

diversity is working

SPARC BC's *Diversity is Working* project provides seventeen (17) case studies of Lower Mainland organizations that have taken steps to make their workplaces more welcoming and inclusive for employees with diverse backgrounds. The purpose of the case studies is to celebrate successes in workplace diversity by highlighting best practices.

The set of case studies includes examples from organizations with small Human Resources departments to larger organizations with large Human Resources departments and designated diversity managers. The case studies are also drawn from a range of different sectors including businesses, non-profit organizations and government institutions. Some of the organizations being profiled have been implementing diversity and employment equity initiatives for decades while others have started to look at diversity in recent years.

Because of the diverse range of organizations being profiled, there are relevant best practices for any organization that is working to make their workplace more welcoming and inclusive of people from diverse backgrounds. Refer to the adjacent diagram for a list of participating organizations.

The following pieces of information are provided in each organization's case study:

- diversity business case or mandate for diversity;
- diversity initiatives and results; and,
- advice for other organizations considering undertaking similar work.



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The Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) is the federal government agency responsible for administering prison sentences of a term of two (2) years or more. CSC is responsible for supervising offenders in the community and managing institutions of various security levels.



Correctional Service of Canada (Pacific Region)

About the Correctional Service of Canada - Pacific Region

The Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) is the federal government agency responsible for administering prison sentences of a term of two (2) years or more. CSC is responsible for managing institutions of various security levels and supervising offenders under conditional release in the community. The Correctional Service of Canada - Pacific Region's catchment area includes British Columbia and the Yukon.

The Correctional Service of Canada's Employment Equity Legal Framework

Since the Correctional Service of Canada is part of the federal public sector, it falls within the jurisdiction of the Employment Equity Act. According to HRSDC, Section 5 of the Employment Equity Act, states that: employers must identify and eliminate barriers against persons in designated groups in their employment systems, policies, and practices. Employers must institute positive policies and practices and make reasonable accommodations to ensure equitable representation of designated group members in the employer's workforce.¹

In addition, the Employment Equity Act has some requirements around steps that organizations must take in order to identify what are the existing employment barriers for under-represented groups. According to HRSDC, Section 9 states that employers must review their employment systems, policies and practices in accordance with the Regulations to identify employment barriers against designated group members. Sections 8, 9 and 10 of the Regulations that accompany the Employment Equity Act are more specific about when employers must undertake an Employment Systems Review (ESR) and what it should include. An Employment Systems Review (ESR) is an examination of human resources policies and practices for their impact on women, Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities and members of visible minorities. The review also includes an analysis of the reasonable accommodation of the special needs of designated group members to ensure their full participation in an employer's workforce.²

1. HRSDC. *Guideline 6: Employment Systems Review*. Accessed April 5, 2012 from: <http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/lp/lo/lsw/we/legislation/guidelines/gdln6.shtml#INTRODUCTION>

2. Ibid.



The Privy Council Office, which is well-known as the body that provides direct confidential advice to the Prime Minister, also has a responsibility to ensure that Canada and Canadians are served by a high quality public service. As part of its work, the Privy Council Office conducted an ERS. The findings of the ERS led to the development of an Employment Equity Action Plan for 2008-2011, with recommendations to overcome barriers to the employment of designated groups (e.g., women, visible minorities, people with disabilities, and Aboriginal peoples) within the public service.³

The Privy Council oversees the Correctional Service of Canada as well as the other federal government agencies, and expects departments to foster a diverse public service workforce. The Privy Council Office also tracks progress in employment equity by overseeing the Public Service Employment Survey, which takes place every four years. Diversity is also included in the “People” component of the Management Accountability Framework for public agencies which establishes the standards for management in the Government of Canada.

The Correctional Service of Canada’s Business Case for Diversity

In addition to having a mandated responsibility to foster employment equity and diversity, the Correctional Service of Canada has also developed a business case for diversity. The Correctional Service of Canada has recognized that as Canada’s population becomes increasingly diverse, there is also increased diversity among the offender population that the Correctional Service of Canada oversees. In order for the Correctional Service of Canada staff to effectively relate to and understand the offenders, the Correctional Service of Canada needs to foster a diverse workforce which reflects the diversity within Canada.

The Correctional Service of Canada’s Diversity Initiatives

Within the Correctional Service of Canada, the organization’s diversity initiatives are overseen by a National Employment Equity and Diversity Committee which has developed a diversity strategic plan. The national diversity strategic plan provides direction to regional/local diversity committees which are led by senior managers.

3. Privy Office. *Archived – Privy Council Office*. Accessed March 27th, 2012 from <http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/dpr-rmr/2007-2008/inst/pco/pco04-eng.asp>



Correctional Service of Canada (Pacific Region)

Development of Action Plans

The Correctional Service of Canada is currently in the process of developing diversity action plans. In order to identify current employment barriers, the Commissioner of the Correctional Service of Canada recently started going “on the road” and holding consultations with employees from different employment equity groups. Because there is already a high level of female representation throughout the organization, the target employee groups were visible minorities, Aboriginal people, and persons with disabilities. The purpose of the staff engagement process was to identify current barriers to recruitment, retention and advancement for the different employment equity groups and to develop action plans to address employment barriers for each group. As of March 2012, one of the action plans was complete, and consultations for the other two (2) employment equity groups were in progress.

In addition to participating in the development of action plans for the different employment equity groups, the Pacific Region’s Regional Employment Equity and Diversity Committee has already implemented some diversity strategies. These fall within the categories of recruitment, training, and leadership development.

Recruitment

To date, the Correctional Service of Canada has undertaken some targeted outreach strategies to increase the number of visible minority and Aboriginal applicants. These strategies include:

- Creating an Aboriginal recruitment officer and a visible minority recruitment officer position within the region;
- Sending the Aboriginal recruitment officers and the visible minority recruitment officers to career fairs at universities and colleges; and,
- Sending Aboriginal recruitment officers to Aboriginal communities to encourage more individuals to consider a career with the Correctional Service of Canada.



The Correctional Service of Canada has also taken steps to create inclusive hiring committees for people from diverse backgrounds. When the Correctional Service of Canada conducts its interviews, one (1) or two (2) people on the interview panel are constant for all candidates, but the third individual is selected to be someone with a similar background as the candidate. This makes the candidate more comfortable and reduces unintentional bias from the selection process. For instance, when interviewing an Aboriginal candidate, the Correctional Service of Canada will work to ensure that the third person on the interviewing panel is an Aboriginal employee.

Training

In 2009 and 2010, the Pacific Region's Employment Equity and Diversity Committee co-chairs worked with senior managers, middle managers and the union to discuss the employment equity legislation, the benefits of diversity, and how different groups (e.g., managers, the unions, etc.) can support diversity initiatives within the Correctional Service of Canada. As part of this discussion, the diversity committee also asked for input on how to deliver staff awareness training. Some of the strategies that have been implemented to increase staff awareness of diversity and employment equity include:

- Incorporating diversity training into employee orientation;
- Collaborating with The Hastings Institute to deliver training to staff;
- Posting diversity resources on the staff intranet;
- Celebrating diversity dates (e.g. Asian History Month, Black History Month); and,
- Incorporating diversity training into National Public Service Week.

The Correctional Service of Canada also holds an annual Employment Equity and Diversity Symposium attended by the Deputy Minister (Commissioner), senior and middle management as well as frontline staff. The purpose of the symposium is to provide education, awareness and direction to the organization.



Correctional Service of Canada (Pacific Region)

Leadership Development

Through a recent gap assessment process, the Pacific Region of the Correctional Service of Canada learned that while the Pacific Region had a good level of representation from the different employment equity groups, there were lower levels of diversity in management positions relative to entry level positions. In response, the region has initiated some local mentorship programs to encourage people from diverse backgrounds to pursue middle and senior management positions within the organization. In addition, some mentorship programs are also being implemented at the national level to address the underrepresentation of some groups in management roles throughout the organization.

The Correctional Service of Canada also supports a national Executive Leadership Development Program to prepare staff for future leadership positions. To date, there have been two cohorts. The first cohort was open to every person in the organization, while the second cohort was targeted at visible minorities, Aboriginal persons, and persons with disabilities. As part of this program, participating employees are put through an eighteen (18) to twenty-four (24) month training program to develop leadership competencies. Within the Pacific Region, there is middle and senior management development programs, which have components that are dedicated to employment equity groups.

The Results

To date, the organization has noticed that there has been an increased awareness around issues of diversity and the value of diversity within the organization. There has also been a very strong commitment from senior management around diversity, and it is considered an important organizational priority to be pursued. The Correctional Service of Canada's Pacific Region expects to build upon this early success as the action plans are completed and they implement further strategies.



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Advice for other organizations

When asked if they have any advice for other organizations considering adopting similar diversity initiatives, the Pacific Region’s Employment Equity and Diversity Co-chairs provided the following advice:

- It is important for diversity initiatives to be led by senior management and have buy-in from managers and frontline staff.
- It is also important for people to understand the legal, business and moral obligations behind the Employment Equity Act.
- It is good to have a deliberate diversity strategy. Some organizations look to diversity programs and think they are being fair by hiring the best candidates, but the research shows that people are a lot more likely to hire people like themselves. This does not promote creativity in an organization—We need to hire people who are different from us.

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