

ANTI-RACISM AND EQUITY POLICY

This policy was approved by the Kensington-Bellwoods Community Legal Services (**KBCLS**) Board of Directors via email on October 1, 2020.

A: STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

The City of Toronto is made up of people from diverse communities and equity seeking groups.¹ KBCLS recognizes that barriers to services exist for members of diverse communities, particularly for equity seeking groups, and we are committed to acting as a positive force in eliminating these barriers.

To achieve this, KBCLS will:

- ensure that diverse communities have equitable access to its services, resources and decision making.
- be nondiscriminatory and promote the goals of antiracism, access and equity; and
- take reasonable steps to ensure its services, programs and decision making reflect the community it serves.

KBCLS prohibits discrimination or harassment and protects the right to be free from hate activity based on age, ancestry, citizenship, creed (religion), colour, disability, ethnic origin, family status, gender identity, level of literacy, marital status, place of origin, membership in a union or staff association, political affiliation, race, receipt of public assistance, record of offences, sex, sexual orientation or any other personal characteristic, by or within the organization.

¹ For the purposes of this policy, equity-seeking groups include Aboriginal/First Nations people, Black and African Canadians, women, people with disabilities, racial minorities, the socio-economically disadvantaged, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered persons.

Definitions

Anti-racism: a set of practices and systems designed to eliminate racism. Racism includes racist ideologies, prejudiced attitudes, discriminatory behaviours, structural arrangements and institutionalized practices resulting in racial inequality as well as the fallacious notion that discriminatory relations between groups are morally and scientifically justifiable.

Access: the ability of or extents to which communities or residents can attain needed services and achieve full participation in the planning, development, administration and delivery of those services. Access includes client access and organizational access.

Equity: practices designed to remove systemic barriers to equality of outcome by identifying and eliminating discriminatory policies and practices.

Discrimination: the act of treating a person unequally by imposing unequal burdens or denying benefits, rather than treating a person fairly on the basis of individual merit. Discrimination is usually based upon personal prejudices and stereotypical assumptions related to at least one of the grounds set out in this Policy. It is not necessary to have an intent to discriminate under the Ontario Human Rights Code (the **Code**). Workplace rules, policies, procedures, requirements, qualifications or factors may not be directly or intentionally discriminatory but may nonetheless have an adverse effect. This may create barriers to achievement and opportunity.

Harassment: a course of conduct of comments or actions that are unwelcome or should be known to be unwelcome. A person has the right to be free of humiliating or annoying behaviour that is based on one or more grounds in the Code.

B: POLICY AND ACTIONS ON ANTI-RACISM, ACCESS & EQUITY

Governance

KBCLS is committed to achieving representation of the diversity of the Toronto community on its Board of Directors by ensuring that it has an equitable and transparent nominations process, that this process is communicated to all members, and that members are committed to outreach beyond the current membership if necessary to achieve this goal.

To meet this commitment, the KBCLS Board of Directors will:

- a) Ensure consistent and equitable staff oversight, that work is allocated fairly, and that decisions are based on clearly communicated criteria
- b) Perform appraisals regularly, and recognize the ways that the board's biases may influence the process
- c) Ensure that racial equity knowledge, skills and practices are incorporated into performance objectives and appraisals for all levels of staff
- d) Recruit and retain a diverse board of directors with a commitment to equity
- e) Foster racial equity work and a collegial work environment
- f) Make clear statements and consistently act to demonstrate the importance of challenging racism in KBCLS
- g) Create a clear structure and process for monitoring and evaluating progress to implement racial equity
- h) Dedicate resources to anti-racism efforts
- i) Appoint a board member that champions the Anti-Racism Policy and ensures it is regularly reviewed and acted upon
- j) Issue clear statements periodically on the importance and progress of Anti-Racist efforts
- k) Set policies and directions that further the implementation of this policy
- l) Work with the clinic coordinator to establish concrete measures of increased organizational equity
- m) Review the allocation of resources to ensure equity
- n) Report on the Anti-Racist efforts at the AGM

Employment

KBCLS is committed to achieving representation of equity seeking groups on its staff by ensuring that members of equity seeking communities have equitable access to employment. This includes recruitment, selection, staff development, performance evaluation, retention, promotion, termination.

To meet this commitment, KBCLS will:

- a) Ensure outreach for hiring is broad and includes a variety of strategies
- b) Create job postings that make clear that KBCLS desires candidates from equity seeking groups, including racialized and Indigenous groups
- c) Create job postings are specific and ask only for qualifications and experience necessary to do the job
- d) List job qualifications that will acknowledge the value of experience in working with racialized communities, knowledge of anti-racism work the ability to work within racially diverse teams, and the capacity to work in languages other than English
- e) Ensure staff and board members on hiring committees will understand how to identify and challenge racial and cultural factors affecting selection
- f) Recognize the full range of expertise of racialized and Indigenous candidates and staff, and not limit them only to their connections with their communities
- g) Create balanced representation of racialized and Indigenous persons sitting on hiring committees

KBCLS 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 will not be tolerated by KBCLS. 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.

To meet this commitment, KBCLS will:

- a) Work effectively with the union on anti-racism efforts
- b) Ensure mobility exists between job categories wherever possible
- c) Embrace opportunities for career counselling and mentoring for all staff
- d) Ensure developmental assignments are used to increase equity
- e) Wherever possible, ensure there is balanced representation of racialized persons sitting on selection panels for hirings and promotions
- f) Avoid over-representation of racialized and Indigenous persons in temporary, contract, and part-time positions
- g) Ensure personnel policies and procedures acknowledge KBCLS's responsibility to meet the needs of people with diverse identities (care for dependents, religious observances, etc.)

Services

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

In addition, KBCLS will take into consideration provision of services to disadvantaged individuals, low income persons, families in poverty, and equity seeking communities.

To meet this commitment, KBCLS will:

- a) Ensure major policies are developed with substantial community participation
- b) Ensure all policy is developed to be consistent with this Anti-Racism Policy
- c) Create mechanisms for community participation and fully utilize them even when community representatives challenge the KBCLS staff or leadership
- d) Ensure that community access to KBCLS includes considerations of childcare, scheduling around days and times of religious significance, translation and interpretation requirements, etc.
- e) Inform staff about where to refer clients when KBCLS cannot meet their needs
- f) Evaluate KBCLS services in terms of their impact on racialized communities, and update or change as needed
- g) Advocate on behalf of equity as part of KBCLS's work
- h) Support other community groups doing racial equity and advocacy work
- i) Wherever possible, require vendors and contractors working with KBCLS to abide by this Anti-Racism policy and practice racial equity as employers, and ensure that Indigenous and Racialized businesses benefit equitably from any KBCLS contracts

Training and Education

KBCLS 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.

- a) Implement consistent racial equity education for all staff and board members
- b) Incorporate racial equity and other equity work into all of KBCLS's educational and professional development programs
- c) Ensure all staff responsible for planning professional development can integrate racial equity components into their educational programming; specific racial equity education will be planned jointly with other education and professional development activities for staff

- d) Design racial equity education to assist staff and the board to practice anti-racism in their daily work for KBCLS
- e) Utilize community expertise in educational programming
- f) Ensure equitable access to education and professional development opportunities for racialized and Indigenous staff
- g) Ensure equitable representation of racialized and Indigenous staff as educators and facilitators

Information and Communications

KBCLS is committed to ensuring that all of its communications, including information on its services and programs, are accessible to diverse communities.

To meet this commitment, KBCLS will:

- a) Provide clear, relevant and timely information to staff about corporate discussions, decisions and actions which affect them
- b) Create opportunities for all staff to coordinate and communicate racial equity efforts
- c) Publish and promote clinic materials that appropriately reflect racialized people as valued board, staff, volunteers, service users, and community members
- d) Ensure staff and board members understand the racial and cultural factors that influence communication
- e) Detect and challenge bias in written and oral communications from the board and staff
- f) Support individuals speaking about racism and racial equity in the workplace
- g) Conduct meetings in ways that recognize and value different ways of speaking, thinking, debating and making decisions
- h) Recognize, use and fairly compensate the knowledge and expertise of staff and community representatives
- i) Use an updated list of community media and information networks
- j) Ensure communication can occur in languages appropriate to the service users or target audience