

# Diversity, Equity and Anti-Racism Charter

## Introduction:

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Becoming a welcoming and inclusive place to live, work and visit is a process. This process involves the ongoing education, examination and re-examination of how individuals from all backgrounds, identities and walks of life are recognized, valued, supported and encouraged. Becoming a welcoming and inclusive community also requires a community to actively combat racism and discriminatory behaviours and practices, both conscious and unconscious, that impact the ability to feel fully part of the community. An inclusive and welcoming Perth County will enhance the entire community making it a desirable place to live, work and play.

Perth County's Diversity, Equity and Anti-Racism Charter reflects our ongoing commitment to take meaningful action as a local government to create an environment that truly values diversity and inclusion. Perth County's mission is to 'celebrate community and enjoy an exceptional quality of life that offers everything from rural landscapes and small towns to urban centres.' Celebrating community means that Perth County celebrates all of the people who call Perth County home regardless of age, sex, gender identity, race, ethnicity, abilities, religion, sexual orientation, social status, educational background or any other differences they may have. This Diversity, Equity and Anti-Racism Charter outlines the values, principles, roles and responsibilities our organization will represent that make up this commitment.

## Guiding Principles and Values

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The following principles and values were identified by the community as critically important in guiding Perth County as it works to advance inclusivity, equity, diversity and anti-racism through the implementation of the Charter. By endorsing this Charter, Perth County affirms its commitment to the following in all aspects of the organization:

**Accessibility** – In order to enact effective changes, processes, policies and actions must be established and implemented in an accessible manner to remove any barriers to participation.

**Anti-Racism** – Racism exists within the community and must be actively combatted in all its forms.

**Diversity** – Including individuals from a range of backgrounds makes the community of Perth County stronger and more vibrant.

**Education** – The process of becoming a more inclusive and equitable community requires a culture and commitment to furthering one's knowledge and understanding. Education is an ongoing process of self reflection and learning to create awareness, empathy and commitment to change.

**Equality** – Every voice has a right to be heard and respected. The ideals expressed in this Charter apply to all regardless of background or position.

**Equity** – Acknowledging existing and systemic barriers to participation, focusing outreach on underrepresented groups and going over and above a simple checkbox to truly ensure that all voices are heard.

**Inclusion** – That all are welcomed to participate and that structures and policies are established and implemented that ensure that diversity is celebrated. All voices are heard and considered, including those who do not feel comfortable to speak loudly.

**Openness** – That the Charter is approached with a willingness to change at an organizational and individual level and that accountability is required.

**Respect and Dignity** – This is the responsibility of all and involves showing respect and standing against those who seek to undermine the dignity of others.

## **Commitment as an Organization**

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Perth County has many responsibilities as an organization. These responsibilities relate to both internal and external interactions amongst Council, staff, residents, businesses, visitors and community partners. In adopting this Charter, Perth County recognizes that it must work to address and prioritize inclusion, diversity and anti-racism in all of its roles:

### **As a policy-maker we will:**

- Apply an equity, diversity and anti-racism lens when developing projects, policies and bylaws
- Use a policy development processes that include consultation with those from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups where appropriate and include regular reviews to ensure they remain current.
- Seek out voices that may not be comfortable coming to the table through traditional public input processes
- Encourage public participation in the policy development processes
- Implement and monitor non-discriminatory policies and practices while reviewing existing policies to remove discriminatory language

### **As an employer we will:**

- Ensure there is transparency in recruitment and hiring practices
- Remove unnecessary credentials or qualifications that would serve as an unnecessary barrier in recruitment
- Foster an inclusive and equitable work environment and ensuring that there is sufficient training for all staff including training to understand conscious and unconscious bias
- Require fair and equitable treatment among employees by both managers and coworkers
- Actively work to attract a diverse and talented workforce that reflects the changing makeup of the community
- Ensure that training opportunities are regularly provided for staff

### **As a service provider we will:**

- Ensure that service delivery models are accessible to all members of the community and not just those who have traditionally asked for service
- Engage underserved communities through outreach and enhanced communication
- Be open to exploring new ways of delivering services and review existing service delivery using an equity lens
- Provide services that respond to the diverse needs of the community
- Train staff on inclusive and equitable customer service

### **As a purchaser of goods and services we will:**

- Encourage equal opportunity in procurement
- Ensure existing local purchasing relationships do not come at the expense of new and emerging supplier options
- Hold suppliers to a high code of conduct and call out discriminatory practices or language when engaged in activities on the County's behalf
- Communicate procurement opportunities locally

### **As a community partner we will:**

- Support the efforts of diverse communities that seek to promote equality of opportunity and respect for all
- Be a collaborator with groups and communities working to advance diversity, equity and anti-racism
- Take a leadership role in promoting equity and inclusion when participating with stakeholders and initiatives within the community
- Recognize a diverse range of significant dates, holidays and grassroots efforts within the County

## Responsibilities for Implementing the Charter

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Implementing the values and principles contained within this Charter is the responsibility of County Council, staff and all those who interact with Perth County. While each have a responsibility to uphold the Charter in their daily interactions, the following specific roles are outlined:

### **Council and Councilors:**

- Use the values and principles of the Charter as a lens through which decisions on projects and policies are made
- Engage in and commit to educational opportunities to improve understanding of and empathy toward issues impacting diverse or marginalized populations
- Use inclusive language around the Council table
- Call out language and dialogue that is not respectful or inclusive at Council meetings and when representing the County in the community
- Hold staff and County representatives accountable to the Charter values and principles
- Represent the values and principles of the Charter at all times

### **Staff:**

- Engage in ongoing education opportunities to learn more about topics of diversity, equity and anti-racism
- Incorporate the Charter into annual business plans and workplans
- Apply a diversity, equity and anti-racism lens when writing reports for Council consideration
- Revisit, revise and examine policies and procedures and apply a diversity, equity and anti-racism lens
- Regularly evaluate work against the Charter
- Ensure progress on advancing the Charter's ideals
- Hold staff and County representatives accountable to the Charter values and principles
- Represent the Charter values and principles at all times

### **Committees of Council:**

- Use inclusive language around the Committee table and encourage fellow members to do so
- Call out language and dialogue that is not inclusive at Committee meetings and when representing the County in the community

### **Advisory Committees:**

- Use inclusive language around the advisory committee table and encourage fellow members to do so
- Call out language and dialogue that is not inclusive at advisory committee meetings and when representing the County in the community
- Actively recruit diverse representation on committees where members of the public are required

### **Residents, Businesses and Visitors:**

- Expect to be held to Charter values and principles when engaging with the County