



diversity

Moving Toward Equity

Employment Equity and Diversity
in the Nova Scotia Public Service

2009-2010

**Message from
the Minister**

I am pleased to present the 2009-10 report “**Moving, Toward Equity**”. This report provides a summary of the progress made in the 2009-10 fiscal year towards our goal of being a diverse workforce.

As a government of the people of Nova Scotia, it is our responsibility to be truly representative of the citizens we serve and to ensure that everyone is provided an equal opportunity for employment.

As one of the largest employers in the province we must also lead by example. That is why my government remains committed to creating an environment where differences are valued and respected and where our diversity only adds to the rich tapestry of our province.

Diversity is one of our public service values. A truly diverse public service has the power to open minds and influence our future in positive and exciting ways; because diversity fuels ideas and ideas fuel progress. By achieving our diversity objectives, we will be better able to serve all Nova Scotians in an effective, inclusive and culturally competent manner.

This report shows we are continuing to build a work environment of fairness, equity, mutual respect and understanding and cultural competence each and every day.

I would like to thank departments and offices for their continued efforts and support. I would also like to thank all public servants who remain committed to our diversity objectives and to the citizens we serve.

Yours sincerely,



Honourable Frank Corbett
Minister, Public Service Commission

Highlights Departments and Offices and Agencies continue to foster a welcoming, inclusive and culturally competent Public Service that is representative of the citizens we serve. Here are some of the highlights from our accomplishments in the 2009-10 fiscal year:

- As of March 31, 2010, 7.1 % of public servants identified themselves as being a member of a designated group. This is a small increase from 2009 when 7.0 % self-identified.
- As of March 31, 2010, women made up approximately 53 per cent of the Management Group in the Nova Scotia Public Service.
- In 2009 the Human Rights Commission Launched Employment Equity Partnership
- Once again in 2009, the Public Service Commission and the Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union (NSGEU) partnered to participate in the Halifax Pride Parade and was awarded first place
- In the Spring of 2009 the LGBTI (Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender/ Intersex) Network for employees of the Province of Nova Scotia was formed.
- In 2009 the Network hosted the first annual Pride event in the Nova Scotia House of Assembly.

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1. Introduction The Government of Nova Scotia is committed to providing a workplace that is free of discrimination, values diversity, and promotes equality of opportunity for all people. This commitment recognizes fairness and equity as cornerstones of human resource management in the public service. Fairness and equity help ensure staffing decisions, access to training, and other opportunities are based on merit, and that no one is excluded for reasons unrelated to qualifications.

This report describes the progress made (2009-10) in achieving the objectives of the Employment Equity Policy. These objectives are:

- *to promote an inclusive, culturally competent public service that values diversity;*
- *to assist with the identification and removal of systemic barriers to employment and the advancement of members of the designated groups; and*
- *to achieve a workforce where the designated groups are equitably represented.*

2. The Corporate Human Resource Plan

The development and adoption of a corporate human resource plan, based on broad dialogue with citizens and public servants, provided a blueprint for human resource planning from 2005 to 2010. This includes the impetus for a diversity initiative within the public service.

The plan also provided the rationale, mandate, and accountability for the development of a public service that values diversity and is representative of the citizens of Nova Scotia at all job levels.

2.1 Our Corporate Human Resource Strategic Goals

The Corporate Human Resource Plan has five strategic goals, each of which is further defined by specific objectives and strategies. These goals are:

- *to make a difference through a skilled, committed, and accountable public service;*
- *to be a preferred employer;*
- *to be a safe and supportive workplace;*
- *to be a diverse workforce;*
- *to be a learning organization*

In order to become a diverse workforce we must be:

- *an organization that values diversity; and*
- *representative of the people we serve*

2.2 Becoming An Organization That Values Diversity

In the Corporate Human Resource Plan the first objective in support of our goal to be a diverse workforce and to...

“Expand the public service focus on employment equity and affirmative action to a broader “valuing diversity” philosophy and culture and to ensure that this focus is reflected in our workforce.”

This means government will continue working to create an environment of fairness, equality, mutual respect and understanding in the public service for all employees regardless of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, mental or physical disability, spiritual beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, marital status, family status, religious affiliation, or socio-economic status.

Government's objective is to create a public service that:

- *is a model employer that values diversity as an organizational strength;*
- *identifies and removes barriers of racism and discrimination that exclude or disadvantage employees or applicants;*
- *is an inclusive organization;*
- *is a learning organization that supports the development of all its employees;*
- *has developed and maintained strong partnerships with communities;*
- *has employees with the cultural sensitivity and competency to provide excellent services to all citizens; and*
- *holds itself accountable for this vision*

2.3 Becoming Representative of the People We Serve

A second key objective in the Corporate Human Resource Plan was to:

“Increase the number and distribution of employees from designated groups each year for the next five years.”

For the Nova Scotia Public Service to develop a culture that values diversity it must become representative, at all levels, of the people it serves. Achieving this includes supporting affirmative initiatives to help ensure groups that have been historically excluded from employment and promotion opportunities are equitably represented throughout the organization.

Our objective is to have a public service that:

- *is representative, at all levels, of the people it serves;*
- *has achieved employment equity for Aboriginal People, African Nova Scotians and Other Racially Visible Persons, Persons with Disabilities, and Women in occupations or positions where they are under-represented;*
- *proactively recruits applicants who are members of the designated groups;*
- *proactively provides developmental opportunities for employees from the designated groups;*
- *has a corporate culture that helps retain skilled members of the designated groups;*
- *has representatives of the designated groups equitably distributed in all occupations and pay levels; and*
- *holds itself accountable for our support for diversity and our employment equity goals*

3. Measuring Our Progress “An Organization That Values Diversity”

While it is important to track progress numerically, it is also important to recognize that diversity is more than merely measuring our statistical profile. It is about how we work together, how we ensure that all employees are valued, and how they feel a sense of belonging and engagement.

The efforts of departments and offices have a positive impact on the culture of the public service and on its representation.

3.1 Highlights of Departmental Activities

In 2009-10 departments and offices continued to implement action plans developed to guide their efforts in achieving the goal of becoming a public service that values diversity and is representative of the people it serves.

While it is impossible to report on all the diversity initiatives that support our goal to be an organization that values diversity, some highlights from 2009-10 include:

Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender/Intersex Network for Nova Scotian Public Servants

In the Spring of 2009 a Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender/Intersex (LGBTI) Network for employees of the Province of Nova Scotia was formed.

People who identify as LGBTI represent a large and important part of the social fabric of Nova Scotia. They are our local business owners, teachers, friends, family, neighbours, and co-workers. People are the foundation of workplaces. A commitment to being people-based is central to an organization's mandate, inspiring employees in their work life, ensuring they feel like they belong, are valued and that everyone has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

It is about creating and maintaining a workplace where people are free to be who they are at work everyday. An LGBTI Network within an organization is key to achieving these goals.

While legal rights exist, not all LGBTI people live in communities and work in environments that enable them to be open about their sexual orientation and gender identity.

The work of building and maintaining inclusive, supportive environments is on-going.

The goal of the LGBTI Network is to make positive changes in the day-to-day experiences of employees, enhance the effectiveness of the organization and enhance the positive impacts of government's work in communities.

Through monthly meetings and other events, the Network is providing LGBTI employees with opportunities to meet and connect with other LGBTI professionals.

In 2009 the Network hosted the first annual Pride Event in the Nova Scotia House of Assembly.

The Network is currently developing a communications strategy, including a web site, which will be used to increase the Network's profile and raise awareness, build membership, and engage employees across the province in this work.

The Network partnered with a community organization to do a literature review and environmental scan to identify effective approaches for employers and employees to address barriers the LGBTI employees face and create/maintain supportive work environments.

Additionally, the Network will be developing a process to engage and understand the experience of employees and the needs of LGBTI employees to inform strategies to address challenges of homophobia, transphobia, heterosexism and genderism in the workplace. As well, the Network is developing relationships and partnerships and contributing an inclusion/equity perspective related to sexual orientation and gender identity to a number of different areas of work.

2009 Halifax Pride Parade

Once again, the Government of Nova Scotia and the Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union (NSGEU) participated together at Halifax's 2009 Pride Parade on Saturday, July 25. "It's important that we take part, to lead by example, and to march alongside our employees and the people of Nova Scotia in support of diversity and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex issues," said Rosalind Penfound, who was commissioner of the Public Service Commission in 2009.

In keeping with the parade theme of Breaking Down Walls; the float entitled, Building Bridges, commemorated the 40th anniversary of the Stonewall riots in New York City that marked the beginning of the modern gay rights movement in North America.

The annual Pride Parade attracts over 40,000 spectators and in 2009 the entry by the PSC and the NSGEU was awarded first place prize for the "best float".

Human Rights Commission: Employment Equity Partnership

The Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission (NSHRC) is committed to promoting the principles of equity, inclusion and diversity. In 2009, in recognition of the changing demographics, our diverse cultures, values and the implication of change in Nova Scotia's workforce, the NSHRC has begun a new and exciting initiative known as the Employment Equity Partnership (EEP).

Under the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act, the Race Relations, Equity and Inclusion Division is mandated to design, develop and implement programs to address and/or eliminate barriers to preventing full participation for some groups of individuals within the labour force. The Employment Equity Partnership initiative is based on the principles described and is in line with the NSHRC's responsibility of upholding and promoting the Human Rights Act.

Historically, the NSHRC focused on Affirmative Action Agreement program as a preventive action to remove barriers which resulted in disadvantage and other forms of discrimination within the work environment because of race, gender, sex and disability, and as a remedy in settling complaints of discrimination.

The vision of the Employment Equity Partnership is reflective of the NSHRC's goal in the Affirmative Action Program: to remove barriers faced by some members of our workforce and to promote the value of equity and inclusion in the workplace. The distinction between the two, affirmative action and employment equity, becomes evident in the EEP's collaborative approach.

The EEP's design is research-based, collaboration with employers and employees, community organizations and academic institutions across Nova Scotia. Recently the NSHRC forged a number of new partnerships in relation to employment equity, and Capital District Health Authority is one such partner.

In March 2010, a major aspect of the EEP was launched. The NSHRC sent a survey questionnaire to over 1,200 businesses across Nova Scotia to gather their knowledge on Employment Equity in their organizations. The NSHRC, received an overwhelming 640 replies. This was a clear indication that Nova Scotians are interested in employment equity issues.

"Human rights are a shared responsibility of government, communities and individuals," said Krista Daley, Director and CEO of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission during an announcement of the initiative. "Through public engagement we can reduce discrimination and work towards our goal of achieving equitable access to opportunities and services for every individual."

The EEP will include policy guidelines and monitoring processes to ensure members of equity groups are welcomed in workplaces across Nova Scotia. The expected launch date for the Employment Equity Partnership survey results and recommendations of the Employment Equity partnership initiative is March 2011.

An advisory panel has been involved from the onset of the two-year EEP initiative which is rooted in principles of collaboration. The panel is comprised of representatives from: Native Council of Nova Scotia; Valley African Nova Scotian Development Association; Dalhousie School of Public Administration; Nova Scotia Public Service Commission; Halifax Regional Municipality; Nova Scotia Barristers' Society; Centre for Entrepreneurship,

Education and Development; Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women; Nova Scotia Disabled Persons' Commission; Saint Mary's University Students' Association; Immigrant Settlement Integrated Services; Nova Scotia Acadian Affairs; Black Business Initiative; and Bell Aliant.

Department Of Health Hosts “Project Brotherhood”

In March 2010, the Department of Health's Diversity Committee welcomed the Chicago-based “Project Brotherhood “Team to Nova Scotia. Project Brotherhood is an innovative, primary health care model involving grass roots participation in health education and outreach, including partnerships with barbers who serve as health information navigators. The model is dynamic and adaptable for Nova Scotia populations. The focus of the Project Brotherhood program is health improvement through education, community and leadership development and coping strategies among African American and minority men using culture and gender specific approaches. The Project Brotherhood Team presented to public servants, health system stakeholders and communities. During their short stay, they shared the Project Brotherhood story, lessons learned and best practices in service delivery. They also inspired youth and supported representation of those most under-represented in the health professions.

Public Service Commission's Diversity Committee Marks African Heritage Month

In February 2010, during African Heritage Month, the Public Service Commission's Diversity Committee, with the support of the US Consulate, welcomed Peter Hanes, Program Coordinator for the Canada-USA Black Studies Mini Film Festival to present during the Diversity Speaker event.

Mr. Hane's presentation titled, “From the Underground Railroad to Black Studies in North America Today: Exploring Our Shared North American Black Historical and Cultural Connections” was well attended by staff of the Public Service Commission and by members of the Diversity Round Table. It included the following topics:

- *The Abolition of Slavery in the British Empire and its Colonies;*
- *The Underground Railroad;*
- *The District of Columbia's Emancipation; and*
- *Canadian Civil War Connections, including the Washington, DC's Black Civil War Regiment; and*
- *World War I: Canada's Only All Black Battalion, the No. 2 Construction Battalion.*

The presentation included a film sneak preview of *Black, Copper, & Bright: the District of Columbia's Black Civil War Regiment.*

Unnatural Causes: Is inequality making us sick?

In 2009, the Diversity Committees of the Department of Health Promotion and Protection and the Department of Health collaborated on the presentation of a film series called “Unnatural Causes: Is inequality making us sick”?

The basic idea underlying Unnatural Causes is that social inequities and their related health consequences are not natural or inevitable and that public policy plays a critical role in addressing health inequities. The setting for the seven episodes is the U.S., but many of the issues raised are also relevant in Canada.

The series draws attention to the root causes of illness, asking questions such as: Why are some people healthier than others? What role does class play in health? What role does gender play? What role does race play? How do these factors come together in people’s lives and impact health?

Overview of the Seven Episodes in the series Unnatural Causes:

- 1) *In Sickness and in Wealth*: introduced ideas about health inequity and featured 4 individuals from different walks of life to show how their positions in society affect their health.
- 2) *When the Bough Breaks*: explored the black-white infant mortality gap in the US, focusing on the role of class, racism and stress in birth outcomes.
- 3) *Becoming American*: Recent immigrants are often healthier than U.S. citizens, but these health advantages erode over time.
- 4) *Bad Sugar*: Some Aboriginal communities have among the highest rates of diabetes in the world. Does the stress of poverty increase blood sugar levels?
- 5) *Place matters*: The neighbourhoods where people live influence their health. Public policy and investment decisions can harm or enhance neighbourhood health.
- 6) *Collateral Damage*: The local populations in the Marshall Islands have been displaced by the American military and globalization, seriously affecting individual and community health.
- 7) *Not Just a Paycheck*: Explores the effects of job loss on individual and community health and compares the experience of job loss in the U.S. and Sweden to demonstrate the role of public policy in supporting industrial workers.

3.2 Diversity Education

We continue to build opportunities for public servants to increase their skills and competencies in the area of diversity.

Diversity and Employment Equity:

This foundational program introduces the language and concepts of diversity, along with strategies for equity and inclusion. This is a mandatory program that all new public servants are required to take within a reasonable time of joining government.

Diversity Management for Leaders:

This module is designed to enhance key leadership skills to manage an increasingly diverse workforce that will ultimately improve personal, employee and organizational performance.

Aboriginal Cultural Awareness E-Learning Module

This E-Learning Module uses an aboriginal culture training program endorsed by the Assembly of First Nations. The program is customized to meet the needs of the province's public servants.

The training program has five key components with a specific module on the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia. The program complements the Aboriginal Perceptions training that is also offered to Nova Scotian public servants.

Aboriginal Perceptions:

This popular program recognizes that an understanding of the contemporary Aboriginal community is essential to our work as government employees and individuals. This course is designed to provide a practical, hands-on approach to working with Aboriginal people.

Acadie at a Glance: The Acadians of Nova Scotia and French-language Services

Thanks to the Office of Acadian Affairs, Acadie at a Glance: The Acadians of Nova Scotia and French-language Services is a new workshop designed to help government employees become more aware of the Acadian and francophone community in Nova Scotia.

Cultural Competence for Public Servants

This course introduces the skills, knowledge and attitudes required to interact with and serve culturally diverse people, and work effectively in cross-cultural situations.

Respectful Workplace

Every employee wants to work in an environment where they will be respected. This half-day program explores the provisions of the Respectful Workplace Policy using video scenarios, presentations and group discussions. Participants learn how to identify disrespectful behaviour and how to respond appropriately. All provincial government employees are required to take this course.

Leading a Respectful Workplace

In the course of their normal duties, people who manage others can become aware of a workplace incident in which one employee has been disrespectful of another. This program is designed to help supervisors deal with these difficult situations.

3.3 The Diversity Round Table

Champions from several key departments and offices continue to participate on the Diversity Round Table, and to work collaboratively to develop ways to support the achievement of our corporate diversity objectives.

The Diversity Round Table is an inter-departmental forum that provides advice and guidance as government works toward a diverse and inclusive public service.

The Diversity Round Table achieves its purpose by:

- *ensuring we have a common understanding of diversity and what it means to be a culturally competent organization;*
- *sharing information on what is happening across government including identification of best practices;*
- *ensuring a coherent approach to diversity;*
- *building momentum to create and enable change;*
- *bringing expertise to the Diversity Round Table (individual experience, position/content expertise);*
- *providing advice and feedback on developing initiatives and/or policies; and*
- *providing a forum for key government agencies and communities of interest to have a voice in policy development and initiatives*

In 2009-10 the Diversity Round Table continued a monthly Diversity Message that is broadcast to all Public Servants. This message includes tips and suggestions on “Achieving Equity”, “Cultural Competence” and has information on significant diversity events for the upcoming month. This monthly message is meant to support and encourage all public servants to build upon the corporate values of Respect, Integrity, Diversity, Accountability and the Public Good as they model and advance equity and cultural competence in the Public Service of Nova Scotia.

A synopsis of the cultural competence tips is included in the Appendix to this report.

Also in 2009-10 the Diversity Round Table worked collaboratively with the Office of Policy and Priorities in order to inform an action plan for diversity policy integration. Work on this initiative is continuing in 2010.

In 2009-10 the Diversity Round Table established a Research Task Team and this team is developing a Research Web Portal that will provide easy access to diversity research and evidence based human resource practices that support diversity.

4. Reporting Our Progress: “A Representative Organization”

It is the responsibility of the Public Service Commission to provide departments and offices with information on the profile of their organizations and to provide information on the representation of the designated groups in the province as a whole.

All newly hired employees with the Nova Scotia public service are provided with, and are encouraged to complete a voluntary workforce self-identification survey called “Count Yourself In.” This information is confidential and maintained electronically on the SAP Human Resource system, which allows for tracking of statistics such as retirements, transfers and promotions. The self-identification survey can now be completed on-line at www.gov.ns.ca/psc/workforcesurvey

4.1 2009-10 Organizational Profile

Table A provides a snapshot of the profile of the Nova Scotia public service as of March 31, 2010. In total, 7.1 % of public servants identified themselves as being a member of a designated group. This is a small increase from 2009 when 7.0 % self-identified. Table A also shows the number of designated group members in Nova Scotia who are in the Nova Scotia labour force from the 2006 Census, which is the most recent information available at the date this report was written.

The public service strives to be representative of our communities at all levels of the organization. One measure of how we are doing is to look at the representation of designated groups in the Excluded compensation Plan (ECP).

Table A: Profile of the Nova Scotia Public Service, March 31, 2010

| Groups | All Ages 2006 (% of Prov. Pop'n) | In Labour Force 2006 (% of Total Prov. labour Force) | Public Service March 31, 2010 (% of Total Public Service) |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| Aboriginal Persons | 24,175 (2.7%) | 11,250 (2.3 %) | 92 (0.8 %) |
| African Nova Scotians & Other Racially Visible Persons | 37,690 (4.2 %) | 17,660 (3.7 %) | 337 (3.0 %) |
| Persons with Disabilities | 179,100 (20%) | 54,560 (11.5 %) | 372 (3.3 %) |
| Total | 240,965 (26.9%) | 83,470 (17.5 %) | 801 (7.1 %) |

Source: Data was accessed from the following sources: SAP-HR, 2006 Canadian Census as reported on NS Community Counts www.gov.ns.ca/finance/communitycounts/ and Statistics Canada 2006 Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS) <http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/071203/d071203a.htm>

Table B: MCP Levels of Designated Groups in Civil Service (2010)

| MCP Level | Number (percent) of Designated Groups in MCP positions by level | Number of Women (percent) in MCP positions by level | Total |
|------------------------|---|---|-------------|
| Level I (Up to MCP 19) | 31 (6.3 %) | 300 (60.9 %) | 493 |
| Level II (MCP 20-23) | 43 (7.4 %) | 311 (53.7 %) | 579 |
| Level III (MCP 24-27) | 14 (5.6 %) | 111 (41.5 %) | 248 |
| Level IV (MCP 28-35) | 8 (4.7 %) | 74 (43.5%) | 170 |
| Totals | 96 (6.4 %) | 788 (52.9 %) | 1490 |

Reference: Data extracted from SAP-HR, March 31, 2010

Note: While the civil service has moved to a new Excluded Classification Payplan (ECP) data from the SAP-HR system has been reported under the Management Compensation Plan for March 31, 2010. In future years this data will be reported by ECP levels.

In 1993, the date of the first workforce survey in the Nova Scotia civil service, women occupied 30 per cent of MCP positions within the Nova Scotia public service. Overall, the Nova Scotia public service has made progress in this area. As of March 31, 2010, women made up approximately 53 per cent of the Management Group in the Nova Scotia Public Service

In order to continue improvements in the area of career advancement, the public service will need to do more work to engage other designated group members to help identify the barriers they are facing in their career development needs, interests and opportunities.

4.2 Diversity Employment Programs

Diversity Accommodation Fund

The Employment Equity Policy provides a directive that states: “Departments shall provide reasonable accommodation to applicants, candidates and employees.” Accommodation is an individualized process by which the employer removes barriers in the recruitment and selection process, as well as in the workplace.

The Diversity Accommodation Fund helps the public service attract and retain employees with disabilities by ensuring workplace-related barriers are removed. Accommodations can include technical aids and devices, ergonomic assessments, interpreter services and minor workplace modifications or modified work hours.

In 2009-10 the Diversity Accommodation Fund supported several interventions in several departments and offices. Examples included large video monitors and refreshable Braille readers for employees who are visually impaired or who have low vision, adaptive electronic equipment and workplace modifications for employees with physical disabilities, and sign-language interpreter services for employees who are Deaf. The Fund supported 47 accommodations for approximately \$35,000 in the 2009-10 fiscal year.

Diversity Talent Pool

The main goal of the Diversity Talent Pool is to help increase public service representation of the province's four designated groups: Aboriginal persons, African Nova Scotians and other racially visible persons, persons with disabilities, and women in under-represented or non-traditional positions.

The pool has more than 300 resumes from pre-screened, skilled applicants, whose qualifications range from high school diplomas to Masters Degrees and PhD's. It provides easy access to applicants, is a quick way to fill casual needs, helps to diversify the workforce, and allows individuals to gain work experience within the provincial government.

The Public Service Commission has also been promoting the talent pool in Nova Scotian communities by making presentations to organizations that represent the designated groups and by attending career fairs and other opportunities to promote the Pool. For example, in 2009 the Nova Scotia Public Service Commission participated in the "Job Search Strategies Forum" which sponsored by the National Education Association of Disabled Students (NEADS). Staff of the Public Service Commission reviewed and provided advice on resumes to individuals who attended the forum and provided information on careers with the Public Service,

Summer Diversity Program

The Summer Diversity Program offers summer employment to qualified students in their chosen fields of study. This program is designed for Aboriginal students, students with disabilities, and African Nova Scotians and other racially visible students who attend university, community college or a post-secondary trades school. Students participating in this program gain valuable experience in order to compete for permanent positions.

In the summer of 2009, the Public Service Commission funded eight positions. These included:

| Department | Position |
|-------------------------|--|
| Health | Module Coordinator: Human Capital Management |
| Natural Resources | Data Management Specialist) |
| Office of the Ombudsman | Junior Ombudsman Representative |
| Human Rights Commission | Research and Education Assistant |
| NS Pension Agency | Financial Services Officer |
| Community Services | Assistant Youth Worker |
| Education | Statistics and Research Assistant |
| Agriculture | Aquatic Science/ AquaCulture Technical Assistant |

Summer Female Mentorship Program

The Summer Female Mentorship Program provides opportunities for women enrolled in post-secondary education, who are pursuing careers in non-traditional occupations to gain relevant career experience. The program provides the opportunity for participants to work with a female management employee in their chosen field. This program places full-time female university and community college or trade school students in fields related to their education where women are under-represented.

In the summer of 2009, the Public Service Commission funded 10 positions under this program. The following positions were funded:

| Department | Position |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Human Rights Commission | Junior Human Rights Officer |
| Public Service Commission | Project Research Associate: HR Renewal |
| Natural Resources Environment | Wildlife Technician Assistant Water Resource Intern (Halifax) |
| Natural Resources | Junior Wildlife Technician |
| Fisheries & Aquaculture | Aquaculture (GIS) Technician |
| Natural Resources | Extension Forester Assistant |
| Labour & Workforce Development | Risk & Audit Management Assistant, Elevators & Lifts Inspection |
| Fisheries & Aquaculture | Aquaculture Outreach Team Leader |
| Natural Resources | Environmental Education Assistant |

Diversity Selection Panel Pool

The Employment Equity Policy has a directive regarding the make-up of Selection Panels when a candidate has identified as a member of a designated group. The Policy Directive states:

“Departments should make every effort to have a member of a designated group on Selection Panels when a candidate has identified as a member of a designated group.”

The Public Service Commission has established a Diversity Selection Panel Pool to support this directive and to ensure that fairness, objectivity and diverse perspectives are an integral component of the selection process.

The Selection Diversity Panel Pool gives hiring managers a resource to establish representative competition panels and gives members of the designated groups hands-on experience on recruitment and selection. In 2009-10 there were in excess of 75 public servants from the designated groups who have been trained and available to support diverse selection panels.

5. Conclusion

The Government of Nova Scotia is committed to a workplace that is free from discrimination that values diversity and is representative of the citizens of Nova Scotia. We are committed to the achievement of Employment Equity in the Nova Scotia Public Service and to build the cultural competence needed today to be a socially progressive organization.

We value respect, integrity, diversity, accountability and the public good. We stand by these values, and we believe that they are in the best interest of all Nova Scotians. Through their diversity action plans, departments and offices will continue to foster a corporate culture that values diversity. We also recognize that changing workplace culture is an ongoing process. There is no one person, or one group that is responsible for this change, as it falls upon all of us to work together and to do our part, to ensure we are taking steps forward and not standing still.

Ultimately we know we must improve the diversity of the Public Service of Nova Scotia. Diversity in our Public Service brings a range of life experience, knowledge and helps us ensure services respond to the needs of all Nova Scotians.

Appendix

2009-10 Cultural Competence Tips

The Diversity Round Table sends monthly broadcast messages to all Nova Scotia Public Servants. Each message has a cultural competence tip aimed at increasing awareness, encouraging diversity conversation and expanding the cultural knowledge of our employees. Here are samples of the Cultural Competence Tips from 2009-10.

Racism Hurts

There are different types of racism, some conscious and some unconscious. All types of racism can impact a person's ability to obtain services and a sense of inclusion, thereby impacting their life and health:

Overt racism - attitudes, actions, policies and practices that openly embody the assumption that one's group is superior to other(s). This form of racism includes hate propaganda and hate crimes.

Systemic racism - may be introduced consciously or unconsciously. Policies and practices that adversely affect people of colour still exist in our society.

Internalized racism - this is racism turned inward, the perception that some people of colour hold that they are "less than" because they internalize negative views and stereotypes held against them.

Eight Steps to Cultural Competence

1. Examine your values, behaviours, beliefs and assumptions.
2. Recognize "isms" and the institutions or behaviors that breed them.
3. Engage in activities that help you to re-frame your thinking, allowing you to hear and understand other world views and perspectives.
4. Familiarize yourself with the core cultural elements of the diverse communities you serve.
5. Engage the people you serve to share how their reality is similar to, or different from yours. Unique histories and experiences will result in different behaviors, values and needs.

6. Learn how different people define, name and understand issues. Engage them in sharing their perspectives.
7. Develop a relationship of trust with clients and co-workers by interacting with openness, understanding and willingness to hear different perspectives.
8. Create a welcoming environment that reflects the diversity of the people you serve.

Diversity Has Common Issues

Some of the common issues diverse populations share include:

- Discrimination
- Lack of data and research that specifies race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation and gender identity
- Limited outreach
- Under-representation at all levels of the workforce
- The need for interpretation services
- The need for written resources and access to services in plain languages and languages other than English
- The need for recognition & respect of spirituality
- The need for recognition & respect for other ways of being outside the mainstream
- The need to understand that “one size fits all” services, programs and policies do not “fit all”.

We All Have Differences

Everyone has differing skills, knowledge and values. It is important to understand people as individuals within the context of cultural competence. For more information visit:

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/health/primaryhealthcare/diversity.asp>

L.I.A.A.S.E. - A General Cultural Competence Tool

LEARN from others and identify your own biases and stereotypes;

INQUIRE respectfully to clarify and understand information;

AVOID polarization by soliciting other options or points of view;

AVOID arguing and defending by agreeing to disagree on differences in values;

SHOW EMPATHY and listen not just to the words, but the feelings behind them/acknowledge and validate powerful emotions when expressed.

A Culturally Competent Organization

An organization that is culturally competent understands, accepts and respects diversity. It also includes and actively involves people who are reflective of the diverse groups represented within its communities.

It's About Behaviour

Having a diverse looking staff does not mean having culturally competent staff. These are distinct concepts – one addresses appearance, the other addresses behaviour. For more information on cultural competence visit: <http://www.gov.ns.ca/health/primaryhealthcare/diversity.asp>

The Importance of Training

Promoting and providing training to staff in cultural competence reflects the organization's commitment to establish a culturally competent work environment, and to ensure programs and services respond to the needs of all citizens. For more information on cultural competence visit: <http://www.gov.ns.ca/health/primaryhealthcare/diversity.asp>

Hear our voices

Congratulations to the Department of Health's Diversity Committee. They developed and produced a short video "Hear Our Voices". This powerful and innovative video conveys individual transformation and organizational commitment to cultural competence and diversity. Want to take a look? Visit: http://www.gov.ns.ca/health/primaryhealthcare/diversity/Hear_Our_Voices.asp

Empathy

Empathy is necessary to our personal, cultural competence development. Being open to putting ourselves in the place of another who may have a different identity or perspective from us is key to the cultural competence journey. It also helps us to better recognize our own biases and appreciate the life experience of others.

Culturally Competent Approaches to Mentoring

- A diversity of people including under-represented populations should be involved in advising mentoring initiatives.
- Cultural responsiveness should be understood as a requirement for mentoring. This includes cultural awareness and competence training and support for mentors as well as assessment and feedback.
- Mentors should consider cultural (ethno-racial, sexual orientation, gender identity, spirituality, (dis)ability, world view, etc.) and linguistic similarity as assets when choosing mentees.
- Customized outreach activities should be considered for under-represented groups (an example might be women in non traditional occupations who have been mentored could refer other women to mentors).

Want more information about culturally competent mentoring? Visit: http://www.3creek.com/resources/newsletters/Masterful_Mentoring_Jun09.html .