

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism (EDIAR) Policy

Downtown Stratford Business Improvement Area

Introduction and Intent

The Downtown Stratford Business Improvement Area (DTS BIA) is committed to building a culture where difference is valued. The more inclusive we are, the better our work will be on behalf of the community we serve.

We recognize that the important work we are doing has to be internal first, so it can impact what we do externally. We believe we will do that better if our stakeholders come from diverse backgrounds and if we create an environment of inclusion and belonging for them. Equity, Inclusion, Diversity and Anti-Racism are the principles guiding how we will build our teams, cultivate leaders, and create an organization that is the right fit for every person. While we have more work to do to advance equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism in our BIA, we are investing to move Stratford businesses and community forward.

We are committed to modeling diversity and inclusion for the Business Improvement Area, and to maintaining an inclusive environment with equitable treatment for all.

To foster inclusion, diversity, and equity, DTS BIA strives to:

- Embed inclusion, diversity, and equity in our mission and ensure the well-being of our Board, staff, volunteers, and the businesses we serve.
- Acknowledge and dismantle any inequities within our policies, systems, programs, and services, and continually update and report on our progress.
- Outline the procedures to be followed to address issues and or receive and resolve complaints.
- Explore potential underlying, unquestioned assumptions that interfere with inclusiveness.
- Advocate for an inclusive board and encourage understanding how systemic inequities impact our BIA's work, and how best to address them in a way that is consistent with our mission.
- Help to challenge assumptions about what it takes to be a leader at our BIA.
- Practice and encourage transparent communication in all interactions.
- Commit time and resources to expand more diverse leadership within our board, staff, committees, and membership.
- Lead with respect and tolerance. We expect all Board, staff and volunteers to embrace this notion and to express it in all interactions and through everyday practices.

Building Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Anti-Racism Capacity

Every Board and staff member, and volunteer will receive training around equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism as a part of their onboarding. This includes compliance requirements regarding discrimination, harassment, and bullying.

All Board, staff, and volunteers of DTS BIA must respect the differences of others and treat everyone with dignity. DTS BIA will strive to build a culturally competent workforce by providing training about diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism encouraging positive attitudes towards cultural differences, raising awareness of unconscious biases and the harmful effects of prejudice, discrimination, and microaggressions, and working to eliminate such aggressions in the workplace.

Recruitment and Hiring of Staff

DTS BIA is dedicated to recruiting and retaining a qualified workforce. By valuing a diverse workforce, DTS BIA is committed to hiring practices that are fair and equitable. DTS BIA will always hire the most qualified candidate for a position. A protected ground will not be used against an individual during the hiring process. DTS BIA will ensure that the search and hiring processes are fair and equitable so that each candidate has a fair opportunity throughout the process regardless of any protected ground they may have.

DTS BIA is committed to developing and promoting staff fairly and equitably. Development opportunities will be offered equitably among staff as they become available and when possible. Personnel decisions will be made based on the qualifications and performance of staff and upon successful completion of the internal application process. A protected ground will not be used against an individual in consideration for a promotion.

Compliance: Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying

We are committed to building a healthy, inclusive environment where we work actively to prevent and address discrimination and harassment. DTS BIA must and will ensure that its workplace is safe, accountable, and free from discriminatory or harassing behaviour as outlined in the following documents (and not limited to):

- [Ontario Human Rights Code](#)
- [Employment Standards Act](#)
- [Occupational Health & Safety Act](#)
- [Accessibility for Ontarians Disability Act](#)

DTS BIA will support all efforts being made towards a community that is safe, accountable, and honours all protected grounds.

Protected Grounds

DTS BIA has a responsibility to honour the protected grounds and protected social areas identified in the Ontario Human Rights Code below.

Protected grounds are:

- Age
- Ancestry, colour, race
- Citizenship
- Ethnic origin
- Place of origin
- Creed
- Disability
- Family status
- Marital status (including single status)
- Gender identity, gender expression
- Receipt of public assistance (in housing only)
- Record of offenses (in employment only)
- Sex (including pregnancy and breastfeeding)
- Sexual orientation.

DTS BIA Policies

This policy works in partnership with the following DTS BIA policies:

- DTS BIA Policy Manual
- Procedural By-law

- DTS BIA Constitution

The DTS BIA provides equal opportunities for employment. We base employment decisions on merit, considering qualifications, skills, performance, and achievements, and we do not tolerate discrimination against any Board or staff member, volunteer or applicant for employment based on non-work-related personal characteristics as protected under the Ontario Human Rights Code. We provide reasonable accommodation to qualified individuals with a disability as well as individuals with needs related to their religious observance or practice.

All of us have a right to work in an environment free from the demoralizing effects of harassment or unwelcome offensive or improper conduct. Our BIA will not tolerate harassment, bullying or conduct that could lead or contribute to harassment of Board, staff, volunteers, and members. We also will actively seek to protect our Board, staff, volunteers, and members from harassment or bullying by non-staff during DTS BIA's activities.

Similarly, we will not tolerate harassment or bullying by our Board, staff, or volunteers of anyone. This also extends to conduct that takes place off DTS BIA premises (including on social media) that could reasonably impact staff or others within our workplace.

Reporting Inappropriate Conduct

If a DTS BIA staff member or volunteer believes that they or another individual has been subjected to conduct prohibited by this Policy, the staff member or volunteer is urged and expected to report the relevant facts promptly. A staff member or volunteer may make a report either orally or in writing. Concerns can be raised to any member of the Board.

If a DTS BIA Board member believes that they or another individual has been subjected to conduct prohibited by this Policy, the Board member is urged and expected to report the relevant facts promptly. A Board member may make a report either orally or in writing to the BIA's Human Resource Committee. If the report is about another Board member, these concerns can be raised to the City of Stratford Clerk.

We take allegations of discrimination, harassment and bullying seriously and ensure the allegations are appropriately investigated. All reported incidents will be investigated, with an effort to keep the source of the report confidential, with the disclosure of information as appropriate to facilitate the investigation or resolution of the matter. The DTS BIA encourages staff, volunteers, or Board members to report in good faith any possible violation of this Policy.

[Workplace harassment: investigation by the employer | ontario.ca](#)

Prohibition of Retaliation

We will not tolerate threats or acts of retaliation of any kind against any individuals because they report conduct reasonably believed to violate this Policy, or in good faith provide information in connection with a report or investigation of any such conduct.

Consequences

Board, staff, and volunteers who do not comply with this Policy and/or are found to have engaged in discrimination, harassment, or bullying, will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including removal from the Board, termination of employment or termination of volunteer duties.

Considerations

It is the responsibility of each Board member, staff, and volunteers to be familiar and comply with the laws and regulations in Ontario which govern the business activities that they engage in. Accordingly, to the extent that following Ontario legislation would conflict with this Policy, Ontario legislation must be adhered to.

Policy Amendments

The DTS BIA reserves the right to modify, update, and amend this Policy at any time, in accordance with current DTS BIA by-laws policy change requirements.

Acknowledgement and Agreement

I, ([insert Board member, staff or volunteer first and last name](#)), acknowledge that I have read and understand DTS BIA's Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism (EDIAR) Policy. Further, I agree to adhere to this policy and will ensure that staff and volunteers working under my direction adhere to this policy. I understand that if I violate the rules or procedures outlined in this policy, I may face disciplinary action up to and including removal from the Board, termination of employment or termination of volunteer duties.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Witness: _____

Appendix 1: Glossary of Key Terms

Downtown Stratford BIA refers to the BIA Board, BIA staff, BIA volunteers, and the membership as a whole, as laid out in the City of Stratford By-Law. #

Anti-Racism: Anti-Racism is defined as the work of actively opposing racism by advocating for changes in political, economic, and social life. Anti-racism tends to be an individualized approach and set up in opposition to individual racist behaviors and impacts.

SOURCE: Race Forward, "Race Reporting Guide" (2015).

Bullying: Bullying is usually seen as acts or verbal comments that could psychologically or 'mentally' hurt or isolate a person in the workplace. Sometimes, bullying can involve negative physical contact as well. Bullying usually involves repeated incidents or a pattern of behaviour that is intended to intimidate, offend, degrade, or humiliate a particular person or group of people. It has also been described as the assertion of power through aggression.

Source: [Bullying in the Workplace: OSH Answers \(ccohs.ca\)](#)

Discrimination: The unequal treatment of members of various groups based on race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, physical ability, religion, and other categories. The law also makes it illegal to retaliate against a person because the person complained about discrimination, filed a charge of discrimination, or participated in an employment discrimination investigation or lawsuit. The law also requires that employers reasonably accommodate applicants' and employees held religious practices, unless doing so would impose an undue hardship on the operation of the employer's business.

SOURCE:

1. Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change Anti-Racism Initiative, [A Community Builder's Tool Kit](#), Appendix I (2000).
2. U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, "[Laws Enforced by EEOC](#)" (accessed June 2013).

Diversity: Diversity includes all the ways in which people differ, and it encompasses all the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another. It is all-inclusive and recognizes everyone and every group as part of the diversity that should be valued. A broad definition includes not only race, ethnicity, and gender—the groups that most often come to mind when the term "diversity" is used—but also age, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education,

marital status, language, and physical appearance. It also involves different ideas, perspectives, and values.

SOURCE: UC Berkeley Center for Equity, Inclusion and Diversity, "Glossary of Terms" (page 34 in 2009 Strategic Plan). Baltimore Racial Justice Action, "Our Definitions" (2018).

Equity: A condition or state of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences.

Source: Canadian Race Relations Foundation

Harassment: Harassment means a course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known, or ought reasonably to be known, to be unwelcome. The phrase "ought to have known" introduces an objective element to the test.

Inclusion: Authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making in a way that shares power.

SOURCE: OpenSource Leadership Strategies

Microaggressions: Microaggressions are the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership. In many cases, these hidden messages may invalidate the group identity or experiential reality of target persons, demean them on a personal or group level, communicate they are lesser human beings, suggest they do not belong with the majority group, threaten, and intimidate, or relegate them to inferior status and treatment.

SOURCE: Derald Wing-Sue

Protected grounds: The characteristics that an employer must not use as reasons to discriminate against an individual or group under human rights legislation. Sometimes called prohibited grounds, these often include race, colour, creed, ethnic or national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, family status, marital status, age, and disability, but protected grounds may differ by jurisdiction.

Unconscious bias: Implicit bias or unconscious bias describes the automatic association people make between groups of people and stereotypes about those groups. Under certain conditions, those automatic associations can influence behavior—making people respond in biased ways even when they are not explicitly prejudiced.

Source: Trust and Justice Org.