

## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy

Updated: January 2021

### Statement of Commitment:

Support House recognizes the value of identifying and removing barriers and promoting diversity and inclusion in the workplace. The agency is committed to building an inclusive and diverse workplace that values equity and encourages a culture of respect for dignity, beliefs and ideas consistent with the principles outlined in the *Ontario Human Rights Code (the "Code")*, and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

The Code prohibits discrimination in employment on the following grounds: citizenship, race, place of origin, ethnic origin, color, ancestry, disability, age, creed, sex / pregnancy, gender identity, gender expression, family status, marital status, sexual orientation, and record of offences.

### Definitions:

**Diversity:** Diversity is about the individual employee, it is about the variety of unique dimensions, qualities, and characteristics we all possess. It means respect for and value of those differences.

**Inclusion:** Inclusion is about the collective culture in the workplace. It is about creating a culture that strives for equity and embraces, respects, and values differences.

**Diversity and Inclusion:** When these two terms are combined, it adds another dimension to the terms. Diversity and inclusion is about capturing the uniqueness of the individual, creating an environment that values and respects individuals for their talents, skills and abilities to benefit the collective culture in the workplace.

**Employment Equity Planning:** Employment equity planning is the recognized systematic human rights method for workplaces to identify and redress systemic discrimination including identifying and eliminating barriers that interfere with employment options.

## **Policy:**

Support House is committed to leveraging diverse backgrounds, experiences and perspectives of our employees, including shared experiences, in order to provide services to an equally diverse community.

Support House believes that an inclusive and fair work environment, free of discrimination and harassment, has a positive impact on the wellbeing of employees, job satisfaction, productivity and retention within the organization.

Our agency also needs to be equipped to provide creative and innovative solutions aligned to the needs of our increasingly diverse and multicultural client base and to respect and meaningfully contribute to the communities in which it operates. The agency is committed to having a staff team committed to providing inclusive and diverse services that values equity and encourages services based on respect for dignity, beliefs and ideas consistent with the principles outlined in the *Ontario Human Rights Code (the "Code")*, and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

## **Policy Details:**

The agency is committed to a diverse and inclusive workplace which enhances the quality and depth of decision-making and improves collaboration and team work at all levels of the organization.

The organization is committed to identifying and removing barriers for diverse employees in recruitment, advancement and retention. Historically, certain groups of people experience barriers to employment and are underrepresented in the workforce. Underrepresented groups include persons with disabilities, racialized minorities, women, Aboriginal people, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer communities, and persons caring for elder and child dependents. The selection of these groups does not preclude the possibility of addressing systemic discrimination for other underrepresented groups.

In order to ensure a diverse and inclusive workplace and culture, the agency commits to:

**1. Build leadership and accountability**

- i. Develop and implement a Diversity and Inclusion Plan as a priority.
- ii. Develop goals and timelines over a three-year period to incorporate and monitor diversity in all levels of the organization.
- iii. Review all relevant policies and practices through a Diversity and Inclusion lens.
- iv. Develop diversity metrics that will be reported to the Board annually.

**2. Foster and sustain diversity and inclusion**

- i. Embed diversity and inclusion in the Strategic Plan.
- ii. Provide training to build awareness on diversity and inclusion during hiring, orientation and onboarding and annually.
- iii. Encourage and support employee network groups to further support diversity initiatives within the organization.
- iv. Implement and hold the Board, staff, volunteers, and clients accountable to our organizational oath.

**3. Enhance Employment Equity Planning (diversity in talent)**

- i. Employment equity planning will drive all agency hiring and promotion decisions within the agency in order to identify and eliminate barriers that interfere with employment options.
- ii. Expand recruitment efforts by advertising job opportunities to diverse professional networks, agencies and media and by establishing relationships with partner agencies to attract applicants from diverse groups.
- iii. Develop special initiatives and programs within the Plan to incorporate diversity into succession planning and development and training to reduce barriers to leadership.

**4. Reporting accountability**

- i. Develop data for tracking and monitoring diversity initiatives.
- ii. Conduct voluntary workplace/Board surveys to understand workplace profile and demographics.
- iii. Establish and maintain a Diversity and inclusion Committee to promote awareness and assist in developing the Diversity and Inclusion Plan