

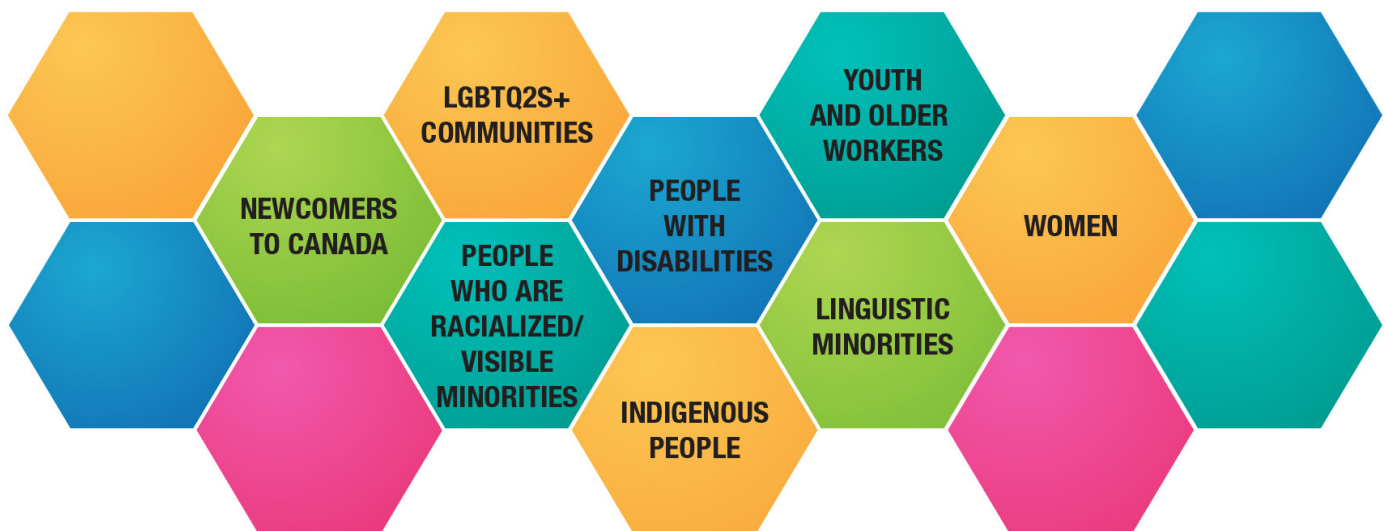
# Workplace Intercultural Inclusion Strategy

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# Workplaces Intercultural Inclusion Strategy

To help employers achieve their Charter commitments, the Inclusive Workplaces working group, in conjunction with KEYS Newcomers Empowering Business, is offering ongoing support to a limited number of employer participants every year. The pilot phase of this Strategy is focused on newcomers, in particular, racialized newcomers.



## Why Choose This Area Of Focus?

Over the last decade, Kingston has welcomed a growing number of newcomers. This includes permanent residents, temporary workers, international students, and refugees. Newcomers add diversity to the social, economic and civic fabric of Kingston and the potential contributions they can make to local businesses are significant.

According to the data presented in the most recent Annual Review of the Labour Market, net employment growth in Canada over the last five years has been almost entirely accounted for by immigrants; a trend that will gain more momentum as Canada's population ages and the birth rate declines. This trend is nowhere more evident than in Kingston, which estimates a loss of 9,000 workers over the next 15 years. In order to grow, local employers will need to recruit, onboard, and retain international talent.

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Although they are essential to our economy, newcomers continue to face considerable barriers in the workplace leading to higher rates of unemployment and a disproportionate concentration in low-pay and low-status jobs. According to the most recent data from Stats Canada, the employment rate among new immigrants in 2018 was 16% lower than that of the Canadian-born population while in Kingston visible minorities earn 28% less than their white counterparts.

Research commissioned by KEYS Job Centre in 2019, found that while 95% of Kingston employers believe that immigrants are beneficial to the local workforce and while 70% of Kingston employers actively recruit newcomers, only 33% have workplace diversity and inclusion strategies in place. The research also demonstrates that newcomers in Kingston continue to be underemployed with nearly 50% of racialized newcomers having experienced cultural and racial discrimination, most often from co-workers and managers.

To address this, KEYS Newcomers Empowering Business program has developed an intercultural integration toolkit that will help employers recruit and retain newcomers in supportive and sustainable ways.

## The Strategy

The goal of the Workplace Intercultural Inclusion Strategy is to provide support to organizations that are moving towards incorporating diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives into the workplace. Several innovative intercultural workplace tools have been developed for that purpose.

The **Understanding your Organization's Diversity & Inclusion Profile** tool is intended to guide businesses through an initial self-assessment. Upon completing the questionnaire, participants will be able to identify which areas need improvement and choose the appropriate tools to implement them.

## Sample Pathway

This scenario was designed as an example of what the Charter implementation process may look like. The organization is MultiGrocery Ltd., a fictional company with 115 employees operating out of Kingston.

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## Scenario

Ms. Miller, the owner of MultiGrocery Ltd., completes the **Understanding your Organization's Diversity & Inclusion Profile** self-assessment to discover areas of improvement that could help the company address its labour shortage. While there is already a strong diversity and inclusion policy in place, barriers in the hiring process are limiting newcomer candidates from applying for openings at the company. Ms. Miller decides to make an effort to improve this and signs the declaration endorsing the Inclusion Charter.

Ms. Miller sets up a meeting with an project staff to assess current practices, determine needs, and develop inclusion goals and metrics that are specific to her company. Together, they create an action plan and decide to focus on implementing the following changes listed under Employee Recruitment:

- Identify international education and experience as an asset in job postings and use it as one of the metrics in hiring decisions.
- Develop inclusive wording for job postings that will appeal to international talent.
- Take part in anti-bias training alongside the HR representatives responsible for hiring new employees.
- Incorporate intercultural interviewing practices when appropriate.

## Ongoing Support

Ms. Miller and the project staff schedule monthly phone meetings to discuss the company's progress. When issues arise, the project staff is available to provide support and expertise.

## Evaluate

At the end of the year, Ms. Miller and the project staff review the progress the company has made and consider the challenges that arose throughout the process. This evaluation will help determine future inclusion and diversity goals for the company.

## Celebrate!

Ms. Miller joins other Charter participants to celebrate the efforts of Kingston businesses to become more inclusive. Organizations that actively participated in the program are recognized for their efforts by the City of Kingston with a plaque and a press release.

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# Intercultural Intelligence Toolkit

The Inclusive Workplaces working group in partnership with the KEYS Job Centre Newcomers Empowering Business program has developed practical implementation tools for the Intercultural Inclusion Strategy. In addition to the tools, Newcomers Empowering Business offers the support of trained project staff.

The creation of the toolkit itself speaks to the business case for diversity: Eight people from very different cultural, educational, and professional backgrounds came together to collaborate on this project. Their diverse skills and perspectives, combined with their openness, dedication, and passion for an inclusive Kingston created a robust yet accessible set of intercultural inclusion tools. The Newcomers Empowering Business program will continue to refine the toolkit and train project staff to support local businesses and organizations in their inclusion, equity, and diversity initiatives.

Examples of the tools project staff can provide are listed below. This directory is by no means exhaustive and the staff will work with your organization to identify the best tools for your inclusion goals.

## Organizational Culture

### 1. Mentorship:

An in-house mentor is a knowledgeable and experienced employee in the organization who agrees to coach a new colleague. Mentoring allows employees to learn the intangibles needed to succeed in the workplace and provides insights into Canadian workplace culture. The Project staff can help your organization set up a simple mentoring program as part of your onboarding process.

### 2. Inclusive Social Activities:

Optional social activities with colleagues can increase staff morale and heighten an employee's sense of belonging to a team. The project staff can support your organization in integrating inclusive and accessible social activities into your team-building initiatives.

### 3. Community Supports Resources:

Part of increasing organizational support for employees with settlement needs is knowing where they can go for assistance. The project staff can provide information on community supports and resources to department leaders and newcomer employees. If possible, the information should be posted in a location that is easily accessible to employees. Consider whether your team would benefit from a translated copy of these resources.

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#### **4. Language Learning:**

Kingston employers hire newcomers with a diverse range of English language skill levels. With the assistance of the project staff, employers will be able to assess language barriers in the workplace and develop options to reduce them. Depending on the level of English spoken in your workplace, this could include focusing on the use of plain language, exploring opportunities for language learning in the workplace, or holding on-site workshops.

#### **5. Ongoing Education:**

The project staff can work with your organization to develop and implement intercultural education initiatives for your employees. These initiatives could range from an added paragraph in your monthly newsletter to providing intercultural competency training or establishing a Lunch & Learn program for employees to share previous international experience.

#### **6. Measuring Knowledge and Adherence:**

All employees are encouraged to participate in an anonymous employment standards survey.

### **Policies & Procedures**

#### **1. Memo re: Accessing Support**

Work schedules can be a barrier to accessing support. The project staff can provide a sample memo to be sent to managers and supervisors encouraging scheduling accommodations for newcomers to attend language class, appointments or workshops for settlement services and other supports.

#### **2. Ethical Purchasing:**

The project staff can provide resources for your organization to develop a document on ethical guidelines for local suppliers.

#### **3. Plain Language Marketing:**

The project staff can provide resources on using plain language and intercultural marketing strategies when promoting team events and activities to employees.

#### **4. Equity and Anti-discrimination:**

The project staff can work with your organization to ensure your policies address issues of equity and inclusion, as well as ensuring that mechanisms are in place for addressing discrimination and harassment in the workplace.

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## 5. Statement of Values:

The project staff can guide your organization in developing an inclusivity statement of values that ensures internal communication materials and workplace training reinforce the message that equity and inclusion are core organizational values.

## Employee Recruitment

### 1. Accessible Job Postings:

The project staff can work with your organization to create job postings that will be welcoming to newcomers and people with intercultural and international experiences, including examining the assets and requirements listed on job posting.

### 2. Resume Screening:

The project staff can provide your organization with resources to improve resume screening process. The staff can also equip you with resources to better assess international work experience, education, and training.

### 3. Interviewing:

The project staff can offer resources and expertise on intercultural interviewing practices through a competency-based approach that mitigates bias and ensures all candidates receive a fair chance when interviewing for a position.

### 4. Anti-Bias Training

Employees responsible for hiring and supervising others are encouraged to participate in anti-bias training on inclusive hiring practices. The project staff can also arrange introductory anti-bias training for the management team.

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## Employee Retention & Career Development

### 1. Onboarding:

Employee orientation sets expectations and clarifies workplace policies and procedures to new employees. To help employees integrate into their new environment, orientation should include information on workplace culture. Employees should have scheduled time in their first few days of work to familiarize themselves with the policies and be provided with an opportunity to seek clarification from the supervisor. The project staff can help your organization develop onboarding tools that will increase retention of newcomer employees.

### 2. Intercultural Training:

Intercultural competency training is beneficial to employees at all levels. The project staff can arrange for your workplace to participate in training.

### 3. Supervisor Training:

Supervisors are encouraged to attend an employment standards workshop as well as intercultural competency training focused on cultural orientations towards work, implicit bias, and intercultural communication. The project staff can arrange for your workplace to participate in pertinent training.

### 4. Clear Feedback:

The project staff can provide your organization with resources to develop a clear staff feedback and evaluations process. Such feedback should include direct input about an employee's job performance and clearly outline pathways for professional development within the organization.

### 5. Equal Opportunities:

The project staff can work with your organization on strategies that will encourage newcomer employees to access opportunities for professional development and advancement.

*Additional resources are available through Inclusion Charter project staff and on <https://possiblemadehere.org/inclusion-charter/>*

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