

Workplace Inclusion Charter

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Introduction

The Kingston labour market loses an average of 400 workers each year. The percentage of the working age population continues to decline and is expected to drop by almost 10% over the next decade. Kingston needs to attract, deploy, and retain talent from underutilized communities.

A 2017 City of Kingston survey found that a majority of Kingston residents (88%) feel our community is enriched by having a diverse and inclusive population. These results are in line with significant evidence that demonstrates the benefits of diversity in the workplace. Nonetheless, members of marginalized communities continue to face racism and discrimination as evidenced by a 2019 KEYS Job Centre study on immigrant recruitment and retention in Kingston:

- 7 out of 10 survey participants reported witnessing racism and discrimination in the community.
- Nearly 50% of newcomers have experienced racial or cultural discrimination at work.

Kingston's **Inclusion Charter** aims to create and promote safe spaces for marginalized populations including:

- newcomers
- marginalized populations including newcomers,
- people who are racialized/visible minorities,
- people with disabilities,
- Indigenous people,
- linguistic minorities (i.e. Francophones),
- women,
- youth,
- older workers, and
- people from LGBTQ2S+ communities.

By collaborating with local employers and supporting inclusion initiatives, the Charter will contribute toward building equitable and prosperous workplaces.

In 2018, recent immigrants to Canada experienced nearly twice the unemployment (9.4%) of the general population (5.8%). At over 12%, both youth and Indigenous people have double the unemployment rates of the general population and people with disabilities face a 35% unemployment rate. By incorporating inclusive practices into the workplace, Kingston businesses will be well-positioned to attract and retain highly skilled, underutilized talent.

The purpose of the Charter is to promote employment practices and provide strategies that will improve inclusion, diversity, and equity in the workplace. The following definitions clarify the Charter's areas of focus and intended impact on participating workplaces:

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Diversity is the presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes, both visible and invisible, within a group, organization, or society.

Equity is a condition or a state of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment that recognizes and acknowledges the accommodation of differing needs and expectations. Equity acknowledges that equal treatment does not always yield equal results.

Inclusion is what happens when diversity and equity meet. It involves creating an environment where people have both the feeling and reality of belonging and are able to grow and develop their potential. It is a situation where disadvantaged communities and designated group members share power and decision making at all levels in projects, programs, and institutions.

The Inclusion Advantage

Diversity is a fact. Inclusion is a mindset.

Inclusive practices in diverse workplaces go beyond ethics – they present significant business advantages and opportunities for organizations that are willing to embrace them. Comprehensive research published by Forbes, Deloitte, Catalyst, and McKinsey among others all points to the same conclusion: diverse and inclusive businesses perform better. Here are just a few of the benefits associated with a diverse workforce:

The relationship between diversity and workplace performance is proven

The statistically significant correlation between a diverse leadership team and financial outperformance demonstrated by McKinsey & Company, in 2015, three years ago continues to hold true on an updated, enlarged and global data set.

Reinvigorate productivity and innovation

Diverse organizations are able to problem-solve from a broader perspective and make better, more informed decisions yielding higher net income growth when compared to homogenous workplaces.

Tap into new markets

Diverse employees bring a wide variety of backgrounds, levels of knowledge, skill sets, and expertise to their workplaces. Incorporating inclusion into hiring practices will help identify such

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assets and in turn, allow organizations to serve a broader clientele. Research published in the Harvard Business Review states that diverse companies are 70% more likely to report that they have captured a new market.

Attract high-level talent

Businesses that are able to recognize and use the skills and talents of a truly diverse workforce have a distinct advantage in a global economy.

Retain expertise

In a competitive labour market, workplace retention strategies are essential to success. Employees do not stay when they feel disconnected or unwelcome. Staff turnover is costly in terms of recruitment and training. It also leads to an unsettled team environment and fractured supplier and customer relations. Implementing inclusive policies promotes employee retention, team consistency, and morale.

Boost employee morale and improve wellness

An inclusive workplace inspires diverse employees and makes them feel valued. This builds loyalty, supports teamwork, and promotes a sense of belonging. Practicing inclusion also improves the overall wellbeing of employees, contributing to increased productivity and fewer sick days.

Build the reputation of your company and your city

An open commitment to inclusion and diversity has significant reputational advantages for individual organizations. Join a growing number of local employers who strive to build Kingston's reputation as an inclusive and appealing place to live, work, play, learn, and do business.

The Inclusion Charter

In April 2017, the City of Kingston endorsed a Workforce & In-migration Strategy for the community. A key priority identified in the strategy is the advancement of diversity and inclusion in the workplace. To implement the priority, a group of dedicated community members formed the Inclusive Workplaces working group. The Inclusion Charter is the result of their work. It aims to guide local businesses in creating and upholding inclusive workplaces. The Charter is designed for businesses and organizations of all sizes and at all stages of advancing diversity, equity and inclusion.

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By signing the Charter Declaration, organizations are taking the first step toward becoming more inclusive. All signatories commit to developing and implementing an action plan.

The action plan can focus on any population facing barriers – newcomers, people who are racialized/visible minorities, people with disabilities, Indigenous peoples, linguistic minorities, women, youth, older workers and people from LGBTQ2S+ communities can all benefit from inclusive practices. These groups are the focus of inclusion strategies because they continue to experience systemic barriers to employment, high rates of unemployment and underemployment, and disproportionate representation in low-pay and low-status jobs. We recognize that there are other populations not listed here who experience regular discrimination and would benefit from equitable and inclusive practices in the workplace. Furthermore, we acknowledge that there is intersectionality among these populations and that often people cannot be confined to one category.

This Inclusion Charter is an opportunity for Kingston employers to embrace the future. It sets out a forward-looking vision for Kingston that actively supports a healthy, vibrant, and sustainable community in which all residents are respected and supported. Having the best talent requires tapping into the entire talent pool.

The Process

Each organization has its unique inclusion needs and challenges. The process outlined here is the blueprint for organizations that endorse the Charter. We encourage you to set an achievable goal for your workplace and go for it. Depending on your focus, we may be able to help you with the tools and resources to implement your individual strategy (See Workplace Intercultural Inclusion Strategy for more information).

ENDORSE

- Show your organization's commitment by signing the Declaration.
- Commit to one year of actively working on your individual action plan.

ASSESSMENT AND GOAL-SETTING

- Assess your organization's current practices, determine needs, and develop an inclusion work plan with goals and metrics that are specific and achievable. A project staff may be able to help you set goals and develop an action plan.

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IMPLEMENT

- Tell the World! Announce your organization's participation internally and externally.
- Set up meetings with senior leaders to ensure their ongoing buy-in and communicate your commitment to all employees.
- Make use of project staff as well as the resources available through our website to carry out your action plan.
- Commit to on-going assessment and evaluation to ensure you are reaching your goals.

CELEBRATE

- The City of Kingston will recognize the efforts of local organizations to improve inclusion, diversity, and equity in our community. Organizations that sign the declaration and can demonstrate progress to the Inclusive Workplaces working group will be celebrated as inclusion champions through press releases and a certificate.

EVALUATE

- Complete a questionnaire about your organization's experience with the Charter program.
- Share your feedback on the tools you implemented and how well they worked for your organization.
- Consider committing to a new goal for the coming year.

The Next Step

Once your organization decides to endorse the Inclusion Charter, please connect with us by email at inclusion@keys.ca. The Inclusion Charter project team will work with your organization to design a unique action plan, set achievable goals, and recommend resources that will help you succeed on your inclusion journey. The research mentioned in this document as well as other resources are available online at: <https://possiblemadehere.org/inclusion-charter/>.

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Declaration

VISION

We envision Kingston to be a place where:

- Residents feel respected, valued, and supported to participate, succeed, and stay in the workplace and the community.
- Employers celebrate diversity, encourage intercultural understanding, uphold worker rights, and support colleague development.
- Employers are leaders in creating a welcoming and inclusive community.

PRINCIPLES

We uphold that:

- Diversity contributes to the strength and prosperity of our organizations and our community.
- Equity is fundamental to successful inclusion.
- Everybody deserves a safe and respectful work environment.
- Employers play an important role in facilitating successful inclusion for Kingston residents.
- Inclusive, diverse and equitable workplaces benefit all.

ENDORSEMENT

On behalf of _____, I/we the undersigned endorse the vision and principles of the Inclusion Charter. I/we commit to the development and implementation of an action plan for the organization that demonstrates this commitment over the course of one year.

SIGNED & DATED

x

x

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