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**TITLE:** EMPLOYMENT EQUITY POLICY  
**SECTION:** HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT  
**POLICY NO:** 4050-01

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**APPROVAL DATE:** February 26, 2024

**CAO Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_



## **POLICY STATEMENT**

The Town of Amherst is committed to diversity and inclusion as it enriches and cultivates a culture of excellence. Attracting and leveraging a diverse workforce, and creating an environment that embraces inclusivity, ignites innovation and excellence in service delivery, engagement, and performance. Our commitment extends to achieving and sustaining a climate of Employment Equity throughout our organization, with the goal of guaranteeing that every employee enjoys a fair and equitable opportunity to engage in, and benefit from, all aspects of their employment experience.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of this policy are to:

1. Promote a culturally competent and inclusive workforce that values diversity by establishing working conditions that are free from barriers;
2. Define the guiding principles that foster employment equity, diversity and a culturally proficient workplace that strives for inclusion;
3. Assist with the identification and removal of barriers to employment and advancement.

## **SCOPE**

This policy applies to all prospective and current employees of the Town, regardless of employment status, and shall be in compliance with the *Nova Scotia Human Rights Act*, *Employment Equity Act* and the *Dismantling Racism and Hate Act*.

## **DEFINITIONS**

**Accessibility:** the quality of an environment that enables a person to access it with ease.

**Cultural Competence:** Attitudes, behaviors and policies which enable employees and organizations to work effectively and develop meaningful relationships with people of various cultural backgrounds.

**Disability:** a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, sensory, learning or communication impairment, or a functional limitation, whether apparent or not, and permanent, temporary or episodic in nature, that hinders a person's full and equal participation in society when they face a barrier.

**Diversity:** the variety of identities found within an organization, group or society. Diversity is expressed through factors such as culture, ethnicity, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, age, language, education, ability, family status or socioeconomic status.

**Employment Equity:** encourages the establishment of working conditions that are free from barriers and seeks to correct conditions of disadvantage in employment.

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**Equity:** the principle of considering people's unique experiences and differing situations, and ensuring they have access to the resources and opportunities that are necessary for them to attain just outcomes.

**Fairness:** an accessible, consistent and transparent process that is impartial, based upon the principles of merit and equity.

**Inclusion:** the practice of using proactive measures to create an environment where people feel welcomed, respected and valued, and to foster a sense of belonging and engagement.

**Merit:** hiring and promoting individuals based on their ability to perform a job.

**Reasonable Accommodation:** Human rights legislation requires that employers have a duty to accommodate by providing reasonable accommodations to support the special needs of all employees, for example, improving accessibility to the workplace, religious observances, and alternative work arrangements. "Reasonable" imparts a duty to accommodate unless it would impose undue hardship on the employer.

**Systemic barrier:** a barrier that results from seemingly neutral systems, practices, policies, traditions or cultures, and that disadvantages certain individuals or groups of people.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

### Fair Treatment

We are committed to ensuring fair treatment for all employees, acknowledging, respecting, and accommodating different needs when reasonably possible.

### Inclusive Workplace

We are committed to building an inclusive workplace by drawing on the ideas and talents of all employees.

### Diverse Workforce

We recognize and embrace the unique perspectives and abilities of a qualified and diverse workforce, while valuing and appreciating the skills, creativity and innovation that diversity contributes to our team.

### Barrier-Free Organization

We are committed to ensuring our systems, policies, practices and work environment are barrier-free and accessible.

### Integrated Approach

We are committed to building diversity and inclusion into organizational plans, policies, practices and programs.

### Equal Opportunity Employer

We are dedicated to achieving equity in the workplace. All individuals have the right of equal opportunity to employment and promotion without regard to race, nationality or ethnic origin, color, religion, age, gender, gender identity or expression, marital or family status, or disability.

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**FOCUS: RECRUITMENT, SELECTION & HIRING**

- A. Eliminate biased language from job advertisements;
- B. Offer flexible working arrangements by default in job ads;
- C. Make job requirements clear, specific, and behavior-based;
- D. Use structured interviews and develop scoring systems and hiring criteria in advance.

**FOCUS: EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING**

- A. Advancing employment equity concepts in the workplace through education efforts;
- B. Including inclusion, diversity and equity training as a compulsory component of new employee orientation as well as for all hiring managers, human resources staff;
- C. Ensure inclusion and diversity training is integrated into all learning and development programs;
- D. Committing to the development of on-going, long term training strategies.

**FOCUS: PROMOTION & RETENTION**

- A. Ensuring transparency of promotion, pay and reward processes;
- B. Developing and implementing formal grievance procedures, offering employees alternative measures to address issues and offering resources for support networks;
- C. Performance assessments: using 360-degree evaluations to collect diverse performance information.

**FOCUS: WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY & ACCESSIBILITY**

- A. Enhance workplace flexibility for all employees, allowing them to align professional responsibilities with other aspects of their lives.
- B. Make workplace or role accommodations available when reasonable and operationally viable.
- C. Improve support and flexibility in the workplace by ensuring that staff and Town Council members with disabilities have access to adaptive technologies, possible accommodations in the workplace, appropriate and supportive leave practices and return to work plans.

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## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Title/Role	Responsibilities
<b>Chief Administrative Officer</b>	The Chief Administrative Officer will: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide leadership in promoting the principles of employment equity throughout the organization;</li> <li>Assist in setting goals and objectives for achieving a diverse and inclusive workforce and incorporate these goals into the municipality's broader strategic plans.</li> </ol>
<b>Director, HR</b>	The Director of HR will: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be responsible for the effective implementation of the policy and the integration of the policy objectives into the organization's HR processes and practices;</li> <li>Provide support for training and education programs related to employment equity;</li> <li>Monitor the effectiveness of the policy and related initiatives.</li> </ol>
<b>Directors and Managers</b>	Directors and Managers will: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure a welcoming and respectful environment for all employees;</li> <li>Encourage and participate in the training and development of staff;</li> <li>Translate the principles of employment equity into tangible actions within their teams.</li> </ol>
<b>Employees</b>	Employees will: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure a welcoming and respectful environment for all employees;</li> <li>Attend and participate in diversity, employment equity and/or inclusion training as required;</li> <li>Participate in the accommodation process when accommodations are necessary.</li> </ol>

For Administrative Use Only:

## VERSION LOG

Amendment Description	Policy Owner	Approved By	Approval Date
New Policy	Director, HR and Customer Services	Council	February 26, 2024

**MINUTES REFERENCE DATE:** February 26, 2024

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## RESOURCES

- How to improve workplace equity: Evidence-based actions for employers, *Government of Canada* : <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/portfolio/labour/programs/employment-equity/reports/employers-improve-workplace.html>
- Employment Equity Act, *Government of Canada*: <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/e-5.401/>
- Guide on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Terminology, *Government of Canada*: <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/maple-leaf/defence/2022/05/guide-equity-diversity-inclusion-terminology.html>
- Employment Equity Policy, *Government of Nova Scotia*: <https://novascotia.ca/treasuryboard/manuals/PDF/500/50203.pdf>
- Nova Scotia Human Rights Act: <https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/legc/statutes/human%20rights.pdf>
- Nova Scotia Dismantling Racism and Hate Act: <https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/legc/statutes/dismantling%20racism%20and%20hate.pdf>
- Anti-Bias and Inclusion, and Diversity and Culture: Strategies for Working with Differences, *Achieve Centre for Leadership*