

POLICY

**BOWEN ISLAND
Municipality**

Policy Adopted: May 25, 2021

Policy # 21-01

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

POLICY STATEMENT:

Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) are core values for Bowen Island Municipality and are central to our work. Actively developing, supporting and promoting these values builds a more resilient community.

POLICY OBJECTIVE:

1. To proactively identify and remove barriers that impede equitable access to opportunities.
2. To commit to a workplace culture that is safe, respectful, and discourages assumptions about people's lived experiences, and instead openly encourages dialogue, support and empathy.
3. To embed the values of EDI in the policies and actions of Bowen Island Municipality and to explicitly integrate them into BIM's strategic planning documents.
4. To critically examine and revise existing policies, practices and procedures at BIM to support equity, diversity and inclusion.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENTS:

We acknowledge that:

1. Nexwlélexwm (Bowen Island), the land on which we gather, is the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Coast Salish peoples, including the territories of the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Səlíl̓wətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. We acknowledge and respect their historical and current relationship to the land, culture, and spirit of this place that continues to this day.

2. Systemic discrimination exists and generates conditions that disproportionately impact certain groups of people who have been marginalized or “othered.”
3. There are specific cultures on Bowen Island (see Figure 1. Conceptualizing Power and Privilege) that hold more power than others.
4. Elements of power and privilege that generate disproportionate benefits are not always visible or obvious.
5. Disadvantages and barriers that restrict a person's opportunities are not always visible or obvious to members of other groups and cultures.

We must all, therefore, act deliberately and continuously to counteract marginalization and oppression.

BACKGROUND:

The Municipality’s decision to create an EDI policy was informed by historic and ongoing inequities occurring around the world. This policy is part of a call, initiated by our community members, to raise awareness and highlight pathways to justice for institutions, including local governments.

Over the past year, members of the local Bowen Island community called on BIM Mayor and Council to act, by submitting letters calling for municipal action and in some cases have set an example through their own actions of reconciliation. Council responded with the following resolution on July 13, 2020:

RES#20-345 That Council direct staff to prepare a Bowen Island Municipality policy to address items such as equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism and to recommend specific next step actions to respond to the renewed sense of urgency to address systemic racism. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

DEFINITIONS:

Authority: Power that is perceived as legitimate by the social structure.

Barrier: Any physical, institutional, social, or cultural norm or tendency that prevents or reduces access to information, opportunities, justice or experience.

BIPOC: Black, Indigenous and People of Colour.

Cis man/woman: A person who identifies with the same gender they were initially assigned at birth.

Culture: the prevalent social behaviours, norms, knowledge, beliefs, arts, customs etc. of a group of people.

Diversity: The representation of varied identities and differences including, but not limited to differences across race, ethnicity, gender, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, and socio-economic status, collectively and as individuals. Refer to BIM's Wheel of Power and Privilege for additional examples of diversity.

Equity: The condition of fair treatment based on respect and dignity, equality of opportunity and access to information and resources for all. Four (4) categories of equity have been identified:

1. **Procedural equity** means the equal inclusion of all people's voices in decisions and processes.
2. **Distributional equity** means the equitable distribution of and access to resources, such as jobs, housing, and community amenities.
3. **Structural equity** means ethical fairness, with consideration for the appropriate historical and current context, is a central principle that is integral to all institutional practices.
4. **Transgenerational equity** means the rights of future generations to have a fair share of resources and abundance and the power to decide how they should be used.

EDI Audit: A process that identifies institutional practices that produce discriminatory or inequitable trends and makes recommendations to reform these practices in an equitable way.

EDI Lens: A critical approach for seeing the impact of power on individuals or groups.

Inclusion: The act of incorporating contributions and reflecting diverse viewpoints in dialogue and decision-making.

Intersectionality: the interconnected nature of multiple social characterizations such as race, class and gender of an individual or group.

Lived Experience: First-hand accounts and impressions of living as a member of a minority or oppressed group.

Management: Refers to any person who represents the Bowen Island Municipality in any professional, public-facing, or service capacity, but refers specifically to workers in a position of power and authority over other employees.

Marginalize: The relegation of a person to a disempowered or less visible position within a society or group.

Municipality: Bowen Island Municipality

Othered: The state of being defined and labeled as not fitting in within the norms of a group. Othering is a way of negating another person's individual humanity and, consequently, those that have been othered are incorrectly seen as less worthy of dignity and respect.

Pansexual: Not limited in sexual choice with regard to biological sex, gender, or gender identity.

People of Colour: Anyone that has/have been racialized or labeled as non-white.

Power: The capacity of an individual or group to influence the actions, beliefs, or conduct of others.

Privilege: An unearned advantage or disadvantage.

Staff, employees, volunteers and workers: Refers to any person who represents the Bowen Island Municipality in any professional, public-facing, or service capacity.

Figure 1. Equity versus Equality

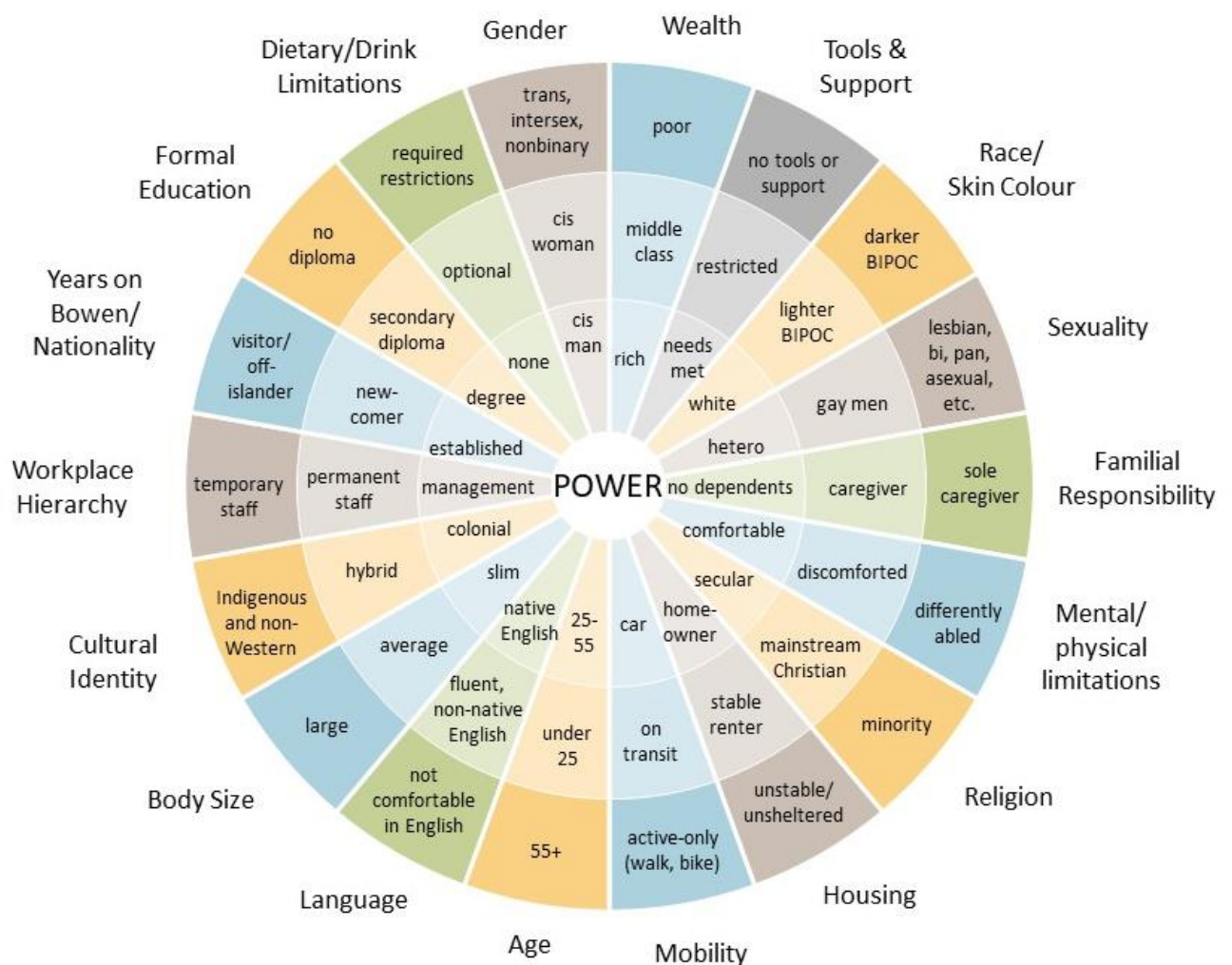


CONCEPTUALIZING POWER AND PRIVILEGE:

Figure 2, below, referred to as the “power wheel”, illustrates how contemporary Western culture has established the structures and patterns of power and privilege. The power wheel below has been adapted from the Canadian Council of Refugees to reflect structures on Bowen Island that are reflected at Bowen Island Municipality. Closeness to power is arranged in the wheel to reflect the structures and patterns which have predominately been influenced by Western culture.

The diagram is not a statement on the current organizational balance and is not intended to reinforce or undermine power structures. The power wheel is simply a tool that can help us view our work and our roles through an EDI lens. The power wheel also does not address the importance and complexity of intersectional identities – the interconnected nature of multiple social characterizations such as race, class and gender of an individual or group.

Figure 2. Conceptualizing Power and Privilege



SCOPE:

1. Establish clear guidelines and expectations for internal operations and interactions, applicable to all members of Staff and Council.
2. Provide standards for how the Municipality, including Council, interacts and communicates with members of the public.
3. Provide expectations for how members of the public interact with Municipal staff, volunteers and Council.
4. Apply an EDI lens to the development and review of all Municipal communications, publications, campaigns, policies, plans, and regulations.
5. Develop a model and a set of EDI best practices that reinforces equitable norms for the community at large. It is not within the scope of this policy to dictate practices conducted outside of the Organization, but rather to lead by positive example and wherever possible to ensure our partners, contractors, and other external organizations are aware of and aligned with this Policy.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

1. **Prioritize equity for all Municipal functions.** No department, committee, or individual is exempt from an “EDI Audit” of their work, or from integrating the values of equity, diversity, and inclusion in the regular course of operations.
2. **Recognize diversity as a strength.** But acknowledge that, in the absence of actionable strategies that promote inclusion and participatory equity, “diversity” becomes tokenistic.
3. **Communication is central** to the success of equity development. Offer communication streams outside of traditional written forms (such as images, rituals, and dialogues) to ensure that all communication styles are valid and valued.
4. **Engage staff and volunteers so that everyone can understand and participate.** Engage with staff at all levels of the Municipality and create opportunities for participation in, and feedback on, workplace structures and culture.
5. **Be transparent** about the processes and power dynamics involved in decision-making at all levels of the organization. Provide access to information whenever possible.
6. **Recognize that there are many dimensions to equity** (see the Wheel of Power below), and that various aspects of equity intersect to inform a person’s identity. Even those with less power in certain situations may have more power in other contexts due to these layers of power and privilege.

IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH:

Approach:

1. Identify barriers to equity within workplace structures and culture.
2. Remove barriers wherever possible, and work to reduce their impact where removal is not possible.
3. Establish protocols to uphold and improve equity, diversity, and inclusion at all levels of the organization.

We commit to:

1. Recognize the need for clear and transparent policies, protocols, and accommodations that enable staff and the public to share equity-related feedback and receive a response in a timely fashion.
2. Communicate all pathways, processes, resources, and tools that are available to all staff, and collaborate with Human Resources to ensure shared organization-wide access to the same.
3. Develop and maintain an EDI Action Plan that contains EDI barrier removal techniques and mandated EDI training opportunities in the workplace. This Plan will be reviewed and updated regularly and is to be approved by the CAO in collaboration with a representative of the EDI Policy Working Group.
4. Ensure that representation, training opportunities, and accountability as appropriate for Council, management, and employees are embedded in the workplace.

These are some sample questions to consider during the development of implementation tools and metrics for an Equity Action Plan.

*Source:
"Move Beyond
Good Intentions"
seminar by the CIP,
20th 11/20/2020.*



Who will benefit from a project or policy?



Who might be excluded from those benefits?



How might some groups be unfairly burdened today or in the future?
How might privilege and power be entrenched?



Have important decisions been made with the direct input of those who will be most affected?



From whose perspective are you evaluating the "success" of your project or policy?

EQUITY POLICY REVIEW:

1. The EDI Policy, and all tools and processes described in the policy and appendices, should be reviewed every two years by the Equity Working Group and the HR Coordinator. Before commencing the review, the Working Group should undertake to communicate the following to all staff, not less than 30 business days before the review date:
 - a) the date of the next scheduled policy review;
 - b) all available Municipal communication streams through which staff can provide critical feedback and suggestions, including (but not limited to): written, verbal, anonymous, and structured (survey) feedback;
 - c) opportunities and transparent processes for joining or further supporting the Equity Working Group; and
 - d) the process through which the Policy will be reviewed.

REMEDIES

Anyone who works at Bowen Island Municipality who believes that they have been treated unfairly in the workplace may use the procedures entitled “Respectful Workplace” of the Personnel Policy.

Policy adopted by Council at its regular Council Meeting held May 25, 2021

(ORIGINAL SIGNED)

Gary Ander

Mayor

(ORIGINAL SIGNED)

Hope Dallas

Corporate Officer