EQUITY HUMAN RESOURCES PLANNING TOOLS AND RESOURCES

Prepared for: Equity Ottawa - OLIP

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Introduction

I want to thank OLIP for giving me the opportunity to produce an Equity Human Resources Planning Guide. With over twenty years' experience in human rights and employment equity, I have seen many changes in this area. Although some progress has been made – in representation, culture, and attitudes - there is still much more that needs to be done to truly have representative and inclusive workplaces and service providers. I have seen organizations make good progress while others have lagged. I have also seen organizations that made good progress only to slide back that progress. My intent with this guide is to share these experiences and provide guidance on how organizations can move forward and continue in that direction.

Over the years, the language used for this work has also changed. When I started, employment equity was used to address under-representation and non-equity friendly work environments. Along with employment equity, concepts of oppression, racism, sexism, ableism, and other "isms" were commonly discussed. However, over the last few years, the language has shifted to diversity, equity, and inclusion. This shift focuses on removing barriers for equity groups which is a well-intended and important.

However, with this shift, there is less focus on root causes of why equity groups are not represented in organizations – the historical an on-going legacy of colonization, slavery, residential schools, patriarchy, and other forms of oppression. By examining inequities and injustices through only a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) lens and not an intersectional anti-oppression and anti-racism lens, then important discussions (about power, privilege, systemic racism, sexism, ableism, etc.) that lead to organization change do not occur. Therefore, I have tried to bring these two areas together in this guide – balancing the need for both the intersectional anti-oppression and anti-racism lens and the DEI lens.

Lastly, it is important to keep in mind that human rights are constantly evolving as we move forward in society to become more equitable and inclusive. Therefore, the language and concepts used in this guide may require updating as we gain better understanding the nuances within our diverse communities.

Taking Stock of Your Workplace

Where are you in your journey of integrating human rights into your organization[1]?
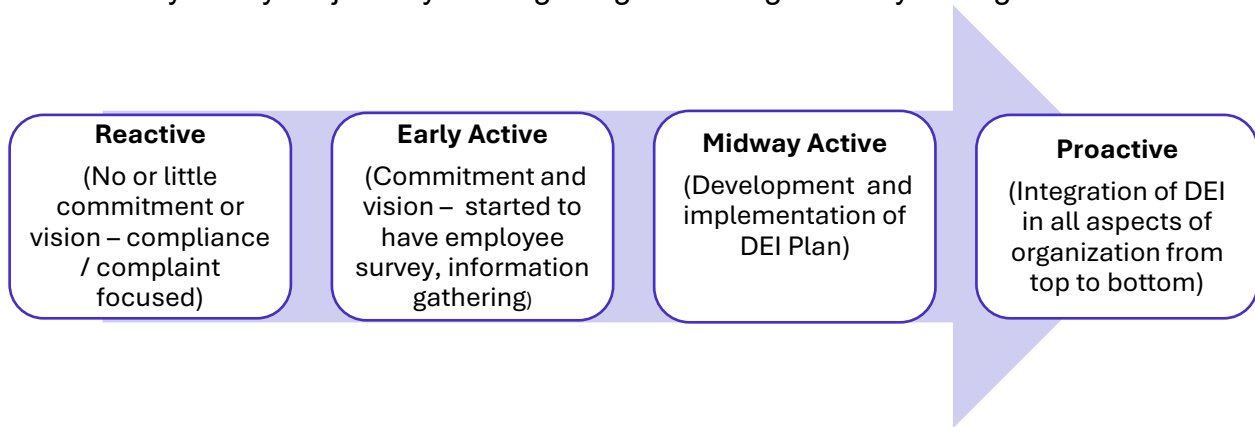
Level 1 – Reactive

- There is no or little commitment or vision on intersectional human rights, anti-oppression, anti-racism and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)
- Actions such as statements on equity days are performative for stakeholders (such as the public, clients, human resources, management and staff, Board members, etc.)
- Focus is on how to deal with human rights-related complaints or grievances or meet the minimum requirements of legislation (such as *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA), *Ontario Human Rights Code*, *Employment Standards Act*, etc.)
- No or little resources allocated for intersectional human rights, anti-oppression, anti-racism, and DEI initiatives

Level 2 – Beginning - Active

- Leadership commitment on changing organizational culture to be more diverse, inclusive, anti-oppressive, anti-racist. Leadership includes both elected/appointed leaders (i.e., Board members) and senior management.
- Leadership training to raise awareness of intersectional anti-oppression, anti-racism, DEI initiatives
- Consultations and communication with stakeholders have started
- Information gathering and data collection such as employee surveys
- Systems review of formal and informal policies, practices, and procedures within organization for barriers for equity groups.

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[1] *Note: There have been human rights maturity models developed over the years. The above model was an adaptation of the Canadian Human Rights Maturity Model: https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2015/ccdp-chrc/HR21-79-1-2012-eng.pdf.

Level 3 – Midway - Active

- Leadership understands their roles and responsibilities and acts to change organizational culture that supports and promotes intersectional human rights, anti-oppression, anti-racism, and DEI
- Understanding that intersectional human rights, anti-oppression, anti-racism, and DEI go beyond performative or business-case rationale
- Proactive and consistent consultation and communication involving all stakeholders
- Development of human rights roles and responsibilities and a human rights and equity plan to address barriers identified in systems review
- Proactive processes to address human rights issues

Level 4 – Proactive

- Human Rights roles and responsibilities shared, acted, and demonstrated throughout the organization (e.g., leadership, management, and staff)
- Organization has built relationships and on-going consultations with stakeholders to get ongoing input on intersectional human rights, anti-oppression, anti-racism, DEI issues
- Polices, process, and procedures foster a diverse and inclusive environment in all aspects and levels of the organization
- Enhanced performance measurement framework that centres human rights and equity goals
- Intersectional human rights, anti-oppression, anti-racism, intersectionality, DEI lens and measures are built into all areas of the organization

As you go through this guide and the various stages of human resource planning, keep these different stages in mind – where is your organization in the journey to become an anti-oppressive, anti-racist, intersectional, diverse, equitable and inclusive organization?

Stages of Organization Change Process

At what stage is your organization in the change process?

Kurt Lewin, an American social psychologist, developed a three-stage change model for organizational change: unfreeze, change, and freeze.

Stage 1 – Unfreeze
In brief, the first stage is to create a need or desire for change within the organization. This stage is crucial to get staff onboard by helping them become aware and understand the need for change and what the desired change should look like.

Stage 2 – Change
The second stage is then moving towards that desired change. It is the implementation stage where processes, structures, and actions are altered. Expected behaviours are modeled, clearly articulated and reinforced.

Stage 3 – Freeze
The third stage is to ensure that the changes are maintained, institutionalized, and do not revert to the undesired state. It is the opportunity to review and assess challenges that have occurred. These three stages are critical for any long-lasting organizational change, even staff or leadership change.

Although this change model focuses on businesses who may be seeing substantial internal changes (e.g., growing from a small business to a large business, introducing new products, etc.), it can be a helpful model for other sectors such as small or large not-for-profit organizations because the emphasis is on structures, behaviours and actions of leaders, management, and staff.

Like taking stock of your organization, as you go through this guide and the various stages of human resource planning, keep this change model in mind – where does your organization fit in this change model?

Human Resource Planning Cycle

DEI human resources planning involves several steps or processes that must be put into place to bring about a successful outcome: an organization that is anti-oppressive, anti-racist, diverse, equitable and inclusive.

It is tempting to skip a step in the cycle, such as conducting a thorough systems review, because it may be "obvious" what the barrier is for an under-represented group, and you want to implement solutions immediately. However, this approach is unlikely to produce the result sought because there may have been other factors contributing to the under-representation that were not evident and would have been discovered during the systems review stage.

Understandably, how much time and resources are put into each stage will depend on the size of the organization and the resources (both human and financial) available for this type of initiative. Therefore, organizations may need to adjust the guidelines that fit within their own organizational reality.

The various stages in the equity human resource planning cycle are demonstrated in this diagram:
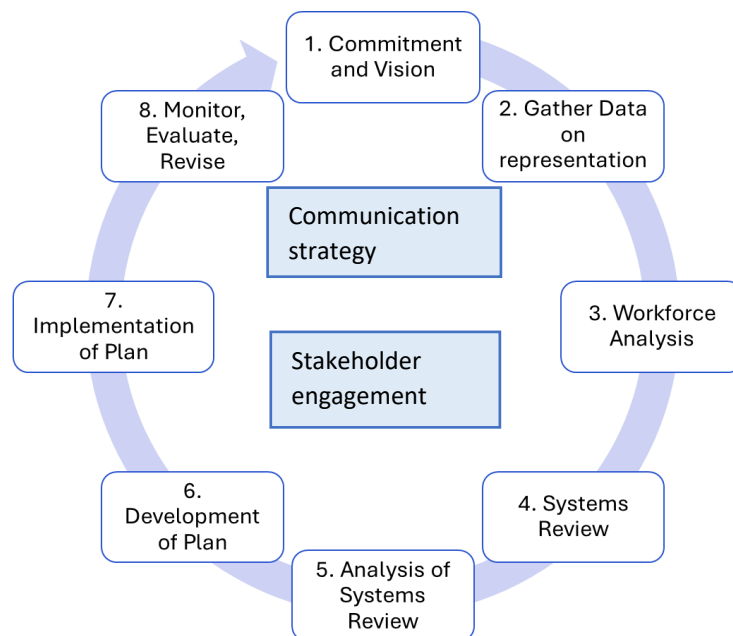
Each step will be examined in-depth but first, let's consider why communication strategy and stakeholder engagement are crucial throughout each of the steps.

Communication Strategy

A communication strategy is important to ensure that all stakeholders understand and buy into an initiative or equity plan because all stakeholders have a role in implementing and ensuring a representative and inclusive organization exists for everyone.

A good communication strategy is more than sending out a few emails or notices about your DEI /EE plan or initiatives. Before developing a communication strategy, you need to know:

- **Who?** Sender and the audience for the communication
- **What?** Key messages and intended outcomes using inclusive language
- **When?** Intentional communication that considers the workplace culture and context in that moment
- **Why?** Purpose for the communication, which can include raising awareness and education; providing information about initiatives and change; managing expectations; fostering support for change and desired outcomes; addressing concerns or resistance; gathering input from stakeholders; increasing transparency; and creating accountability
- **Where and how?** Ways and places to communicate most effectively in your workplace, including written letters, emails, surveys, suggestion boxes, small group meetings, informal or formal discussion forums, townhalls, presentations, etc.)

Too often, written emails are sent out without the buy-in into the message or initiative. Sometimes, there are inaccurate and damaging rumours that can adversely impact the successful implementation of the initiatives. It is important that one-sided communications are minimized.

More importantly, any communications must be intentional, transparent, consistent, and on-going with concrete timetables and measurables. Messages and actions need to be accessible and appropriate for that moment – stakeholders need to understand what the organization is striving for with clear outcomes and how that will be done. Otherwise, stakeholders may be cynical of any true commitment to DEI/EE.

Lastly, any communications should be engaging with the stakeholders – two-way communication – to foster authentic conversations to not only get buy-in but build momentum to make change.

Avoid statements with undefined or too-specific commitments, objectives, actions, or messages that do not align with the organization's values and cultures. Stakeholders will see through these kinds of messaging quickly when the communication does not fit the actions of the organization. In other words, "walk the talk".

Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement is important to get long-term commitment and support through the whole organization. Without engagement with all stakeholders (or anyone who is impacted) throughout the DEI/EE process, you will not have a complete understanding of DEI/EE related workplace issues.

First, determine who are the stakeholders in your organization. It is anyone who is impacted by your DEI/EE plan which could include but not limited to:

- Board of directors or leadership team
- Management team
- Future and current staff – both those who have been historically marginalized and those who have not
- External contractors
- Clients / customers
- Union / employee representatives

Next examine the purpose of stakeholder engagement. One important purpose for stakeholder engagement is to get buy-in – the change desired is more likely to occur if it is driven by all stakeholders and not by one stakeholder. The purpose of stakeholder engagement can overlap with the communication strategy, including:

- Increasing awareness and education
- Facilitating buy-in to foster changes in behaviour, and
- Gathering input from all stakeholders, including those who have been historically marginalized

Questions to ask before, during and after stakeholder engagement:

- Are voices from marginalized groups missing? (Why and how will you address the lack of representativeness?)
- Is the workplace culture and environment conducive to honest and authentic discussions? (If not, why not and how do you address it? Different engagement processes may be needed for different stakeholders.)
- Is the consultation/engagement process inclusive and safe for participants, taking into consideration power dynamics? (If not, how can that be achieved?)
- How will you use and report back on the stakeholder engagement feedback? (How will you demonstrate it to those who were involved in the engagement?)

1. Commitment and Vision
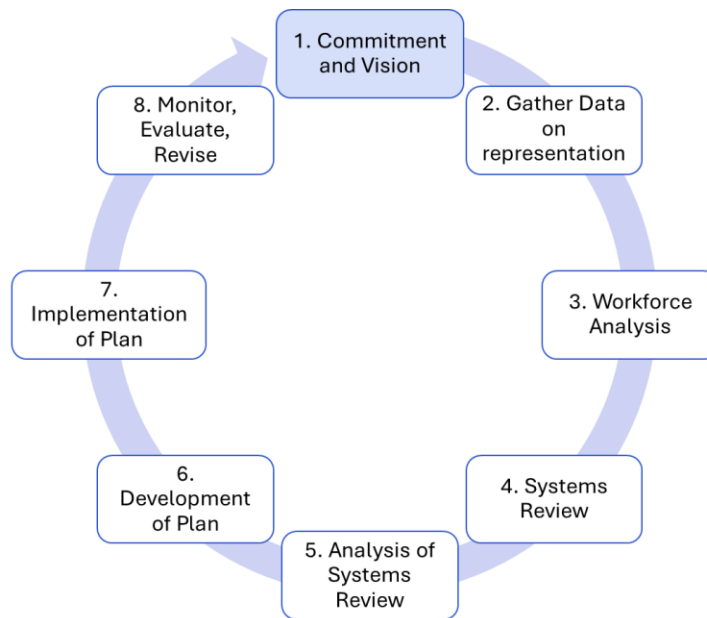
Often the future direction and vision of an organization is led by leadership and senior management.

There may be situations where an organization attempts to change to protect or improve their public image, minimize financial settlements, or are directed by an external decision-maker due to staff, client or external stakeholder complaints or grievances. Unfortunately, leaders and management driven by these elements are not likely to bring about meaningful or lasting cultural change because the desire for culture change has not been internalized

There may also be situations that drive organizational change based on the "business case" for diversity and inclusion. The business case rationale for diversity and inclusion, simply stated, is that recruiting, hiring, promoting, and retaining historically marginalized groups allows organizations to tap into diverse knowledge and expertise which benefits the organization's overall productivity and performance. However, after more than two decades of the "business case", many organizations have increased some representation but have not become any more inclusive. In some cases, increased representation has resulted in increased internal conflicts and tensions which in turn results in marginalized groups leaving the organization. As well, marginalized groups continue to be under-represented in most senior leadership positions.

The business case has been critiqued – simply increasing the representation of marginalized groups does not result in measurable organizational benefits because it has not been internalized organizationally. However, if key conditions are included in

the "business case" rationale then there may be measurable organizational benefits. These conditions include building trust and safety, actively working against discrimination, embracing a wide range of styles and voices, and making cultural differences a learning resource. These elements are more than simply "inclusion" because they involve reconfiguring power relations, changing the status quo and internalizing the culture of diversity and inclusion. It means that those that have been marginalized have the power to set the agenda and influence decisions, feel valued and recognized for their work and can have further opportunities to advance.[2]

The question arises: how do we move organizational commitment beyond performative and reactive to public opinion, specifically if the leadership is not reflective of marginalized groups? The conditions must be right for meaningful commitment to occur.

To foster the necessary conditions, first, the leadership must be ready for honest and authentic discussions about who is leading the organization and who is missing. Although some leaders may have some knowledge of why marginalized groups are under-represented, many do not have the necessary deep understanding of how to bring about organizational culture change on these issues.

Deeper insight can occur through intersectional anti-oppression and anti-racism training. This type of training differs from diversity and inclusion training. The former addresses historical and systemic power structures with the recognition that some have greatly benefited in society for merely being born a particular colour, ethnicity, religion, gender, abilities, etc. Intersectional anti-oppression and anti-racism training emphasize that the root causes of under-representation, under-employment, or unemployment of marginalized communities are based on colonialism, racism, sexism, ableism, etc. and that any solutions, including removing barriers, must start with addressing these root causes. Diversity and Inclusion training emphasizes that the issues of under-representation will be addressed by removing barriers for marginalized communities - this is important but misses the point on the root causes for the marginalization.

It needs to be emphasized that meaningful and impactful intersectional anti-oppression and anti-racism training is ongoing. Training once – whether half a day or a week – will not have long lasting effects unless there are regular ongoing trainings that build on previous training. Anti-oppression and anti-racism trainers call this kind of learning a lifelong journey where there is no final destination because our understanding of what is or is not oppressive or discriminatory today may be very different from our understanding in the future.

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[2] Source: "Getting Serious About Diversity: Enough Already with the Business Case" by Robin J. Ely and David A. Thomas, Harvard Business Review Magazine, November-December, 2020
https://hbr.org/2020/11/getting-serious-about-diversity-enough-already-with-the-business-case

As well, for intersectional anti-oppression and anti-racism training to be meaningful and impactful on the learners, there should be a level of discomfort. In organizations that consider themselves progressive or specialize in work assisting marginalized communities, there may be an even greater amount of discomfort. In transformative education, the most significant learning comes from and after this discomfort.

As a cautionary note, intersectional anti-oppression and anti-racism training that results in discomfort could result in resistance to change. Individuals may refuse to acknowledge the role the organization may has played in perpetuating oppression regardless of whether the oppression is unintentional and contrary to the beliefs and values of individual leaders, managers, and staff in the organization.

Once the leadership has an understanding and commitment to intersectional anti-oppression and anti-racism concepts, then management and staff need to also be educated on these topics with specific anti-oppression and anti-racism discussions and training. It is important for leadership to first be grounded on these principles so that they can be role models for anti-oppression and anti-racism by building trust and safety among staff, actively working against discrimination, embracing a wide range of styles and voices, and making cultural differences a learning resource.

Questions to ask:

- What are the commitments to anti-oppression, anti-racism, intersectionality, and DEI?
- How are these commitments made?
- What resources are allocated to these commitments?
- Is there meaningful buy-in from leadership, management, staff, and other stakeholders?
- What is the communication strategy around the commitment?

2. Gather Data on Representation
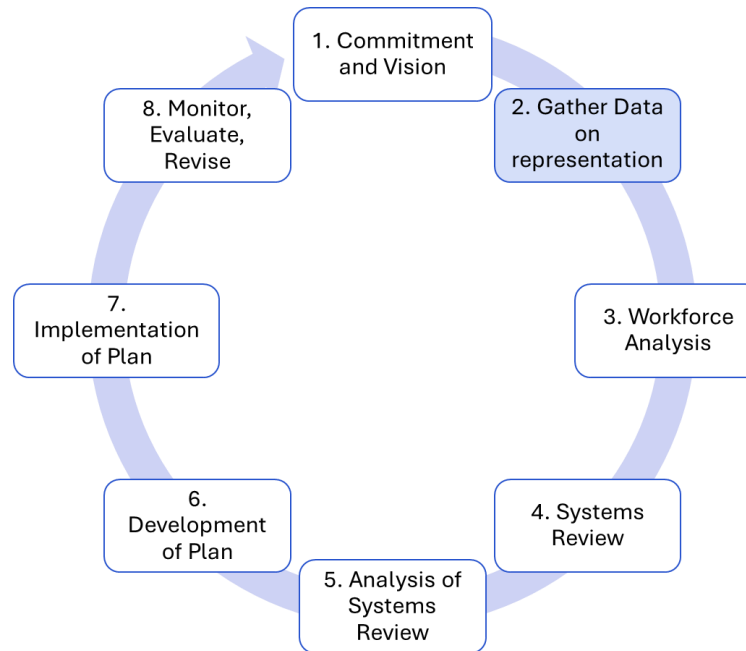
The first step in examining your workplace environment is determining how representative your organization is with respect to marginalized communities. A voluntary confidential self-identification survey should be undertaken by the organization, encouraging participants to disclose their identities such as racial, gender, sexual orientation, disability, etc. This is very personal information for participants to reveal so gathering this data should be done very deliberately and cautiously.

For a voluntary survey to understand the actual representation in the workplace, it is important to get a high rate of responses. According to Employment and Social Development Canada, 80% or higher is an acceptable return rate to the survey. Some organizations are perplexed as to why they do not get a high level of response when they have declared their commitment to diversity and inclusion. Here are a few of the common reasons why such surveys have low rate of response:

- Lack of a communication strategy on the roll-out of the survey, specifically purpose and how it will be used
- Lack of buy-in to the diversity and inclusion commitments (e.g., beliefs that it is being driven by a political agenda, that certain groups will get "special treatment" over others, that people should be hired on "merit" and not a "quota system", that qualifications will be lowered if jobs are targeted towards workers from marginalized groups, etc.)

- Lack of adequate resources for the self-identification survey (e.g., the questions or language are not appropriate, it is only in one format such as email, it is time-limited, there are no pre-survey meetings and discussions with employees, etc.)
- Lack of trust that the information will be confidential and kept in a secure place away from staff.
- Fear of disclosed information being used against them and will prevent future opportunities.
- Confusion between a self-identification survey and an employee engagement survey measuring the environment of the workplace.

In contrast, a proper workplace self-identification survey should have the following elements:

- Resources allocated for a communication strategy and roll-out before, during and after the survey. Allocations of human and financial resources should be as specific as possible. Staff required to conduct the survey should have adequate time to (i.e., it should not be added as something to be done on the "side of their desk").
- Resources allocated to ensure a confidential, statistically valid survey conducted by a trusted source – such as one person in the organization responsible for DEI/EE or a third party – that will ensure the information is stored and accessible to only people who require it for their work. It is important to have the expertise in conducting such surveys, how they are drafted and interpreted.
- A communication strategy should include stakeholder engagement and use of different formats (emails, townhalls, meetings, one-on-one discussions, etc.) to provide information on the objectives, confidentiality, voluntariness, and use of the survey, as well as, allowing time to answer questions. The communications before the survey are crucial in setting the tone for the actual survey. It is important to get buy-in and dispel rumors and myths about DEI/EE at the outset. It is also important to be aware that there may be resisters who do not want the survey to succeed and thus, it is vital that the communications be transparent, honest, and accessible to ensure that all participants and stakeholders have the same information about the survey. Engaging stakeholders like unions can play an important role in getting buy-in and trust of participants.
- The text of the survey should include: a privacy statement, an explanation of the purpose of the survey, why the information is being gathered, where it will be stored, who will have access to it, and how that information will be used, as well as definitions of any words that may not be consistently understood (such as employment equity, diversity, and inclusion). Each equity group identified in the survey should have a definition so that people are clear about who fits within that identity.
- It is important for participants to know that they can change their responses at any time and that they can identify in more than one equity group.

- The survey should be offered in alternate formats to ensure that it is accessible to all participants.

    Note that the identity questions are voluntary to answer. However, participants can be required to return the questionnaire even if they choose not to complete the voluntary identity questions. Having a mandatory question about their participation compels members to send back the survey, regardless of whether they filled out the voluntary portion or not.

As a cautionary note, there may be a temptation to do a "head count" of equity group members, especially if the identity survey results are lower than the expected results. The "head count" approach should be rejected at the outset. How one identifies is personal and should not be imposed on anyone. It is about identity and how one defines themselves, not how others define them.

The self-identification survey is a stand-alone survey only to determine representation. It is kept by the person responsible for DEI/EE and the information is not shared widely, except for the overall data, which can be included in reports that discuss the representation of the organization. It should not be used simultaneously with an employee engagement survey. The purpose of an engagement survey is to reveal how participants perceive their organization on various workplace issues. These surveys can include identify questions and thus, analyze how marginalized groups perceive their workplace compared to other groups; however, they should not be used to provide representation rates within the organization because participants are less likely to fill out the self-identification portion of the employee engagement survey if they feel that it could be traced back to them.

Other considerations for workplace data collection of personal identities:

- Job applications can also be used to gather identity data right from the outset. It is useful to gather this data because it allows organizations to track how applicants from marginalized groups do through each step of the recruitment, hiring and promotion processes.
- A survey should be given to new employees hired after the date of the survey to ensure that the data stays up to date.
- Subgroup data should be gathered if appropriate for the size of your organization. Subgroup data refers to sub-groups within equity groups, for example, different identities of racialized people or different types of disabilities. For years, marginalized groups have been arguing that they are not homogenous groups and that within equity groups, there much diverse lived experiences of oppression and discrimination. As well, some subgroups within equity groups may be well represented and yet others within another subgroup are not. For example, persons with severe or multiple disabilities are under-represented in

most workplaces and yet, there may not be an under-representation of persons with disabilities as a group.

- Consequently, there has been a push to move away from overarching categories such as racialized, Indigenous, women, persons with disabilities, or 2SLGBTQIA+ groups. Instead, each group is broken down in subgroups as follows:
  - o racialized groups include Chinese, South Asian, Black, non-white Arab or Middle Eastern, etc.
  - o Indigenous groups include First Nations, Metis, and Inuit
  - o 2SLGBTQIA+ include two-spirited, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, etc.
  - o Women include racialized women, Indigenous women, women with disabilities, etc.
  - o Persons with disabilities include seeing disability, hearing disability, speech disability, mobility disability, mental health disability, environmental disability, cognitive disability, intellectual disability, environmental disability, etc.
- The organization should consider the representation of clients or customers that come from marginalized groups if services are mostly provided to those marginalized groups (e.g., clients that are mostly racialized or Indigenous, etc.). Therefore, an identity survey could be sent to clients to fill out that is similar to staff survey (except that it may not be mandatory to return). It is important that marginalized client groups are reflected in the organization.

3. Workforce Analysis
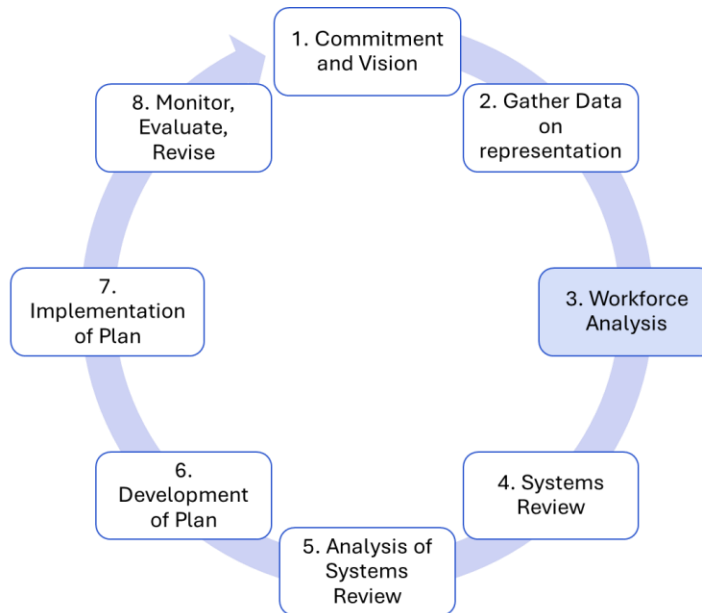
The purpose of a workforce analysis (WFA) is to determine how equity groups are represented in your organization is compared to their representation in the Canadian workforce. In other words, how does your organization compare to the outside labour market? Does it reflect the diversity that's out there?

To do this, a comparison must be made between your organization's workplace identity data and the labour market availability (LMA) rate in the workforce for similarly skilled equity group members. LMA refers to the share of equity group members in the workforce from which employers could hire.

A workforce analysis involves:

- examining the workforce data, you collected through the self-identification questionnaire to find out if:
  - the representation of the equity groups in your organization is equal to their availability in the Canadian workforce
  - equity group members are concentrated in specific occupational groups
- identifying any gaps in representation for each of the designated groups by occupation, including areas of significant under-representation
- examining all hires, promotions, and terminations
- creating a report that highlights the results of the WFA

The LMA can be in either the Canadian workforce as a whole or segments of the Canadian workforce identified by job category. These categories are called Employment

Equity Occupational Groups (EEOGs). For small organizations with not many employees in a single job category, it may only be appropriate to use the national LMA. Although this sounds technical, it does not have to be done by an expert in employment equity data analysis. It does require understanding of where and how to gather the data.

Part of the data includes determining the Occupational Classification (NOC) codes and corresponding EEOG for your workplace. Once you have a list of your EEOG then compare the number of employees in each of those NOC codes and/or EEOGs with the LMA of those NOC codes and/or EEOG.

The LMA rates are set out in the *Employment Equity Data Report*, which Employment and Social Development Canada issues after each Canadian census. The national LMA for the four equity groups is found in Table 1 at the beginning of the Report.
The 2016 national LMA for each of the four equity groups is as follows:

Women	48.2%
Indigenous peoples	4.0%
Racialized people	21.3%
Persons with disabilities	9.1%

Information about EEOGs for each equity group is found in the sections dealing with each of those groups. Note: Currently, there is no data for the LGBTQ2+ group, as Statistics Canada does not yet provide this data.

Currently, only the 2016 census data for NOC and EEOGs is available. The data provides national, provincial, or territorial, and census metropolitan area (CMA). The CMA consists of major cities in Canada, including Ottawa.

This data can be found at:

https://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/93f81da5-a9e0-477d-b73f-7f54952ce580 and
https://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/07deee9b-4275-40ab-a0d3-9cd913feed47
Note that because the LMA provided by ESDC is limited because it is out of date and consequently, the demographics have changed for the equity groups. As well, there are limitations for data related to Indigenous groups because the census does not cover all Indigenous communities when gathering census data. Therefore, organizations should factor these changes into the LMA rates used.

Once an organization has the identity survey data and the LMA rates, then the workforce analysis can be undertaken to determine how the organization's representation of equity groups overall and in different occupational groups compares to their respective LMA rates. This can also show whether equity groups are clustered in specific occupational groups. As well, the data should allow an analysis of hiring, promotion, and termination rates. Depending on the organization's size and desire to do

a more detailed analysis, a salary analysis, employment status (e.g., full time, part time, temporary, etc.) could also be done.

If the LMA rate is greater than the organization's representation rate of an equity group then there is a gap or in other words, that equity group is under-represented. How significant a gap or under-representation will depend on how large the gap is. Representation gaps can be overall representation or specific to occupational categories. In other words, even though an organization may not have overall under-representation gaps does not mean that there is no under-representation issue. There may be a clustering of an equity group in specific occupations and not enough in others. In some organizations, mostly clerical, manual, or front-line work may be done by an equity group while they are under-represented at the managerial or leadership levels. In the analysis on hires, promotions and terminations, the equity group occupational group is compared to:

- the percentage of hires of equity groups compared to the LMA rate of that equity group.
- percentage of promotions of equity groups compared to non-equity groups
- percentage of terminations of equity groups compared to non-equity groups

This analysis allows organizations to see if there are gaps in hiring and promotions and if equity groups are leaving the workplace at higher rates than non-equity groups. Other areas could also be captured such as percentage of training opportunities or acting opportunities for equity groups compared to non-equity groups.

Lastly, the workforce analysis should result in a report that highlights:

- how you conducted the workforce analysis; and
- results of the workforce analysis for each equity group including detailed description of representation rates, LMAs, gaps, and clustering identified.

Ensuring the analysis and report is adequately done is important because identifies gaps that need to be addressed. It is crucial for the next step to identify and remove barriers, as well as the development of an equity plan.

Sample Workforce Analysis Summary Table[3] of a specific equity group as of specific date:

Occupational Catergory	All Employees	Representation of _____ (specific equity group) # %	Labour Market Availability of _____ (specific equity group) # %	Gap # %
Senior Manager				
Middle & Managers				
Professionals				
Semi-Professionals and Trades				
Supervisors				
Administrative & Senior Clerical Professionals				
Skilled Sales & Service Personnel				
Skilled Crafts & Trades Workers				
Clerical Personnel				
Other manual work				
TOTAL				

Source: WFA rates from 2016 National Household Survey

Sample of a Hiring, Promotions, and Separation Table:

	All employees #	Women # %	Indigenous Peoples # %	Persons with Disabilities # %	Racialized Members # %
Hirings					
Promotions					

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[3] Adopted from the Annual Treasury Board Report on Employment Equity in the Federal Public Service: https://www.canada.ca/en/government/publicservice/wellness-inclusion-diversity-public-service/diversity-inclusion-public-service/employment-equity-annual-reports.html.

Separations					

(From X date to X date)

Questions to ask:

- Are there gaps for any equity groups? Subgroups? How significant are the gaps for the organization?
- Where are the gaps – occupational, job levels (e.g., senior management vs clerical), salary?
- Are there gaps in hiring, promotions, and terminations?
- Are there gaps between workplace representation and the clients served

4. Systems Review
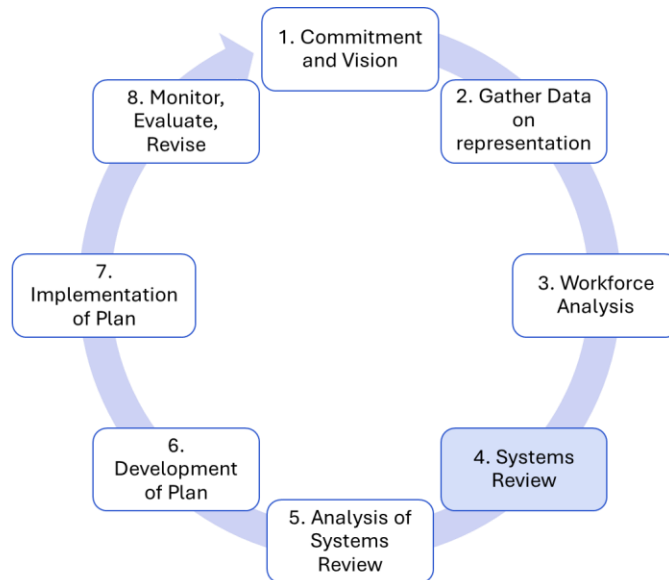
A systems review is a comprehensive examination of an organization's informal and formal systems, policies, procedures, and practices to understand the reasons for the under-representation of equity groups in the workplace by identifying barriers to those equity groups. Barriers can be physical, systemic, or attitudinal as well as subtle and unintentional. It is preferable of the systems review is done by an objective and impartially, often an external consultant. It can be difficult for the people who are responsible for implementing initiative to also then assess their own work.

This step requires the gathering of the organization's informal and formal systems, policies, practices, and processes such as those listed below.

Informal and formal Human Resources and staffing related policies, practices & processes	Other informal and formal Human Rights related policies, practices & processes	Other workplace informal and formal policies, practices and processes	Collective Agreements
•recruitment •job advertisements •screening applications •interview process •job offers •selection boards •training and development •promotion •retention and termination •etc.	•anti-discrimination •anti-harassment •anti-racism •sexual harassment •accomodation •etc.	•classification •remote work •attendance •health and safety •website •communications •contractors •etc.	•barriers such as seniority •hours of work •etc.

It is also important to examine not only what the policies, procedures and practices say but also how they are implemented and applied. Many policies do not have obvious barriers and appear fair and neutral; however, the barrier arises when individuals must interpret or apply the policy without any accountability. For example, during an interview process, the interview process may appear neutral but when applied the questions, prompts and grading process may not be same for all candidates. As well, unconscious bias or negative stereotypes and prejudices may be factors in the interview process. These will not be captured in written formal policies, procedures, or practices.

Consequently, a comprehensive review involves conducting surveys, interviews, meetings, focus groups, and discussions with various staff, since informal processes, practices and procedures are often not written down. Often, informal practices may not follow formal written practices or policies. These practices can have barriers that may not be recognized by the organization and will go undetected. For example, it is important to examine if the recruitment process involves informal networks or places to recruit new hires.

Voluntary employee engagement and satisfaction surveys can also be a very useful tool during an employment systems review to get a picture of how staff perceive their workplace on issues such as discrimination, harassment, and accommodation; diversity and inclusion; workplace wellbeing; compensation; career progression, workplace culture, leadership, training opportunities; employee engagement; performance management; and physical environment. When possible, voluntary identity questions for equity groups should be included, then responses can be compared between equity groups and other staff. If equity groups perceive their workplace experiences more

adversely than their non-equity counterparts, then the reasons why will need to be explored.

The same considerations for identity surveys discussed earlier apply to employee engagement surveys. However, the key difference between the two surveys is their purpose. An employee engagement and satisfaction survey can review barriers or issues that equity groups encounter at a higher rate than their non-equity counterparts. It also helps to understand whether perception of employees is aligned with actual representation rates and other employees.

5. Analysis of Systems Review
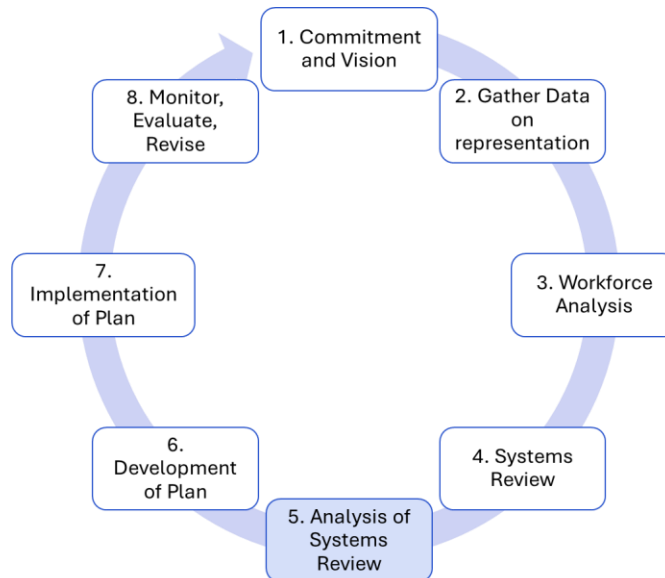
Systems review is time consuming and requires specialized expertise in employment systems and being able to review policies, processes, and practices for equity-related barriers. Consequently, organizations may use external consultants to conduct a systems review.

Regardless of who leads the systems review, it will need to be supported by management, human resources, DEI / committees, bargaining agents and staff. Having diverse perspectives during the systems review is important. One individual alone cannot have a complete equity lens.

The systems review should be linked to the gaps identified. For example, if there was under-representation of an equity group in hiring, then the review should focus on recruitment, selection, and hiring policies and practices. Likewise, if there is a gap in promotions then the focus should be on training, development and promotion policies and practices. If there is a higher number of equity groups leaving the workplace then the focus should be on retention, organizational culture and termination policies and practices.

Each policy, practice, and process are reviewed with an equity lens to find the barriers for the equity groups where gaps were identified. A barrier means that the policy, practice, or process has a disproportionate negative impact on a particular equity group. Barriers should be identified in the following areas (but not limited to):

- recruitment

- selection
- hiring (includes appointments, competitions, assignments, transfers, etc.)
- training and development
- promotion
- retention
- termination
- compensation
- accommodations
- organizational culture and environment and
- recourse processes.

To identify barriers, the following questions should be considered:

- Is the system, policy, practice, or procedure consistent with human rights, accessibility, labour, employment, and other applicable laws?
- Does it negatively impact equity group members compared to the impact on non-equity group members?
- Has it been applied consistently, fairly, and transparently to everyone?
- Is it necessary for the safe and efficient operation of the organization?
- Is (reasonable) accommodation possible to reduce the negative impact?
- Are there alternative ways to achieve the desired outcome?

The above can be used when drafting new policies, practices, or practices to prevent future employment barriers.

Example of barriers include:

- job requirements that are not necessary for the performance of the job
- physical or technological barriers
- lack of access to training
- negative work culture and environment
- lack of access to informal networks
- unconscious bias of selection boards; etc.

How the findings are captured is important and should be shared with all stakeholders. There should be a summary report of the review that consists of the following:

1) Introduction about why the system review was conducted, history of reviews and findings, and any challenges or limitations with the review
2) Description of methodology used to do the review including who conducted the review; the consultation process; the list of who was consulted; and the barriers identification process
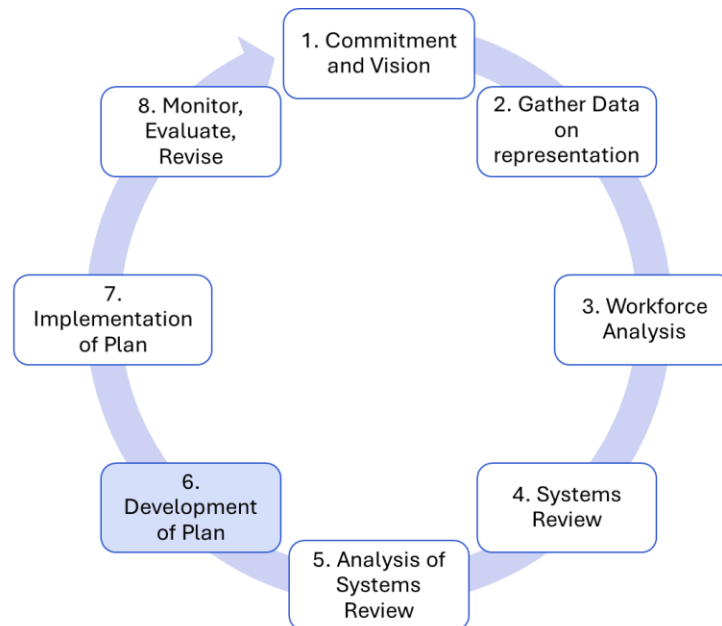3) Summary of the representation gaps

4) List of employment systems, policies, procedures, and practices that were examined (and ones that were not examined, if any)
5) Results of the review including identifying barriers and ways to remove them.

6. Development of a Plan

Once the analysis of gaps and barriers has been completed, the next step is to develop an equity plan that outlines the representation gaps and barriers as well as the measures and actions to remove those barriers.

The plan should consist of:

- Introduction with an overview of how the plan was developed (e.g. who prepared the plan, consultation process, who is responsible for implementation and monitoring it, etc.)
- findings of the workforce analysis and systems review (representation gaps and barriers)
- short-term (within 1 year) and long-term (3 years or longer) goals, measures, and actions to address specific under-representation of equity groups, increase representation generally and remove barriers
- roles and responsibilities of individuals responsible for implementing the equity plan
- clear accountability framework
- policies, practices, and measures to ensure an equitable workplace and environment dealing with hiring, training, promotion, retention, etc.
- communication strategy on the equity plan with actions and timeframes, and
- a system for monitoring, reviewing, and revising the equity plan

The plan should be developed in consultation and collaboration with leadership, management, staff, and bargaining agents. The consultation and collaboration are not only important to get the buy-in but also find creative measures to address the gaps and barriers.

It is important to remember that gaps and systemic barriers may have existed for a very long time. Therefore, not all corrections can be rectified immediately on the one hand, and yet, corrections should occur within an expected timeframe. Any plan should have short-term, mid-term and long-term goals to address barriers and gaps.

Questions to ask when drafting an equity plan:

- Are there positive policies, procedures, and practices to be implemented in the short-term for hiring, training, promotion, and retention with the goal to correct the under-representation gaps as identified by the workforce analysis?
- Are there special measures or actions with the goal of correcting specific under-representation gaps (e.g., senior management levels, board members, supervisors, etc.)?
- Are there short-term numerical goals for hiring and promotions of under-represented equity groups?
- Are there long-term goals for increasing the representation of under-represented groups?
- Are there measures for the elimination of any barriers identified in the systems review (attitudinal, systemic, etc.)?
- Are there measures for making reasonable accommodations for under-represented equity groups?
- Is there a timetable for implementation of each measure identified in the plan?

Sample Equity Plan[4]: Workforce Analysis – Gaps

Employment Equity Occupational Group (EEOG)	Under-representation		Numerical Goal	Timetable	Responsibilities	Achievement Progress
	#	%				
Senior Manager						
Middle Manager						
Professionals						
Etc.						

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[4] Adapted from ESDC's Employment Equity Template: Employment Equity Tasks (esdc.gc.ca)

Sample Equity Plan – Employment Systems Review – Barriers

| Positive Policies and Practices	Barriers Identified	Specific Measures (including resources needed)	Timetable	Responsibilities	Achievement Progress
Recruitment					
Selection					
Hiring					
Training and Development					
Promotions					
Retention					
Termination					
Accommodation					
Organization culture					
Communication					

It should be noted that the term "goals' does not mean quotas. Quota requires that there should be a fixed number of persons hired or promoted or represented. Unlike quota, short- and long-term numerical goals provide guidance to assist with increasing representation of equity groups.

Lastly, equity plans are "special programs" under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*. It may be useful to check in with the Ontario Human Rights Commission to confirm that your equity plan falls within "special programs" so that it can withstand challenges of discrimination by non-equity groups.

7. Implementation of Plan
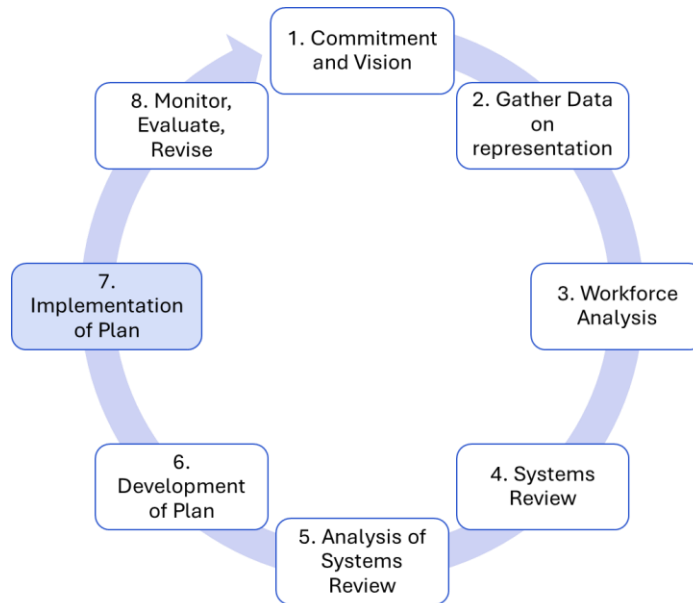
As already stated, the equity plan should outline who is responsible for implementing the plan with specific timeframes.

There should be a communication and stakeholder engagement strategy. The messaging about the equity plan to stakeholders will be crucial to its success. At this stage, the equity plan should not be a surprise and there should be buy-in from most stakeholders.

The equity plan should be accessible to any stakeholder. The systems review report should also be accessible with one caveat: if information could identify individuals, then that information should be summarized in a way that does not reveal any identities. It is important to be transparent about the equity plan and answer questions that may arise to address any misconceptions or rumours about it. Information and training sessions about the systems review and equity plan should be provided to all stakeholders. Regular update sessions should also be provided on the progress of the equity plan.

It should not be assumed that, once the equity plan has been developed, those who are mostly responsible for implementing it have the skills, knowledge, and ability to implement it. Ongoing, in-depth training and regular check-ins must be provided to these individuals (e.g., leadership, managers, human resources, etc.).

For example, when there is a job posting, hiring managers will have to decide about whether to make a position "designated" or "preferred". Managers will need to

understand the difference and when to do one or the other. Designated hiring means that only applicants from the under-represented designated group will be considered for the position. If there is no suitable applicant, then it will be reposted after being reviewed to examine and review barriers that may exist for that equity group. On the other hand, a preferred position means that candidates from the under-represented designated group will be considered first and only if there is no successful applicant from that group will others be considered. Preferred positions are used in succession planning, and when there may be a small under-representation gap.

Every individual that has a role to play in the equity plan must understand that role and that they are accountable for achieving the goals and implementation of the equity plan. For example, performance evaluations for managers can be tied to outcomes in the equity plan. The onus should be on those individuals to raise challenges that may arise as soon as possible so that the equity plan can be adjusted.

The CHRC has learned that the most effective equity plans are supported by equity committees that meet regularly (e.g. quarterly), include representation from equity groups, senior management and bargaining agents, and regularly prepare activity and performance reports which are available to stakeholders[5]

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[5] Canadian Human Rights Commission: Factsheet 2 (employmentequitychrc.ca)

8. Monitor, Evaluate and Revise
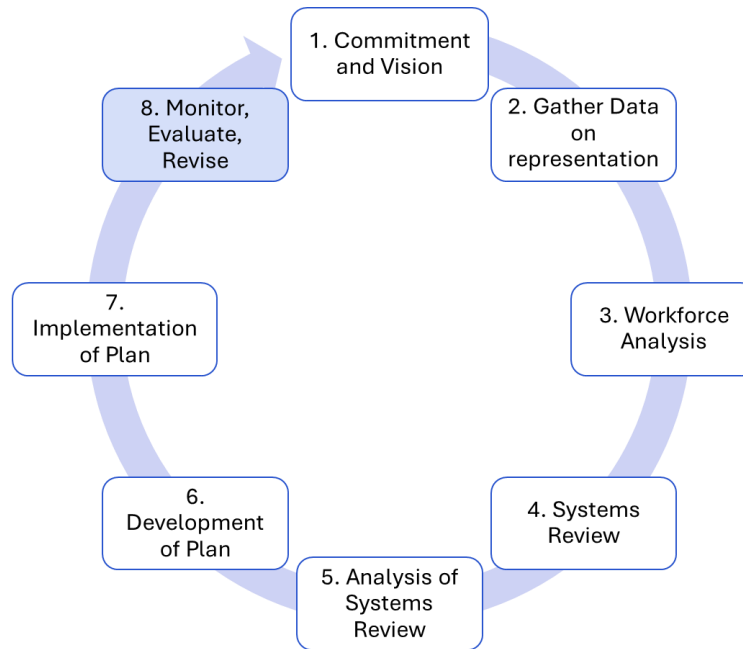
Equity plans are only as good as how well they are implemented, the resources provided, the support by stakeholders and the accountability measures put in place. If there is little or no progress on the equity plan, then there is a problem either in the communications and stakeholder engagement strategy, lack of commitment and understanding of roles and responsibilities, lack of an accountability framework, or barriers that were not identified in the systems review.

The equity plan should be monitored, reviewed, and revised as needed periodically. The equity committee that oversees the implementation of the equity plan can also update and revise the plan as needed, including the short-term and long-term goals based on unanticipated changes in the organization.

During this process, stakeholders should be consulted and provided opportunities to provide input into the changes needed.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this toolkit is a guide that can be adapted for your workplace – taking into consideration where you are in your journey to becoming a diverse, inclusive and anti-oppressive workplace as well as your size, organizational culture and processes. The intent is that these practices become entrenched and normalized into any workplace so that if there are changes in leadership or staff, they practices will be sustained.

Resources

1. Public Service Commission, as an employer dealing with staffing in the federal public service, has developed tools on equitable staffing including:

    *   Enhance fairness and reduce bias in the content of assessment tools https://www.canada.ca/en/public-service-commission/services/public-service-hiring-guides/enhance-fairness-reduce-bias-assessment-tools.html
    *   Guide for Assessing Persons with Disabilities https://www.canada.ca/en/public-service-commission/services/public-service-hiring-guides/guide-assessing-persons-disabilities.html
    *   Fair assessment in a diverse workplace https://www.canada.ca/en/public-service-commission/services/public-service-hiring-guides/Fair-assessment-diverse-workplace.html
    *   Employment Systems Review – A Guide for the Federal Public Service https://www.canada.ca/en/public-service-commission/services/appointment-framework/guides-tools-appointment-framework/employment-systems-review-guide-federal-public-service.html
    *   Employment Equity – Leveraging Staffing Options for Hiring Managers https://www.canada.ca/en/public-service-commission/services/appointment-framework/employment-equity-leveraging-staffing-options-for-hiring-managers.html

2. Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC) has factsheets on employment equity: https://www.employmentequitychrc.ca/en/factsheets

3. Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) is responsible for the oversight of federal regulated private sector employers that fall under the Employment Equity Act. ESDC has developed tools for employers:
    *   How to improve workplace equity: Evidence-based actions for employers https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/portfolio/labour/programs/employment-equity/reports/employers-improve-workplace.html
    *   Employment Equity Tasks: Legislated Employment Equity Program https://equity.esdc.gc.ca/sgiemt-weims/emp/WeimsEET.jsp#00/
    *   2016 Employment Equity Data https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2019/edsc-esdc/Em8-5-2016-eng.pdf

    *   Employer resources and tools on employment equity https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-

development/corporate/portfolio/labour/programs/employment-equity/tools-resources.html
- Sample WFA Table from Employment and Social Development Canada's Workforce Analysis (WFA) Tools: https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/portfolio/labour/programs/employment-equity/tools-resources/workforce-analysis.html

4. Municipal equity plans and tools:
   - City of Ottawa: Equity and Inclusion lens https://ottawa.ca/en/city-hall/creating-equal-inclusive-and-diverse-city/equity-and-inclusion-lens#section-f0ef0c5a-150c-450d-8255-772ef6f8d8e8
   - City of Ottawa: Equity and Inclusion Lens Handbook https://documents.ottawa.ca/sites/documents/files/ei_lens_hb_en.pdf
   - City of Toronto: Workforce Equity and Inclusion Plan https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/accessibility-human-rights/equity-diversity-inclusion/workforce-equity-inclusion-plan/