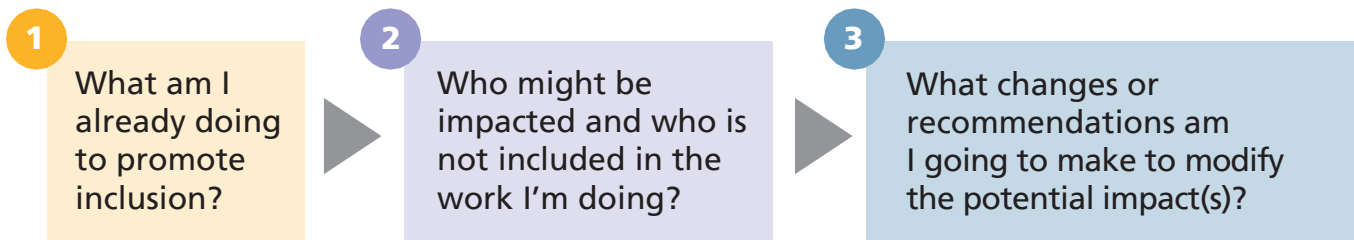# Oakville Inclusion Lens

Inclusion is about creating an environment where everyone feels like they belong, are able to work and live to their full potential and participate freely with respect, dignity and freedom from discrimination.

What is an inclusion lens?

An inclusion lens is like a pair of glasses or a filter, it helps you see things with a new or different perspective from your own. It's an easy to use tool made up of three questions that prompt us to think about inclusion in our work. Using the lens helps us consider potential impacts of programs, services and initiatives on the diversity of our employees and customers.

Oakville inclusion lens

1	2	3
What am I already doing to promote inclusion?	Who might be impacted and who is not included in the work I'm doing?	What changes or recommendations am I going to make to modify the potential impact(s)?

Who should use this lens?

Staff, volunteers and anyone who represents or acts on behalf of the town (i.e., consultants). Remember to use the lens when developing an RFP or requesting a quote.

When should you use the lens?

New initiatives: use it at the beginning of a project or when planning new programs and services to identify impacts that may unintentionally exclude certain groups.

Existing initiatives: use it to review a current project, program or service to identify steps to eliminate or reduce any negative impacts or unintended barriers.

Examples:
- *programs and services*
- *projects*
- *policies, procedures*
- *hiring, creating job requirements, recruiting*
- *events*
- *purchasing*
- *online in text, images, services, tools*

Worksheet

How to apply the lens

Identify: Identify a program, service, policy or project. Remember it can be new or already implemented.

Answer: Answer the three questions below. They will help you determine the potential direct or indirect impacts and whether your initiative encourages inclusion.

Implement: Jot down ideas on the worksheet and implement outcomes from the lens.

Name of project, program or service

Consider:
- Faith groups
- Families
- Indigenous peoples
- LGBTQ2+
- Low-income households
- New Canadians, newcomers or refugees
- Older adults, seniors
- People with different educational backgrounds
- People with disabilities (visible, invisible)
- People with different language, literacy levels
- Racialized people
- Women
- Youth

1 **What am I already doing to promote inclusion?**
Highlight potential impacts and issues (positive and negative) and what you've done to assess the impact (research, consultation, self-assessment).

2 **Who might be impacted and who is not included in the work I'm doing?**
Determine if you've missed a group that may be impacted or impact your work.
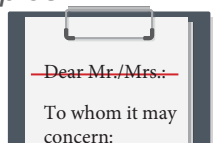
3 **What changes or recommendations am I going to make to modify (increase, decrease or eliminate) the potential impact(s)?**
If you are not making any changes describe why.

Examples:

Dear Mr./Mrs.:
To whom it may concern:

Gender neutral language in forms/documents:
remove Mr./Mrs., his/her (or change to them)

Information

Welcoming facilities:
remove physical obstacles, provide inclusive wayfinding

Images:
include people of all groups

Additional questions and facts

These additional questions will help you take a deeper look at inclusion in key areas below. Also check out facts about inclusion in our community.

Working together   Communications   Inclusive hiring checklist
Programs, service and projects   Public engagement   Facts

Working together

When I interact with others, do I:
- ☐ Check my assumptions?
- ☐ Avoid stereotypes so I can see the individual for who they are?
- ☐ Discourage jokes, insults and negative comments that may be offensive?
- ☐ Respect differences and recognize what we have in common?
- ☐ Encourage feedback and full participation from everyone?

As a leader, do I:
- ☐ Take steps to create a respectful and inclusive environment and encourage staff to contribute in creating an inclusive workplace?
- ☐ Clearly communicate to staff and the public that inappropriate behaviour such as offensive jokes, and negative comments are not acceptable?
- ☐ Actively gather input and ideas from staff or the public from diverse perspectives?
- ☐ Have procedures, practices or attitudes that unintentionally prevent some people from fully engaging in our work? (i.e. scheduling meetings that conflict with religious holidays, not considering accessibility in planning or implementation). What alternatives are possible?

Programs, services and projects

- ☐ Have equity and inclusion been considered for the current or proposed program, service or project?
- ☐ How is the current or proposed service, project or program designed to ensure that a diversity of people can participate and benefit with dignity? (e.g., accessibility for mobility devices, visual and hearing disabilities, language, access to public transit)
- ☐ Will the service or program give the community fair and equal access to resources and benefits?
- ☐ Are there inclusion practices in other municipalities, departments or community organizations that can inform the implementation?
- ☐ Have the primary target user groups been consulted?

Communications

- ☐ Have you considered all possible target audiences? Who might not be included?
- ☐ What specific communication strategies are needed to reach them (e.g., working with community leaders, community organizations and networks, town website, community newspapers, social media)?

- ☐ Is the way you are communicating easily accessible and understood by the full diversity of our target audience? (e.g., plain language, accessible formats, graphics, multiple languages, both online and print). Will any groups be missed by only using certain methods? What other approaches might we use?
- ☐ Do images represent the full diversity of employees or residents?
- ☐ Will people relate to the images and feel included in the way they are represented?
- ☐ Is everyone portrayed in a positive way that promotes inclusion and breaks stereotypes?

Before

After

Public engagement

- ☐ What types of engagement and outreach will help to ensure that everyone is able to fully participate? How are you creating opportunities for people least likely to be heard to share their specific concerns? (e.g., use of multiple techniques such as online surveys and focus groups, types of questions asked, communication supports, anonymous feedback)
- ☐ Is your team representative of the diversity of the population you are engaging? What steps can you take to ensure you are inclusive of the diversity of perspectives?
- ☐ What steps can you take to remove barriers to people's full participation? (e.g., ensure location is accessible, offer communication supports such as ASL or CART, consider date and time of day, etc.)
- ☐ Does the time of the event or hours of the service consider potential impacts on people's time? (e.g., transportation, language, accessible location, time, multiple formats, religious and cultural holidays, culturally appropriate, family responsibilities)
- ☐ Is the environment welcoming to participants who may be reluctant to share their views? Does the pace, format and language of the engagement accommodate everyone, including participants for whom the information may be new? If not, what can we do to change this? (e.g., pair up a new participant with an experienced one to help those new to the process feel encouraged to participate, use translators or google translate on iPad).

Inclusive Hiring Checklist

The purpose of this checklist is to challenge unconscious bias and consider barriers that candidates may face during the recruitment process. Below is a list of questions to ask yourself to support an inclusive hiring process as much as possible.

Pre-Posting

- ☐ Do staff in your department reflect the diversity of the residents of the Town of Oakville?
- ☐ Would it be beneficial to engage in any focused employment outreach activities (i.e. job

fairs, information sessions) to encourage diverse applicants to apply for positions in your department?

☐ Are you aware that unconscious biases or perceptions about who is suitable for certain jobs exist for all of us? (i.e. men are more suited to certain jobs; people from certain backgrounds are better/worse at certain positions; people are too young/old, etc.)

Posting content

☐ Have you reviewed the job posting to ensure it continues to include bona fide occupational requirements (requirements that are integral to carrying out the functions of the position)?

☐ Are the educational credentials (degree, diploma, certificate, licence) listed in the job description, job posting, pre-screening criteria and/or assessment criteria still necessary and/or required by law to perform the job? Could a candidate with an equivalent combination of education and experience perform the duties of the position?

☐ Are the years of experience requirements that are listed in the job description, job posting, pre-screening criteria and/or assessment criteria still necessary or valid in order to perform the job? For example:
- Requiring "recent experience" can create barriers for people re-entering the job market
- Requiring a specific number of years of experience can create barriers due to age
- Candidates should not be required to demonstrate "Canadian" experience

☐ Are you using inclusive language in the job description, job posting, testing materials, during your interviews and telephone discussions with candidates? For example:
- Are your communications and terms gender-neutral (i.e. referring to a "firefighter" not a "fireman")?
- Are you providing examples and communicating messages that reflect diversity?
- Are you using jargon, idioms or humour that would not be easily understood across different generational, cultural, ethnic and language groups?

Posting

☐ Have you considered where to post your job to reach the broadest pool of diverse applicants? For example, in addition to the town's website, the job ad may be shared with community partners, employment agencies that serve diverse applicants, educational institutions, or other places that facilitate access to job postings for diverse applicants.

☐ Have you considered the language level used in the posting? Use plain language and consider testing your document's readability using tools such as Word to evaluate the language level

Screening

☐ Make sure when reviewing applications you are not allowing irrelevant information to influence your assessment of candidates, such as their name, home address, sex/gender, where or what year a candidate went to school/received training, where they received their prior work experience, etc.

Interview panel

☐ Does your interview panel include diverse representatives?

☐ Have you considered having cross-departmental interview panels to draw on the different experience, skill sets, educational background, professional background, etc. of people outside of your department?

Evaluating candidates

☐ Are you evaluating candidates in the same way, against the same criteria, at every stage of the hiring process, including the review of applications, interview, assessment of any written testing requirements, reference checks, etc.?

☐ Are tests/screening tools reviewed for cultural, gender, racial, age or other biases?

Biases

☐ Are candidates being evaluated on factors that do not predict future job performance and could result in bias, discrimination and/or a lack of diversity in hiring and advancement decisions? These factors could include:
- Personality, generation, culture, gender, etc.
- Your first impression or "gut" feeling
- Perception of "fitting" in or how comfortable you feel with them
- Communication style (accent, how loudly or softly they speak, use of pauses, level of expressiveness, whether they are reserved, how formal they are, etc.)
- Whether they are introverted or extroverted
- Body language (how they shake hands, eye contact, how close they stand to others)
- Physical appearance and dress, facial hair, tattoos, piercings

☐ Make sure you are not asking about and evaluating candidates based on gaps in their employment history. This could result in bias and create systemic barriers for:
- Individuals who left the workplace to care for children or aging parents
- Individuals with disabilities who have periods of absence due to medical reasons
- New Canadians and foreign-trained professionals
- Youth entering the workforce who face difficulty securing permanent full-time work
- Individuals who face barriers and are underemployed due to race, colour, ethnicity, ancestry, place of origin, ethnic origin, sex/gender, sexual orientation, etc.

☐ Make sure you are not rejecting candidates because they appear to be overqualified. This could have an adverse effect on:
- Older individuals, who have significant work experience but are facing barriers to employment, or who may desire a position with less responsibility to transition into retirement or for greater work life balance
- Newcomers to Canada who are facing difficulties securing employment despite their prior work experience and education
- Individuals re-entering the workforce after lengthy absences (such as individuals with disabilities or who have taken time off for childrearing)

☐ Make sure you are not favouring candidates that are similar to you in gender, race, ethnicity/ancestry/place of origin, colour, ability, sexual orientation, cultural background, where you grew up/lived, education background, similar interests, etc.

Barriers

☐ Are you able to remove as many barriers as possible upfront? For example:
  - Scheduling interviews in locations that are physically accessible
  - Arranging interview/testing rooms that are large enough for assistive devices
  - Providing a copy of interview questions at the interview for candidates to follow along (collect at the end of the interview so they do not leave with a copy)
  - Providing test materials in alternative formats

Celebrating our diversity!

If Oakville was a village of 100 people...

Age distribution (years)

	2016	2021
0-9	11	10
10-19	15	16
20-29	11	11
30-39	10	11
40-49	17	15
50-59	16	15
60-69	10	11
70-79	6	7
80+	4	4

▼ Median age: 41.7 (2016) 41.6 (2021)

Religions most observed

Catholic	29
No religion	28
Christian	24
Muslim	10
Hindu	4
Sikh	2
Buddhist	1
Jewish	1
Other religions	>1
Traditional*	>1

*North American Indigenous spirituality

52 women+
52 (2016)

48 men+
48 (2016)

+ refers to an identity as a man, woman or non-binary person

22 persons with disabilities
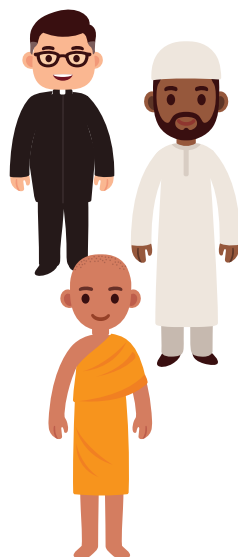
4 Sexual orientation, gender identity and expression

Two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, plus additional terms (2SLGBTQIA+)

OAKVILLE

Celebrating our diversity!

If Oakville was a village of 100 people...

68 ▲ post-secondary education
66 (2016)

46,000 ▲ median income
42,000 (2016)

50 ▼ married or common-law
62 (2016)

40 ▶ have children
40 (2016)

42 ▲ belong to a racialized community
31 (2016)

41 ▲ immigrated into Canada
36 (2016)

1 Indigenous population

20 languages most often spoken at home (other than English)

1. Mandarin
2. Arabic
3. Spanish
4. Urdu
5. Korean
6. Portuguese
7. Punjabi
8. Russian
9. Yue
10. Serbo-Croatian
11. Polish
12. Hindi
13. Tagalog
14. French
15. Iranian Persian
16. Serbian
17. Croatian
18. Italian
19. Romanian
20. Turkish

Statistics are taken from 2016 and 2021 Census data, 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability and a 2021 statistical portrait of Canada's diverse LGBTQ2+ communities.