

Diversity in Governance

A Toolkit for Inclusion
on Nonprofit Boards



About Maytree

The Maytree Foundation is a private Canadian charitable foundation established in 1982, committed to reducing poverty and inequality in Canada and to building strong civic communities. The Foundation seeks to accomplish its objectives by identifying, supporting and funding ideas, leaders and leading organizations that have the capacity to make change and advance the common good.

www.maytree.com

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Other Maytree publications on diversity and governance:

1. *Diversity Matters* - An Action Plan for Inclusion in Public Appointments.

Download from <http://www.abcgta.ca/docs/diversitymatters.pdf>.

2. *Board Mentoring Handbook*.

Download from <http://www.abcgta.ca/docs/BoardMentoringHandbook.pdf>



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Introduction

- Why do we need diversity in leadership?
- What do we need to know to fully utilize the skills of diverse leaders?

Diversity is a fact of life in Canada today. It is projected that by 2017, 49% of the population in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) will be immigrants, up from 41% in 2001. By the same projections, the share of GTA residents who are visible minorities will rise from 36% in 2001 to 50.6% in 2017.

A growing proportion of those arriving are from Asia and Africa, with an estimated 200,000 new immigrants to Canada each year. Three-quarters of those who came to Canada in the 1990's are members of a visible minority group. In 2001, almost 4 million people in Canada identified themselves as visible minorities; 75% of this figure is derived from immigration.

Immigration has changed the urban Canadian landscape - changing the way people think, act, changing the way houses are built, how people worship, what sports are played. This massive flow of different cultures, languages and ethnicities has changed Canada, especially its cities.

This diversity of race, life styles and perspectives brings with it its own unique challenges. How do we define ourselves as one nation when we are constantly absorbing people who do not share a history with us, or subscribe to our values or to our aspirations and assumptions.

Diversity also brings huge opportunities. The problems that we face today - environment, poverty, and health - are complex.

The leadership we need to address these problems requires creativity and the skill to reach across boundaries - geographic, religious, ethnic and philosophical - to bring together broad and increasingly diverse constituencies. Canada and Canadian institutions will need a diversity of approaches, a diversity of perspectives and ideas to help reach solutions that are sustainable.

Diversity has been recognized as an essential component of organizational survival from a variety of perspectives including performance, creativity and stakeholder satisfaction. To this end, organizations - especially those operating in the voluntary sector - are starting to take action to enhance diversity at all levels, including the board of directors.

The advantages of diversity for nonprofit boards are increasingly well articulated in the literature. Factors such as being more responsive to the community and clients, better able to respond to the priorities of funders and improving ability to make creative decisions have all been identified as drivers of change. While boards increasingly understand the value of diversity, the practical reality is that they continue to struggle with how to become more reflective of their communities.

For the most part, discussions about diversity focus on increasing access and opportunity for those belonging to groups historically excluded from power or denied rights enjoyed by others. Among those who face such discrimination are members of ethnic, racial, linguistic and religious minorities, First Nations members, people with disabilities, women, gays and lesbians, seniors and in some cases, youth.



1

Articulate Board Diversity Policy

Like other policies, a diversity policy needs a concrete statement of objectives, a resource allocation to ensure implementation and an implementation strategy.

The actions of an organization and the people working within it are guided by the policies the organization has adopted. Policies serve as guidelines governing behaviour; they outline what the organization is trying to achieve and how it will go about it. An organization's policy on board diversity needs to be clearly articulated and broadly embraced.

Strong support and commitment from key leadership is essential to success. Statements of commitment to diversity from the executive leadership of the board are critical to champion the cause and act as a catalyst for change. As well, wide participation in the policy development process throughout the institution ensures that the policy is relevant for the entire organization and not just a few people. This will ensure the buy-in that is essential for successful change.

Diversity policies are most useful when they contain:

- a values statement about the organization's commitment to issues of diversity and equity
- a brief statement of the added value that implementing this policy will bring to the work of the organization for example, better reflecting the demographics of the community it serves; design programs and services that better serve the needs of diverse groups
- a set of milestones that the board would like to achieve and
- an accountability framework for achieving these

Like other policies, a diversity policy needs a concrete statement of objectives, a resource allocation to ensure implementation, and an implementation strategy that outlines, in priority, the steps to be taken to reach the goal. Steps to develop the implementation strategy can include:

- a review of the existing membership strategy for board recruitment to identify systemic barriers to gender equity and participation of minorities
- identifying previously disadvantaged groups and inviting individuals from those groups to discuss new criteria for gender equity and participation of minorities in the governance structures

Accountability is about determining who holds responsibility for board structure and what system will be established to monitor and evaluate the policy. Some good ideas for accountability include:

- membership committee of the board leads and monitors the policy
- require all board members to ensure that other board and board committee members are treated with respect
- develop an annual action plan to guide implementation of the policy and sets out objectives, actions required, accountability, responsibility, timelines and evaluation of activities
- periodically assess the policy to ensure it is up-to-date.



Promising Practice

Clarifying Issues through a Diversity Policy

A non-governmental organization (NGO) that works with children and young people from low-income neighbourhoods, is particularly aware of issues of inequity and discrimination. The inequity is demonstrated not only in differences in the distribution of wealth and in indicators of social well-being, but also in access to power and decision-making. The board has traditionally consisted primarily of able-bodied white men, so power and control within this organization has tended to rest with only one segment of society. Women and other “minorities” are underrepresented on the board and often face historical barriers to participation.

A statement of issue can be used to identify the problem or issue that the policy will help address, in this case, the balance of representation on the board.

Another NGO is committed to working toward gender equity and the participation of minorities within its governance structures. This NGO has decided to work toward the elimination of systemic barriers that have prevented this participation. The NGO believes that those being affected by the decisions of a board of directors should be reflected in the decision-making process and be able to influence that process. The board has outlined a clear focus for its diversity policy: to ensure that those affected by the decision of the board are involved in making the decision, which means they are members of the board of directors. This is the statement of goal: to bring those affected by board decisions onto the board.

Value Statement

CCIC is a coalition of Canadian voluntary organizations committed to achieving global development in a peaceful and healthy environment with social justice, human dignity and participation for all. CCIC and all of its member organizations are committed to development principles which ensure diversity and equity through CCIC's Code of Ethics and diversity policies.

As an NGO working in the international co-operation sector, CCIC is particularly aware of issues such as inequity and discrimination. Inequity is demonstrated not only in differences in the distribution of wealth and in indicators of social well being but also in access to power and decision-making. Power and control of decision-making have been located with in the dominant culture which in Canadian society is able-bodied white males. In addition, it is clear that the upper and middle-class have more access to opportunities than the poor. Within CCIC, minorities have been underrepresented in CCIC structures and face historical barriers to inclusion.

Goal

CCIC is committed to working towards more diversity within its governance structures. CCIC aims to maintain gender balance on the Board and to promote the participation of minorities who are underrepresented on the Board. In this way, the Board will be more reflective of the membership and Canadian society. CCIC will work towards the removal or reduction of systemic barriers that have prevented the participation of minorities. As CCIC strives for excellence as an organization, it will promote diversity to fully utilize differences in backgrounds and perspectives in its governance structures. Minorities are defined as identifiable groups not represented by the dominant culture.

Objectives

- Bring a wider range of backgrounds, perspectives and information to the Board table by:
1. Expanding linkages and domestic partners within the specific mission of CCIC
 2. Expanding opportunities for visible minorities
 3. Increasing diversity of CCIC's membership which will result in increased diversity on the Board
 4. Increasing opportunities for youth, multicultural, First Nations, persons with disabilities and other visible minorities to be represented on the Board
 5. Removing barriers to participation and finding ways to encourage participation.

Strategy

- Promote equity and diversity within CCIC member organizations
- Review existing strategies for Board recruitment to identify systemic barriers to participation of minorities
- Identify priorities in underrepresented groups
- Invite youth, multicultural, First Nations, persons with disabilities and other minorities to help the organization design and recommend new criteria to bring about participation of these groups in governance structures
- Actively promote membership in CCIC to organizations who represent these groups
- Revise election process as necessary (nomination, recruitment)
- Learn from the experience and incorporate lessons learned into other activities/areas of the organization

*Adopted by CCIC Board of Directors, March 12-13, 1999
Source - Canadian Council For International Cooperation (CCIC) www.ccic.ca*



2

Establish a Baseline and Track Progress

- What is the demographic composition of the community?
- Is the demographic composition of the community currently reflected in the governance of the organization?
- What are the board nomination and appointments policies and procedures?
- Do those policies and procedures create barriers to the participation of diverse communities?

A diversity competent organization needs to rely on current factual information about the diversity of the population it serves; about the social and cultural characteristics and needs of different groups in the community. To plan a comprehensive strategy addressing diversity in governance, it is necessary to understand your starting point:

- What is the demographic composition of the community?
- Is the demographic composition of the community currently reflected in the governance of the organization?
- What are the board nomination and appointments policies and procedures?
- Do those policies and procedures create barriers to the participation of diverse communities?

To answer these questions the organization needs to have current information on who lives in the community served by it and their socio-demographic characteristics. Once the external environment has been established, the board needs to undertake a quantitative and a qualitative assessment of current governance policies and practices:

- **Diversity Census:** Collect data on current board members and if possible, on applicants, short-lists, alternates, and skills registries. The Ontario Human Rights Code, section 14.1 permits voluntary and confidential data collection for the purpose of implementing a special program designed to achieve equal opportunity. When collecting this data, compare the results to available statistics on the demographic composition of the community.
- **Diversity-Based Analysis:** Similar to gender-based analysis², this assessment maps the existing appointments process, and analyzes its differential impact on diverse communities. The analysis involves explicitly considering how and why diverse communities may be affected by procedures and policies, and identifies barriers to participation in the appointments process. It is useful to consult current and previous applicants, individuals involved in selection and nomination, and community members to assess their perception of the appointments process and its effect on diverse groups.

To establish quantitative and qualitative baselines, the assessment needs to capture all steps including determining eligibility criteria for available positions, advertising vacancies, recruitment, screening and nomination processes and orientation of new members. The entire process must be included in the evaluation. There should also be an opportunity for individuals surveyed to comment on the diversity census and consultations to determine whether they are inclusive and to adjust these tools as necessary.



Promising Practice

A Board Diversity Profile

In 2002, the Social Planning Council of Peel conducted a needs assessment for the addictions treatment agencies in Halton and Peel regions . This was an assessment of the organizational capacity of these organizations to serve the mental health and addictions needs of diverse groups. An important aspect of this assessment was the board diversity profile of the participating agencies.

The board diversity profile was assessed through a questionnaire filled out by the agencies. It identified the current composition of the board with regard to gender, age, country of birth, visible minority status, and disability as well as by employment status and occupation of the members. Agencies were also able to share other characteristics of their board that were of a non-confidential nature and would describe the diversity on their boards.

Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition Organizational Inclusiveness - A Self Assessment Tool

Please rank the status of each of the following items on a scale of 0 to 3, according to the rating shown belows:

- 0 - Not yet started
- 1 - Beginning phase
- 2 - Well under-way
- 3- Fully Developed (including monitoring /review procedures)
- N/A - Not Applicable / Don't know

Where appropriate please add your comments to explain or illustrate your rating

MEASURE	STATUS	
<p>Policy</p> <p>Vision: <i>The organization's commitment to creating an environment free of barriers to inclusion is incorporated into the policies, guidelines and practice of the organization.</i></p> <p>Standard: 1.1 The organization's commitment to inclusion is understood by all board members, management, staff, volunteers, members and organizational affiliates.</p> <p>1. The Board has publicly stated their commitment to being an inclusive organization.</p> <p>2. Opportunities for involvement in the development of organizational policies and strategies have been clearly defined for all members of the organization (board, staff, volunteers) and the community at large.</p> <p>3. Principles of diversity, equity and inclusion are contained in the organization's statement of values.</p> <p>4. Appropriate resources (staffing, time, financial) are allocated to the development and review of polices relating to diversity, equity and inclusion.</p> <p>Standard: 1.2 Principles of diversity, inclusion and equity are embedded in all organizational policies and practices.</p> <p>1. The organization has addressed issues of diversity and inclusion in its strategic plan.</p> <p>2. Anti-discrimination and workplace harassment policies are in place.</p> <p>3. The organization has assessed its existing policies, guidelines and practices to determine if they contain any barriers to inclusion.</p> <p>Standard: 1.3 Progress towards reducing barriers to inclusion is monitored and evaluated.</p> <p>1. The Board has established a policy for monitoring and evaluating progress in eliminating barriers to inclusion.</p> <p>2. All members of the organization have opportunities for involvement in evaluating progress made in the areas of diversity, equity and inclusion.</p>		

COMMENTS

MEASURE	STATUS	
Leadership		
<p>Vision: <i>The Board and management provide informed leadership in the implementation of anti-discrimination and workplace harassment policies.</i></p>		
<p>Standard: 2.1 Principles of diversity, inclusion and equity are embedded in all organizational policies and practices</p>		
<p>1. The Board has clearly outlined its expectations for management on the implementation of diversity, equity and inclusion policies.</p>		
<p>2. The Board has clearly outlined its expectations for management on the implementation of workplace discrimination / harassment policies.</p>		
<p>3. The Board has developed clear guidelines to follow if the policies are breached.</p>		
<p>4. An action plan to eliminate or reduce barriers to inclusion has been established, including steps to monitor and review the plan.</p>		
<p>5. Resources have been explicitly allocated to the effective implementation of diversity, inclusion, equity and workplace discrimination / harassment policies and programs.</p>		
Participating and Decision-Making		
<p>Vision: <i>The participation and decision-making processes are inclusive and reflect community needs and expectations.</i></p>		
<p>Standard: 3.1 Information about the organization, including its governance structure and opportunities to become involved are communicated effectively to members of diverse communities within the service area.</p>		
<p>1. The organization has developed a communications strategy to inform diverse populations of its activities and invite them to participate.</p>		
<p>2. The organization has developed a comprehensive list of community and ethnic media.</p>		
<p>3. The organization has developed a comprehensive list of community, regional and provincial groups and organizations that deal directly with diverse and / or marginalized populations.</p>		
<p>4. The organization has developed a comprehensive list of other points of access for reaching diverse communities (i.e. places of workshop, community centres, social clubs etc.)</p>		
<p>5. The organization has compiled and updated provincial and regional profiles including demographics and social, economic, health and environmental issues.</p>		

MEASURE	STATUS	
Participating and Decision-Making		
Standard: 3.2 Effective partnerships exist between this organization and other community organizations that reflect the diversity of the population.		
1. The organization has developed effective and inclusive formal and informal working relationships with diverse community groups and organizations.		
2. The organization has developed a two-way consultation mechanism with diverse communities.		
3. Partnerships are actively sought with organizations representing diverse populations.		
4. Partnerships agreements include a process for conflict resolution.		
Standard: 3.3 Members of diverse communities are equitably represented in the different decision-making levels of organization (i.e. board, committees and management)		
1. The organization has explored the possibility of systemic barriers in the recruitment, selection and retention processes for board, committees and senior management. (e.g., advertising outlets, criteria for selection, interview)		
2. The Board has explored the possibility of barriers existing in the way the board and committees function. (e.g., time and location of meetings, accessibility of building, availability of child / elder care, meeting style)		
3. Orientation and training are provided to members as needed to increase their ability to participate effectively.		
4. Time is set aside in meetings for each member to express their perspective and concerns.		
5. Ground rules have been established for how group members relate to one another.		
6. Terms of reference for committees include a process for conflict resolution.		
Standard: 3.4 Effective procedures exist to handle complaints about incidences of discrimination.		
1. The organization has written procedures for effectively handling complaints of discrimination by the organization from organizational partners, affiliates, volunteers and community groups.		
2. The organization ensures that the board, management, staff, organizational affiliates, volunteers and community groups are aware of their right to access the complaints procedure to address any incidence of discrimination.		



3

Create a Diversity Committee

A committee will be needed to plan and monitor the process of creating change within the board and its committees. It should be comprised of individuals from all areas of the organization - staff, board, volunteers and members - to ensure different perspectives are represented.

A committee will be needed to plan and monitor the process of creating change within the board and its committees. It should be comprised of individuals from all areas of the organization - staff, board, volunteers and members - to ensure different perspectives are represented. It may also be beneficial to invite external community members to join the committee, particularly if the organization does not reflect the makeup of the community it serves. The committee may want to meet internally a few times first to identify issues, define the organizational goals, identify available resources and establish internal communication and management procedures before consulting with the community. If necessary, these can always be altered once feedback is received from external community members.

The following actions can help the committee to run smoothly and effectively:

- establish terms of reference
- create a shared understanding and vision
- develop leadership
- generate involvement
- conduct education and training sessions

Establish terms of reference: Terms of reference are used to establish roles, responsibilities and process and purpose for the committee.

The terms of reference will include decisions about the following:

- purpose of the committee
- roles of members
- decision-making procedure
- reporting relationships
- authority and accountability
- resources available
- membership composition
- meeting schedule



Promising Practice

Active Outreach by a Diversity Committee

Eva's Initiatives is a large non-profit in Toronto with the mission to work collaboratively with homeless and at-risk youth to help them reach their potential to lead productive, self-sufficient and healthy lives by providing safe shelter and a range of services, and to create long term solutions for homeless youth by developing and implementing proactive and progressive services.⁴

In the late 1990s Eva's Initiatives grew from a single site with under 30 employees to a four-site organization with over 100 employees. Understanding how this growth impacted Eva's support services, in 2001 the Board undertook to review and upgrade the management infrastructure. During this process a staff Anti-Oppression Committee was developed to advise the Executive Director and a Diversity Task Force with representation from the Board and included the Chair of the staff Anti-Oppression Committee was created as a subcommittee of the Board.

With input from a consultant who provided training to board and staff, the Diversity Task Force co-chaired by the Board President developed a 3-year work plan in February 2004. The Task Force mandated that the organization must:

- Have youth representation on the Board of Directors
- Disseminate board postings more widely to a diverse group

The Board has seen some early success in making its composition more reflective of the community it serves.

Diversity Committee Terms of Reference

Diversity Committee, Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition (OHCC)

Date Revised: June 20, 2003.

Chair: Rotated by Committee Members

Staff Support: OHCC Diversity Coordinator

Reporting Relationship:

The committee will report to the Executive Director. The committee will present an evaluation of the implementation of OHCC's diversity policy and practices to the Board of Directors annually.

Purpose:

1. To ensure that OHCC is a welcoming environment for diverse groups.
2. To ensure that OHCC is a true reflection of Ontario's population.
3. To develop and evaluate policies, procedures and action plans that will welcome diverse groups in Ontario to the Healthy Communities (HC) movement.
4. To encourage HC members to become more inclusive of diverse groups in their communities.
5. To share information, network and offer mutual support to provincial, national and international groups who are working around Healthy Communities and are interested in the areas of diversity and inclusion.

Authority:

Unless otherwise stated by the Executive Director or the Board of Directors, the committee has no direct authority for the allocation of financial or human resources of the organization.

Meeting Schedule:

The committee will meet at least six times per year, with meetings scheduled by the committee, or called by the staff support as needed. The agenda for each meeting will be set in collaboration with the designated Chair and staff support.

Composition:

Included on the committee will be two or more staff members, Board Members (who sit on the committee in a volunteer capacity) and other community members who may come from the general membership of OHCC (50%). The committee will strive to reflect the diverse population of the Province of Ontario.

Other Resources:

The committee may pursue additional human and financial resources to implement the projects of the committee as needed, in consultation with OHCC's Resource Development Coordinator and with the approval of the Executive Director.

Specific Areas of Responsibility:

1. To ensure that OHCC and the HC movement is a true reflection of Ontario's population, thereby bringing diverse perspectives of a healthy community.
2. To review the barriers within OHCC that prevent diverse groups from participating.
3. To broaden diverse participation within OHCC.
4. To raise awareness of the issues affecting those who are marginalized (e.g., through the Community Animation Program).
5. To proactively recruit volunteers to this committee so that it may reflect the diverse population of Ontario.

Source - Excerpted with permission from Inclusive Community Organizations; A Tool Kit by Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition, www.healthycommunities.on.ca.



4

Provide Orientation and Ongoing Training

Training reinforces the commitment to diversity by demonstrating that the board is willing to dedicate time and resources to building the organization's skills to reach that goal.

The implementation of training for everyone involved in the board nomination and appointment process and of orientation for new board members communicates the organization's commitment to diversity and provides tools to make that commitment a reality. Training reinforces the commitment to diversity by demonstrating that the board is willing to dedicate time and resources to building the organization's skills to reach that goal.

Education on the value of and skills needed to achieve diversity should be incorporated throughout the process, including:

- training for board members, staff and volunteers involved in implementing the appointments process
- orientation programs for new board members, staff and volunteers and ongoing training for all members, staff and volunteers

Training programs should be adapted and tailored to the needs of the organization and provided to all. This training is not a one-time event, but an ongoing process to ensure the commitment to diversity and that the skills to achieving it are reinforced.



Promising Practice

Board Education for Equality

The Legal Services Corporation (LSC) is a private, non-profit corporation established by Congress in 1974 to assure equal access to justice under the law for all Americans. During a series of conversations on diversity and discrimination held throughout 2001, LSC spoke with members of the national legal services community (LSC and non-LSC funded organizations) about how diversity, leadership and inclusion are perceived by staff, client board members and managers.

LSC determined that board education was clearly the most powerful way to raise bedrock issues about equality and share the insights garnered during these diversity conversations. They also wanted boards to hear and respond to the concerns of staff and board members who felt shut out of the organization and frustrated by what they saw as failures in meeting client needs.

Legal Services Corporation (USA) Board Leadership and Diversity Plan

The governing body stands at the helm of the organization. It is this group of individuals that is responsible for shaping and guiding the direction of the organization. They embody and articulate the core values of the organization. Their commitment to diversity will influence the organization's success in optimizing the benefits of differences within the community. A diversity plan sets out the method by which an organization will use diversity as a tool for the effective achievement of its long and short term goals. The following is a list of essential elements of a diversity plan, in order of relative importance:

1. Management commitment, leadership and support

It is essential that the governing body demonstrate its leadership by anticipating and preparing for the changes that will result from the effective use of the diversity of your client-eligible community, staff and other stakeholders in planning how to deliver legal services in your service areas.

2. Integration of diversity initiatives into organizational objectives

The governing body will note that a full embrace of diversity considerations into their deliberations and decisions will lead to innovative projects and new goals. In turn, this will allow staff to pioneer areas where little has been done to identify and respond to legal problems that reflect changing community and workplace needs. Minorities are defined as identifiable groups not represented by the dominant culture.

3. Communication and continuing dialogue among all employees

It is up to the governing body to show staff why including a variety of viewpoints enhances the work product. Valuing and incorporating diverse perspectives is essential in an organization that wishes to adopt effective delivery systems. During case review meetings, for example, is time sometimes devoted to inquiring about and analyzing shifts in legal problems and client needs?

4. Education and training

Devote adequate time and resources to teaching your staff and other stakeholders about diversity issues and why it is important to recognize, acknowledge and incorporate these differences into the organization's plans. Do not assume that everyone will understand the importance of diversity.

5. Accountability with consequences, especially for senior and middle management

As the governing body demonstrates its commitment, leadership, and support for integrating diversity in the organization's activities, the need for planned diversity initiatives will grow. Be sure to make someone or some group of individuals responsible for carrying out the diversity plan, complete with appropriate ways to measure its accomplishments, and study, if appropriate, how and why it failed to meet goals.

6. Employee involvement

Do not plan in isolation. Both employees and other stakeholders have valuable contributions to make and should be given the opportunity to shape the development of the diversity plan. Involvement of staff and other stakeholders will increase their commitment to the management of diversity.

7. Measurement of initiatives

Find ways to assess the achievement of goals and objectives set forth in your diversity plan. Statistical and substantive analysis of cases, caseloads and client bases is one means. Examination of staff patterns, including recruitment and retention successes is another. Reviewing the increase or change in affiliations with community organizations and agencies is yet another evaluation tool.

8. Line-driven initiatives

It is helpful to create diversity initiatives that relate to particular work units or client groups. For example, a diversity focus may center on the services of a specific regional office or substantive law area or job category. The common interest will help to generate interest around the issue.

9. Exclusive definition of diversity

Because no two organizations are identical, it is important to develop a statement of what diversity is within your organization or your community. This will reduce the likelihood of confusion around issues that have not been included at a particular stage of diversity planning. For example, the organization may not want to examine family status of staff members during the development of its first diversity initiatives.

10. Culture change

The underlying assumptions that led to the organization's objectives should be re-examined and changed to recognize the many and the variety of contributions to organization's accomplishments. This is a continuing process that evolves as new insights and perspectives emerge to influence the organization's work and goals.

11. Clear diversity vision and objectives

As the commitment of the governing body to the principles of managed diversity deepens, the members should create a statement of that commitment and how they envision it being accomplished. The statement also should clarify what is to be achieved through their diversity work.

12. Access to decision making and decision-makers

The process for embracing diversity is one that should not be undertaken in a vacuum. Stakeholders should be afforded the opportunity to interact with those who will ultimately make the decisions about how diversity is incorporated. This may initially mean interaction with the governing body. However, as the responsibility of managing diversity is delegated to senior staff and others assigned such oversight, opportunities for their input should occur.

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13. Champions of diversity at all levels

No cause can be successful without advocates. This is as true of diversity initiatives as it is of other efforts. At every level, there should be persons in place who have the ability to influence others and the willingness to take a risk. These are the people who will spread the arguments in favor of diversity and the needed justification for adoption of managed diversity within the legal services community. As they persuade others of its importance, the momentum will grow and new initiatives will be possible. For example, when appointing an ad hoc committee, the board chair may select a new, client-eligible member to serve as the committee's co-chair, along with a long-standing member. This will afford the newer member an opportunity to learn how the governing body operates and develop the skills needed to become a high-performing participant.

14. Resources

A commitment to allocating financial resources to diversity is essential to the success of the initiative. Does the budget adopted by the governing body reflect the organization's commitment to diversity? Are resources needed to serve diverse client populations in place, such as budgets that support hiring culturally competent staff, creating foreign language materials, underwriting far-ranging recruitment searches to ensure that opportunities exist to retain bi-lingual staff, staff of color and contractors to translate brochures and other written information that the program distributes to clients?

15. Strong recruitment, retention and promotion efforts

Essential to the success of any diversity effort is a commitment to developing a diverse staff. Indicators of this commitment can include an examination of various ethnic and racial groups in the service area as well as recognizing the gender, age, disability, and other special attributes of the client community. Hiring is only the first step. It should be followed by specific efforts to retain employees by providing them with adequate training, support, and opportunities to learn how the governing body operates and develop the skills needed to become a high-performing participant.

Source - Excerpted from Leadership and Diversity: The Link that Promotes Effective Delivery of Legal Services - A Diversity Training Module for Governing Bodies in Legal Services Organizations created by Legal Services Corporation. The full document can be found at http://www.lri.lsc.gov/pdf/02/020112_ldtm.pdf.



5

Establish an Open and Transparent Board Recruitment Process

The primary goal of this recruitment method is to increase the number of qualified applicants as a whole, because having more candidates with the experience, knowledge, and skills to effectively participate will create an applicant pool that better reflects the diversity of the population served by the organization.

Attracting diverse candidates to apply for board vacancies requires using inclusive recruitment methods that communicate the skills, qualifications, and experiences needed for available board positions. The primary goal of this recruitment method is to increase the number of qualified applicants as a whole, because having more candidates with the experience, knowledge, and skills to effectively participate will create an applicant pool that better reflects the diversity of the population served by the organization. An increase in diverse applicants is, in part, a consequence of a broad and transparent recruitment process.

Board and Vacancy Profiles

Selection criteria for board positions should be clear and publicly available through board and vacancy profiles.

- **Board profiles** identify the competencies needed by the board as a whole to achieve its mandate and strategies
- **Vacancy profiles** set out the specific skills and qualifications needed by candidates to be considered and selected for an available position

Profiles increase transparency by demonstrating that all candidates will be evaluated against the same criteria. The primary criterion is skill; the selection of board members is first and foremost based on merit. Diversity is taken into consideration through its inclusion as a mandatory criterion in the board profiles.

These profiles must be communicated to all applicants, and to staff, volunteers and board members involved in recruitment, screening, and selection of candidates. To reduce barriers to participation, board and vacancy profiles should also be flexible enough to allow applicants to demonstrate the required skills through a range of experience and formal qualifications. Whenever possible, those involved in making the selection should be provided training in cross-cultural interviewing skills to ensure a bias-free process.

5

**Establish an Open and Transparent
Board Recruitment Process**



Promising Practice

Governance Development Committee

The Multiple Sclerosis Society (UK) was aware its board needed to change. It was big and unwieldy. The board didn't attract the right skills and diversity for a large complex national charity. Nor did it reflect the profile of people affected by multiple sclerosis. Its selection process was unclear. The board appointed a Governance Development Committee (GDC) to focus specifically on these issues. A member of staff was allocated to work on this, a budget was identified and the support of a volunteer human resources expert secured.

The GDC reviewed their recruitment processes including how trustees' roles were defined, how the election process worked and how to identify the skills the board needed. The result of the review was a clearly structured and rigorous recruitment process. All trustees have written role descriptions. The GDC interviews prospective candidates to ensure they meet defined criteria before putting them to the membership for election. The process cannot guarantee every skill or attribute is represented. But it has certainly helped. The Multiple Sclerosis Society now has a much better balanced board with more younger people, including young women.

Community Social Planning Council of Toronto Sample Skills Assessment Matrix to Define Board Vacancy Profiles

There are three stages in this process:

1. Consider the organization's priorities for the next few years; you may have already set these out in a strategic or business plan or you may need to agree them now. Now identify the skills, experience and knowledge needed at board level to help you achieve them. Record these on the matrix provided below. For example if you are employing a member of staff for the first time you may want to ensure someone on the board has experience of being an employer.

Consider your changing external environment and whether this requires new skills of the board. If you are not yet clear about your priorities, you should ask whether you are ready yet to recruit new members. If your organization is in major transition it may be appropriate to bring in new members to help you with that process, but it is generally better to have a clear idea of where you are going so you can recruit people with the skills that are most useful.

2. Once you have completed Stage 1 above, assess which of these skills existing board members have. Ask existing members to fill in copies of the matrix indicating whether their skills for the area are strong, adequate or weak.
3. Put all the individual results on one matrix. You will be able to see where you are already strong and where you have gaps in skills, knowledge or experience. These are the skills you should be looking for in your new trustee.
4. Use the Skills Assessment Matrix to define the board vacancy profiles.



6

Support Diverse Board Members

Boards must accommodate the needs of all members by, for example, ensuring that venues are accessible, meetings are scheduled to not interfere with major cultural holidays, and child-care needs are addressed.

Increasing the number of diverse members on boards is only the beginning. To realize the value of improving diversity, it is also necessary to ensure that boards are inclusive and supportive environments for all members - most of whom volunteer their efforts. Accommodation will not only benefit individuals from diverse communities, it will also lead to more flexible processes that increase the involvement of all members.⁵

Boards must accommodate the needs of all members by, for example, ensuring that venues are accessible, meetings are scheduled to not interfere with major cultural holidays, and child-care needs are addressed.

NOTES:

Immigrants account for 18.5% of the total Canadian population. This is the highest proportion in Canada since 1931.



Promising Practice

Board Mentoring

Between October 2004 and March 2005, the United Kingdom Cabinet Office piloted a mentorship scheme aimed at providing disabled people with an insight into the work of public bodies and the role of the board members, as well as an understanding of the public appointments process. The evaluation of the mentorship program found that over 75% of mentees planned to apply for public appointments in the next 12 months. As a result, a toolkit was developed to assist government departments in setting up a mentoring scheme for disabled people.

The Maytree Foundation Board Mentoring Handbook Board Mentoring to Support Diverse Board Members

Mentoring is an effective and inexpensive means of preparing new board members for full participation in the work of the board. A complement to board governance training and board orientation, mentoring is an efficient way of sharing knowledge and developing cross-functional understanding. In the context of a board, mentoring is a relationship between a more experienced board member - a mentor - who provides knowledge, advice and support to a newer member. The new member - a mentee - is seeking information and knowledge about the workings of the board and the organization.

Two components are essential to a successful mentoring program:

1. A strong commitment to the program from board leaders and senior management.
2. Clear selection criteria for mentors and for new board members to be mentored.

Leadership Commitment

A mentoring initiative is more likely to succeed if it is valued and supported by senior members of the board and senior management of the organization. The chair of the board is often a natural champion for development of the program. The chair of the board and/or the executive director are responsible for the selection of mentors and mentees.

Selection of Mentors

Criteria recommended when selecting experienced board members to become mentors:

- Minimum of one year on the board
- Good knowledge of the strategic priorities of the organization
- Good knowledge and understanding of governance
- Willingness to share knowledge
- Experience in leadership roles on the board or board committee(s)
- Commitment to increasing diversity on the board
- Comfortable with the time commitment of nine hours over six months
- Understanding of challenges faced by new board members

Selection of Board Members to be Mentored

These criteria are recommended when selecting new board members to become mentees:

- Recently appointed to the board (less than six months)
- Some experience on community boards or committees or of community leadership and civic engagement
- Commitment to increasing their capacity as board members
- Motivated to take leadership on the board
- Willingness to commit the time to increase their effectiveness on the board

NOTES:

Visible minorities are growing six times faster than the total population.

Statistics Canada, 2001 Census. Analysis Series, Canada's Ethnocultural Portrait: The Changing Mosaic, January 2003



ROADMAP FOR BOARD MENTORING

MONTH 1	Meeting 1 In person -1 Hour Topic: Introduction	Meeting 2 Online or By telephone - 1/2 Hour Topic: Bylaws, Policies, Codes, Liability and Officers Insurance
2 meetings		
GOAL : Get to Know Each Other and the Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meet face-to-face and get to know each other ▪ Share previous board experiences ▪ Share expectations of each other ▪ Mentee outlines learning goals for the mentoring relationship ▪ Mentor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reviews basic information about the organization and answers questions - explains board's governance model - clarifies roles of board and management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mentor arranges for mentee to receive copies of bylaws, policies and codes, e.g. resolving conflict, insurance coverage ▪ Mentor clarifies content and context
MONTH 2	Meeting 3 In person -1 Hour Topic: Board Contacts, Communication, Roles and Responsibilities	Meeting 4 In person -1 Hour Topic: Meetings
2 meetings		
GOAL : Board Organization and Membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mentee reviews organization chart ▪ Discuss board's responsibility to oversee organization ▪ Mentor discusses fiduciary and legal duties as a board member ▪ Mentor answers questions on interpreting financial statements ▪ Mentor outlines lines of communication and information flow between board members, committees, ED, management and staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discuss the types of meetings including board meetings, committee meetings, AGM ▪ Set up meeting for 30 minutes prior to next board meeting to outline rules of procedure and agenda
MONTH 3	Meeting 5 Online or By telephone - 1/2 Hour Topic: Committees	Meeting 6 In person -1/2 Hour Topic: Pre-Board Meeting
2 meetings		
GOAL : Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discuss committee most suitable for mentee to serve on ▪ Mentor introduces committee chair so mentee can follow up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mentor outlines rules of procedure for board meeting ▪ Discuss board meeting agenda

MONTH 4	<p>Meeting 7 In person -1 Hour Topic: Strategic and Operational Plans and Reports</p>	<p>Meeting 8 In person -1 Hour Topic: Strategic and Operational Plans and Mentee Learning Goals</p>
2 meetings		
GOAL : Strategic and Operational Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discuss organization's vision, mission statement, and values of organization as they relate to strategic plan ▪ Mentor discusses goals and objectives of board ▪ Mentor shares internal and external reports on strategic and operational plans ▪ Mentee reviews list of programs ▪ Mentee reviews list of funding partners, memorandum of understandings and funding agreements outlined in board manual ▪ Discuss history of funding relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review and discuss questions on strategic and operational plans and/or reports ▪ Assess mentoring relationship; what's working, what's not ▪ Revisit mentee's learning goals
MONTH 5	<p>Meeting 9 Online, By telephone or In person -1 Hour Topic: HR Policies</p>	
1 meeting		
GOAL : Organization Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mentee reviews all HR polices for employees and volunteers ▪ Discuss any issues regarding policies ▪ Mentor shares background information regarding any collective agreement 	
MONTH 6	<p>Meeting 10 In person -1 Hour Topic: Evaluation and Closure</p>	
1 meeting		
GOAL : Evaluation of Board Performance and Closure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discuss board evaluation process ▪ Celebrate mentoring relationship and acknowledge end ▪ Discuss what to do differently next time ▪ Discuss any further training mentee should pursue 	

Source - Excerpted from *The Board Mentoring Handbook* by The Maytree Foundation www.maytree.com.



7

Embed Diversity in all Board Policies and Practices

The main purpose of a diversity lens is to raise awareness. The lens should have a checklist of questions or criteria, accompanied by appropriate means of measurement or indicators.

Organizations wishing to become more inclusive need to examine all their organizational policies and practices to ensure that not only are they not discriminatory but the systems and values actually contribute to making an inclusive and welcoming organizational culture. It is not enough to add new ways of working, if we do not remove old systems that reinforce the exclusionary practices nor surface the values that underlie them.

Usually the systems, structures, practices and norms in an organization reflect the values and life situations of the people who created the organization. What is considered normal or neutral is anything but for others with different values and life situations. While 'the way things are' may be common sense to some, they are actually actions valued by particular cultures. Someone who is not part of that culture will not find them common. Giving privileged status to some ways of working inevitably results in the undervaluing of alternative ways.

Applying a diversity lens to all board policies and practices ensures that diversity does not get trapped in token appointments and, instead, fosters truly inclusive governance structures and practices. The main purpose of a diversity lens is to raise awareness. The lens should have a checklist of questions or criteria, accompanied by appropriate means of measurement or indicators. This tool is used to systematically evaluate whether policies and practices respect identified principles, in this case: diversity principles.

NOTES:

Create a Diversity Committee

Developing a specific board committee on diversity and inclusion, whose job it is to set and implement goals and objectives related to inclusive governance and keep the board on task toward their achievement.

NOTES:

Immigrants account for 18.5% of the total Canadian population. This is the highest proportion in Canada since 1931.

*Statistics Canada, 2001 Census:
Analysis Series, Canada's Ethnocultural Portrait:
The Changing Mosaic, January 2003*



Promising Practice

The Diversity Lens

The need for a diversity lens emerged out of Canadian Mental Health Association's (CMHA) cross-cultural organizational change initiative. In this process it became apparent that a practical tool was needed that would assist the organization's branches and divisions to identify and tackle some of their systemic barriers.

The CMHA Diversity Lens was developed as a framework to evaluate existing policies and procedures with respect to how sensitive these are to the diverse needs of staff, volunteers, board members and clients. It covers communications - access to information, language and visuals - policy and procedures, including personnel procedures, recruitment and evaluation, and programs and services. Though the list is extensive, it is not intended as exhaustive. Users are asked to "feel free to tailor it" to the needs of their workplace or branch, indicating that it is key to see this as a tool for accomplishing a review of organizational practices and to ensure it is actually applied.

RECRUITMENT/ EVALUATION

	Yes	No	To some extent	Need to do/ find out
Does your organization reflect the diversity of your community with respect to:				
▪ board membership?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ staff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ committee / Working group members?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ volunteers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aside from conventional methods, do you advertise positions in community newspapers and through cultural agencies for:				
▪ staff positions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ volunteers positions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ practicum students?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you recruit from diverse groups in your community for:				
▪ new board positions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ committee / working group positions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is proficiency in languages other than the two official languages recognized as a valued skill when selecting:				
▪ board members?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ new staffs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ committee / working group positions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ volunteers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ practicum students?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is knowledge of cultures and traditions recognized as a valued skill when selecting:				
▪ board members?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ new staffs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ committee / working group positions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ volunteers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ practicum students?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Do you recognize knowledge of languages other than the official languages and knowledge of cultures and traditions as valued skills when evaluating staff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ When recruiting in general, do you ask potential candidates how comfortable they feel about working with others from diverse backgrounds in the workplace?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Source - Excerpted from *The Diversity Lens*, Canadian Mental Health Association. Full text available at www.cmha.bc.ca/about/vision_mission.



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abcGTA is an initiative of The Maytree Foundation,
a private charitable Canadian foundation.

The initiative works to ensure that the governance
bodies of public agencies, boards and commissions
(ABCs) as well as voluntary organizations reflect
the diversity of people who live and work
in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

www.abcgta.ca



The Maytree Foundation

