Our Commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

A STRATEGIC PLAN

January 2021

Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations

Our Journey

In the early fall of 2020, ECVO embarked on a journey to create a more inclusive organization. We engaged a consultancy specializing in equity, diversity and inclusion and held training and planning sessions with board members and staff throughout the fall. These sessions provided a platform for learning about equity, diversity and inclusion and for assessing organizational strengths and areas for improvement.

ECVO understands that equity requires a long-term commitment. Learning, development and organizational change take time. Change can be disruptive, moving us away from current practices and approaches as we grow to be more open and inclusive. We are excited to begin this work and we are ready for the impacts it will have on us as individuals and as an organization.

Our Intention

Early in the process, ECVO staff and board members articulated a clear intention for our EDI work. We emphasized the desire to make meaningful and lasting change that impacts the entire organization. We wanted to find a path forward to embed EDI in all that we do and to avoid tokenism. We talked about a desire to share power in equitable ways, to create a more inclusive organizational space and invite greater diversity in all aspects of it.

What we have created here is a starting place for change. We have identified key strategic priorities to move us to the next step, with the intention of ongoing learning, assessment and planning. Our intention is that this document and the ideas within it are fluid and evolving so it can guide our work now and into the future.

Our EDI Vision

ECVO is a diverse organization that welcomes and values the knowledges and lived realities of our members and communities. We are committed to ensuring our programs, activities, policies and priorities are inclusive, equitable and aimed at systems level change. We actively work to enhance diversity at all levels of the organization in order to effectively represent public-serving voluntary sector organizations in the Edmonton area.

Our Understanding

We understand that focusing on and developing our capacity to promote and enact equity, diversity and inclusion is crucial for our ability to represent voluntary sector organizations and to understand the complex issues that public-serving voluntary sector organizations address.

We understand **equity** to mean fairness in access and the opportunity to succeed. Employment equity principles, policies, and practices enable equitable access, representation, opportunities, and meaningful participation of equity seeking groups.

We understand **diversity** refers to difference or variety. In a broad societal equity, diversity, and inclusion context diversity refers to demographic or identity diversity, including that based on the protected grounds.

We understand **inclusion** to mean that we value and cultivate full and meaningful engagement of historically and structurally excluded individuals and groups.

Our Approach

In order to transform our organization, ECVO understands that work must happen at multiple levels, concurrently. We will attend to behaviours and practices; norms and assumptions; frameworks, policies and programs. In doing so, we will target change efforts and the individual, organizational and systemic levels. Working at all three levels is important because they all work together to create effects that sustain inequity.

Our Strategic Priorities

Framed by our EDI vision and Strategic Framework 2020-2022, we have identified three EDI strategic priorities. Each priority area is supported by clear statements of intent, commitments and strategic actions.

Diversify Our Leadership

Engage Our Community

Grow Our Organization

Diversify Our Leadership	Engage Our Community	Grow Our Organization
We recognize the value of diverse ways of knowing, being and experiencing. We will invest our time and energy into enhancing board diversity in order to more effectively represent the sector. We will create a diverse, inclusive and equitable environment where all staff, volunteers and board members feel heard, respected and valued.	We recognize the value and importance of the ideas, thoughts and values of our members and community. We will invest our time and energy into building relations with equity deserving and other marginalized communities such that they can participate as members of ECVO in fulsome ways.	We recognize the value of a truly representative workforce and for all of our staff to be and feel respected and included. Through our policies and practices we commit to addressing discrimination and to ensuring appropriate accommodation.

Commitments

Diversify Our Leadership

- We will be transparent about diversity at ECVO
- We will be accountable to our members and communities by tracking and reporting on our progress
- We will challenge normative ideas of excellence and leadership
- We will investigate assumptions that detract from our valuing of diversity

Engage Our Community

- We will engage in meaningful relationships with our members and community
- Where possible, we will share power with our community so they can impact decisions
- We will create new pathways to reach out to excluded groups

Grow Our Organization

- We will create an inclusive organizational space where people can bring their whole selves to work and feel open to speaking without fear of censor or judgement
- We will engage in continuous review of our organizational policies and practices to ensure they contribute to EDI now and in the future

Strategic Actions

Diversify Our Leadership

- Develop a board and staff training plan for further development of EDI and allyship skills
- Examine norms and address biases in organizational practices and culture
- Review organizational practices (including recruitment and retention practices) to identify and address barriers to inclusion
- Create a mechanism for ongoing learning and dialogue about EDI topics

Engage Our Community

- Highlight the stories and perspectives of marginalized organizations
- Assess existing engagement strategies and practices using an EDI lens
- Develop additional ongoing mechanisms for members and communities to shape the organization

Grow Our Organization

- Develop principles to assess revenue and funding sources and determine if they align with an EDI approach
- Identify EDI policy and procedure gaps and priorities for new policy development
- Embed EDI in the informal organizational culture