

Bridging the Gaps

Gender Equity & Economic Security

A Series of Tools for Employers in Restigouche (New Brunswick) and Avignon (Quebec)

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This project was created to help advance the economic recovery of women and gender minorities in our communities as we rebuild from the social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tool #3:

Inclusive and Equitable Recruitment Strategies

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About this tool

This tool is informed by government and other research-related documents on the topic of **inclusive and equitable recruitment**. This tool also includes regional resources designed to help employers in the recruitment process.

This tool covers:

- Why inclusive and equitable recruitment matters.
- Tips on how to write an inclusive job posting and where you can get resources.
- Where and how to promote your job posting.
- How to conduct more inclusive and equitable interviews.
- Inclusion considerations for the onboarding process.



Inclusive and equitable recruitment

The COVID-19 pandemic has transformed how businesses operate. As we recover and sometimes reinvent, there are new opportunities and challenges for businesses as Canadian workplaces continue to evolve. In some sectors, use of technology in the workplace has been ramped up (e.g. online/hybrid jobs have increased nationwide), creating opportunities to diversify candidate pools.¹ Some challenges persist, including **economic challenges and an aging population leading to reduced workforce participation**.² As our realities continue to evolve, **we must adopt new strategies to address labour shortages and recruit more diverse candidates**.³

We are now shifting into a recovery phase in the wake of the pandemic's economic and social impacts. **Inclusive and equitable recruitment is a critical step towards a more inclusive and resilient workplace, economy and society**.⁴ Diverse candidates, such as women, Indigenous and racialized individuals, newcomers, gender minorities, 2SLGBTQIA+ people, persons living with disabilities, etc. are facing a number of systemic workplace barriers; **these barriers are also found in the recruitment process and you, as an employer, can help alleviate some of them**.⁵

Despite employers' good intentions and a genuine commitment to recruiting and hiring with the principles of equity and inclusion in mind, failing to have a sound recruitment strategy in place is a key barrier that threatens these efforts.⁶

This tool puts forward various strategies and resources to help get you started.

Building an inclusive recruitment strategy

Attracting the best candidates requires a well-thought-out strategy. Recruiting the right people has profound impact on your business organization since it helps to cultivate a positive work environment and boosts employees' overall satisfaction.⁷

Here are a few hints:



Evaluate your current strategy

Regularly assess your current recruitment and hiring process and identify any aspects that you can improve. What has proved effective? What could use some work? What would you do differently next time? Asking questions like these will enable you to determine whether your processes are effective and meet your business needs.⁸



Stay up to date on industry trends and shifts in the job market

The job market is constantly shifting and adapting and so are employees' needs and expectations. It is important to stay up to date on trends and best practices in your industry and region.⁹



Take advantage of new technologies

You can make recruitment more effective by using new tools such as artificial intelligence (AI) to help draft job postings for example. This tool can be utilized to help you spend less time thinking about the process.¹⁰ However, you need to be careful when using these tools, as studies have shown that they can reproduce biases/stereotypes present in society. We need to guide these tools in a precise way, for example, you can ask them to compose an inclusive job offer in a non-gender-specific, culturally sensitive style and that considers people with disabilities.¹¹



Create a positive candidate experience

A thoughtful and respectful hiring process contributes to candidate satisfaction and business growth. If your process is well thought out (writing/posting inclusive job offers, reviewing interview questions, etc.), potential candidates will see you as a valuable employer.¹² By showing that you care about the hiring process and by making it a priority, you will stand out to potential candidates. Although the recruitment and interview process are used to recruit staff, they also enable them to assess your work environment.¹³



Integrate diversity and reconciliation into your broader workplace

As mentioned before, there are cultural systemic barriers and biases in the recruitment process and more broadly in the employment experience of various employees, including Indigenous peoples. Employers should improve diversity and inclusion in their workplaces by not only including diverse staff members but by enhancing policies and practices. One example of this is exploring what reconciliation is in the workplace. The Joint Economic Development Initiative's (JEDI) document "Developing Best Practices" for Reconciliation in the Workplace offers some first steps to consider in your workplace.¹⁴



Showcase your company's culture and values

A key part of an effective recruitment strategy is to showcase your company's culture and values. If they reflect equity and inclusion, they will also attract diverse candidates. Your website, social media and job offers are great places to highlight these elements. Using inclusive images and language can have a big impact.¹⁵



Create an inclusive and equitable workplace

Please note that inclusive workplaces depend on more than just recruitment strategies. In addition to hiring diverse candidates, you should also implement inclusive day-to-day work practices to ensure employee satisfaction and wellbeing.¹⁶ (See Tool No. 2 and Tool No. 4 of this series for ideas and resources.)

In the following section, you will find ideas to make your recruitment and hiring strategies more inclusive and equitable.

Drafting more inclusive job postings

The inclusion process begins as soon as someone sees your job posting. It is essential to take the necessary precautions not to demonstrate bias.

According to Egale Canada, appropriate language must be used in formal job postings or on social media to demonstrate your company's accessibility and openness towards various potential employees.¹⁷ It is also important to think about the visual aspects of your job postings.¹⁸

Here are some tips for creating inclusive job postings:

Eliminate language that could be regarded as biased or stereotypical

- Use language that is simple, clear, inclusive and unbiased. For example, try to avoid using pronouns and gendered words.¹⁹
- Review your job postings for any potential bias in language or in the interview/hiring process.
- Use language that focuses on skills and abilities rather than on years of experience. Highly skilled candidates could be overlooked due to perceptions that they lack years of experience, particularly if this is linked to external factors such as parental/sick leave and does not actually represent the skills and benefits they could bring to your team.



Applicants may be discouraged from applying if the wording in a job posting is not inclusive. For example, individuals who identify as women might think that words like “leaders” or “competitive” are more masculine and might not feel like they belong.²⁰ Instead, job postings that use gender-neutral phrases such as “must be open to exploring innovative ideas” (instead of “entrepreneurial”) are more effective and will be perceived as more inclusive.

There are various free online tools and resources to help employers use more inclusive language in recruitment documents, on your business website or any other documents. Here are some resources to get you started:



- Egale: [2SLGBTQI Terms and Definitions, Pronoun Usage Guide and Inclusive and Affirming Language Tips / Grammaire de genre neutre et langage inclusif](#)
- Government of Canada: [Inclusive writing – Guidelines and resources](#) and [A collection of gender-inclusive solutions](#)
- Government of Quebec: [Rédaction épicène, formulation neutre, rédaction non binaire et écriture inclusive](#) (French)
- Hire for Talent: [How to Write an Inclusive Job Posting](#)
- Sheridan College: [Inclusive Language Guide – Indigenous Peoples](#) and [Inclusive Language Guide – Gender Identity, Gender Expression, Sexual Orientation](#)
- Western Equity, Diversity & Inclusion: [A Guide for Inclusive Language](#)

Here is an example of an inclusive and objective statement:

“Administrative work experience, including experience handling appointments, patient requests and communication with healthcare partners.”

(Hire for Talent, 2023).

Statements of this kind are objective and specific enough to avoid “grey areas” where some people might interpret your message as being biased against them.

Mention in your job posting that flexible work options and reasonable accommodations are available.



Having flexible work options and accommodations in place will help employees to balance their personal and professional lives.²¹ If a job posting mentions flexible work options, it will be perceived as more inclusive for everyone.²²

For example, it may help attract and retain candidates with lived experience of disability or others who need accommodations or flexibility, such as individuals with young children.²³

Make sure job requirements are clear and understandable and that they highlight key aspects of the job.



Framing requirements as specific skills will help applicants to determine whether they are a good fit for the job. This will help employers to find a broader pool of qualified individuals. It will also clarify expectations, thus making it easier for applicants to understand what they need to do to move forward.²⁴

For example, instead of saying “at least two years of experience in administrative work”, employers could specify what skills or tasks they are referring to, such as experience answering calls, organizing schedules and booking appointments.

Promoting job postings

Before posting a job publicly, you might want to evaluate whether you can fill the position internally. You may already have employees who can do the job with a little more training, guidance or mentorship. In other words, hiring internally could provide advancement opportunities. It is important not to overlook individuals who are already committed to your organization.

When seeking external candidates, you might want to consider new ways to promote your job postings.²⁵ It may be beneficial to expand your recruitment efforts to include diverse networks and various recruitment platforms, as well as to undertake focused outreach involving diverse groups. If your posting is only shared within your existing network of employees, your pool of applicants will reflect your existing workforce and you may not attract diverse candidates.²⁶



Provincial, national and international recruitment events

The Governments of New Brunswick and Quebec are making a concerted effort to recruit staff locally, in other parts of the country and internationally. Contact one of the following organizations in charge of recruitment to share job postings and to demonstrate your openness to diversified hiring:

[Destination Canada](#)

[RDÉE Canada: Pan-Canadian recruitment event](#)

[Province of New Brunswick](#)

[Province of Quebec](#)

[Vivre en Gaspésie](#)

Job/career fairs

Taking part in job/career fairs will bring your company greater recognition and visibility with other organizations and potential employees. You will also have a wider pool of candidates.²⁷

Hints for a successful job/career fair:

- Prepare questions to ask interested candidates.
- Promote your participation in the job/career fair in advance.
- Bring business cards and printed job postings with you.
- Have application forms on hand.
- Wear a tag with your name and pronoun (he, she, they) depending on your comfort level.
- Promote your company enthusiastically and display positive energy.
- Stay in touch with potential candidates after the event.
- Evaluate areas for improvement for your next event.²⁸



Social media platforms

Social media platforms are more important than ever for creating a strong employer brand and for attracting and connecting with potential candidates. Remember, social media platforms go beyond broadcasting or advertising; they also provide an opportunity to connect and build relationships.²⁹

Social media platforms make it possible to answer applicants' questions in an informal setting and enable you to reach more people (social media are free to use but also offer the option of paying to reach a more targeted audience). That way, applicants can see your company's profile and learn more about your mission and services.³⁰

Hints to ensure effective job postings:

- Identify one or more appropriate platforms (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, etc.).
- Adjust your application process to reduce the number of steps.
- Create a separate account for your company (do not use your personal profile for recruitment purposes).
- Ensure that your account accurately reflects your company's image.
- Post frequently so you appear in your users' newsfeeds more often.
- Use hashtags, e.g. #accountant #accountingjob.
- Ask your users to like and share your posts.
- Respond to direct messages without delay.
- Advertise your services and projects so potential employees know what your company is all about.³¹



Expand your ways to promote job postings

Promote your job postings in more places to increase your reach and attract new talent pools.

Ways to promote your postings might include:

- Local radio stations, newspapers and online community groups (e.g. Facebook).
- Online job recruitment sites such as LinkedIn, Indeed, etc.
- Job posting websites, such as:
 - [Working NB](#)
 - [Government of Canada: Job Bank](#)
 - [Emploi Québec](#)
 - [Vivre en Gaspésie \(QC\)](#)
 - [Restigouche Career Employment Center \(CEC\) \(NB\)](#)
 - [Place aux Jeunes en région \(QC\)](#)
- College and university job posting websites or newsletters.
- Associations or organizations providing services to under-represented groups (e.g. newcomers organizations)
- Local or regional chambers of commerce or business-related organizations:
 - [Chambre de commerce et d'industrie Baie-des-Chaleurs \(QC\)](#)
 - [Campbellton Regional Chamber of Commerce](#)
 - [Chambre de commerce de Saint-Quentin](#)

Interview process, integration and orientation

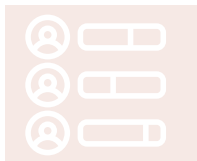
Consider a streamlined evaluation of candidates



Establish interview questions and selection criteria in advance and use a scoring chart to evaluate your candidates so the process is streamlined and fair.



Have a team of several interviewers (ideally from diverse backgrounds themselves) present for one interview so they can evaluate candidates from different perspectives and reduce the chance of bias.



Ask the same questions in the same sequence and evaluate candidates' answers using the same standards, making the evaluation process easier and more objective.³²



Focus on skills rather than on experience. This will give you a different perspective during the interview process. For example, you could ask “How would you perform a specific task?” instead of asking “Do you have experience in this specific task?”³³

Be mindful of the questions you ask in or outside of the interview process, for example, it is recommended not to ask someone if they have children or plan on having children, even if it's just to make conversations.³⁴

Consider alternative assessments as part of the interview process

During the hiring process, consider alternative forms of assessments so candidates can fully show their abilities. For example, ask candidates to perform tasks that are related to the job they are applying for, e.g. situational exercises, work samples or short assignments. You could also ask candidates to bring a portfolio of their work.³⁵

Integrate fair and transparent compensation/promotion procedures

Women, gender minorities and individuals from marginalized groups are less likely to negotiate their salaries, resulting in pay inequities and gaps in the workplace. Some applicants might avoid salary negotiations due to fears of negative reactions, such as being perceived as “being too demanding.”³⁶

Having transparent and equitable pay scales in place that are clearly articulated to staff and new applicants will help to reduce this barrier. Research shows that developing a fair and transparent compensation model is a key part of diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace and promotes trust between employers and employees and among employees themselves.³⁷

To address gendered pay gaps in your workplace, please refer to the following resources:

- Government of New Brunswick’s [Quick Guide to Pay Equity](#).
- CNESST Quebec’s [Pay Equity Guide](#).
- For more information on gender pay gaps, visit the [Canadian Women’s Foundation](#) website and,
- The [Pay Equity Act](#) from the Canadian human rights commission.



Consider your onboarding and integration processes

When you hire someone, you must also focus on the onboarding process (orientation for new employees). According to the Canadian Association for Supported Employment, onboarding must be personalized. In other words, it must not be the same for everyone. If someone seems to need more time to absorb information, in an inclusive workplace, they will be given all the time they need. Small changes like these will boost your employees’ on-the-job performance.³⁸ A seamless and effective onboarding process plays a crucial role in helping employees to integrate into your company’s culture.³⁹

Refer to Tool 4 of this series for more information on retention strategies.

Conclusion

Having a strategic recruitment and hiring plan in place, one that is rooted in the values of inclusion and equity, can positively impact your business and improve employee retention and overall satisfaction. You will also attract the right candidates and create clear expectations from the beginning, aligned with your values and goals. This often leads to a workforce that is happier and more productive.⁴⁰

To attract the right candidates for your team, it is important to stay informed about the latest recruitment strategies and to keep being inclusive, equitable and transparent.

Feel free to contact someone from your regional offices to help guide you in your recruitment process:

- Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC): [Recruit](#)
- CBDC Restigouche: [Orientation Services and training support](#)
- Government of Canada: [Recruiting and hiring](#)
- Government of New Brunswick: [Recruitment supports](#)
- Government of Quebec: [Recruter du personnel](#)
- SADC de Baie-des-Chaleurs: [HR support](#)

Other resources for diversifying workplace talent

- Canadian human rights commission: [What are human rights?](#)
- Canadian Association for Supported Employment: [Various resources](#)
- Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion: [Various resources](#)
- CBDC Restigouche: [Hire for Talent](#) (national resources)
- Chroma NB: [2SLGBTQIA+ Inclusive Allyship Workshop](#)
- First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Economic Development Commission (FNQLEDC) : [Services for entrepreneurs](#)
- Egale Canada: [2SLGBTQIA+ resources and information](#)
- Emploi en région (QC): [Recherche d'emploi pour personnes immigrantes](#)
- Evol (QC): [Brigade-conseil](#) (Women Entrepreneurs)
- Government of New Brunswick: [Immigration](#)
- Government of Quebec: [Immigration](#)
- Immigration Québec: [Embaucher un travailleur étranger temporaire](#)
- Joint Economic Development Initiative (JEDI) (NB): [Employer toolkit](#)
- New Brunswick Multicultural Council: [Rural settlement network](#)
- Place aux jeunes en région (QC): [Migration des jeunes / soutien à la recherche d'emploi](#)
- Pride at Work Canada: [Reports, guides & toolkits](#)
- Restigouche Multicultural Association (NB): [Support services for employers and immigrants](#)
- Restigouche Residential Agency (NB): [Supporting people with special needs in employment](#)
- [Service d'accueil des nouveaux arrivants \(SANA\)](#) (Avignon, QC)
- Women in Business NB: [Human resources development](#)

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