

A smiling woman wearing a blue hard hat and a yellow safety vest over a denim shirt. She is holding a tablet computer. The background is a blurred industrial setting with warm colors.

# Guide to Launching Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging in Your Workplace

# Nurture a Better Employee Experience with Inclusive Workplaces

## Build the spaceship to successfully launch employees

Aerospace engineers design ingenious spaceships to safely carry astronauts to new destinations. Similarly, to achieve significant company goals, employers must enable talent with every tool and resource they can. Unfortunately, historically marginalized groups continue to face discrimination in workplaces and be ignored for opportunities to advance. Employers should understand the current issues of historically marginalized groups, especially because these issues can filter into the workplace and directly affect an employee's wellbeing and performance.

To safely lead their team to new frontiers, employers must conduct thorough risk assessments and know of the safety concerns historically marginalized groups face every single day. Recent studies show that Indigenous women aged 25 to 44 are five times more likely to die from violence than Canadian women of any other ethnicity in the same age group; hate crimes against the Muslim community of Quebec doubled in frequency in the last five years and continue to rise; and 39% of LGBTQ2+ respondents stated they experienced violence or discrimination in the past five years. Using a [Workplace Violence and Harassment Risk Assessment](#) Form helps you ensure you miss nothing.

These statistics are concerning, but employers can create a safe work environment for employees when they know the risks and double down on preventive safety measures. Establish or review your [Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy](#), ensure all employees are up to date on their training, and adequately assess employees on their understanding of best practices. [Workplace Violence and Harassment Training \(All](#)

[Jurisdictions](#)) is a great course to start employees on their learning journey. Almost 60% of employees recently surveyed by Flexjobs stated that they wanted to quit their job due to low salary. Unfortunately, pay equity and employment continue to be top concerns for people of historically marginalized groups. LGBTQ2+ Canadians earn significantly less than their non-LGBTQ2+ counterparts, and Black, Latin American, Filipino, Korean, and other visible minority men earn significantly lower (-6% to -19%) weekly earnings than their white male counterparts in the large commercial firm sector.

Employers should undertake an internal compensation audit to identify any possible wage discrepancies and use the [Compensation Review Changes Letter](#) to communicate any corrections. Employers can also set pay grades for specific jobs in the company, ensure these pay grades are published on job postings, and consider increasing pay transparency throughout the organization. Knowing the benefits of diversity, it should exist at every level of the organization. However, unequal access to education and skill-building opportunities are often the gravitational forces keeping members of historically marginalized groups from climbing the ladder. A foundational pillar of an equitable workplace is equal access to educational opportunities. Employers can choose to empower all employees with an [Education Assistance Policy](#) and assist employees' dependants through scholarships and bursaries. Skill-building can also retain employees by increasing their sense of fulfilment and qualifying them for internal promotions. To identify what specific skills are needed for each position in the organization, have employees complete the [Cross-Training Job Analysis Form](#).



## Navigate change and complaints

There are infinite ways to adapt DEIB best practices for your workplace. Just as there is no GPS to navigate space, there is no roadmap to make DEIB work specifically for your organization; however, the introduction of a new inclusive practice is better than none at all. When in total darkness, ask employees to be the satellites guiding your way. Distribute the [Employee Suggestion Form](#) to collect new ideas on ways to better represent or accommodate employees and to cultivate a sense of belonging for all. Employees may identify areas for improvement in the organization, such as the need for gender-inclusive spaces or recreating more accommodating dress codes.

It's important to note that it is up to every employee at every level of the organization to improve DEIB in the workplace. Employers cannot expect employees of a historically marginalized group to be the sole voice of change or to educate other workers who do not understand their concerns or experiences. Adding this additional responsibility only to a select group of employees is inequitable. Making DEIB a part of the company's ethos, and therefore a responsibility of every employee, is critical to ensuring its success.

In case of emergencies or other incidents, employers must function as mission control. Maintain clear policies and procedures for reporting workplace violence and harassment incidents and give alternative reporting practices in case the incident involves someone the employee would normally report the incident to. Employees can use the [Discrimination Complaint Form](#) if they have been unfairly treated due to a protected characteristic under human rights legislation or if they experience microaggressions at work. In response to workplace violence and harassment complaints, employers should use the [Violence and Harassment Complaint Investigation Form](#) to thoroughly address the situation

## Make it a mission

To reach any destination or fulfil any goal, you need a clear plan and intention. Own the challenge of

fostering greater DEIB standards. Revisit your company vision and be sure to address how you plan to show your commitment to promoting DEIB in the workplace. Include a [Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging \(DEIB\) in the Workplace Policy](#) to inform employees about this strategy. Equip employees with the training necessary to fulfil this mission. Assess whether your organization's learning and development strategies align with your mission to support DEIB in the workplace. If you identify gaps in your training strategy, you may educate employees on the fundamentals of DEIB with [Workplace Diversity and Inclusion Training \(Immersive\)](#) or how to create a better company culture with [Fostering a Culture of Respect Training \(Immersive\)](#).

## Celebrate everyone, every day on the trip around the sun

June is full of occasions to celebrate Canada's multiculturalism and the progress individuals and groups have achieved; however, celebration and inclusion don't need to be limited to this month. Employees may find it difficult to participate in cultural practices and traditions because of inflexible work arrangements. Employers can support employees' efforts to honour and maintain their connection to identity and cultural groups by establishing clear expectations and guidelines for celebrating cultural and traditional events in the workplace and during the workday throughout the year, without penalty.

Promote inclusion by giving employees greater flexibility, such as offering additional time off to celebrate cultural and traditional activities, which you can communicate through a Cultural and Traditional Days Policy. You can also provide employees designated space and time at work to honour religious commitments and practices with a Group Religious or Cultural Ceremonies Policy. While recognizing statutory holidays is important, giving employees support to fully participate in their cultural, religious, or other practices will encourage them to be their most authentic selves, an essential step in fostering belonging in the workplace.



## Final thought

Key takeaways to remember.

While your organization works tirelessly to be pioneers in your industry, employers can also be pioneers of social change. Improving DEIB practices may manifest as small steps in your organization, but they may actually be giant leaps for your employees. Though contemporary issues of historically marginalized groups can filter into the workplace, our intention is to reverse this effect; through training employees on DEIB, enforcing human rights legislation, and using equitable workplace practices, employers may be a catalyst for change outside the workplace, too.

# How Citation Canada can help

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