

Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission Employment Equity Partnership

Message from Krista Daley, Director and CEO



In May 2009, the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission invited all Nova Scotians, particularly businesses, academic institutions, and various organizations to engage in a discussion on employment equity partnerships as a way of addressing the barriers to equality in the workplace.

The Commission received a tremendous response from invited participants to this project. We are delighted to report that many organizations have captured our vision and have committed time and resources to support the initiative.

We are entering into a new phase and once again your participation would further enhance our project. Over the next four weeks we will be circulating our Employment Equity Partnership (EEP) Survey. Our aim is to capture the views of at least 500 employers (small, medium and large) on employment equity in their organizations.

The survey can be found on the Commission's homepage (<http://www.gov.ns.ca/humanrights>). Participation is entirely voluntary and anonymous. Please refer to page 5 for further details. We hope you will join in this new venture to promote equity in the workplace.

We would like to thank you for your continued commitment to this initiative.

Are you an employer that wants to get involved in the Employment Equity Partnership Project?

Don't miss our survey!
<http://www.gov.ns.ca/humanrights/>

International Persons with Disabilities event a success

Exciting new developments for the EEP project

Learn more about our advisory panel organizations

The Employment Equity Partnership Project Continues to Grow and Gain Support...

The Commission first introduced this exciting new initiative on May 1, 2009 at a well attended breakfast event. Since the spring of 2009, the EEP project has gained overwhelming support and achieved many successes. To highlight a few:

Collaboration with local organizations and businesses such as the Nova Scotia Government Employees Union (NSGEU), Acadia University, Bell Aliant and the Black Business Initiative has given the project great momentum.

Public engagement has been fundamental to the development of the EEP project. Ann Divine, lead of the EEP project, successfully delivered the project's message and engaged many youth and new government employees at the IPAC Conference on 'Engaging in Diversity,' (Institute of Public Administration of Canada) in October 2009.

A great relationship has been formed with Capital District Health Authority (CDHA). The EEP will be implemented through a joint venture in the summer of 2010.

EEP Advisory Panel Organizations:

Bell Aliant, Office of Acadian Affairs, Office of Immigration, Public Service Commission, Disabled Persons Commission, Advisory Council on the Status of Women, Nova Scotia Government Employees' Union, Black Business Initiative, Immigrant Settlement & Integration Services (formerly MISA), Valley African Nova Scotian Development Association, Nova Scotia Barristers' Society, Native Council of Nova Scotia, Dalhousie University, Halifax Regional Municipality, Centre for Entrepreneurship, Education and Development



Human Rights Training

Save the date...

April 21st - One Day Workshop - Human Rights at Work
Location - Halifax

April 28th - One Day Workshop - Human Rights at Work
Location - Annapolis Valley

June 14th to 18th - Five Day Workshop
Creating Cultural and Organizational Change

Human rights education training is a vital aspect of the Employment Equity Partnerships. It is through continuous learning that we begin to break down the barriers within our workforce that prevent equitable employment opportunities and healthy working environments.

EEP aims to enhance training effectiveness through embracing a collaborative approach to learning. If you are interested, please contact Race Relations, Equity and Inclusion, 1-902-424-7282

Celebrating Collaboration

Last year the Commission embarked on a new vision with the goal of engaging Nova Scotians in discussion on valuing equity in the workplace. The Commission had previously used Affirmative Action Agreements as memoranda of understanding between government, businesses and the Commission. Affirmative Action Agreements, first introduced in 1972 to Maritime Tel & Tel (now Bell Aliant), proved less effective than initially envisaged. The Commission actively sought the advice of the public. Feedback from research conducted with small focus groups led the Commission to become a more effective partner.

Recently, the Commission invited Bell Aliant to become a partner in this new Employment Equity Partnership initiative. The largest employer east of Montreal, Bell Aliant has brought to the initiative a great deal of knowledge and experience in the area of employment equity.

The Commission's aim is to work in partnership with other organizations to promote inclusion and achieve a representative workforce in Nova Scotia. The goal of the partnerships is to encourage engagement of under-represented persons and raise awareness of the barriers faced in employment by certain groups of people.

When the Employment Equity Partnership initiative was announced in May 2009, many organizations expressed keen interest in the project. Organizations, including the Black Business Initiative, the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration, the Native Council of Nova Scotia and the Nova Scotia Government Employees' Union, also highlighted in this newsletter, have all given their full support to the Employment Equity Partnership initiative. The Commission is delighted that employers such as Acadia University and the Valley African Nova Scotian Development Association are some of the partners involved in the project's advisory panel. The Commission is further developing new relationships for the Employment Equity Partnership initiative, such as with Capital District Health Authority.

Another development of the initiative is the launching of the online Employment Equity Partnership survey on January 26, 2010. The response has been very positive, with more than 300 employers completing the survey to date. Once the information has been analyzed, we will report its results. The Commission expects to use this information to address one of our largest areas of complaint: disability and employment. Our hope is that, through building working relationships with employers on the benefits of accommodating persons with disabilities, we can work together to reduce hardship for these Nova Scotians.

The Commission thanks its partners for their time and valuable insight. We look forward to continuing our work together to learn more about some of our partners.

EEP Advisory Panel Members Speak

Black Business Initiative



The Black Business Initiative (BBI) is a province-wide business development initiative committed to fostering the growth of businesses owned by members of the Nova Scotia Black business community. In 1995, the Government of Canada and the Province of Nova Scotia set up the BBI to address the unique needs confronting the Black business community in Nova Scotia.

The BBI is currently funded by the federally administered Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) and the Provincial Department of Economic Development.

We place priority on educating Black business owners in the operation of their business - from marketing to budgeting to securing funding. Our mission is to positively influence the Nova Scotia business culture by promoting and assisting in the development of Nova Scotia Black-owned businesses. As an organization that is committed to best practices, BBI's involvement with the Employment Equity Partnership fits into our mandate and mission.



Bell Aliant

Bell Aliant is committed to providing equity in employment and fostering an inclusive work environment. Needless to say, the news of Bell Aliant's recognition as one of Canada's Best Diversity Employers was received with great pleasure this past spring.

Canada's Best Diversity Employers' program recognizes employers across Canada that have excellent workplace diversity and inclusiveness programs. Bell Aliant received this recognition as part of Canada's Top 100 Employers project - an annual ranking sponsored by MediaCorp Canada Inc. In addition to ranking in the top 35 for diversity, Bell Aliant was recognized as one of the Best Employers for New Canadians and was also recognized as one of the Top Ten Best Employers in Nova Scotia.



Office of Immigration

The Office of Immigration is committed to representing the population it serves and will continue to be diligent in hiring the most qualified candidates, while valuing diversity, linguistic capacity and the benefits they bring. This serves as an example to employers throughout the province that the Nova Scotia Public Service is committed to hiring immigrants. Office of Immigration staff have

attended mandatory diversity and human rights training in order to ensure cross-cultural competence when meeting with clients and the public.



NSGEU

The NSGEU represents 26,000 public sector workers who provide quality public services in communities across the province. We have a strong and proud history of identifying human rights issues that affect our members in their workplaces and promoting the advancement of human rights in all of our collective bargaining processes.

We are pleased to participate in initiatives like the Employment Equity Partnership that raise awareness, advocate and promote equity in workplaces throughout Nova Scotia.

Native Council of Nova Scotia

The Native Council of Nova Scotia (NCNS) is the self-governing authority for the large community of Mi'kmaq/Aboriginal peoples residing off-reserve in Nova Scotia throughout traditional Mi'kmaq territory. Grace Conrad is the Chief and President of the NCNS. The goal of the NCNS is to operate and administer a strong and effective Aboriginal Peoples Representative Organization that serves, advocates and represents the community it serves.

The NCNS latest initiative involves working with Encana Native Council Opportunities Fund (ENCOF) to provide support for the off-reserve Mi'kmaq/Aboriginal People interested in training or education opportunities related to the oil and gas industry.



International Day of Persons with Disabilities

2nd Annual Symposium on Inclusive Employment and Education:

This event has truly become an opportunity to explore the many challenges of the journey from education to employment and to embrace a collaborative working network between the Collaborative Partnership Network, Disabled Persons Commission, and the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission.

The event speakers, including key note speaker David Samson, Nova Scotia Human Rights Commissioner, provided great insight and passion. The Lieutenant Governor's Persons with Disabilities Employer Partnership Award, presented by the Honourable Mayann E. Francis, Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia, was humbly received by Acadian Seaplants Limited.

The EEP initiative supports the goals of this partnership to encourage engagement of underrepresented persons and to raise awareness of the barriers faced in employment by persons with disabilities. The Commission's largest area of complaints is in the area of disability and employment. Our hope is that, through building working relationships and engaging with employers on the benefits of accommodation, we can work together to effect positive change in Nova Scotia.



We want to hear from you!

You are invited to participate in the Employment Equity Partnership survey.

The purpose of this survey is to gather data from a representative sample of Nova Scotian employers in the public, private and non-profit sectors to further examine employment equity trends and to help produce an Employment Equity Partnership program that is built on the principles of collaboration. The information for this survey was derived from a number of experts in the field of survey development.

Participation in the survey is completely voluntary. Responses to the Employment Equity Partnership Survey are considered anonymous and confidential, and therefore individually - named responses will not be released, shared or published.

Please find the survey on the Commission's homepage.
<http://www.gov.ns.ca/humanrights/>

Thank you for your participation!

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