



# Policy on Multiculturalism



## Government of Newfoundland and Labrador



Newfoundland  
Labrador

June 2008



## *MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER*

As Minister of Human Resources, Labour and Employment (HRLE), I am pleased to present the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's Policy on Multiculturalism.

Government recognizes that diversity through increased immigration strengthens the social and economic life of the province and contributes to a prosperous future for all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. In March 2007, the Provincial Government launched the provincial immigration strategy Diversity - Opportunity and Growth. The new Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism is overseeing the implementation of the \$6 million strategy. The strategy strongly recognizes the importance of multicultural communities throughout the province.

In implementing the policy on multiculturalism, the Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism will partner with community groups and agencies and other government departments to promote active and inclusive citizenship that respects the rights and responsibilities of all. The new policy encourages residents of the province to welcome newcomers into our communities. It serves to support people from diverse cultural backgrounds who make Newfoundland and Labrador their new permanent home. It celebrates the cultural mosaic of Newfoundland and Labrador and recognizes the collective contribution being made to grow the province. It also promotes cross-cultural understanding and highlights the importance of public awareness and education regarding the benefits of a diverse and vibrant population.

I encourage everyone to support multicultural initiatives in their community, to share cross-cultural experiences and to foster partnerships that increase understanding and knowledge of one another. By celebrating diversity, we increase respect for all cultures; this enriches Newfoundland and Labrador society and the quality of life enjoyed by all citizens.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shawn Skinner". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Shawn Skinner  
Minister

## *VISION*

Newfoundland and Labrador is a dynamic and vibrant Province, with welcoming communities where the cultural diversity of all its residents is valued and enhanced in the spirit of inclusiveness and harmony, to collectively build a self-reliant, prosperous Province.

## *PREAMBLE*

The Policy on Multiculturalism for the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador is based on the following international, national and provincial commitments:

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- The International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights;
- International conventions to promote racial and cultural equality such as the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination;
- The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms;
- The Canadian Multiculturalism Act;
- The Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Code; and
- The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador Multicultural Education Policy.

## *POLICY STATEMENT*

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is committed to the promotion of multiculturalism and cross-cultural understanding where the cultural diversity of all people is valued, supported and enhanced to collectively build a self-reliant, prosperous Province.

As a result, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is committed to a holistic approach to:

- ensure that relevant policies and procedures of provincial programs and practices reflect, and consider the changing needs of all cultural groups;
- lead in developing, sustaining and enhancing programs and services based on equality for all, notwithstanding racial, religious, ethnic, national and social origin;
- provide government workplaces that are free of discrimination and that promote equality of opportunity for all persons accessing employment positions within the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador;
- support multicultural initiatives by enhancing partnerships with culturally-diverse communities and provincial departments and agencies;
- encourage community based programs to foster two-way cross-cultural sharing, mutual respect, and citizenship values, as well as promote attitudes and perceptions that lead to cultural inclusiveness and harmony;
- highlight through public awareness and education, the importance of diverse cultures in our province, and facilitate life long learning that prepares individuals, especially youths to live and work in a multicultural society.

These commitments govern interaction among all cultural communities, including the Aboriginal peoples of Newfoundland and Labrador, through promotion of the following policy principles.

## ***POLICY PRINCIPLES***

*Culture*, as a way of life, is dynamic, learned, and ever changing. The Newfoundland and Labrador Policy on Multiculturalism is based on the following principles:

***Respect:*** There must be mutual understanding and respect for all cultures and appreciation of the way in which these cultural values are reflected in institutions and in everyday interactions both within and among all cultural groups.

***Equality:*** Equality of opportunity for all, notwithstanding racial, religious, ethnic, or cultural origin is a fundamental precondition to full participation in society. It embodies rights and responsibilities of all, including people of diverse cultures. This means a commitment to a society where racial, religious, ethnic, and cultural minorities may live without fear of exploitation or discrimination and where all, irrespective of their racial, religious, ethnic, and cultural background, are encouraged and supported to participate in Newfoundland and Labrador's society.

***Collaboration:*** Cross-cultural understanding, sharing and learning from each other assists to honour all cultural heritages while recognizing individual and group identity. Awareness and respect for all cultures helps to establish a base for a collaborative society with full and equal participation by all.

***Inclusive Citizenship:*** Culturally diverse people possess a wealth and variety of human talents and experience with great potential to contribute to the economic and social development of the Province. The Province in partnership with community groups will facilitate access to services, to employment and to social and government institutions, so that everyone, irrespective of their cultural and ethnic background, can experience equal opportunity to contribute and actively participate in building a self-reliant, prosperous Province.

## ***POLICY IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES***

To be developed in collaboration with various provincial departments and agencies, and in keeping with the general tenets of this policy and principles. Projects supported by the policy could include:

- Community development projects to foster cross-cultural understanding.
- Civic participation and ethno-cultural/ educational programs for youths to combat racism and discrimination and promote respect, collaboration and integration.
- Nurturing "Welcoming Communities" to make newcomers feel at 'home' and promote integration by actively participating in culturally inclusive community/social activities.
- Cultural Sensitivity professional development workshops for community workers (e.g. educators, law enforcement officers, health care/community service workers) to effectively serve youths, adults, women and senior members of diverse cultures.
- Acquisitions/Development and dissemination of multicultural resources (e.g., print, electronic, website) to support urban and rural communities.
- Development of targeted provincial government programs to serve diverse cultural groups in areas such as, entrepreneurship, employment, housing, health, education, women's and youth issues and legal services.

## ***ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS***

This policy is based on the review of existing policies on multiculturalism implemented across Canada and includes elements of the policies from the three Atlantic Provinces. We would like to thank members of Association for New Canadians, Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Association, Newfoundland and Labrador Multicultural Council Inc., Canadian Race Relations Foundation, The Leslie Harris Centre of Regional Policy and Development and the Canadian Heritage for their assistance in developing this policy.