

ANTI-RACISM AND ANTI-OPPRESSION POLICY

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Table of Contents

ANTI-RACISM AND ANTI-OPPRESSION POLICY	1
1.0 Purpose	1
2.0 Policy Statement	2
3.0 Scope	3
4.0 Definitions	3
5.0 Responsibilities	5
6.0 Reporting.....	6
7.0 Related Policies & Guidelines.....	6
8.0 History	6

1.0 Purpose

The New Canadians Centre recognizes that racism exists in both interpersonal and systemic forms in Canadian society. Racism is embedded in the dominant culture and social institutions in a way that is so pervasive that it is often invisible.

Racism affects everyone. Racism affects the everyday reality of racialized individuals. It also affects the perception of the world of those who knowingly or unknowingly carry around racist attitudes or stereotypes which make them prejudge individuals and situations. These perceptions lead to behaviours that validate and propagate racism.

Racism causes pain and humiliation and has far-reaching consequences. It reinforces xenophobia, increasing the obstacles to participation faced by refugees and immigrants. It prevents equality in opportunity and access to asylum, immigration opportunities, education, jobs, housing, health care and social services, and limits participation in decision-making bodies.

It is vital to also understand the intersectional impacts of racism with other forms of oppression.

The NCC recognizes the talents and contributions of the diversity of individuals that make up our community are of immeasurable social, economic and political value to Canada and within NCC. The NCC

acknowledges the legacy of historical colonial and ongoing injustice towards Indigenous and racialized peoples and systemic inequities based on race, gender, class, religious beliefs, physical ability, mental ability, age, sexual orientation and other forms of discrimination. These forms of discrimination and systems of oppression continue to create barriers to access, equality and participation for marginalized communities that include our clients and stakeholders. This is to the detriment of NCC as an organization and Canadian society in general.

The purpose of this policy is:

- **To foster** anti-racism and anti-oppression **values and attitudes** and **to develop** anti-racism and anti-oppression **knowledge and practices** within NCC, among the Board, employees, management, volunteers, clients, and anyone who does work at, for or on behalf of the organization; and
- **To guide** the efforts of **NCC in meeting its commitments** regarding the elimination of racism and other oppressions in the organization's internal systems and external work.
- **To foster** anti-racism and anti-oppression values and attitudes, and to develop anti-racism-anti-oppression knowledge and practices within the communities where we work.

2.0 Policy Statement

As an organization seeking to empower immigrants, refugees and other newcomers, NCC is focused on ensuring this goal is achieved within our organization's systems, structures, programs and practices. NCC is committed to ensuring that all our employees, management, Board members, volunteers, clients and visitors experience an environment that is free from racism and other forms of oppression.

The NCC recognizes interpersonal and systemic racism exists in our community, and providing leadership to ensure cultural integration in a welcoming community means supporting those affected by racism and actively working to dismantle systemic racism. The NCC, therefore, commits to playing a leadership role in the community on issues of racism, particularly as it relates to immigrants, refugees and other newcomers.

NCC is committed to addressing racism and other forms of oppression and will integrate this commitment into our day-to-day work and interactions, working actively to eliminate all forms of racism, oppression, and discrimination at the NCC and in the wider community.

The NCC is an organization committed to:

* **Identifying and working to eliminate barriers** that may prevent refugees and immigrants from participating fully in Canadian society;

- * Ensuring the **principles of equity** for all races, languages, faiths and cultures are **reflected in the organization's policies and procedures**;
- * Ensuring that **the people NCC serves** see themselves **valued and reflected** within the programs, services, priorities, and leadership roles of the organization;
- * **Increasing awareness of and appreciation** for the racial, cultural, religious, and linguistic diversity of Canada;
- * Promoting through all of its processes, practices and structures, **an environment which is free of racism and all forms of discrimination**, where all individuals are treated with respect and dignity;
- * **Working with community partners** to eliminate racism and address harm caused by racism.

The NCC acknowledges its responsibility to provide an **anti-racism anti-oppression policy** that outlines the organization's commitments to and expectations of its staff, Board members, volunteers and clients together with a complaint procedure to address any perceived violations.

The NCC recognizes that in the process of compliance with this policy some may require new learning and understanding to navigate new experiences and that this process of learning may sometimes occur through mistakes and conflict. The NCC is committed to fostering an environment that supports evolution and change through increased personal self-reflection and awareness. At the same time, the NCC's priority is to ensure that no one endures disrespectful or oppressive treatment in this process. Genuine efforts for new learning are facilitated through feedback, conflict mediation and resolution that assumes goodwill, unless otherwise demonstrated through persistent and/or deliberate failure to comply with related organizational expectations.

3.0 Scope

This policy applies to all NCC employees, volunteers and Board members, and is intended to address racism and discrimination from all sources, including volunteers, clients, employers, supervisors, employees, other stakeholders, and members of the public.

4.0 Definitions

Definitions

From the Ontario Anti Racism Directorate: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-public-service-anti-racism-policy#section-9>

For the purposes of this policy, these terms have the following meaning:

Anti-oppression

an anti-oppression approach recognizes the power imbalance within society that attributes benefits to some groups and excludes others. This approach seeks to develop strategies to create an environment free from oppression, racism and other forms of discrimination. It acknowledges the intersections of identity and diversity including race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, gender

identity, gender expression, age, record of offences, marital status, family status and disability and aims to promote equity between the various identities.

Anti-racism

an anti-racism approach is a systematic method of analysis and a proactive course of action. The approach recognizes the existence of racism, including systemic racism, and actively seeks to identify, remove, prevent and mitigate the racially inequitable outcomes and power imbalances between groups and the structures that sustain these inequities.

Diversity

the range of visible and invisible qualities, experiences and identities that shape who we are, how we think and how we engage with, and are perceived by the world. These can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical or mental abilities, religious/spiritual beliefs, or political ideologies. They can also include differences such as personality, style, capabilities, and thought/perspectives.

Inclusion

Inclusion recognizes, welcomes and makes space for diversity. An inclusive organization capitalizes on the diversity of thought, experiences, skills and talents of all employees, clients, volunteers and stakeholders.

Intersectionality

acknowledges the ways in which people's lives are shaped by their multiple and overlapping identities and social locations, which, together, can produce a unique and distinct experience for that individual or group; for example, creating additional barriers or opportunities. In the context of race, this means recognizing the ways in which people's experiences of racism or privilege, including within any one racialized group, may differ and vary depending on the individual's or group's overlapping (or "intersecting") social identities, such as ethnicity, Indigenous identification, experiences with colonialism, religion, gender, citizenship, socio-economic status or sexual orientation.

Race

a term used to classify people into groups based principally on physical traits (phenotype) such as skin colour or other apparent differences perceived as 'inherent' or 'unchanging' (for example, a social group's culture or religion may sometimes be treated as unchanging and inherent). Racial categories are not based on science or biology but on differences that society has created (i.e. "socially constructed"), with significant consequences for people's lives. Racial categories may vary over time and place, and can overlap with ethnic, cultural or religious groupings.

Racialized

refers to individuals who can have racial meanings attributed to them as a group in ways that negatively impact their work and social life. This includes but is not necessarily limited to people classified as "visible minority" under the Canadian census and may include those impacted by anti-semitism and Islamophobia.

Systemic racism

refers to organizational culture, policies, directives, practices or procedures that exclude, displace or marginalize some racialized groups or create unfair barriers for them to access valuable benefits and opportunities. This is often the result of institutional biases in organizational culture, policies, directives, practices, and procedures that may appear neutral but have the effect of privileging some groups and disadvantaging others.

5.0 Responsibilities

The Board of Directors:

- Ensure that there are measurable indicators or reporting requirements that show this policy is being achieved
- Ensure that Board members individually and collectively have training (with support from the organization) to be able to view governance responsibilities through an anti-racist lens.
- Monitor NCC programs and decisions through an anti-racist, anti-oppressive equity lens;
- Hold staff management accountable for specific work plan objectives and planned actions that address the commitments of this policy;
- Bring to the attention of the Board and Executive Director any violations or perceived violations of this policy;
- Address complaints that are brought forward related to this policy;
- Ensure evaluations of organizational processes, structures and systems are conducted.

Executive Director:

- Put in place processes to monitor and report on the ongoing implementation of this policy
- Provide leadership that reinforces and champions the values and goals outlined in this policy
- Oversee the implementation of this policy and procedures, including through annual operational planning

NCC Staff:

- Uphold relevant policies and guidelines and represent the organization accordingly to clients, volunteers and the public;
- Participate in anti-racism and anti-oppression training;
- Model approaches and practices that uphold the commitments of this policy;
- Bring to the attention of management any violations or perceived violations of NCC guidelines and policies.

NCC Volunteers:

- Respect and uphold this policy while acting as an NCC volunteer or participating in NCC activities;
- Participate in anti-racism and anti-oppression training organized by NCC as part of the volunteer orientation and training program;
- Bring to the attention of NCC staff any violations or perceived violations of NCC guidelines and policies.

NCC Clients:

- Respect NCC policies, guidelines and procedures while seeking services or participating in programs offered by NCC;
- Bring to the attention of NCC staff any violations or perceived violations of NCC guidelines and policies.

6.0 Reporting

The Executive Director will provide a report to the Board of Directors, at least annually, on the ongoing implementation of this policy and associated procedures.

7.0 Related Policies & Guidelines

Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy

Human Resources Policies and HR Manual

Media Relations Policy

Whistleblower Policy

Volunteer Policy

Advocacy Policy

NCC Workplace Charter

NCC Board of Directors Statement 2020

NCC Guideline – Responding to Acts of Discrimination/Racism (Client Services)

8.0 History

First Version – 2021

Revised November 2024; Director of Fundraising and Communications added Jan 2025

References:

OCASI Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants https://ocasi.org/sites/default/files/ocasi-arao-policy-2014_2.pdf

Canadian Council for Refugees Anti-Racism Policy - <https://ccrweb.ca/en/anti-racism-policy>

Ontario Anti-Racism Directorate - <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-public-service-anti-racism-policy#section-9>

Ontario Human Rights Commission - <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en>

LEGISLATION: Ontario Human Rights Code <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90h19>

Anti-Racism & Anti-Oppression Procedures	
Approval Authority: Executive Director	Effective Date: October 2024
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1. General

The NCC entrenches inclusion and equity as a priority, not an afterthought, in programming, budgeting, hiring, and other aspects of our operations.

- Employees, management, Board members and volunteers are held accountable and evaluated in relation to this policy as part of performance appraisals and Board evaluation. Organizational systems, policies and practices are periodically evaluated.
- Complaints regarding violations of this policy are addressed through procedures outlined in the Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy (for harassment issues) and the Whistleblower Policy (for non-compliance issues).

2. Governance (Responsible: Board of Directors, Executive Director)

- The Board will identify and seek to eliminate barriers that prevent individuals from diverse communities from becoming board members.
- The Board Recruitment Committee will prioritize recruitment of board candidates that represent the diversity of the province of Ontario, with a particular focus on immigrant & refugee candidates to reflect our client population.
- New members of the board of directors receive an orientation to the mission, vision, policies, organizational goals, board functions and responsibilities with respect to anti-racism and anti-oppression.
- The Board Governance & HR Committee, and the Board itself, with support from management, will engage in anti-racism training periodically.
- Board members will hold each other accountable for providing leadership to help the organization fulfill the commitments to anti-racism and anti-oppression outlined in the Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Policy.
- The Board will oversee development of all NCC policies within an inclusive, intersectional, and anti-oppressive framework.
- When Board Committees conduct reviews of NCC policies, they consider the policies' fit within an inclusive and anti-oppressive framework and recommend improvements to policies and practices as necessary.

3 Employment (Responsible: Board of Directors, Executive Director, Management team)

The NCC is committed to achieving representation of its client base on its staff by ensuring that members of immigrant, refugee, racialized communities and other equity-seeking groups have

equitable access to employment. This includes recruitment, selection, staff development, performance evaluation, retention, promotion, termination.

- As outlined in the NCC Human Resource Policy, in all hiring the NCC prioritizes employment of newcomers and people from marginalized groups.
- The NCC is committed to maintaining an environment where all individuals are treated with dignity and respect and are free from all forms of discriminatory treatment, behaviour or practice. Discrimination, harassment, violence, and any other form of discriminatory practices are not tolerated. Discrimination does not have to be intentional. It can result from practices or policies that appear to be neutral but in reality have a negative effect on groups or individuals based on race, religion, gender, etc. Any violations or complaints are addressed as per the NCC Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy.

4 Services & Programs (Responsible: Executive Director, Director of Client Services, NCC staff)

The NCC is committed to ensuring that its services and programs are accessible to diverse communities. This involves ongoing review of current outreach, communications, program planning and evaluation, to ensure this goal is being met.

- Full participation of all clients in activities organized by NCC is facilitated through measures acknowledging cultural and linguistic diversity.
- Every effort is taken to ensure that financial considerations are not a barrier to participation.
- The NCC solicits feedback and input from its clients on services and programs at a minimum on an annual basis.

The NCC commits to empowering the immigrants, refugees and newcomers it serves by:

- Convening a newcomer and refugee-led advisory group to advise on programs and services;
- Engaging newcomers and refugees in training to understand and respond to racism and discrimination in the Canadian context;
- Helping newcomers and refugees to navigate opportunities to be leaders in the community.

5 Training and Education (Responsible: Executive Director, Management team, NCC staff)

The NCC is committed to ensuring that those involved in the delivery of services and programs have the knowledge, understanding and skills to work with and provide services to members of diverse communities, particularly equity-seeking communities. The organization commits to making equity and inclusion training an important part of its board, staff and volunteer orientations and ongoing personal and professional development.

- NCC employees participate in mandatory and voluntary anti-racism and anti-oppression training on a regular basis, as part of their professional development commitment.

- Employees are encouraged to participate in ongoing formal or informal education and dialogue on the topics of anti-racism and anti-oppression, including internally and in external community settings.
- Guidelines, information and other resources are created and/or made available to support NCC staff to provide relevant and effective support to clients, volunteers and others.
- NCC Board members and volunteers are required to participate in anti-racism and/or anti-oppression training as part of their onboarding process.

6 Information and Communications (Responsible: Executive Director, Director of Fundraising & Communications, Director of Community Development, Director of Client Services)

The NCC is committed to ensuring that all of its communications, including information on its services and programs, are accessible to diverse communities and reinforce an anti-racist and anti-oppressive approach.

- All communications, both external and internal, are consistent with and promote the NCC's anti-racism and anti-oppression commitments as outlined in this policy.
- In all its publications, policies and communications with members and the general public, the NCC uses language and images which are inclusive, reflecting Canada's racial and ethnic diversity.
- Where possible, the NCC offers information in multiple languages and in varying forms (online, on paper, in person, etc.) to maximize accessibility.
- Services provided by NCC staff to clients are normally offered in English; however, recognizing the particular nature of NCC clientele, staff make all reasonable efforts to communicate with clients using methods and tools, including interpretation and low-literacy options, that facilitate understanding and respect.

7 Community Outreach and Development (Responsible: Executive Director, Director of Community Development, Director of Fundraising & Communications, Director of Client Services)

The NCC strives to play a leadership role in the community in addressing racism and oppression particularly as it relates to immigrants, refugees and newcomers in the following ways:

- Participate in community networks and activities that focus on anti-racism and anti-oppression work;
- Offer educational opportunities to local organizations, employers and institutions which aim to reduce racism and improve public understanding of discrimination and racism experienced by immigrants, refugees and newcomers;
- Convene opportunities to share best practices on diversity, inclusion and equity with other organizations;
- Respond to community incidents and events with a clear commitment to anti-racism and anti-oppression.