



**HALIFAX**

# **Diversity and Inclusion Guidelines for Staff Reports 2023**

2023-11-27

# Origin

THAT Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer, through the Office of Diversity and Inclusion/African Nova Scotian Affairs Integration Office (ANSAIO), to develop diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility guidelines for all staff reports, rather than create a specific accessibility impact section. The goal of these guidelines is to ensure that diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility are considered at all stages of the report-writing process.

# Authority

The Chief Administrative Officer is the head of the administrative branch of the government of the Municipality and is responsible to the Council for the proper administration of the affairs of the Municipality in accordance with the by-laws of the Municipality and the policies adopted by the Council.

# Current State

- Reports are the primary method through which staff communicate to Halifax Regional Council about projects, decisions, and programs.
- Applying a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) lens during the preparation of staff reports is an important process for ensuring transparency and highlighting how DEIA was considered during the project
- For this lens to be genuine and effective, consideration of DEIA must occur at every step of the process, from scoping onwards.
- There are many resources currently available to staff to support the development and application of a DEIA lens, however, staff are not always aware of these resources and there is currently no single document to outline the different opportunities for employees to develop and expand their DEIA lens.
- Additionally, every business unit has an advisor from the Diversity & Inclusion/ANSAIO Office who is assigned to their unit as a first point of contact in navigating DEIA considerations and questions.

# What we have created

- *Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Guidelines* (the “*Guidelines*”) for Council Reports
- *Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Consultation and Consideration Checklist* (the “*Checklist*”). The *Guidelines* adopt an approach focusing on the needs of underrepresented groups and serve as a resource for report authors and collaborators to inform the direction of municipal services, programs, and projects to better meet these needs.

# Diversity Lens Checklist

- Designed to support business units in applying a meaningful DEIA lens and encouraging business units D&I advisors be consulted at the beginning of the workflow process.
- Outlines the different resources available and provides an explanation of how each resource may be used and clarifies the role of the D&I advisor.
- Key to this checklist is use of the *Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Guidelines for Council Reports*

# Diversity Lens Guidelines

- The Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Guidelines for Council Reports are designed to help report authors and collaborators inform the direction of municipal services, programs, and projects with a clearer focus and intersectional perspective.
- The *Guidelines* are designed to support staff in:
  - Improving municipal services and programs to ensure inclusion of everyone's needs.
  - Creating positive and respectful work/community environments.
  - Creating a workforce and services representative of the community.
  - Recognizing and addressing systemic barriers and inequities people face.
  - Acknowledging diversity and consciously seeking to incorporate diverse perspectives into all municipal projects, programs, and policies.

# Considerations

While both documents could be made available to staff as optional resources should Regional Council not choose to provide direction to make them compulsory, it is unlikely that they will be used as effectively or consistently if they are presented to staff as optional tools.

# Recommendations

1. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to adopt the *Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility Consultation and Consideration Checklist* to inform project, program, and policy development at all stages of the work process. (Attachment 1)
2. Approve the *Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility Guidelines for Council Reports* and direct the Chief Administrative Officer to incorporate the use of these guidelines in all staff reports. (Attachment 2).

**Thank you**



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