

Recognizing and Supporting Diverse Neighbourhoods and Communities

The purpose of this practice brief is to (1) introduce our approach to equitable and inclusive neighbourhoods and communities; (2) examine some key strategies for recognizing and supporting diverse neighbourhoods and communities; and (3) make connections between inclusive neighbourhoods and community well-being. EDs/CEOs, managers, frontline staff, consultants, volunteers and community residents can use this practice brief in order to implement some of the key commitments in the D&I Charter of Peel.

INTRODUCING THE ISSUE

A multi-level, cross-sectoral and collaborative process, recognizing and supporting diverse neighbourhoods and communities requires that several stakeholders i) engage in self-reflexive practice; and ii) take deliberate and concerted action to ensure that neighbourhoods/communities are well equipped to thrive and prosper. Understanding and responding to the intersections of economic & political, spiritual & psychological, social & cultural, and physical & ecological spheres of community life is key to fostering greater social inclusion within neighbourhoods and communities.

As defined by the D&I Charter Initiative, inclusive neighbourhoods/communities are those in which **COMMUNITY ASSETS** are valued, **CREATIVITY** is showcased, **NETWORKS** are developed, **SAFE/WELCOMING SPACES** are fostered, **LOCAL ECONOMIES** are strengthened, **HEALTH/ WELLBEING** is prioritized and **DIVERSITY** is celebrated (Tamarack Institute, 2013). The outcome is ultimately the creation and sustenance of connected, resilient and healthy communities where people feel valued on a daily basis.

'HOW TO': TIPS AND SUGGESTIONS

There are a number of key strategies that can be employed in order to ensure the recognition and support of diverse neighbourhoods and communities:

- **Consistent Self- Reflection, Recognition of Diversity:** As individuals, it is important that we identify what our social identities are and where our privileges lie; and acknowledge the diversity of our community both in personal and professional practice
- **Meaningful Community Engagement & Regular Assessment of Needs:** Service providers and public institutions must ensure that diverse needs are assessed appropriately in developing programs and services, and that communities are engaged throughout
- **Responsible Decision-Making & Resource Allocation:** Decision makers, funders, community foundations, public/private institutions, and local governments must take ownership of inclusive community development
- **Commitment to a Transparent, Egalitarian & Accountable Justice System:** Lawyers, case workers, and law enforcement officials are responsible for keeping *all* neighbourhoods/communities safe and ensuring everyone has equal access to justice
- **Deliberate Capacity Building & Leadership Development:** Public institutions, local governments and funders can support inclusive neighbourhoods by enhancing local capacity and working to develop, recognize and support diverse leaders
- **Conscious Planning, Policy Development, Service Delivery:** Decision makers, local governments, policy analysts, and urban planners should invest in social infrastructure, design/maintain inclusive spaces and programs, focus on inclusive growth, and commit to increasing local access to resources
- **Critical Questioning and Advocacy:** Students, researchers and community advocates can support inclusive community development by thinking critically, questioning systems, advocating for change, and engaging in social innovation

RESOURCES & MORE INFORMATION

- PowerPoint – Recognizing and Supporting Diverse Neighbourhoods and Communities
- Webinar - Recognizing and Supporting Diverse Neighbourhoods and Communities
- D&I Charter Practice Brief 1.2 – Partnering and Collaborating to Ensure Equity and Inclusion
- Deepening Community Online Learning Platform, Tamarack Institute
- Healthy Peel By Design – Region of Peel, Public Health Department

MAKING CONNECTIONS: INCLUSIVE NEIGHBOURHOODS AND PROSPEROUS SOCIETIES

When you commit to recognizing and supporting diverse neighbourhoods and communities, you are:

- Starting to 'live' the commitments in the Charter!
- Facilitating full participation in the social, cultural, and economic life of neighbourhoods
- Deepening the feeling and reality of belonging for individuals
- Contributing to a more vibrant, productive, engaged and connected community

WHICH CHARTER COMMITMENTS AM I IMPLEMENTING?

- ✓ *Integrating the values of equity and inclusion into personal lives, work, relationships and participation as residents*
- ✓ *Supporting vibrant neighbourhoods where diverse people come together as communities*
- ✓ *Providing ongoing learning that facilitates equity and inclusion at individual, organizational and community levels*
- ✓ *Partnering and collaborating to support and build equity and inclusion*
- ✓ *Celebrating Peel Region's rich diversity*
- ✓ *Enabling full participation and engagement by all through equitable access to information, services, opportunities*