



Independent Living Services Simcoe County POLICIES and PROCEDURES MANUAL

CATEGORY A: Administration and Operations

SECTION 9: Employment Equity Human Rights and Accommodation

POLICY NAME: Diversity and Inclusion

POLICY

Diversity is an important value of the Agency, where each employee is respected and valued for their differences. Independent Living Services Simcoe County (ILS) is committed to enhancing workplace diversity. A diverse workplace benefits employees by allowing them to feel valued for their differences by the Agency and creating opportunities for advancement. The Agency is committed to identifying and removing barriers for diverse employees in recruitment, advancement, and retention. Historically, certain groups of people experience barriers to employment and are underrepresented in the workforce. These groups include persons with disabilities, racialized minorities, women, Aboriginal people, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer communities, and persons caring for elder and child dependents. The selection of these groups does not preclude the possibility of addressing systemic discrimination for other underrepresented groups.

ILS protects all employees, clients and volunteers from discrimination and harassment under the Human Rights Code and ILS's Human Rights and Anti-Harassment/Discrimination Policy. ILS will strive to ensure diversity is represented in all areas of the Agency including policies, procedures, and practices.

APPLICATION

This policy applies to all employees and prospective employees of ILS, volunteers and board members. This policy is particularly relevant for employees and board members who are in a position to make or influence decisions of the Agency. Third parties who have business dealings with ILS, including contractors and vendors of ILS, are expected to comply with any provision of their contract related to diversity and inclusion performance commitments.

DEFINITIONS

Prohibited Grounds:

The Code prohibits discrimination in employment on the following grounds: citizenship, race, place of origin, ethnic origin, colour, ancestry, disability, age, creed, sex / pregnancy, gender identity, gender expression, family status, marital status, sexual orientation, and record of offences.

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Employment Equity Human Rights and Accommodation – Diversity and Inclusion

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Diversity:

Is any dimension that can be used to differentiate groups and people from one another. It means respect for and appreciation of differences on the basis of a prohibited ground. Diversity is about the individual employee, it is about the variety of unique dimensions, qualities, and characteristics we all possess.

Inclusion:

Inclusion is about the collective culture in the workplace. It is about creating a culture that strives for equity and embraces, respects, and values differences.

Diversity and Inclusion:

When these two terms are combined, it adds another dimension to the terms. Diversity and Inclusion is about capturing the uniqueness of the individual, creating an environment that values and respects individuals for their talents, skills and abilities to benefit the collective culture in the workplace.

Access:

People from diverse groups gaining equal opportunity to the use of goods, services, programs, facilities, public spaces and participation in social, economic, cultural and political life.

Equity:

Is not limited to equal access to opportunities but equal benefits as well. It requires the removal of systemic barriers and the accommodation of differences so that individuals can benefit equally.

Barriers:

A barrier means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating because of his or her disability. Generally, barriers fall into three areas: attitudinal/behavioural, procedural, and physical. Barriers that are usually hidden in the rules, procedures, policies and operations of organizations that limit the access to goods, services, programs, facilities, and economic, social and cultural participation of people from diverse groups. Barriers prevent underrepresented groups from maximizing their contribution to the workplace.

Special Programs:

The Code recognizes the importance of addressing historical disadvantages by protecting special programs to help marginalized groups. Under Section 14 of the Code, it is not discrimination to put in place a program if it designed to relieve hardship or economic disadvantage, help disadvantaged people or groups to achieve or try to achieve equal opportunity or help eliminate discrimination. Provided the program or initiative meets the requirements of the Code and the Ontario Human Rights Commission, special programs may include Aboriginal employment strategy, statistical goals for priority groups, and continuous training initiatives.

Discrimination:

Is any practice or behaviour which, whether intentional or not, treats people unequally or makes a distinction based on a prohibited ground (e.g., disability, sex, race, and sexual orientation) resulting in a disadvantage, an obligation, or a burden that other individuals or groups do not have. A decision to

deny a benefit that relies on any of these grounds, unrelated to a person's abilities, is prohibited under the Code. Discrimination may result from the effect of applying general rules to everyone.

Systemic Discrimination:

Patterns of policies, practices, and procedures that are part of the structures of an Agency, and which create or perpetuate discrimination.

The Duty to Accommodate:

Is an individualized process designed to improve equality and eliminate disadvantages experienced by individuals or groups related to a prohibited ground, to the point of undue hardship. Accommodation includes appropriate steps designed to the special needs of individuals and groups protected by the Human Rights Code. Accommodation is determined in consultation with the person requesting the accommodation.

Harassment:

Is a course of comment(s) or conduct about a prohibited ground that a person knows or ought to know would be unwelcome. Harassment may result from one incident or a series of incidents.

CONDITIONS

ILS is committed to building diversity and inclusion in the workplace, and will advance this standard by the following components and specific activities:

1. Build Leadership and Accountability:

Transform Agency culture by incorporating diversity in all levels of the Agency and develop accountability in the senior leadership team regarding diversity initiatives.

1. ILS will develop a Diversity and Inclusion Strategy with goals and timelines over a three-year period that will assist the Agency in building, fostering, and sustaining a diverse and inclusive workplace. The goal is for ILS to support diversity throughout all levels of the Agency.
2. ILS will review all relevant policies, procedures and practices through a lens that builds, fosters and sustains diversity as a priority.

2. Enhance Diversity Initiatives in Talent Management:

Develop a workforce profile based on the population of Simcoe County and identify gaps on a regular basis. Create and execute diversity and inclusion strategies for the underrepresented groups in recruitment, advancement, and retention with a goal of being more reflective of the workforce profile. These strategies may include the following:

1. Expanding recruitment efforts by advertising job opportunities to diverse professional networks, agencies, and media and by establishing relationships with partner agencies to attract applicants from underrepresented groups.
2. Incorporate diversity into the succession planning framework and encourage Managers/Supervisors to identify and develop a diverse pool of talent within the Agency.

3. Implement special programs for the training and development of underrepresented groups to eliminate and reduce barriers and improve their ability to obtain leadership roles within the Agency.

3. Foster and Sustain Diversity and Inclusion:

Implement diversity training and develop strategies for employee engagement.

1. ILS will provide training to build awareness on diversity during onboarding and conduct training on a regular basis.

4. Reporting Requirements:

Develop data for tracking and monitoring diversity initiatives.

1. Conduct voluntary workplace surveys to understand the workforce demographics and profile.
2. ILS will maintain confidential employment diversity databases restricted to authorized staff for the purpose of engaging in activities related to advancing diversity achievements.

IMPLEMENTATION

Diversity Reviews

The Senior Leadership Team will ensure the principles guiding this policy are upheld.

Reporting

The People and Culture department will develop metrics on diversity and equity initiatives which will be reported yearly to the Senior Leadership Team.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Human Rights Code

Employment Standards Act

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

Human Rights and Anti-Harassment/Discrimination Policy

APPROVED BY: ILS Leadership Team

DATE APPROVED: Feb. 24, 2021

DATE REVIEWED:

DATE REVISED: