

Town of Truro – Policy & Procedure Manual

Subject: Affirmative Action Policy
Policy Number: P100-005
Approval Date: May 1, 2003
Departments: All

INTRODUCTION

The Municipality recognizes the need to remedy the effects of past and present discrimination on specific groups by society in general and is committed to providing equality of opportunity through affirmative action measures designed to eliminate discrimination. Affirmative Action signifies a positive, continuing, results-oriented program to ensure meaningful opportunities to all members of society. It strives for the removal of discrimination on the basis of race, gender, First Nations origin, ethnic background, disability or any other condition that deprives people of opportunities to live and work.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION STATEMENT

The Municipality of the Town of Truro recognizes that benefits, such as fairness, social justice and equality, can be achieved by a firm commitment to the concept of Affirmative Action and Employment Equity. The Municipality will address systemic discrimination through Affirmative Action and take steps to remedy practices which may have an adverse effect on individuals from its staff as well as the community as a whole. The Town of Truro also recognizes the diversity of its communities including, but not limited to, the multi-racial, multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic, multi-cultural and multi-religious communities composed of individuals from many parts of the world. The Municipality acknowledges the contributions of all its residents and respects and values its various cultures. Accordingly, the Town of Truro:

- a) Reaffirms its commitment to the intolerance of discrimination which is based on any of the grounds recognized under the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act. The grounds are: age; race; colour; ethnic, national, or Aboriginal origin; sex; creed; an irrational fear of contracting an illness or disease; religion; sexual orientation; physical or mental disability; family status; and marital status; source of income; political belief; affiliation, or activity; or an individual's association with another individual(s) having characteristics referred to in the previous grounds.
- b) Will recognize diversity in its by-laws, policies, practices, programs and delivery of service through the development and implementation of an Affirmative Action Plan. The Affirmative Action Plan is a work plan for reaching each of the goals as set out in this policy. To ensure the continued success of this Plan, the

Municipality will continue to identify and strive to eliminate those barriers which may deny equal opportunities to residents in the Municipality, focusing particularly on diverse communities.

The Municipality acknowledges that an Affirmative Action Committee and a Diversity Management Coordinator as necessary sources of advice and input with regard to issues affecting the Municipality's diverse communities. The Municipality supports the work, activities and initiatives of the Affirmative Action Committee and the Diversity Management Coordinator.

GOALS

To ensure that all the residents and civic employees in the Municipality have equitable opportunities to develop their individual potential, the Affirmative Action Policy has seven objectives:

- **Equality of Opportunity** – Institute and modify current policies, by-laws and practices to ensure that the Municipality is functioning in a socially responsible manner as well as striving to achieve equality in the workforce.
- **Education and Sensitization** – Increase awareness and understanding of the principles and objectives of programs such as Affirmative Action and Employment Equity. Encourage the appreciation, respect, and value of diversity.
- **Anti-Racism** – Take steps to educate civic employees and residents in the Municipality on the harmful affects of racist attitudes and behaviour. Promote the understanding and acceptance of all individuals through written communication and awareness training
- **Anti-Sexism** – Take steps to educate civic employees and residents in the Municipality on the harmful affects of sexist attitudes and conduct through written communication and awareness training.
- **Cultural Diversity** – Promote knowledge, appreciation and acceptance of diversity through education and participation in cultural celebrations.
- **Accessibility** – Strive to eliminate barriers and provide adequate accessibility to those persons faced with disabilities.
- **Reasonable Accommodation** – Promote knowledge, understanding and acceptance of the importance of employment accommodations for persons facing barriers in the workplace or barriers to employment. Barriers may result from (among other things) physical or mental disability; cultural, ethnic, or religious diversity.

DEFINITIONS

Affirmative Action is broadly defined to include:

- A remedy for eliminating systemic discrimination on the basis of race, gender, ethnic background or any other condition that deprives people of opportunities to live and work.

Affirmative Action Plan is broadly defined to include:

- A written document committing to a program to achieve the goals and objectives of the Affirmative Action Policy.

Civic Employees is broadly defined as all employees (union and non-union) that are employed by the Town of Truro.

Community is broadly defined as individuals and groups, who reside, work or have occasion to be in the Municipality.

Discrimination is broadly defined to include:

- Action, speech or behaviour by individuals, organizations or groups which may bring about or have the effect of producing, directly or indirectly, hatred, intolerance and/or prejudice against other individuals or groups on the basis of any prohibited ground covered by the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.
- Illegal and/or arbitrary denial of the rights guaranteed to individuals or groups under the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, with a view to exclude or limits the exercise of these rights in equal participation in the economic, political, social and cultural life of society.

Diverse Communities is broadly defined as including, but not limited to:

- Individuals from all communities including First Nations/Aboriginal people, African Nova Scotians, visible minorities, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, religious groups, age, sexual orientation and persons with disabilities residing within the Municipality.

Employment is broadly defined to include:

- Recruiting, hiring, promotions, tenure and its equivalent, salary, benefits, transfers, training, career development and tuition assistance.

Employment Equity Act (1995, c.44)

- Is a Federal Act enacted by Parliament and, as such, the Act is applicable to all Canadians. This Act's stated purpose is to achieve equality in the workplace so that no person shall be denied employment opportunities or benefits for reasons unrelated to ability and, in the fulfillment of that goal, to correct the conditions of disadvantage in employment experienced by women, First Nations/Aboriginal people, members of visible minorities and persons with disabilities (also referred as the designated groups) by giving effect to the principal that employment equity means more than treating persons in the same way but also requires special measures and the accommodation of differences.

Harassment is broadly defined to include:

- Any improper conduct by an individual that is directed at and offensive to another person or persons in the workplace and which the individual knew or ought reasonably to have known would cause offence or harm. It comprises any objectionable act, comment or display that demeans, belittles or causes personal humiliation or embarrassment, or any act of intimidation or threat.

Race Relations is broadly defined to include, but not limited to:

- Promoting equality and understanding among all residents in the economic, political, social and cultural life of the Municipality, and is, therefore opposed to any form of discrimination on the basis of any prohibited ground covered by the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act (R.S.N.S., 1989, C. 214 as amended) and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982).

Racism is broadly defined to include:

- Action, speech or behaviour by individuals or groups that may bring about or have the effect of producing hatred, intolerance, prejudice, physical harm and/or discrimination against other individuals or groups on the basis of racial background or skin colour.

Reasonable Accommodation is broadly defined to include:

- Adaptations or changes that make a job or work site more suited to the individual requirements of the employee. According to Nova Scotia Human Rights Guidelines, "reasonable" refers to cost, and health and safety considerations.

Sexism is broadly defined to include:

- Behaviour, conditions or attitudes by individuals or groups that foster stereotypes or social roles based on sex.

Town of Truro is otherwise referred to in the Policy as the Municipality.