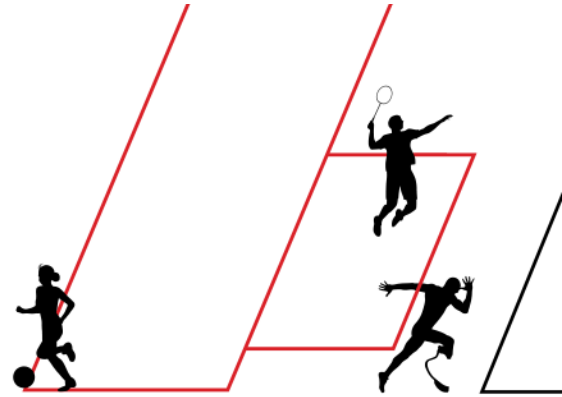


# Developing equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) policies for a sporting organization: A step-by-step plan



## Welcome and overview

Creating a safe and diverse environment is very important for any organization to thrive. We must all be more culturally aware, whether you're working at the community level or national level. This is true no matter what role you hold, whether you're involved in coaching, sport science, administration, or health care capacities. Becoming more culturally aware is very important when developing a policy or resource template.

Most of us know that diverse and inclusive workplaces are a good thing, because in such environments, employees and participants feel valued and can see different demographic characteristics reflected. A diverse and inclusive environment finds and nurtures the best talent, increases employee engagement, and improves customer willingness to continue to be involved in the organization (Cox & Lancefield, 2021).

We'll review some steps to consider when developing a resource or policy template on equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) for a sporting organization. Simply put, when you're working on an EDI policy, it means understanding the people who work for your organization and figuring out if there's anything stopping fairness, diversity, and inclusion (Pogosyan, 2023).

## Importance of EDI in sports

Equity, diversity, and inclusion are increasingly recognized as crucial elements in the sports industry, bringing about various positive impacts on individuals, organizations, and the sports community.

Here are key reasons why EDI is important in sports:

1. Fairness and equal opportunities
  - a. Promoting equality: EDI initiatives aim to eliminate discrimination and provide equal opportunities for everyone, irrespective of their background. This fosters fairness in sports participation, competitions, and career advancement.
2. Reflecting society's diversity
  - a. Representation: Embracing diversity ensures that sports organizations reflect the broader society. Representation in leadership, coaching, and player roles allows for a more inclusive and representative sports community.

3. Enhancing performance and innovation
  - a. Diverse perspectives: A diverse and inclusive environment brings together individuals with varied perspectives, experiences, and skill sets. This diversity can lead to innovative ideas, problem-solving approaches, and improved performance in sports.
4. Positive impact on athlete well-being
  - a. Cultural competence: Coaches and sports professionals with cultural competence can better understand and support athletes from diverse backgrounds. This positively impacts athletes' well-being and mental health.
5. Attracting a broader fan base
  - a. Increased engagement: Embracing diversity in sports appeals to a broader audience. Fans are more likely to engage with sports organizations that reflect their values and demonstrate inclusivity.
6. Talent development and retention
  - a. Unlocking potential: An inclusive environment allows organizations to tap into a wider pool of talent. By removing barriers, organizations can attract, develop, and retain skilled individuals, contributing to the overall success of the sports community.
7. Inspiration and role modeling
  - a. Positive role models: Diverse role models in sports inspire individuals from various backgrounds to participate and pursue careers in sports. This can have a lasting impact on future generations.
8. Resilience and adaptability
  - a. Adapting to change: In a rapidly evolving world, it is important to know that organizations that are diverse and inclusive tend to be more resilient and adaptable to change. EDI fosters an environment that can respond effectively to societal shifts and emerging trends.

In summary, embracing EDI in sports isn't just about meeting legal requirements; it's a strategic imperative that positively affects the performance, culture, and long-term sustainability of sports organizations. EDI fosters a sense of belonging, unlocks the full potential of individuals, and contributes to the overall success and positive impact of the sports community.

Whether a company has an EDI policy or not sends a message to people thinking about working there. If there is a policy, it suggests that organizations care about fairness and diversity. On the flip side, not having an EDI policy can be equally telling. But it's important that the policy be real and not just for show. A meaningful EDI policy shows a company is genuinely committed to promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion (Pogosyan, 2023).

## Guide to drafting an EDI policy

When creating a strong and effective EDI policy, you must cover 2 main aspects: proactiveness and reactiveness. Your EDI policy's proactive part should set out your organization's standards and values, and its reactive part must address how your organization plans to manage with any EDI-related incidents or complaints that may arise (Pogosyan, 2023).

1. The first step is to emphasize your organization's commitment to EDI. Your policy should clearly express your organization's dedication to equity diversity, and inclusion, illustrating how EDI aligns with your **organization's values and objectives**.
2. Next, **define your purpose and scope**. An EDI policy aims to foster an organizational culture that values and respects the unique attributes and experiences of every individual associated with your sports organization. These policies create an inclusive environment, promoting equal opportunities, eliminating discrimination, and instilling a sense of belonging for everyone, including athletes and participants, coaches, staff, volunteers and partners.
3. Be sure to **include definitions and principles**. This section should define key words and outline the fundamental principles that will guide your organization's approach to EDI.
4. Have a **section addressing what's forbidden** (prohibitions against discrimination and harassment). Clearly spell out in the policy that discrimination and harassment based on protected characteristics (such as race, gender, religion, or sexual orientation) won't be tolerated in the workplace.
5. Ensure your policy includes provisions for **ongoing training and education** for all employees to raise awareness of EDI issues and cultivate a more inclusive work environment. This may involve training about unconscious bias, cross-cultural communication, and other relevant topics.

Here's a sample policy.

Introduction:

[Sport Organization] (name of the organization) is committed to advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion within the coaching community. Our organization recognizes that fostering an inclusive environment is essential for raising the skills and stature of coaches, enhancing the athlete experience, and contributing to the overall growth of

sport in Canada. This equity, diversity, and inclusion policy outlines our commitment to creating a coaching culture that values diversity, promotes inclusivity, and ensures equal opportunities for coaches at all levels.

### 1. Statement of commitment

[Sport Organization] is dedicated to promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion in all aspects of our programs, services, and initiatives. We commit to creating a coaching environment that's welcoming, respectful, and free from discrimination, where coaches of all backgrounds can thrive.

### 2. Definitions

**Equity:** Ensuring fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all coaches, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, age, ability, sexual orientation, or socio-economic status.

**Inclusion:** Creating an environment that embraces and celebrates diversity, fosters a sense of belonging, and actively involves all coaches in our coaching community.

**Diversity:** Acknowledging and appreciating the range of differences among coaches, including race, ethnicity, gender, age, ability, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status.

**Intersectionality:** Recognizing and addressing the interconnected nature of social categories and identities, understanding that individuals may experience multiple forms of discrimination or privilege simultaneously.

### 3. Leadership and accountability

**Leadership commitment:** [Sport Organization]'s leadership is dedicated to championing equity, diversity, and inclusion, ensuring that these principles are integrated into our organizational culture and decision-making processes.

**Accountability measures:** [Sport Organization] is committed to creating and following the accountability measures listed below:

- Setting clear roles and responsibilities for promoting equity and inclusion within the organization
- Regularly assessing and reporting progress toward diversity goals

- Actively encouraging and promoting diversity in leadership roles, including the Board of Directors, to authentically represent the diverse population in Canada
- Implementing mentorship programs to provide support and guidance for underrepresented groups
- Fostering career advancement within the coaching community

#### 4. Inclusive coach development

**Accessible learning opportunities:** Ensure that coach education programs are accessible to coaches from diverse backgrounds and experiences.

**Diverse coaching staff:** Strive for diversity in coaching staff at all levels, from grassroots to professional, to provide role models and mentors from various backgrounds.

**Reassess:** Conduct periodic reviews of coaching programs to ensure accessibility and inclusivity for individuals of all backgrounds.

**Partner mindfully:** Foster collaborative partnerships with diverse community groups to design and implement targeted coaching initiatives, ensuring representation and participation from underrepresented communities.

#### 5. Anti-discrimination and harassment:

**Zero tolerance:** [Sport Organization] maintains a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination, harassment, and any form of bias within the coaching community.

**Reporting mechanisms:** Set clear and confidential reporting mechanisms for incidents of discrimination or harassment, ensuring prompt and fair resolution.

#### 6. Outreach and inclusivity in coaching programs:

**Community partnerships:** Actively engage with diverse community groups to promote inclusivity in coaching programs and expand outreach efforts.

**Representation in coaching events:** Ensure diverse representation in coaching events, conferences and seminars organized or supported by [Sport Organization]

#### 7. Education and training:

Integrate content on cultural competence, unconscious bias, and inclusive coaching practices into new and existing educational modules.

Regularly provide training sessions and resources to empower coaches with the knowledge and skills necessary for fostering inclusive environments.

#### 8. Review and revision:

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure its effectiveness and relevance. [Sport Organization] is committed to continuous improvement and will revise this policy based on feedback, changing circumstances and evolving best practices.

By adopting this equity, diversity, and inclusion policy, [Sport Organization] affirms its dedication to creating an inclusive coaching environment that values diversity and ensures equal opportunities for coaches across Canada.

#### Work cited:

Pogosyan, K. (2023, February 15). Implementing an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Policy. *Seabrook Workplace Law*.

<https://seabrookworkplacelaw.ca/implementing-an-equity-diversity-and-inclusion-edi-policy/>

Cox, G., & Lancefield, D. (2021, May 19). 5 strategies to infuse D&I into your organization. *Harvard Business Review*.