

# Creating Inclusive Communities:

a diversity booklet of tips and resources for community groups wanting to involve new Canadians and persons with disabilities.

## What is diversity?

All the ways that we are unique and different from others.

*"This term describes the differences that exist within Canadian society, across all four levels of diversity – individual, team/organizational, professional and societal. In the historic/socio-political context there is a relationship with exclusion and inclusion (out-of-group/in-group) power dynamics. These qualities are included in the term culture."*

[Source] Adapted from Terminology of Diversity '97, Alberta Human Rights and Citizens Commission.

*"When strangers begin acting like friends, communities are reinvigorated."*

Ralph Nader





# Inclusion is . . .

Taking into consideration that diverse groups have different needs that might require extra work on your part before they can have access to the opportunities and events that everyone else has.

Treating each person and group according to their needs.

Everybody's responsibility. Particularly those who are part of a dominant group because they are the ones with more privilege and power to change the 'isms' in society.

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## The “isms” preventing inclusion.

Something that may get in the way of inclusion is society's belief that one person/group is better than another. When that belief is combined with society's granting certain privileges and power to the mainstream group that's defined as the ideal, then we have the “isms” in our lives.

When the belief is about skin colour, it gives way to racism.

When the belief is about ability, it gives way to ableism.

When the belief is about gender, it gives way to sexism.

. . .and so on and so forth.

Inclusion is about recognizing that, due to their characteristics, these groups are vulnerable and generally at a disadvantage when it comes to sharing resources and opportunities in society. Inclusion is about taking action to incorporate all people into community life.



# Why become more inclusive?

We are becoming a more diverse society and yet, groups with diverse needs continue to experience discrimination and exclusion.

Inclusion is a part of the Canadian way:

- *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*
- *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*
- *Alberta Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act*
- *Employment Equity and Human Rights*
- *Calgary's declaration of Municipalities Against Racial Discrimination*

## Advantages to being inclusive:

- Fulfilling the mandate of serving and involving the community as a whole.
- Enhancing problem solving and creative thinking skills.
- Having access to diverse, best qualified individuals.
- Building partnerships with culturally diverse businesses, religious groups and other cultural organizations.
- Empowering people to contribute the best of what they have to offer without holding back because they don't fit in.
- Diversifying volunteer base and support from a broader constituency.
- Responding more quickly and easily to broader community needs.
- Avoiding legal and other disputes associated with discrimination, harassment and other human rights infringements.



In 1959, the ratio of caucasian to visible minority persons in Calgary was 350:1. Today, the ratio is 5:1.

In 1971, Canada became the first country in the world to adopt the Multiculturalism Policy.





*"One-third of all persons with disabilities, almost half of all recent immigrants and over half of all aboriginal persons in Calgary are living in poverty."*

[Source] Prosperity: on Being Without, in the Land of Plenty. The City of Calgary.



# Bridge Builders

Building rapport, relationships and acknowledging people with disabilities is the most helpful manner of connecting with them. It's better to talk to people and risk making mistakes than to keep distant and silent for fear of doing something wrong.

When you see someone with a disability, it's okay to ask if he or she requires any help. Remember too that an aide who is accompanying someone with a disability may also require assistance.

Treat adults as adults. Speak to an adult with a disability in the same tone that you would use with any other adult. And speak directly to the person rather than to the aide.

## Understanding disability is important.

The extent to which a person becomes disabled by an impairment depends on the frequency and intensity of limitations associated with each disability. However, the individual's environment has a significant impact. The more accommodating the environment, the less severe the limitation placed on the individual.

People with disabilities see themselves first and foremost as a person, and then as someone who happens to have a disability. They don't want to be defined by their disability. Our use of terminology is therefore important.

It is preferable to use the terms:

- People with disabilities rather than disabled people.
- People with mobility or visual impairment.
- People hard of hearing.

Often, employers assume that persons with disabilities are unable to work. Most people can in fact lead productive lives when the right conditions are provided.

# Cultural competency . . .

Is about being able to function and communicate effectively with people of various racial, ethnic, religious and linguistic groups. This involves sensitivity, knowledge about various cultures, communication and, most importantly, the belief in equality.

*Immigrants account for one-fifth of Calgary's population.*

*The percentage of newcomers with a university degree is more than double that of Canadian born residents and yet their poverty level in Calgary is more than 50 per cent higher.*

[Source] Poverty in Calgary. The City of Calgary, Community Strategies, Policy & Planning division.



*"Cultural competency... is compatible with the fundamental principles of respect, equality and diversity that Canada has long embraced."*

[Source] Cultural Competency: A Self-Assessment Guide for Human Service Organizations. Hieu Van Ngo.

## Involve new Canadians.

Understand/interact. You are not expected to know everything about the many cultures represented in Calgary but you can become knowledgeable about some things from certain countries by becoming friends with people from those cultures.

Use language appropriate to the person's needs. Assess their comfort with the English language first and, if they are not yet proficient, speak slowly, clearly, with simple words and without slang or jargon.

Pay attention to communication styles. Consider using visual aids and body language along with verbal communication.

Avoid labelling or stereotyping. Generalizations about a group is stereotyping. Accepting jokes that promote generalizations, or mentioning a person's cultural background or ethnicity in reference to a negative behaviour is stereotyping.

Don't judge by appearances. One's appearance, manner or accent does not tell of the person, their history, beliefs or abilities. Check your assumptions.





A lot of people with a physical impairment are not completely disabled by their condition. For example, they may not be completely deaf or blind.



# Common myths: A reality check.

## Myth

“Previous immigrants made it with no help, while today’s government is spending millions on immigrant and refugee programs.”

## ✓ Reality

During major migrations from Europe in the early years, major incentives were offered to attract immigrants, including free land, travel subsidies, settlement allowances, start-up provisions, equipment, and even wives. Today, most immigrants have to have educations and/or money before they are allowed into Canada. The average amount being brought in per immigrant is \$18,000. Immigrants contribute to the economy.

## Myth

“We are taking in too many immigrants into Canada.”

## ✓ Reality

The largest wave of immigration to Canada was from 1910 to 1913. In 1913 alone, 400,000 immigrants came. In comparison, during the 1980s, we averaged 125,000 immigrants per year. The number established by Immigration Canada for the next five years is 250,000 immigrants per year.

## Myth

“People with certain disabilities don’t really know what’s going on.”

## ✓ Reality

Perceptions can be deceiving. People with disabilities are self-aware and, like everyone, crave connections and a relationship with the world around them.

## Myth

“Children and adults with disabilities do best with their own kind and prefer to be with other people just like them.”

## ✓ Reality

When asked, many children with disabilities will say that their best friend is a typical child, not another child with a disability. Encouraging children to play among themselves regardless of ability illustrates the wonderful lesson that everyone is equally valuable.

[Sources]

Alberta Facts. Edmonton Social Planning Council, March 1992.

Family Support for Children with Disabilities. Parent Advisory Committee.

Disability Awareness Information Sessions. Development Disabilities Resource Centre of Calgary.

# Did you know?

The City of Calgary 3-1-1 information line has over-the-phone interpretation available for individuals who are not fluent in the English language and are asking for information about City programs. Just call 3-1-1.

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**Alberta Health Services** has health information translated into different languages. Interpretation services are available to people when accessing their health services. Order the booklet “Inclusive Language” at (403) 943-0205 or TTY (403) 943-1552.

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Visit [www.culturegrams.com](http://www.culturegrams.com) to obtain information about a specific culture, or ask staff from our south office to download and print information about a specific culture for you for free.

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**There is a list of ethno cultural groups in Calgary** and their associations to help connect community residents. The list is found in Cross Cultural Connections, a must-have City of Calgary document with support, resources and agency connections. Download it at [calgary.ca/arts](http://calgary.ca/arts).

**Agencies can provide free awareness seminars** on diversity issues. See the Get Connected section of this booklet.

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**The Inclusive Schools Initiative** provides support to teachers who have children with disabilities in their classroom. Visit [www.ddrcc.com](http://www.ddrcc.com).

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**There are many groups in Calgary providing sports activities** for people with disabilities and some groups are able to do sports demonstrations on how to be inclusive in community programs. Contact David Legg at [www2.mtroyal.ab.ca](http://www2.mtroyal.ab.ca).

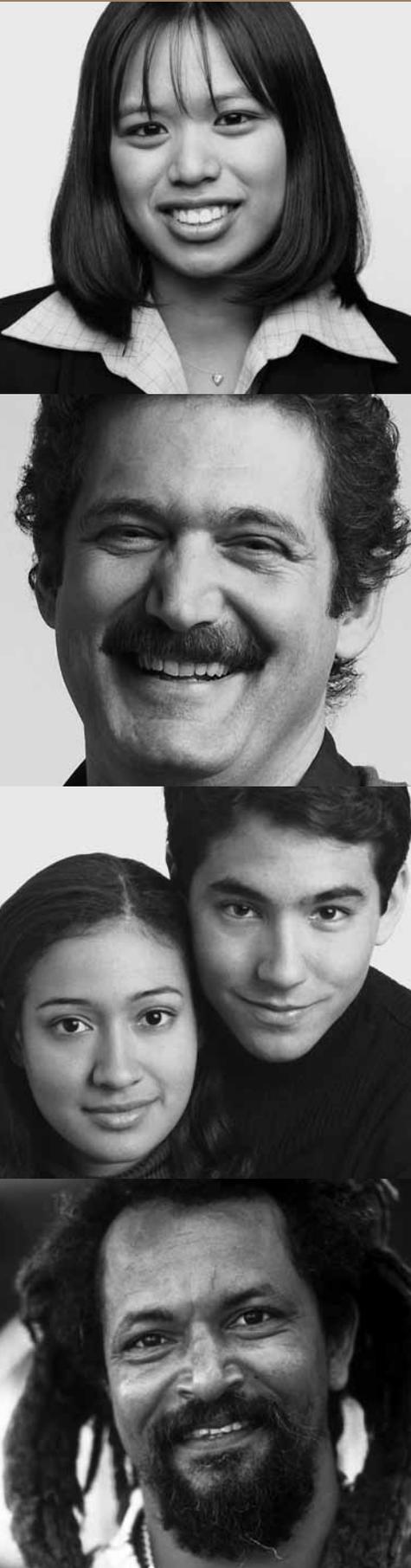
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**Personal aides for special needs children** get in free at any City of Calgary swimming pool and at some local movie theatres. Visit [www.access2.ca](http://www.access2.ca).

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**The City of Calgary’s website** has a demographic profile for every Calgary community. Visit [calgary.ca](http://calgary.ca).





# How inclusive are you?

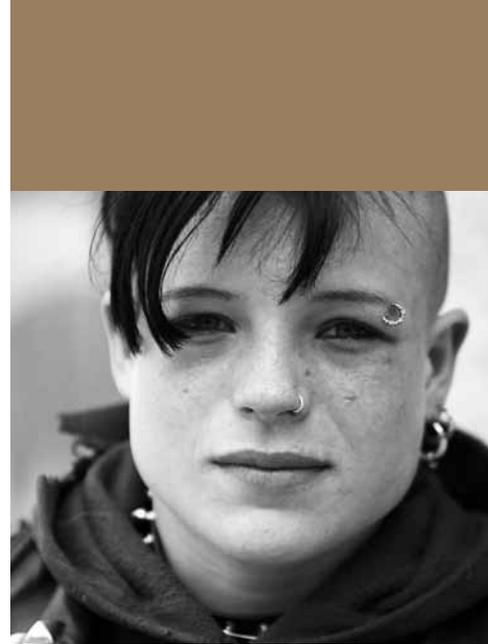
## A checklist of criteria to increase community accessibility.

1. Is your promotional material up-to-date and written in plain language?
2. Does your physical space reflect the present demographic of the Calgary community?
3. Is promotional material available in another language spoken in your community?
4. Is your material readily accessible (i.e. visible)?
5. Is your material located outside the organization such as agencies that serve diverse populations?
6. Does your mission statement state your commitment to being inclusive?
7. Do stakeholders from diverse communities become involved in developing best practices? Are they part of your board, staff, group and volunteer committees?
8. Are your programs and services easy to get to by way of public transportation?
9. Are your programs and services readily accessible (e.g. wheelchairs, captioning, interpreters)?
10. Do your programs and services consider the current economic status of the proposed participants?
11. Are your programs flexible enough to accommodate the needs of diverse populations?
12. Do you consider inclusion of diverse populations in planning for community events?

# Things you can easily do.

1. Have a plain language document consultation on your printed material. The VRRRI offers free consultations to community groups. Contact Stacey Kowbel at [www.vrii.org](http://www.vrii.org). A more detailed review can also be done by a plain language specialist at Literacy Alberta (Terri Peters) [literacyalberta.ca](http://literacyalberta.ca) and The Learning Centre (Laura Godfrey), [calgarylearningcentre.com](http://calgarylearningcentre.com).
2. Choose art, pictures, posters, etc. that reflect diversity. Download photos or clip art online or contact a local print shop for photos that reflect diversity.
3. See Cross Cultural Connections (download at [calgary.ca/arts](http://calgary.ca/arts)) for a listing of local interpreters and information on how to access a language bank.
4. Ensure all promotional material is at the entrance and in high traffic areas.
5. Check Cross Cultural Connections for agencies that serve diverse populations.
6. Volunteer Calgary offers workshops on working with diverse populations. Check their website at [www.volunteercalgary.ab.ca](http://www.volunteercalgary.ab.ca).
7. Be sure to include your street address, and consider including the applicable bus routes to your organization in your promotional material.
8. Rent port-a-potties that are wheelchair accessible as well as wheelchair ramps. If your event or building is wheelchair accessible, say so.
9. Consider providing subsidies or using a sliding fee based on income. You can also provide childcare and bus tickets.
10. Include recreation programs that accommodate activities enjoyed by other cultures such as ping-pong and ethnic cooking. Remember that some cultures have a dress code that does not include swimwear, shorts or other similar apparel.
11. For tips on planning inclusive events, download “Inclusive Community Organization: A tool kit” by the Ontario healthy communities coalition (under “tools”) – [www.healthycommunities.on.ca](http://www.healthycommunities.on.ca).

For a list of resources on social inclusion (inclusion in recreation and community centres), see Everybody's Welcome in the Get Connected section.





Consider celebrating other cultural holidays. You can buy a multi-faith calendar which outlines the many different celebrations from the Alberta Association for Multicultural Education. Email [info@kanataint.ca](mailto:info@kanataint.ca) or more information.



Everyone belongs™ is a social marketing initiative conceptualized by the Developmental Disabilities Resource Centre of Calgary (DDRC) to promote the inclusion of all people in our workplaces, schools and communities – [everybodybelongs.com](http://everybodybelongs.com).

# Get Connected

## Agencies

**Alberta Association of Immigrant Settlement Services (AAISA)** provides a list of settlement agencies, information and resources for new Canadians. For copies, call (403) 680-1772 or visit the website at [www.aaisa.ca](http://www.aaisa.ca).

**Committee on Race Relations & Cross-Cultural Understanding –** [www.crrccu.org](http://www.crrccu.org).

**Developmental Disabilities Resource Centre of Calgary (DDRC)** Support for those with developmental disabilities and a resource centre to the general public on accessibility and inclusion. (403) 240-3111 or [www.ddrcc.com](http://www.ddrcc.com).

**Disability Links – Alberta Senior & Community Supports** A good, broad site of connections for all ages. [www.seniors.gov.ab.ca](http://www.seniors.gov.ab.ca).

**ESL Cooperative Ministries** works with churches involved in ESL language support and ministry. [www.eslcooperative.ca](http://www.eslcooperative.ca).

**Ethno-Cultural Council of Calgary.** An umbrella organization providing support to ethno cultural groups and addressing racial discrimination. [eccecalgary.com](http://eccecalgary.com).

**Family Support for Children with Disabilities –** [www.calgaryandareacfsa.gov.ab.ca](http://www.calgaryandareacfsa.gov.ab.ca).

**Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD)** provides referrals to adults. (403) 2297-5011 or [www.calgary-pdd.org](http://www.calgary-pdd.org).

**Vocational Research & Rehabilitation Institute (VRRI)** has a library available for research and plans to develop a plain language resource centre. [www.vrri.org](http://www.vrri.org).

# Get Connected

## Resources

**Alberta Committee of Citizens with Disabilities** – [www.accd.net](http://www.accd.net).

**Alberta Council of Disability Services** – [www.acds.ca](http://www.acds.ca).

**Cultural Cues.** A resource guide to help seniors from six ethno-cultural seniors' groups (Chinese, Filipino, Hispanic, Korean, Sikh and Vietnamese) – [calgary.ca](http://calgary.ca).

**Cultural Mapping Tool Kit.** A self-assessment guide for human service organizations.

**Directory of ESL Programs and Services for immigrants and international students** offered by various institutions – [www.immigrantservicescalgary.ca](http://www.immigrantservicescalgary.ca).

**Every Body's Welcome.** A list of social inclusion resources including tool kits and manuals for the inclusion of different groups. [sparc.bc.ca](http://sparc.bc.ca).

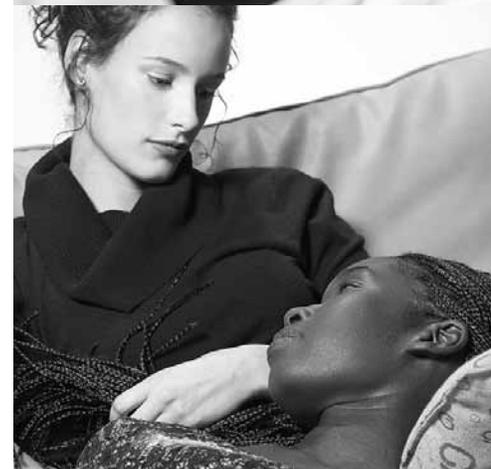
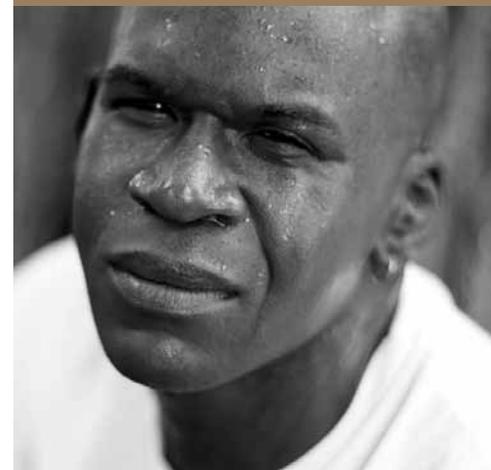
**Expanding the Circle.** Information on the concept of race and racism – [www.socialjustice.org](http://www.socialjustice.org).

**Recreation Discovery,** a recreation resource directory for people with disabilities. [calgary.ca](http://calgary.ca).

**Resources on Diversity & Inclusion.** Includes a booklet "Speak-Up" with examples of how to respond to everyday bigotry in different situations. [www.tolerance.org](http://www.tolerance.org).



Cross-Cultural Connections is a must have City of Calgary document with support, resources and agency connections. [calgary.ca/arts](http://calgary.ca/arts).



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Inclusive  
Communities  
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Creating Inclusive Communities is intended to assist community organizations and groups wishing to become more inclusive with their programs, services and events by offering simple first steps in that direction.

## To obtain copies contact:

South Office, Community & Neighbourhood Services

The City of Calgary

403-537-7599

[calgary.ca/cns](http://calgary.ca/cns)

People of Aboriginal descent are a completely separate and unique cultural group because their roots constitute the foundation of our Canadian heritage. For more information on inclusion of Aboriginal people in community life, please contact Bev Renaud, Aboriginal community worker at The City of Calgary. 403-268-5959 or email [bev.renaud@calgary.ca](mailto:bev.renaud@calgary.ca).