

Tourism Kelowna Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Policy

September 2023

Introduction

Tourism Kelowna is committed to the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion. We are committed to creating and maintaining an inclusive workplace that welcomes, respects, and values diverse backgrounds, viewpoints, and abilities. We will adhere to the [B.C. Human Rights Code](#) at all times and the [Accessible British Columbia Act](#) as the Government of British Columbia leads the way in becoming the first accessible province.

Purpose

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion policy has been established to outline Tourism Kelowna's expectations and guiding principles when it comes to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Scope

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion policy applies to all employees, board members, and volunteers of Tourism Kelowna including employees who are full-time, part-time, casual, seasonal, or management.

Policy Guidelines

Tourism Kelowna is committed to creating and maintaining an inclusive workplace that welcomes, respects, and values diverse backgrounds, viewpoints, and abilities. We value the variety of unique dimensions, qualities, and characteristics we each possess and acknowledge that this variety occurs in any group of people. Race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, economic status, physical and mental abilities, life experiences, and other perspectives can make up individual diversity and we value this diversity as a way of strengthening our workplace.

We believe in equitable treatment and opportunity for all employees and fostering cultural competency. Discrimination will not be tolerated. We will ensure this right to equitable treatment is upheld throughout all stages of the employee life cycle and in key employment areas including those of recruitment and selection, compensation, onboarding, hours of work, time away from work, benefits, prevention and early intervention in workplace complaints, performance evaluations, and opportunities for development and advancement.

We strive to weave inclusivity into everything we do. Tourism Kelowna will actively work to remove barriers to equity and inclusion, be they systematic, physical, or otherwise and supporting every employee to actively engage in the workplace and reach their full potential. We want all employees to feel welcomed, included, and able to bring their authentic selves to the team.

Our intention is that anyone who interacts with Tourism Kelowna, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, family status, genders, age, disabilities, or sexual orientation, feels comfortable and welcome when working with us. It is expected of every employee to uphold and help create this comfortable and welcoming workplace.

Responsibilities

Tourism Kelowna and its employees are responsibly for promoting a culture of respect and inclusion by:

- Examining the various barriers that may be in place that work against diversity, equity, and inclusion and implementing strategies to overcome them such as:
 - Asking for employee feedback through various channels
 - Examining language and available supports
 - Creating diversity committees/groups
 - Revising policies and procedures annually
- Providing an open door so all employees can voice any concerns or barriers they may be experiencing and acting on recommendations or concerns
- Providing supports or accommodation to employees as required
- Stive to provide a workplace environment where everyone feels welcome and included
- Creating opportunities to ensure the ideas, talents and opinions of all team members are heard and that proper credit is given for ideas and accomplishments
- Being flexible on policies as needed such as allowing employees to observe various religious or spiritual practices or days of observance, including altering break time or substituting statutory holidays
- Actively working to find ways to bring people together so they may share ideas
- Bringing forward any ideas, suggestions, or issues to their manager or supervisor
- Complying with this policy

Supportive Practices

All employees can create and support a comfortable and welcoming workplace by:

- Making an effort to speak with, and include, everyone in day-to-day conversations, larger conversations and group activities
- Using first person language whenever possible when describing persons from equity-deserving groups. For example, 'person with a disability' instead of 'disabled person'. First person language means you put the person first. However, as terminology evolves, it is always best practice to ask an individual's preferred way to be addressed

- Using gender neutral language within interactions, meeting, and communications that does not assume or assign a gender. For example, 'thanks, friends' instead of 'thanks, guys'
- Participating in training around the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion as well as Tourism Kelowna's policies.
- Continuously learning to improve and support cultural competency

Recruitment Practices

Tourism Kelowna is committed to hiring applicants on the basis of their individual merits such as their skills and knowledge. We recruit, hire, train, compensate and promote people of all races, ethnicities, religions, genders, sexes, abilities, and ages.

Tourism Kelowna will establish practices that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion during the recruitment process. Wherever possible we will:

- Post job positions to multiple job boards or multiple platforms, including those which target underrepresented groups
- Ensure job postings focus on the essential requirements of the position wherever possible, as qualifications and skills described as being an asset may create barriers
- Openly welcome and invite applications from persons with disabilities or those protected by the human rights code in all job postings, and indicate that accommodation will be provided during all stages of the recruitment and hiring process upon request.
- Train hiring managers about their own biases and how to utilize equitable hiring practices, including how to use an equity and diversity-focused lens when recruiting
- Utilize set interview questions based on the job description to help eliminate biases
- Using external agencies for recruitment, agencies must agree to adhere to the above

Reporting

Any employee who becomes aware of unacceptable behaviour that is contrary to this policy, should report this information, concern, or complaint as soon as possible. Furthermore, if you find any of our other workplace policies or practices to be contradictory to our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion policy or have any further questions about this policy, you are encouraged to bring any thoughts or concerns forward to your Manager.

All information, concerns or complaints will be taken seriously, and will be looked in to promptly. Tourism Kelowna will take whatever actions it considers reasonable and necessary to provide a welcoming and inclusive environment for every person, in accordance with local laws, rules and/or regulations.

Privacy

Tourism Kelowna understands the sensitive nature of information that may be shared during conversations about equity and diversity. We are committed to providing a safe space for conversations, and will be sensitive to the interests of all parties involved while maintaining confidentiality. Respect of privacy and confidentiality while preserving everyone's dignity is expected of all employees.

Conclusion

Tourism Kelowna recognizes the evolving nature of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion policies across the province. We are committed to developing and advancing our policy to represent best practices and commit to reviewing this policy on an annual basis.

Definitions

The following definitions have been sourced directly from the [Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion's Glossary of Terms](#):

Cultural competence: Awareness and understanding of different cultures and practices, and the ability to accept and bridge differences between cultures for effective communication. Cultural competence has become especially important as globalization increases and individuals must effectively interact with people from other cultures.

Discrimination: treating someone unfairly by either imposing a burden on them, or denying them a privilege, benefit or opportunity enjoyed by others, because of their race, citizenship, family status, disability, sex or other personal characteristics (note: this is not a legal definition).

Diversity: Diversity is about the individual. It is about the variety of unique dimensions, qualities, and characteristics we all possess, and the mix that occurs in any group of people. Race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, economic status, physical abilities, life experiences, and other perspectives can make up individual diversity. Diversity is a fact, and inclusion is a choice.

Equity: Where everyone is treated according to their diverse needs in a way that enables all people to participate, perform, and engage to the same extent.

Equity-Deserving Groups: Groups of people who have been historically disadvantaged and underrepresented. These groups include but are not limited to the four designated groups in Canada – women, visible minorities, Indigenous Peoples, and people with disabilities – and people in the LGBTQ2S+ community/people with diverse gender identities and sexual orientations. Equity-seeking groups identify barriers and unequal access, and actively seek social justice and reparation.

Inclusion: Inclusion is creating a culture that embraces, respects, accepts, and values diversity. It is a mindful and equitable effort to meet individual needs so everyone feels valued, respected, and able to contribute to their fullest potential. Where diversity occurs naturally, creating the mix in the organization, inclusion is the choice that helps the mix work well together.

Relevant Resources

- [B.C. Human Rights Code](#)
- [Accessible British Columbia Act](#)
- Tourism Kelowna Employee Handbook

Tourism Kelowna Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy is adapted from the go2HR “Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy Template”