

MODULE 3

BEST PRACTICES FOR DIVERSITY-COMPETENCE IN NON-PROFIT HUMAN SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS: GOVERNANCE

SUMMARY OF MODULE

PURPOSE

The purpose of this module is to help participants understand the basic tasks that an organization should undertake **at the governance level** of the organization, if it wants to develop its capacity to serve diverse groups in a manner that respects and accommodates the social and cultural characteristics of those groups.

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SYNOPSIS OF CONTENT

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SYNOPSIS OF CONTENT

Major Best Practices for Diversity-Competence at the Governance Level

Governance refers primarily to the work of the Board of Directors and the Executive Director (and, sometimes, to other senior management staff). This work includes the development of corporate mandates and visions, organizational policies, strategic plans, resource acquisition and allocation, etc.

- An assessment of the organization's current capacity to provide services to individuals from diverse racial, social, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds. (Conducted by senior managers in different areas of the organization).
- A Board of Directors comprised of persons from different gender and age groups, and from different racial, social, and cultural backgrounds.
- A diverse Board of Directors trained and knowledgeable about issues pertaining to diversity-competence and their implications for governance and management of the organization.
- A Board of Directors with positive attitudes towards diverse groups and zero tolerance for prejudice and discrimination against any group of persons in society.
- Appropriate and adequate legal services available to guide the organization's work with diverse racial, social, cultural, and linguistic groups in the community.
- Appropriate and adequate insurance coverage available for the organization's work with diverse racial, social, cultural, and linguistic groups in the community.
- Policies and procedures to guide and sustain the organization's efforts to become diversity-competent and, thereby, able to provide appropriate and effective services for diverse groups in the community.
- Plans for developing the capacity of the organization to provide appropriate and effective services to diverse groups in the community (action plan, financial plan, communications plan).
- A diversity-competence working group, led by a Board member or senior management representative, responsible for implementation of the diversity-competence action plan.
- The creation of a position - Manager of Diversity for the organization. This position is responsible for developing and monitoring the capacity of the organization to be diversity-competent in relation to staff, volunteers, clients, and stakeholders in the community.
- Acquisition of financial resources for implementing the policies, procedures, and action plan for the organization's journey towards diversity-competence.

Background: Defining Governance

Governance refers to the highest level of authority within an organization.

The people associated with governance are:

- the Board of Directors
- the CEO or Executive Director
- senior managers

The activities usually associated with governance are:

- development of the mission of the organization
- hiring of the CEO and senior managers
- development of organizational policies and procedures
- monitoring the implementation of organizational policies and procedures by staff
- strategic planning
- establishment of strategic partnerships and alliances
- financial management and oversight

3.1 GOVERNANCE: ATTITUDES FOR DIVERSITY-COMPETENCE

In the diversity-competent organization, all staff and volunteers – have to have non-discriminatory attitudes towards diverse groups in the community. This principle is especially important for Board members and senior managers who should be champions and role models for the valuing of diversity inside and outside of the organization. To do this, they need training. They also need their main meeting place to physically reflect and celebrate the valuing of diversity among people.

- Attitudes to be Developed and Nurtured Among Board Members and Senior Managers**
- Training for the Development of Positive Attitudes Towards Diverse Groups**
- Artifacts Reflecting and Celebrating Diversity**

☑ Attitudes to be Developed and Nurtured Among Board Members and Senior Managers

- Diversity among human beings is a natural phenomenon that should be accepted as a matter of fact and valued.
- Human services professionals should carry out their professional duties in a manner that is in accordance with Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Canada's Human Rights Legislation, Canada's Multiculturalism Act and other public laws and policies of Canada and its provinces.
- All human beings have the right to be treated equally and fairly.
- People should be valued and respected regardless of their biological, social, economic, and cultural characteristics.
- Differences among people of diverse backgrounds should be seen as assets and not as liabilities, as complementary and not as conflicting.
- It is morally wrong to place differential value on the characteristics of diverse groups. (For example, it is wrong to view racial groups in a hierarchical manner with one group being labelled as better or more valuable than another.)
- It is good to work with people from diverse groups and to learn from them.
- Co-workers from diverse racial, cultural, and social backgrounds should be treated respectfully and fairly.
- It is the obligation of the human services professional to provide services that are respectful of and responsive to the social and cultural characteristics and needs of diverse groups in the community.

There should be zero tolerance for attitudes of discrimination (racism, sexism, homophobia, etc.) within the organization.

☑ Training for the Development of Positive Attitudes Towards Diverse Groups

Anti-oppression training should be provided to Board members, the CEO, and senior managers to help them understand and address systemic discrimination in organizations and society as a whole.

- Racism
- Sexism
- Homophobia
- Discrimination against persons with disabilities
- Classism
- Ageism
- Ethnocentrism

Specific training on attitudes towards diversity and equity in their own organization should be provided to Board members, Executive Directors, and senior managers:

- to understand their own attitudes towards people of diverse racial, social and cultural backgrounds
- to value and respect the differences among themselves and to relate to each other in a manner that is respectful of the diversity among them
- to develop positive attitudes about providing services to diverse groups
- to develop positive attitudes about collaborating with different groups in the community in order to develop appropriate and effective services for those groups
- to develop positive attitudes towards having the organization go through a change process to develop its capacity to provide appropriate and effective services to diverse groups in the community

☑ Artifacts Reflecting and Celebrating Diversity

The Boardroom should overtly reflect and celebrate diversity among human beings. (The same applies to other public spaces within the organization.)

- pictures of people from diverse groups
- motivational posters extolling the virtues of diversity and team work
- art and sculpture from different cultures, etc.

3.2 GOVERNANCE: POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR DIVERSITY-COMPETENCE

In the diversity-competent organization, the Board of Directors, with assistance from the Executive Director and senior managers, develops formal policies on the organization's valuing of diversity and its commitment to providing services to diverse groups in ways that are socially and culturally appropriate for those groups. These policies and procedures reflect the official will of the organization towards serving diverse groups in the community. As such, they provide direction to staff and volunteers about how they should go about the business of the organization in relation to serving people from diverse groups in the community.

- General Corporate Policy Statement on the Organization's Commitment to Serving Diverse Groups in the Community in Socially and Culturally Appropriate Ways**
- Policy Statement on Board Membership and Board Management**
- Specific Policies for Developing Diversity-Competence in Different Parts of the Organization**
- An Action Plan for Developing the Diversity-Competence of the Organization**
- A Financial Plan for Developing the Diversity-Competence of the Organization**
- A Communication Plan for Developing the Diversity-Competence of the Organization**
- A Formal Working Group Responsible for Directing and Monitoring the Organization's Journey Towards Diversity-Competence (The Diversity-Competence Working Group or Advisory Committee)**

☑ General Corporate Policy Statement on the Organization’s Commitment to Serving Diverse Groups in the Community in Socially and Culturally Appropriate Ways

An organizational policy stating the organization’s valuing of diversity in the population and its commitment to becoming diversity-competent/to having the organizational and professional capacity to provide services to diverse groups in socially and culturally appropriate ways for those groups.

☑ Policy Statement on Board Membership and Board Management

- A policy which directs the organization to:
 - recruit a Board of Directors comprised of people from diverse racial, social and cultural backgrounds,
 - provide the Board with training on issues of diversity and their implications for governance and management,
 - provide the Board with on-going support for their responsibility for ensuring that the organization provides equal opportunity and appropriate services for people of diverse backgrounds in the community.
- The policy should also direct the organization to respect and accommodate the specific social and/or cultural characteristics and needs of individual Board members, except in cases and situations where providing such respect and accommodation would result in the organization being in violation of one or more public laws.

☑ Specific Policies for Developing Diversity-Competence in Different Parts of the Organization*

The Board should ask senior management to develop policies in at least the following three (3) areas for Board discussion and approval:

- Diversity-Competence and Human Resources Management
- Diversity-Competence and Service Delivery
- Diversity- Competence and Partnerships with Stakeholders in the Community

* (See Modules 4, 5 and 6 for information on how to develop these policies.)

☑ An Action Plan for Developing the Diversity-Competence of the Organization

- The Board should ask senior management to develop and implement an action plan for developing the diversity-competence of the organization (to develop the capacity of the organization to provide socially and culturally appropriate services to diverse groups in the community).
- The action plan should focus on how to develop diversity-competence in at least four major areas of the organization:
 - Governance (decision-makers and strategists of the organization) *
 - Human resources management (workforce of the organization)**
 - Service delivery (services and clients of the organization) ***
 - Partnerships (relationships of the organization)****

☑ A Financial Plan for Developing the Diversity-Competence of the Organization

- In relation to the above action plan, senior managers and the Board of Directors should estimate the cost of undertaking a process of organizational change for developing diversity-competence throughout the organization.
- The financial department of the organization – if it has one - should be charged with the responsibility of finding the funds for the implementation of the action plan in the different areas of the organization. If there is no financial department or financial manager within the organization, then this funding responsibility may be turned over to the Executive Director or another senior manager.

☑ A Communications Plan for Developing the Diversity-Competence of the Organization

The Board and senior management should develop a plan for informing everyone in the organization about the organization's work to develop its capacity to serve diverse groups in the community. At minimum, the plan should include:

- policies and procedures of the organization for the provision of services for diverse groups in the community
- updates on work in progress
- updates on accomplishments
- updates on challenges
- request for on-going assistance from staff and volunteers.
- contact information of persons responsible for the organization's project on diversity-competence.

* This present module on Governance is a useful resource for developing an action plan for diversity-competence at the governance level of the organization.
** Please see Module 4 on Human Resources Management
*** Please see Module 5 on Service Delivery
**** Please see Module 6 on Partnerships

☑ A Formal Working Group Responsible for Directing and Monitoring the Organization’s Journey Towards Diversity-Competence (The Diversity-Competence Working Group or Advisory Committee)

- The Board of Directors should establish an internal working group or advisory committee on diversity-competence.
- The major purpose of this working group would be to direct, coordinate and monitor the organization’s activities for developing the capacity of the organization to provide services to diverse groups in the community in socially and culturally appropriate ways.
- This group should report to the Executive Director, and through him or her, to the Board of Directors.
- This working group should be co-chaired by a Board member, preferably the President of the Board, and the CEO or Executive Director (or another senior manager).
- The members of the organization’s diversity-competence working group should be inclusive of Board members and different levels of staff: senior managers responsible for developing action plans for diversity-competence in specific areas of the organization (see below), some staff supervisors and front-line staff, and a representative of the volunteers of the organization. The financial manager and the communication manager of the organization should also be members of this group. (See “Suggested Composition of Internal Working Group on Diversity-Competence” below.)
- The members of the Working Group on Diversity-Competence should be provided with training on diversity-competence from a management perspective, as well as training on systemic discrimination in organizations and society as a whole. They should also receive a thorough orientation to their group’s purpose and tasks.
- The members of the organization’s Working Group on Diversity-Competence should be promoted as the organization’s internal champions for diversity-competence.
- A Diversity Manager should be hired to coordinate the work of the organization’s working group on diversity-competence.

SUGGESTED COMPOSITION OF THE INTERNAL WORKING GROUP ON DIVERSITY COMPETENCE

Co-chairs: Board President and Executive Director

Staff/ Volunteers	Governance	Human Resources	Service Delivery	Community Partnerships	Financial Management	Communications
Board Member	X	X	X	X		
Senior Managers		X	X	X	X	X
Staff Supervisors		X	X	X		X
Frontline Staff		X	X	X		X
Volunteers			X			X

3.3 GOVERNANCE:KNOWLEDGE/INFORMATION FOR DIVERSITY-COMPETENCE

When it comes to its own governance, the diversity-competent organization relies on factual and accurate information about the laws governing the obligations of organizations with respect to their treatment of staff and clients from diverse groups in the community, and the kinds of services that they should be providing. It also has access to current and accurate information on diversity within the population as a whole, and on the social and cultural characteristics and needs of different groups in the community. In addition, it has information on the current capacity of the organization to develop a diverse workforce and provide services to diverse groups in the community.

- Information on the Laws Governing the Treatment of People from Different Groups**
- Information on Insurance for Human Services Agencies Serving Different Groups in the Community**
- Information on Different Groups in the Community**
- An Assessment of the Current Capacity of the Board and Senior Management to Lead the Organization Through a Change Process for the Development of Diversity-Competence.**
- An Assessment of the Current Capacity of Frontline Staff and Volunteers of the Organization to Provide Services to Different Groups in the Community**
- An Assessment of the Services of the Organization in Relation to Their Relevance and Appropriateness for Different Groups in the Community**
- An Assessment of the Community Partnerships of the Organization in Relation to the Organization's Need to Provide Services to Different Groups in the Community**

☑ Information on the Laws Governing the Treatment of People from Different Groups

- Legal information on the obligations and responsibilities of an organization for the treatment of staff and clients of diverse racial, social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. (Human rights legislation, Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Employment Laws, etc.)
- A list of lawyers or legal firms with expertise on diversity and equity issues, with emphasis on those that are knowledgeable about the non-profit sector and human services.

☑ Information on Insurance for Human Services Agencies Serving Different Groups in the Community

When an organization has to provide services, especially counselling services to people from different racial, cultural, linguistic, and other social backgrounds, what kinds of insurance protection does it need?

- Kinds of Insurance to be purchased and for what amount? (For example, insurance to cover errors and omissions in providing counselling services to a person from a particular religious background, or incorrect information provided by a language interpreter hired by the service organization.)
- A list of insurance agents knowledgeable about diversity and equity issues in the workplace, with emphasis on those that are knowledgeable about the non-profit sector and human services.

☑ Information on Diverse Groups in the Community*

Information on Diversity Within the General Population

- Size of different groups in relation to the general population
- Proportion of different groups in relation to the general population
- Growth rate of different groups in comparison to the growth rate of the general population
- Geographic distribution of different groups in the community

Information on Specific Groups in the Community/or Target Client Groups of the Organization

- Size of group
- Rate of growth
- Geographic distribution
- Socio-economic characteristics (education, occupation, income, home-ownership, etc.)
- Language(s) spoken
- Major cultural characteristics: history, customs, beliefs, religion, etc.
- Citizenship status (immigrants, refugees, Canadian citizens)
- Current challenges and needs
- Existing resources in the community for addressing challenges and needs of the group
- Existing approaches for addressing challenges and needs of the group
- Service delivery preferences of the group
- Social and cultural taboos with respect to service delivery and overall etiquette
- Organizations (cultural, social, religious, economic, political, etc.)
- Media
- Community leaders
- Experts on the group

* *This information is required not only at the governance level but throughout the organization/in different departments. Responsibility for collecting this information should be given to a particular manager, with clear direction to make this information available throughout the organization. If the organization has a research department or researchers on staff, this task should be delegated to them. Another option would be to purchase this information.*

☑ An Assessment of the Current Capacity of the Board and Senior Management to Lead the Organization Through a Change Process for the Development of Diversity-Competence

Factual Information (Board Members, Executive Director, Senior Managers)

- Extent of Diversity (gender, age, race, culture, language, citizenship status, disability, etc.)
- Education and Training Received on Diversity and Equity Issues
- Experience in Working With People from Diverse Racial, Cultural and Social Groups (employment experience, volunteer experience, other kinds of experience)
- Experience in Providing Services to People from Diverse Racial, Cultural, and Social Groups (employment experience, volunteer experience, other kinds of experience)

Attitudinal Information

- attitudes towards persons of diverse backgrounds
- perception of one's knowledge of diversity issues
- perception of one's skills in working with people from different racial, cultural and other social groups
- attitudes towards change
- attitudes towards risk-taking
- attitudes towards the organization undertaking the task of developing diversity-competence throughout the organization (hopes, fears, concerns about cost, conflict, etc.)
- feelings about other Board members and senior managers with respect to their interest and commitment to the related values of diversity, equity, fairness, etc
- feelings about frontline staff and volunteers with respect to their interest and commitment to the related values of diversity, equity, fairness, etc.
- feelings about how frontline staff and volunteers will react to the organization's decision to go through a formal change process to develop its capacity to serve diverse groups in the community

(Assessment tools should be developed to collect the above types of information.)

☑ An Assessment of the Current Capacity of Frontline Staff and Volunteers of the Organization to Provide Services to Different Groups in the Community

Responsibility for this assessment should be delegated to the organization's human resources department, under the leadership of the Human Resources Manager. The findings should then be shared with the Board, the Executive Director, and other senior managers. (Please see Module 4 on Human Resources Management.)

☑ An Assessment of the Services of the Organization in Relation to Their Relevance and Appropriateness for Different Groups in the Community

Responsibility for this assessment should be delegated to the organization's service delivery department, under the leadership of the Services Manager. The findings should then be shared with the Board, the Executive Director, and other senior managers. (Please see Module 5 on Service Delivery.)

☑ An Assessment of the Community Partnerships of the Organization in Relation to the Organization's Need to Provide Services to Different Groups in the Community

Responsibility for this assessment should be delegated to the department or employee (s) responsible for the community outreach work of the organization. The findings should then be shared with the Board, the Executive Director, and other senior managers. (Please see Module 6 on Partnerships.)

3.4 GOVERNANCE: SKILLS FOR DIVERSITY-COMPETENCE

Board members, the Executive Director and other senior managers should be trained to develop skills in the following areas:

- Risk management
- Diversity-competence from a governance/management perspective
- Cross-cultural communications
- Cross-cultural conflict resolution
- How to recruit Board members from diverse social and cultural groups, especially those from marginalized and disadvantaged groups.
- How to retain and support Board members from diverse social and cultural groups, especially those from marginalized and disadvantaged groups.
- How to develop policies and procedures that provide direction to Board members, staff and volunteers on how to positively respect, accommodate and respond to the social and cultural characteristics and needs of the clients served by the organization. (What kinds of policies, the content of those policies, etc.)
- How to evaluate senior management's performance in developing the organization's capacity to provide services to diverse social and cultural groups in the community.
- How to network with community leaders of diverse social and cultural groups.

3.5 GOVERNANCE: PERFORMANCE FOR DIVERSITY-COMPETENCE (INDICATORS)

The performance of the Board and senior management with respect to developing diversity-competence at the governance and senior management level of the organization should be informed by the policies, information and training that they received for this purpose.

Indicators of Successful Performance:

- A Board of Directors comprised of persons from different gender and age groups, and from different racial, social, and cultural backgrounds.
- A diverse Board of Directors trained and knowledgeable about issues pertaining to diversity-competence and their implications for governance and management of the organization.
- A Board of Directors with positive attitudes towards diverse groups and zero tolerance for prejudice and discrimination against any group of persons in society.
- Appropriate and adequate legal services available to guide the organization's work with diverse racial, social, cultural, and linguistic groups in the community.
- Appropriate and adequate insurance coverage available to guide the organization's work with diverse racial, social, cultural, and linguistic groups in the community.
- Policies and procedures to guide and sustain the organization's efforts to become diversity-competent and thereby able to provide appropriate and effective services for diverse groups in the community.
- An assessment of the organization's current capacity to provide services to individuals from diverse racial, social, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds. (Conducted by senior managers in different parts of the organization.)
- Plans for developing the capacity of the organization to provide appropriate and effective services to diverse groups in the community (action plan, financial plan, communications plan).
- A diversity-competence working group, led by a Board member or senior management representative, responsible for implementation of the diversity-competence action plan.
- The creation of a position - Manager of Diversity for the organization. This position is responsible for developing and monitoring the capacity of the organization to be diversity-competent in relation to staff, volunteers, clients, and stakeholders in the community.
- Acquisition of financial resources for implementing the policies, procedures, and action plan for the organization's journey towards diversity-competence.

3.6 GOVERNANCE: EVALUATION FOR DIVERSITY-COMPETENCE

- A conceptual framework for evaluating the work done by the Board and senior managers to develop the diversity-competence of the organization at the Board and senior management levels. (Use the information provided in this module, especially that on “Indicators of Successful Performance.”)**
- A procedure(s) for evaluating the work of the Board and senior management in developing the diversity-competence of the organization.**
- Tools for evaluation and measurement (survey questionnaires, inventories, etc.)**
- Undertaking of the evaluation**
- Communication of the findings and recommendations of the evaluation**
- A procedure for implementing the recommendations of the evaluation**
- Implementation of the recommendations of the evaluation**

3.7 GOVERNANCE: RESOURCES FOR DIVERSITY-COMPETENCE

- Senior Management Support**
- Internal Champions**
- External Champions/Resource Persons**
- Professional Labour and Services**
- Time**
- Money**

☑ Senior Management Support

- Consensus between the Board and senior management that the organization should undergo a change process to develop its capacity to provide appropriate and effective services to people from different racial, cultural and social groups in the community.
- Consensus between the Board and senior management that they should work together on developing the diversity-competence of the organization and provide visible leadership on this task for the rest of the organization to see and emulate.
- Commitment of senior management staff to be supportive of each other and frontline staff in the process of developing the organization's capacity to serve diverse groups in the community.

☑ Internal Champions

- The Board should appoint a Board member to take responsibility for overseeing the development of diversity-competence at the Board level.
- The Board should appoint the Executive Director to take responsibility for overseeing the development of diversity-competence among the organization's managers.
- A formal working group responsible for directing and monitoring the organization's journey towards diversity-competence (This group - its purpose, membership, etc. - was described in detail in Section 3.2.)
- The Diversity Manager of the organization.

☑ External Champions/Resource Persons

- Professional networks or associations that focus on diversity and equity issues, with emphasis on those in the non-profit sector.
- Human service professionals in other organizations who are knowledgeable about diversity and equity issues.
- Human service professionals working on specific projects related to diversity and equity in employment and training.

Board members, the Executive Director, other senior managers, and the Diversity Manager should network and collaborate with the above parties as much as possible. These external professionals are a source of knowledge and can provide professional and emotional support for the work of the organization on diversity issues.

☑ Professional Labour and Services

- Project supervisor/leader (Diversity Manager)
- Staff/consultants for development of policies and procedures
- Trainer(s)
- Clerical support for staff and consultants involved
- Legal services, if necessary
- Insurance services, if necessary

☑ Time

- To hire a Diversity Manager.
- To recruit other staff or consultants to assist the Board and senior management staff to address diversity-competence at the Board and senior management levels.
- To provide training to Board members and senior management staff on diversity-competence and its implications for organizational change and performance.
- To establish and develop the Working Group on diversity-competence.
- To provide training to the Working Group on diversity-competence.
- To develop and implement the policies and procedures for developing diversity-competence throughout the organization.
- To acquire the necessary information, do the required assessments, surveys, etc.
- To participate in inter-agency networks and professional associations that address issues of diversity and equity at the human resources management level of organizations.
- To seek funding for the organizational change process that the organization has to undertake to develop diversity-competence throughout all parts of itself.
- To make mistakes and learn from them.

The process of developing diversity-competence within an organization is a long process. It can take from five to ten years to put the necessary policies, people, and structures in place. Moreover, the process never ends, because the organization has to maintain its competence in serving different groups. In addition, the community around the organization is constantly changing, and the organization has to be able to respond appropriately to these changes.

☑ Money

- To hire a Diversity Manager.
- To purchase professional labour and services as required.
- To purchase training curricula, materials and other resources of relevance to diversity-competence issues.
- To rent training facilities if necessary.
- To participate in professional networks/associations focused on diversity and equity issues.
- To purchase artifacts promoting diversity and equity (pictures, posters, sculptures, etc. for the Boardroom and other meeting rooms and public spaces in the building(s) of the organization).
- To purchase legal services, if necessary.
- To purchase additional insurance, if necessary.

Questions for Review and Discussion

- How relevant is the information presented in this module for:
 - You/your position in your organization?
 - Your organization?

- Is there anything in the module that you disagree with? Why?

- What issues were not made clear/need further clarification?

- What else should have been included in the information presented?

- What insights do you have after studying this module?

- How do you think you can apply the information presented in this module to your organization or agency?