

West Neighbourhood House	
Policy Title:	Equity Policy
Approved by:	West Neighbourhood House Board of Directors
Approval date:	March 2007
Revision dates:	April 2012 / January 2017 / November 2021

Policy Statement

West Neighbourhood House is committed to creating an equitable organization in which everyone is treated fairly, with dignity and respect. This policy is intended to ensure that equity, inclusion and respect are key values driving all aspects of our work in a manner that is consistent with the Vision, Mission, and Guiding Principles of West Neighbourhood House.

West Neighbourhood House’s services are provided on the traditional territories of the Huron-Wendat, the Chippewa, the Seneca, and the current treaty-holders, the Mississaugas of the Credit. As an organization, West Neighbourhood House recognizes and supports the spirit of the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada concerning Indigenous people and of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) National Inquiry.

West Neighbourhood House and all stakeholders in our community benefit from equity. The benefits of equity include a welcoming, inclusive community setting for all, opportunities for all to participate fully in the local community, respectful and appropriate supports for all who need them, meaningful employment and volunteer experiences for diverse people, opportunities to develop staff potential, partnerships with diverse communities, responsiveness and accountability to stakeholders.

We recognize that discrimination can have a direct impact on the health and well-being of those who experience it. We acknowledge the courage required and barriers faced by individuals experiencing discrimination to reporting or speaking out about incidents or discriminatory environments. West Neighbourhood House acknowledges that we have a responsibility within our own organization and the community to prevent actions and practices of discrimination, whether intentional or not.

West Neighbourhood House also acknowledges the existence of racism in our community and the barriers created by systemic racism for many of the communities we serve. West Neighbourhood House specifically acknowledges anti-Black racism and is actively striving to redress the harms done by anti-Black racism and all forms of racist and oppressive behaviours.

West Neighbourhood House prohibits harassment and protects the right to be free of discrimination and hate activity based on age, ancestry, citizenship, creed (religion), colour, disability, ethnic origin, linguistic background, family status, gender identity, level of literacy, marital status, place of origin, membership in a union or staff association, political affiliation, race, economic status, receipt of public assistance, record of offences, sex, sexual orientation or any other personal characteristics by or within the organization. Discrimination prohibited by

West Neighbourhood House policies, Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Ontario Human Rights Code and the City of Toronto's Human Rights and Harassment Policy and Hate Activity Policy is not permissible. Distinctions made in accordance with these policies and legislation is permissible and the delivery of appropriate, directed services to individuals or groups with particular needs is allowed.

West Neighbourhood House also recognizes that the diversity of our staff, volunteers, and students is a source of tremendous strength and knowledge essential to delivering effective services to and with the diverse population in our community.

Applicability

- All Staff
- General public
- Program Participants, Clients, Members
- Volunteers
- Student Placements
- Individuals and Community Groups who utilize West Neighbourhood House space

Definitions

Equity

Equity requires a distinct process of recognizing differences within groups of individuals and using this understanding to achieve substantive equality in all aspect of a person's life. Equity may involve treating some individuals differently, to take into consideration particular needs and situations.

Discrimination

Discrimination involves treating someone unfairly by either imposing a burden on them, or denying them a privilege, benefit or opportunity enjoyed by others, because of their race, citizenship, family status, disability, sex or other personal characteristics.

General Principles and Procedures

To meet its legal, professional, social and moral/ethical obligations towards equity, West Neighbourhood House will:

- **Be accountable to our communities regarding equity.**
West Neighbourhood House will include equity considerations in the annual Planning Cycle (e.g., Community Sweep, Program Sweeps, Staff Planning Day, Board Planning Day, and Strategic Plan/Operating Plan). We will explicitly consider equity in our decision-making, priority-setting, partnership development, training, program planning and resource allocation. West Neighbourhood House will engage diverse viewpoints within our organization,

including but not exclusively through the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, and in the communities we serve and seek to serve.

- **Provide an environment that is accessible, welcoming, safe and free of stigma and discrimination for all our stakeholders, recognizing those stakeholders who identify themselves as members of a group having traditionally experienced discrimination and oppression.**

West Neighbourhood House will ensure that our policies, programs, practices and performances correspond to and reflect this environment. We will promote this environment through targeted outreach, multiple forms of communication, education and appropriate responses to complaints or concerns.

- **Recognize and support the achievement of equity as an important outcome of the services we provide.**

West Neighbourhood House will foster and monitor equity in our responsiveness to our community, including collection, monitoring and analysis of race-based data and data that tracks other potential forms of inequity or oppression with their consent and disclosure. This includes provision of training, language/cultural interpretation, and continued development and support of community partnerships.

- **Evaluate how we hire, train, retain, promote and set expectations for staff.**

West Neighbourhood House ensures that equity and diversity is reflected and considered throughout all aspects and levels of the organization. To evaluate this, we will collect, monitor and analyze race-based data and data about other forms of inequity/oppression of staff, with their consent and disclosure. We will monitor and develop human resources policies and procedures that promote fair employment practices.

- **Provide diversity, equity and inclusion training** to new staff, students, volunteers and participants when starting at West Neighbourhood House with regular refreshers and deeper level training periodically.

- **Receive, investigate and address complaints.**

Complaints regarding equity and discrimination may be submitted through the process outlined in the [Complaints Policy](#).

Responsibilities

- **The Board of Directors** is accountable to the larger community for ensuring that equity policy and procedures are embodied in the work of West Neighbourhood House. The Board is responsible for the overall development and implementation of this equity policy.

The Board will include equity considerations in their recruitment, selection, support and evaluation of the Executive Director. The Board is also responsible for recruiting and retaining a diverse Board of Directors with a commitment to equity.

- **The Executive Director**, in conjunction with the Associate Executive Director, is responsible for allocating adequate resources to ensure that equity policy and procedures are embodied in the work of West Neighbourhood House. The Executive Director is also responsible overall for ensuring ongoing review and continued development of policies affecting equity in all aspects of West Neighbourhood House operations.
- **The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee** is responsible for monitoring progress on the Implementation Plan of the Organizational Review, reviewing policies and practices, and acting as a reference group for questions and issues.
- **Supervisors** are responsible for adhering to equitable employment policies and procedures and working with their teams to ensure that equity goals are reflected in all aspects of program delivery. They are also responsible for working with other staff, students and volunteers of West Neighbourhood House and partner organizations to ensure equitable relations with communities that experience discrimination.
- **All staff** are responsible for promoting equity and for actively addressing discrimination, intentional or not, by co-workers, program participants, students, volunteers and other community members.
- **Students, volunteers, program participants and other community members** will be supported and encouraged to promote equity and to address discrimination.

Related Policies

- West Neighbourhood House recognizes and fully supports the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Ontario Human Rights Code and the City of Toronto's Human Rights and Harassment Policy and Hate Activity Policy. Our advocacy work includes responding to potential or real violations of these policies in our community.
- More information on the policies West Neighbourhood House has in place which relate to equity for historically and systematically marginalized groups can be found in the following:

[Respectful Workplace Policy](#)

[Workplace Harassment Policy](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Human Resources Policy and Procedure on Hiring](#)

Acknowledgement of Policy

I acknowledge that I have received and read the Equity Policy and/or have had it explained to me.

I understand that it is my responsibility to abide by this policy and related policies of West Neighbourhood House as a condition of my employment.

Date: _____

Name of Employee/Volunteer: _____

Signature: _____