

A Diversity and Inclusion Recruitment Resource Document for Tides Canada

A Project for the AFP Fellowship in Inclusion and
Philanthropy

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Synopsis

Tides Canada is an innovative national charity that is dedicated to a healthy environment, social equity, and economic prosperity for all Canadians. This project will serve as a resource document to continually improve Tides Canada's recruitment, hiring and selection practices; the goal being that this document will serve as a resource on how to build on an already robust recruitment and hiring process in order to hire staff that are reflective of the diverse communities Tides Canada works within.

This project was completed in fulfilment of the requirements of the AFP Fellowship in Inclusion and Philanthropy program.

Key Definitions

Diversity: Diversity is about the individual. It is about the variety of unique dimensions, qualities, and characteristics we all possess. Diversity is about more than just representation or visible differences. It is about all of us.¹

Inclusion: Inclusion is about the collective. It is about creating a culture that strives for equity and embraces, respects, accepts, and values difference.²

Bias (Unconscious): An inclination or preference formed without reasonable justification that can prevent judgement from being balanced or even-handed. Prejudice in favour or against a person or group. We cannot eliminate but must manage.³

Stereotype (Conscious): A false or generalized conception that results in conscious categorization of an individual or the members of a group. Stereotypes represent a set of social constructs that can be eliminated.⁴

Background

Tides Canada's mission is to provide uncommon solutions for the common good by helping Canadians secure a healthy environment in ways that promote social equity and economic prosperity. We support people in building healthy, vibrant communities that have the social, economic, and natural capital to steward their environments for generations to come. We collaborate with both donors and social change leaders, build bridges between and among sectors, and help to steer more philanthropy into innovative work that can address tough social and environmental challenges.

Tides Canada is comprised of two associated philanthropic organizations - Tides Canada Foundation and Tides Canada Initiatives Society. Tides Canada Foundation is a public grant-making foundation. Tides Canada Initiatives Society is a shared platform that houses and supports over 30 social and environmental projects across the country. We work with diverse stakeholders and work in partnership with Indigenous communities to address tough social and environmental challenges related to: clean energy and climate solutions, healthy oceans, healthy watersheds, protected lands and forests, resilient communities, sustainable food

¹ CCDI

² CCDI

³ CCDI

⁴ CCDI

systems and sustainable livelihoods.

Tides Canada's already robust recruitment practices are reflected as follows:

1. Tides Canada includes the following statement in all job postings:

"Tides Canada is strongly committed to creating a diverse workplace environment and we welcome and encourage applications from the communities we serve. We are proud to be an equal opportunity employer."

2. Tides Canada's Employee Handbook includes statements on Diversity and Inclusion:

- a) As an equal opportunity employer:

"Tides Canada welcomes diversity and the synergy stemming from the perspectives our employees who have different backgrounds and experiences bring to the workplace. We provide a respectful workplace and equal employment opportunities for all employees and applicants for positions regardless of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status and family status, disability, or conviction for an offence for which a pardon has been granted."

- b) Is committed to building an inclusive workplace:

"As Canada's population becomes more diverse, it is important for organizations to accommodate and recognize the diverse cultural and religious beliefs of their employees. Tides Canada recognizes that our diverse staff is an essential asset to our organization, and values and embraces the different approaches and perspectives that internationally educated professionals bring to our workplaces. We want all of our Projects to work in an environment where we all learn from each other."

Tides Canada recognizes that "by accommodating all cultures and faiths in our workplace, we can have realized benefits that include improved innovation, increased productivity, reduced turnover and the ability to attract the best talent. We encourage all supervisors and staff to focus on increasing the cultural literacy of all employees, regardless of their ethnic background, so that they can begin to understand and appreciate their own culture and those of their co-workers. By identifying and addressing communication style differences, creating dialogue and building a foundation of effective communication with new Canadians, in addition to recognizing and leveraging the international education, qualifications and experience of its immigrant staff, we will be better able to find new and effective ways to approach problem solving, strategic planning and organizational development."

3. Tides Canada Surveys it's staff:

Tides Canada Foundation conducts a staff survey approximately every 18 months. Based on the most recent survey results, while less than 20% of staff responded that they believe Tides Canada does not support workplace diversity, there is still room for improvement.

Focus

This document will focus on improvements that can be made in Tides Canada's current recruitment practices to ensure our hiring practices are inclusive and encourage the hiring of diverse candidates. Tides Canada has offices in Vancouver, Toronto, and Yellowknife; therefore, as we work with diverse stakeholders and Indigenous communities across Canada, our recruiting practices should reflect that diversity and always take this into consideration.

Five Methods to Increase Diversity and Inclusion in Recruiting Practices

1. Staff Training

There are a number of organizations that provide staff training for bias free hiring. Developing self awareness of needs, beliefs and biases that impacts one's judgements, attitudes and behaviours is important in the recruitment process. Training should be provided to all staff, especially hiring managers and staff involved in the recruitment process.

Resources include:

HRdownloads:

Interviewer Bias Training:

- The different types of interviewer biases
- How biases impact our decision making
- What we can do to overcome making recruitment decisions based on our personal biases

Workplace Sensitivity - Training for Employees:

- This course is intended to assist all employees with understanding and appreciating individual differences in others.
- It examines the definition of workplace sensitivity, why it is important to achieve, and general sensitivity strategies.
- It reviews specific strategies for becoming more sensitive towards people with disabilities, people from different cultures, people born into different generations, and people of different gender and sexual orientation, so that we may all learn to respect each other for our differences and as human beings.⁵

Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion eLearning program:

Managing bias in hiring:

30 minute course that gets learners to think their way through three common hiring scenarios, which better equips them to:

- Identify when bias might be affecting their hiring decisions.
- Recognize the possible consequences of bias.
- Develop alternative approaches to help minimize the effects of bias on hiring.
- Staff will learn the impact of bias on resume screening, interviewing, and candidate selection; alternative approaches to minimize impact on bias; unpacking the "communication skills" requirement; unpacking the "fit" criterion; unpacking the "sell yourself" principle.⁶

⁵ HRdownloads

⁶ CCDI

[Project Implicit - Harvard University](#) offers a number of free and confidential implicit association tests (IATS) that staff can take online to discover their attitudes or beliefs about topics such as sexuality, disability, skin-tone, race, age etc.

[AIM \(Abilities In Mind\)](#) shares a number of free resources such as training, tools and tips, and articles to help build inclusive workplaces. The goal of AIM is to reframe disability and focus on the ability of all individuals.⁷ AIM provides information that can help determine an organization's readiness to ensure that their workplace is accessible and inclusive for people with disabilities.

2. Job Descriptions

In order to create barrier free job descriptions it is important for Tides Canada to continue to list only education and experience that is vital to successful job performance. The job description template will need to continue to determine:

- Essential vs. non-essential qualifications required for the position.
- Essential education and equivalent work experience required for the position.

3. Job Postings

Tides Canada job postings are currently shared on Tides Canada's website and social media, professional websites related to the career field of the vacancy, and nonprofit/charitable sector specific platforms such as CharityVillage. Employees are encouraged to share job postings within their networks.

To reach a more diverse pool of applicants it is recommended that Tides Canada expand its outreach efforts and partner with other community connectors that can share and promote Tides Canada's job postings. Examples include:

[ACCESS - Aboriginal Community Career Employment Services Society](#)

Funded by Service Canada and the Province of BC, the goal of ACCESS is to increase Aboriginal participation in the labour market. ACCESS has various locations throughout Metro Vancouver and offers customized employment and training services designed specifically to provide urban Aboriginal people with the education and skills they require to compete equally and effectively in today's job market. Core values include: respect, honour, kindness and sharing.⁸ Employers are required to sign-up on the online job gateway portal to share job postings:

[Immigrant Services Society of BC](#)

Provides a variety of support services for immigrants and refugees to help them get settled, find careers and learn all they need to know about starting their new lives in Canada.⁹

They also provide employers with the following services at no cost:

- Job listing advertisement to skilled immigrant candidates
- Applicant pre-screening
- Interview scheduling
- Job fairs to facilitate in-person connections

⁷ <http://www.abilitiesinmind.ca/about/>

⁸ <http://www.accessfutures.com/>

⁹ <https://issbc.org/about-us/>

- Ongoing assistance for up to two months following a hire
- Wage subsidies for work experience placement¹⁰

Canadian Association of Professionals with Disabilities

The Canadian Association of Professionals with Disabilities is a federally incorporated non-profit dedicated to maximizing the inclusion, job retention, and advancement of current and future professionals with disabilities.¹¹

A list of additional suggested resources can be found in the appendix.

4. Application Screening

Cultural differences can influence how applications are both presented and then screened. It is important to have an action plan for inclusive application screening and to understand how unconscious bias impacts the process. Culture is one of the factors that shapes how we interpret, form assumptions and make determinations about what we encounter day-to-day.¹² Our cumulative life experiences shape our preferences, perceptions and biases, which are deeply buried in our unconscious. This makes it difficult to see the impact of this thinking when screening for the most qualified candidate for a job.

Recommendations for screening applications:

- Prior to reviewing the applications, review again the minimum qualifications, education and experience determined in the job description, as opposed to creating a picture of the ideal candidate.
- Based on those minimum requirements, create a yes and maybe pile by matching applicants with those criteria. After this initial review, the yes and maybe lists can be revisited based on the unique qualifications and experience each candidate might bring to the organization.
- Resumes and cover letters should be scanned for overall readability and should not be discounted because of minor spelling or grammatical mistakes, unless the job requires this and that is clearly stated in the job description and job posting. The candidate should be able to communicate at an acceptable level to successfully perform the job.
- Questions about the length of time at, and reasons for leaving, previous jobs should be addressed during the interview to determine the individual's motivations.
- Gaps in a candidate's employment history should be addressed in the interview as there could be a solid reason such as personal circumstance, family responsibilities and pursuing additional training.
- Employees can always be trained on specific skills and processes. Consider candidates that have not necessarily held the same type of job at their previous organizations, but bring complementary skills that broaden their expertise.
- Take into consideration both education and work experience. Capability and know-how can be acquired through formal education and through life and work experience.¹³

¹⁰ <https://issbc.org/employer-solutions/hiring-services/>

¹¹ <http://www.canadianprofessionals.org/>

¹² TRIEC

¹³ TRIEC

5. Interview Questions & Format

Interviewers have a role in influencing the outcome of an interview. Not only do words and actions affect the outcome, but the non-verbal gestures we make all send strong messages about whether or not we care or how well we are listening.¹⁴

Steps towards making interviews inclusive include:

- Create a diverse hiring team for the position that brings understanding and perspective to the process related to that position.
- Offer training for human resource staff and hiring managers/teams that address bias.
- Staff interviewing candidates should analyze their own perceptions, interpretations and assumptions when there is something in the candidate's behavior and/or responses that they find different than expected/hoped or may not understand.
- Ensure the interview question templates are worded using language that is bias and barrier free. Barriers might include internal jargon, acronyms and local idioms which may not be familiar.¹⁵ Avoid using colloquialisms and metaphors i.e. 'what do you bring to the table.'¹⁶
- Do not let accents be a barrier. Listen a little harder and occasionally ask if something needs to be repeated.

Limitations

Tides Canada is a national organization that works in a number of geographies across Canada. Our recruiting practices cannot be so specific regarding certain kinds of diversity that become limiting or restrictive for our hiring managers that recruit staff to support Tides Canada's priorities in a variety of communities. We need to provide tools, templates and guidelines that allow flexibility while still ensuring and promoting diversity and inclusion.

Conclusions & Recommendations

Tides Canada's current recruitment, hiring and selection tools, templates and processes are robust and concur with all Human Rights protected ground. This project aims to provide a number of resources and practical recommendations that Tides Canada can utilize to continue to improve the diversity and inclusion of its hiring practices. In order to action these recommendations, the following next steps have been outlined:

1. HR will review and revise questions in the interview template that may conflict with job descriptions to eliminate any potential bias.
2. HR will create an interview guidelines document that will be shared with hiring committees, which details methods to ensure interviews are bias free.
3. A summary of this project and updated recruitment practices will be shared with the management team for their review and questions.
4. Staff will be invited to a session to learn about this project and the improvements Tides Canada is making to our recruiting processes.
5. HR, hiring managers and hiring teams will complete training on bias free hiring.
6. Improve existing onboarding practices to ensure they are inclusive.

¹⁴ TRIEC

¹⁵ TRIEC

¹⁶ CCDI

APPENDIX

List of Community Connectors for Job Postings

National

Indigenous

Aboriginal HR Council

<https://aboriginalhr.ca/en>

Aboriginal Careers

<https://www.aboriginalcareers.ca/>

Persons with Disabilities

Canadian Association of Professionals with Disabilities

<http://www.canadianprofessionals.org/>

CCRW - Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work

<http://www.ccrw.org/>

British Columbia

Indigenous

ACCESS - Aboriginal Community Career Employment Services Society

<http://www.accessfutures.com/>

North Vancouver Island Aboriginal Training Society

<http://www.nviats.com/>

First Nations Employment Society

<http://fnbc.info/jobs>

Persons with Disabilities

BC Association of Professionals with Disabilities

<http://www.bcprofessionals.org/>

Abilities In Mind

<http://www.abilitiesinmind.ca/>

Neil Squire Society

<http://www.neilsquire.ca/>

Newcomers to Canada

Immigrant Services Society of BC

<https://issbc.org/employer-solutions/hiring-services/>

Vancouver Northeast Employment Services Centre

<https://www.employmentworks.ca/services/employers/>

Ontario

Emerging Leaders & Youth

Civic Action

<http://civicaction.ca/>

Persons with Disabilities

Careers for Inclusion

<http://www.careersforinclusion.com/index.html>

Newcomers to Canada

TRIEC - Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council

<http://triec.ca/>