

Dedicating Resources, Including People, Time and/or Money, to Equity and Inclusion

The purpose of this practice brief is (1) to introduce the importance of dedicating resources to diversity, equity, and inclusion (2) to identify various types of resources that are essential for the success of diversity and inclusion initiatives; and (3) to provide support around the distribution of resources for diversity, equity and inclusion in different organizational contexts. EDs/CEOs, managers, frontline staff, consultants, volunteers and community residents can use this practice brief in order to operationalize the commitments in the D&I Charter of Peel.

INTRODUCING THE ISSUE

Institutionalizing diversity, equity and inclusion within workplaces, community services, and policy and planning processes requires the committed dedication of resources. Today's society is rapidly changing (e.g., in 2011, 37% of Ontario's population was born outside of Canada; moreover, it is projected that Peel Region's population will grow 45.7% by 2041 – see Statistics Canada 2015 and Greater Golden Horseshoe Growth Forecasts 2014). Given the multifaceted needs that arise as a result of this demographic complexity, it is important that various sectors respond accordingly and take deliberate action to ensure that everyone gets the opportunity to succeed and thrive – at home, at work and everywhere in between. This means consistently allocating appropriate resources to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives.

Dedicating resources to equity and inclusion is beneficial for a number of reasons:

- It is a tangible articulation of a meaningful commitment to DEI; rather than actions being taken on a reactionary basis, this commitment to institutionalization generates more visibility to the change process
- It acknowledges the structural/systemic barriers to equity and inclusion
- It enhances the sustainability of programs, projects, initiatives; after all, embedding DEI into systems is a long-term process which yields long-term results
- It is an efficient use of resources, skills and infrastructure; it allows for easier and more strategic decision-making, priority setting, and resource expenditure
- It catalyzes behaviour change within organizations and within communities
- It creates everyday accountability for decision-making, strategic planning and priority setting
- It makes an otherwise complex and large scale change process more manageable

It is important to ask: **WHAT** are some strategies for dedicating resources to DEI in different contexts? Resources for building DEI come in many shapes and sizes and can be distributed in various ways. Irrespective of the kind of resource or method of allocation chosen, it is important to remember that in order to ensure that everyone can achieve their full potential, purposefully dedicating resources to the change process is crucial.

'HOW TO': TIPS AND SUGGESTIONS

- **Dedicate Financial Resources:** Invest in training opportunities, strategic planning around DEI, internal research/data collection, and the development of supportive organizational infrastructure; think about what can be allocated from your existing budget; if financial resources are limited, think about alternative funding sources
- **Invest in Human Capital:** Ensure there is some leadership infrastructure in place to move forward on issues; create a department and/or dedicate personnel to the work; form employee resource groups to create visibility around DEI issues
- **Set Time Aside:** Make DEI a strategic priority; dedicate time to having conversations about the issues, ensuring the work gets reported on and moves forward
- **Be Willing to Commit to the Change Process:** In order for DEI to be embedded in a system, individuals must commit to the change agenda; other resources are more easily allocated when a firm commitment to action has been made
- **Collaborate with Others:** The dedication of resources to DEI does not always require reinventing the wheel! It is important to tap into existing resources and build upon them
- **Dedicate Resources to Evidence-Informed Programming:** Think about what resources will ensure diverse, equitable, and inclusive programming that is also evidence-based; what data would be helpful; what infrastructure is necessary

RESOURCES & MORE INFORMATION

- Practice Brief 2.1: Ensuring the Provision of Equitable and Inclusive Community Services
- Diversity & Inclusion: Valuing the Opportunity (Mowat Centre)
- Characteristics of a Welcoming Community (Welcoming Communities Initiative)

DOES SIZE MATTER? GRAPPLING WITH RESOURCE CONSTRAINTS

Oftentimes, the allocation of resources for diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) seems to be dependent on the size of an organization and/or the number of resources available for distribution.

Research indicates that not many organizations with fewer than 20 employees will have the capacity to express their commitment to DEI in the form of training, policies or action plans (see Diversity & Inclusion, Mowat Centre, 2014).

However, this finding assumes that the quantity and quality of resources within organizations are interchangeable. It also does not take into account the creative solutions that small and resource-constrained organizations are continually implementing (e.g., recruiting a volunteer diversity committee, engaging in regular staff conversations about equity and inclusion, weaving a DEI lens into existing staff portfolios and leadership positions).

While organization size and resource availability do indeed matter in the long-term institutionalization of DEI, they do *not* tell the whole story. How limited resources are allocated – and *why* – is as important, if not more so. Organizations of all sizes and shapes are thus encouraged to creatively commit to the change process.

Moreover, while integrating DEI into existing structures is important, it is essential to maintain a central focus on equity and inclusion by allocating appropriate resources accordingly.

