

# **OTK BIA Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**

## **Introduction**

Our greatest strength is the people that comprise and support our organization. The cumulative sum of the individual differences, life experiences, accumulated knowledge, creativity, self-expression, ideas, abilities and talent that our members, volunteers, employees, partners, suppliers and vendors invest in their work represents a significant part of not only our culture and identity, but our reputation and our organization's success as well.

## **Objectives**

The Old Town Kemptville Business Improvement Area (BIA) is committed to fostering, cultivating and preserving a culture of diversity, equity and inclusion.

The BIA fully embraces and accepts our members, volunteers, employees, partners, suppliers and vendors' differences in age, color, disability, ethnicity, family or marital status, gender identity or expression, language, national origin, physical and mental ability, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, and other characteristics that make them unique.

It is our intention to create an environment where all of our members, volunteers, employees, partners, suppliers and vendors feel accepted, valued and safe to be their true authentic selves without any fear of discrimination, intolerance or any other behaviour that ought to be known as hurtful or damaging to others.

## **Expectations**

The BIA's expectations are that all current and potential members, volunteers, employees, partners, suppliers and vendors understand and respect that our diversity, inclusivity and equity initiatives are applicable to all of the BIA's operations, activities, programming and participation whether they are led by the BIA or led by another individual or organization that we are partnering with.

The BIA will strongly consider all opportunities to work with other individuals and organizations that exhibit similar values as those expressed in this policy and that align with the strategic initiatives of the BIA.

All members, volunteers, employees, partners, suppliers and vendors of the BIA have a responsibility to treat others with dignity and respect at all times. They are also expected to exhibit conduct that reflects diversity, equity and inclusion during all operations, activities, programming and participation in activities led by another individual or organization.

## **Commitment**

The BIA will foster an environment of diversity, inclusivity and equity that both encourages and ensures:

- Respectful communication and cooperation between all current and potential members, volunteers, employees, partners, suppliers and vendors of the BIA.
- A spirit of teamwork and participation by permitting the representation of all groups and perspectives in all operations, activities and programming, where reasonably possible.
- All BIA policy and strategic decisions are made with the values of diversity, inclusivity and equity as a key influencer on the decision-making process.
- All hiring, recruitment, selection, professional development and training practices and processes will reflect the values represented in this policy.
- Members, volunteers and employees may be required to attend diversity awareness training to enhance their knowledge and understanding in order to fulfill their commitments and responsibilities to the BIA.

## **Policy Violations**

Members, volunteers, and employees who make any statements that are contrary to this policy or demonstrate conduct or behavior that ought to be known as harmful to others will be subject to an immediate mandatory plan for performance improvement that may result in further measures up to and including dismissal or termination of service.

## **Resolution Process**

Members, volunteers, employees, partners, suppliers and vendors who believe they have been subjected to any kind of discrimination or other harmful conduct whether it be verbal or otherwise that conflicts with the intention and language of this policy should seek assistance from the Executive Director, so that the situation can be formally documented.

Once documented, an investigation into the matter will be conducted by the Executive Director and the Chair of the Board. The investigation may include but not be limited to:

- Interviews with all of the individuals involved.
- Interviews with any potential witnesses who may have been present or may have firsthand knowledge of the situation.
- Review of any accessible communications between the involved individuals or other documents that may provide further context on the situation or about the individuals involved.

After the investigation has been completed, the Executive Director will draft a report and present it to the Executive Committee under the conditions of a closed session meeting.

Upon review of the report and after a fulsome discussion on the matter in closed session, the Executive Committee will make a recommendation(s) to the full Board on the need for any further actions that it feels are necessary in order to resolve the situation. This will take place in closed session at the next full Board meeting.

In the event there is a perceived conflict or lack of comfort in working with the Executive Director, the next point of contact for purposes of initial documentation of the matter would be the Chair of the Board. In this case, the Chair and the Vice Chair of the Board would conduct the investigation and draft the report.

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I have read and will adhere to the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy of the OTK BIA

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_