and acknowledgement to the current and previous Municipal Councils for identifying equity efforts as an important part of the strategic priorities of our region. Your leadership helps identify the importance of this work organizationally.

Finally, thank you to the other amazing people doing this work in the province. Sharing your lessons learnt, your expertise and even just being a listening ear, helps this work truly move forward as a larger community.

# TIMELINE AND SCHEDULE

The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog into a shimmering pool of rainwater that had gathered since the last frost. Soft clusters of leaves fall without a plan to the ground, mirroring the unhurried chestnut thatch of the fox’s dense coat. The fox looks to the west, only then realizing the horizon has begun to curve towards them. Perhaps they should not have jumped so soon.



APR - JUN 2025	JUL - SEP 2025	20XX	20XX	20XX