

# CommunityWise Resource Centre Employment Equity Policy

Approved on: November 15, 2017

Written by: The CWRC Equity Framework Coordinator, based on the work of the AROC Working and Advisory Groups and the CWRC 2017 Hiring Committee

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## Definitions

Definitions of the following terms can be found in Appendix A:

- Anti-racism
- Diversity
- Inclusion
- Employment equity
- Equity
- Equity-seeking groups
- Organizational racism
- Race
- Racialization

## Overview

CommunityWise Resource Centre (CWRC) is committed to employment equity because it is:

- a) Consistent with our Mission, Vision, and Values; and is,
- b) Critical to effectively serving our diverse Membership.

We will ensure that the Staff Collective reflects the diversity of our membership by removing barriers to employment that are faced by equity-seeking groups and creating positive structures within our hiring procedure to make employment at CWRC more accessible to them.

Note: This policy is a work in progress and will be updated as we learn how to best design and implement equitable organizational policies.

## Equity Priority Groups

CWRC recognizes that many equity-seeking groups face barriers to employment in the non-profit sector due to various and intersecting forms of systemic discrimination. However, in order to respond to the needs of our most underserved Members, CWRC has identified specific equity-seeking groups that have experienced especially restricted access to employment and

representation at CWRC. These groups have been designated Equity Priority Groups, and specific measures have been adopted to ensure their full inclusion at CWRC.

CWRC's current Equity Priority Groups are those who self-identify as:

- 1) Indigenous (First Nation, Metis, and Inuit); or,
- 2) Racialized ("Racialized" is used here instead of the more outdated and inaccurate terms "racial minority", "visible minority", "person of colour", or "non-White")

These groups have been identified through CWRC's Anti-Racist Organizational Change (AROC) process, and evidence to support their designation as Equity Priority Groups can be found in CWRC's [AROC: Resources and Tools for Nonprofits](#) resource booklet. This, and other references used in creating this policy, can be found in Appendix B.

CWRC commits to monitoring the changing diversity of our Membership, understanding what their needs are, and measuring the impact of our efforts to serve them more equitably so that we can add to or change this list of equity priority groups as needed.

### **Composition of CWRC Staff Collective**

CWRC aims to have its Staff Collective reflect the diversity of the communities served by the CWRC Membership. In particular, it aims to ensure the Staff Collective represents the designated Equity Priority Groups.

The most current member survey was done in 2015, and it collected data on which communities the CWRC Membership serve. The variety in CWRC Member organizations "target populations or communities" in terms of race—as per our current Equity Priority Groups—was as follows:

- Indigenous (44%)
- People of colour (44%)
- White people (42%)

The data was not collected in such a way as to provide clear guidance on how the Staff Collective can reflect our current Equity Priority Groups. Efforts will be made in all future member surveys to collect more accurate data on not only the Equity Priority Groups but also that of other equity-seeking groups.

Using the 2015 data as a rough guide, as well as the commitment to represent the designated Equity Priority Groups, the 2017 Hiring Committee proposed the following goal. The Board accepted it in November 2017:

CWRC aims to have at least 50% of the Staff Collective (individuals—including practicum and summer students) identify as Indigenous or racialized.

CWRC commits to revisiting this goal as better data about our Membership is collected and as the list of designated Equity Priority Groups changes. It will also consider expanding the goal beyond a percentage of individuals to include other factors such as hours worked (and thus paid) and roles taken on within the Staff Collective.

## **Equity Statement**

CWRC will include a statement of equity that goes beyond a declaration of non-discrimination at the beginning of every job posting. The current statement is as follows:

*CommunityWise is committed to inclusion and equity and strives to ensure that our Staff Collective reflects the diversity of our Membership. We are committed to removing barriers to employment that are faced by equity-seeking groups and encourage (but do not require) members of these groups to self-identify as such in their cover letters.*

When the existing staff composition under-represents individuals from the current Equity Priority Groups, as per the compositional goal stated above, CWRC will hire new employees from the designated Equity Priority Groups. In these cases, for the current Equity Priority Groups, the following will be added to the Equity Statement:

*In accordance with our current Employment Equity Policy, and given the compositional needs of our Staff Collective, preference will be given to applications from individuals who self-identify as racialized\* or Indigenous (First Nations, Metis, or Inuit).*

*\*The term “racialized” is used here instead of the more outdated and inaccurate terms “racial minority”, “visible minority”, “person of colour”, or “non-White”.*

A statement of “preference”—also known as “[targeted recruiting](#)”—is permitted under Section 11 of the Alberta Humans Rights Act.

## **Hiring Committee**

When CWRC needs to hire new staff, the CWRC Human Resources committee will form a hiring committee that will honour the principles outlined in this policy and implement the steps outlined the CWRC Hiring Procedure.

The hiring committee must include representation from multiple levels of CWRC (board, staff, membership, and community) as well as the current Equity Priority Groups. The hiring

committee as a whole must also be able to technically assess applicants for the position that is undergoing recruitment.

Members of the community will be asked to volunteer for the hiring committee when there are gaps in representation or technical knowledge. These volunteers will be compensated for their time with an honorarium.

The Staff Collective and Board will undergo regular training in anti-racism and equity to support their work on this committee. Efforts will be made, as per the Hiring Procedure, to ensure the entire hiring committee has the capacity (e.g., awareness of implicit bias) to undertake an equitable hiring process.

### **Complaints Procedure**

If an applicant feels as though the CWRC hiring committee has discriminated against them (on grounds set out in the Alberta Human Rights Act), the individual can file a complaint directly to the CWRC Board of Directors by emailing [board@communitywise.net](mailto:board@communitywise.net). The Board will follow this procedure:

- 1) The Board shall, within 2 business days, form a Special Review Committee (SRC). The SRC shall be comprised of no less than 3 people and no more than 5; 2 members of the CW Board including one representative of the executive committee, and 1 to 3 individuals who are not directly associated with the complainant or not implicated by the complaint.
- 2) The SRC shall gather and review all relevant evidence, which shall, at a minimum, include interviewing the complainant and those implicated by the complaint.
- 3) Upon completion of its review, the SRC shall determine whether or not the complaint has been proven. If the determination is that it has been proven, the SRC will take appropriate action, which may include any of the following:
  - a. Following a restorative justice approach which prioritizes the safety of the complainant;
  - b. Requiring that those found responsible formally apologize to the complainant;
  - c. Reviewing and possibly redoing the hiring procedure for the job competition the complaint implicated;
  - d. Ensuring that those found responsible access training or therapy to address discriminatory behaviours or patterns;
  - e. Making the complaint aware to all members of the Board of Directors and Staff Collective;
  - f. Taking disciplinary action, including possible termination of employment, position on the Board, and/or Membership at CommunityWise;

If this procedure does not resolve the complaint, the complainant has the option to make a complaint with the Alberta Human Rights Commission. This statement will be added to the end of each job posting so that all applicants are aware of their options:

*Discrimination on grounds set out in the Alberta Human Rights Act will not be tolerated at CommunityWise. If you wish to file a complaint about discrimination within this job competition, you may do so to the CommunityWise Board of Directors at [board@communitywise.net](mailto:board@communitywise.net). You may also file a complaint with the Alberta Human Rights Commission.*

## APPENDIX A – Definitions

**Anti-racism** is the active, on-going process of dismantling systems of racial inequity and creating new systems of racial equity. Anti-racism demands that this work be done at the individual, organizational/ institutional, and cultural levels in order to effectively address systemic racism. Anti-racism is an approach, not an end-point, and thus provides a useful frame for an organizational change process. (CommunityWise)

**Diversity** refers to the wide array of differences among people and their perspectives on the world. Diversity is an important organizational goal in its own right, but it may or may not be linked to the issue of equity. A diverse workplace is not necessarily an equitable workplace. Nor does the presence of people who are diverse necessarily produce decision-making that optimizes results for the groups their diversity reflects. (Race Matters Institute)

**Inclusion** is reflected in the ability of diverse peoples to raise their perspectives authentically, and for those voices to matter and impact decisions, where the organizational culture has been enabled for that to happen. Inclusion promises a broader view of the world and a more democratic process of decision-making. Inclusion is an important organizational *process* goal, but it does not on its own guarantee equity in an organization's mission-critical *results*. (Race Matters Institute)

**Employment equity** is when employers engage in proactive employment practices to increase the representation of designated equity-seeking groups in their organizations. This includes removing barriers to employment that disadvantage members of the designated groups; and, instituting positive policies for the hiring, training, retention, and promotion of members of the designated groups. (Adapted from Wikipedia)

**Equity** refers to achieved results where advantage and disadvantage are not distributed on the basis of age, ethnicity, culture, disability, economic status, gender, nationality, race, religion, sexual orientation and transgender status, etc. Strategies that produce equity must be targeted to address the unequal needs, conditions, and positions of people and communities that are created by institutional and structural barriers. Equity requires a set of informed policies and practices, intentionally designed to promote opportunity and rectify disparities, as well as informed people positioned to implement them effectively. (Adapted from Race Matters Institute)

**Equity-seeking groups** are communities that face significant challenges in participating fully in society. This marginalization could have historical, social or economic origins. These communities can also be disadvantaged due to discriminations based on age, ethnicity, culture, disability, economic status, gender, nationality, race, religion, sexual orientation and transgender status, etc. The decline of upward mobility and social capital in an individual or collectivity is further aggravated when these characteristics co-exist and intersect, particularly when economic disadvantages are present. (Canada Council for the Arts, Equity Policy)

**Organizational racism** refers to the way normal, seemingly neutral or objective organizational policies and systems (e.g., the way we hire people, recruit board members, develop programming, etc.) can create disparities in access and outcomes for racialized and Indigenous individuals and communities. If not addressed, these policies and systems can increase

disparities in power. It refers to organizational practices, which are related to but different from the racist behaviour or unconscious bias of individuals. (CommunityWise)

**Race** is a dynamic, fluid, relational category, socially constructed for political and economic interests over groups of people. This social construct loosely refers to a group of people distinguished from others often by physical characteristics such as colour of skin, shape of eyes, hair texture or facial features. (Sahar Ibrahim & Reakash Walters, anti-racism facilitators)

**Racialization** is the process of social construction of race: “the process by which societies construct races as real, different and unequal in ways that matter to economic, political and social life.” Recognizing that race is a social construct, CWRC describes people as “racialized person” or “racialized group” instead of the more outdated and inaccurate terms “racial minority”, “visible minority”, “person of colour” or “non-White”. (Adapted from Ontario Human Rights Commission)

## **APPENDIX B – References**

[AROC: Resources and Tools for Nonprofits \(CommunityWise\)](#)

[Equity priority groups \(Toronto Arts Council\)](#)

[How to resolve human rights complaints in the workplace \(Alberta Human Rights Commission\)](#)

[Targeted recruiting \(Alberta Human Rights Commission\)](#)