

# Equity & Anti-Racism Plan 2025

A regional approach to eliminating barriers and providing equitable opportunities in Pictou County.



## **Mayor's Message**

On behalf of the Town of Westville's Council, Accessibility Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ADEI) Advisory Committee and all staff I welcome and encourage you to read Westville's Equity and Anti-Racism Plan.

The Westville plan was built in concert with the municipalities of Pictou, County of Pictou, Stellarton and Trenton. The five municipalities worked together to develop a common plan to make the entire Pictou County area open and welcoming, while still reflecting Westville's priorities as we move forward into a bright future where growth and development will bring positive change and greater diversity to the town. Over time both I and Council expect that the priorities and areas of focus outlined in the following pages will evolve as Westville grows and changes. In short, the plan will be a 'living document', meaning it will adapt and change with time.

The plan reflects the desire of Westville to be inclusive and responsive to the needs of all residents and visitors. Westville's goal is to be a model community that is welcoming, inclusive and accepting of all regardless of age, ability, race, creed, sexual orientation or place of origin.

With this in mind, I encourage you to become involved by voicing your concerns, questions, suggestions and ideas to the Accessibility Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ADEI) Advisory Committee, or Town Council, at any time. All meetings of the Committee are open to the public.

I am thankful for the dedicated citizen volunteers who have worked passionately to make this plan a reality. Their work together with our council and staff involvement will assure that Westville reaches the goal of becoming a community that is even more welcoming, inclusive and accepting of all regardless of age, ability, race, creed, sexual orientation, or place of origin.

Lennie White  
Mayor  
Town of Westville

## **Executive Summary**

The Towns of Pictou, Stellarton, Trenton, Westville, and the Municipality of Pictou County, acknowledge and recognize the value of diversity and the importance of fostering a regional community where everyone feels valued, heard, included, and at home.

This regional plan is our commitment to eliminate systemic barriers, promote equitable opportunities, and empower our underserved communities across Pictou County and beyond.

We welcome residents and visitors alike to view our plan and share with us ways to make Pictou County feel like home.

## **Overview**

The Towns of Pictou, Stellarton, Trenton, Westville, and the Municipality of Pictou County, acknowledge the historical exclusion of Indigenous, Black, and newcomer communities and commit to actively addressing their needs.

This plan was created with a regional approach as we recognize that all of our municipalities needed to develop a foundation to build upon that supports diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB). A regional approach will ensure that underserved communities will have the same equitable experience regardless of which town they live, work, and play in across Pictou County.

The five municipalities have been invited to work with the Town of New Glasgow's Inclusive Communities Committee to ensure that our region has a regional perspective on the work for equity and anti-racism as well as ensure we are accountable to our respective plans, have feedback from first-person perspective, and develop allyship with underserved and underrepresented communities. We will engage communities through this committee, surveys, and other appropriate means to ensure that quality community engagement continues throughout the year. This plan will be reviewed and updated annually to reflect the needs and changes of our underserved communities.

## **Vision**

A safe and inclusive region that fosters community connection, well-being, and support. A region where the experiences, the sounds, the voices, and the feeling tells people that they belong.

# Goals

*Learn:* Provide ongoing inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility training for staff and elected officials and incorporate education into daily action and organizational culture.

*Collaborate:* Connect with community organizations and businesses to learn approaches that foster collaboration and encourage community outreach to underserved communities.

*Communicate:* Amplify the voices of those who are underserved. Make DEIB a part of our storytelling and communications. Create messaging that reflects the commitment to DEIB.

*Provide:* Offer and adapt services and programs to address the needs of underserved communities in our municipalities.

# Actions

| Area of Focus      | Commitment  | Target  |
|--------------------|---|---|
| <b>Learn</b>       | Provide mandatory training for staff and council on equity and anti-racism.   | Annually host minimum of one workshop provided to all staff, council members, and committee representatives.              |
|                    | Provide staff and council with opportunities for individual learning.   | Curate a list of resources by July 1, 2025, to be updated annually, and offered to staff and council throughout the year. |
| <b>Collaborate</b> | Engage local experts and organizations that support underrepresented and underserved communities to foster understanding and ensure all voices are heard. | Begin engagement this year with ongoing collaboration, measured annually.   |
|                    | Solicit feedback from underserved communities to inform decisions, policies, and training.  | Use feedback to amend and implement decisions, policies, and training.  |
|                    | Adopt more equitable and inclusive practices in the recruitment of committee volunteers.  | Begin practices this year with ongoing enhancements, measured annually.   |
|                    | Adopt more equitable and inclusive practices at all stages of the recruitment and employment process.   | Begin practices this year with ongoing enhancements, measured annually.   |

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|--------------------|---|---|
| <b>Communicate</b> | Develop joint plain language commitment statement on accessibility, diversity, equity, and inclusion. | Signage with statement at all public facilities.    |
|                    | Use an inclusion lens when creating and amending municipal documents.                                 | Ongoing as documents need to be created or amended. |
|                    | Share appropriate online educational and support resources for external audiences.                    | Ongoing as resources are available.                 |

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|----------------|---|---|
| <b>Provide</b> | Identify and address recreational programming gaps faced by underrepresented and underserved populations.                               | Ongoing as feedback is available.                             |
|                | Work with underrepresented and underserved populations to create opportunities to recognize and acknowledge diversity in Pictou County. | Ongoing as collaboration increases and feedback is available. |
|                | Identify and address barriers to participation in municipal programs and events.  | Ongoing as feedback is available.                             |

**Glossary of Terms**

**Accessibility:** Ensuring that everyone, regardless of their abilities or disabilities, can access information, products, services, and environments in a way that is inclusive and equal.

**Allyship:** Refers to the actions, behaviours, and practices that leaders take to support, amplify, and advocate with others, especially with individuals who don't belong to the same social identity groups as themselves.

**Belonging:** The emotional connection, feeling of security and support, and sense of acceptance individuals experience within a group, community, or organization

**Discrimination:** The unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, especially on the grounds of ethnicity, age, sex, or ability.

**Diversity:** Any characteristic, dimension, or view that can be used to differentiate groups of people, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, and social class.

**Equality:** Providing equal opportunities to everyone; each individual or group of people is given the same resources.

**Equity:** Providing opportunities and resources that account for an individual's specific needs to overcome barriers.

**Inclusion:** Refers to an environment where everyone feels respected and valued, and has equal opportunities, regardless of their background or identity.

**Oppression:** A situation in which people are governed in an unfair and cruel way and prevented from having opportunities and freedom.

**Prejudice:** Preconceived opinions that are not based on reason or actual experience, often on a basis of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, or social class.

**Racism:** Prejudice or discrimination against a person or people on the basis of race or ethnicity, typically one that is a minority or marginalized.

**Systemic Racism:** Patterns of behaviour, policies, or practices that are part of the structures of an organization, and which create or perpetuate disadvantage for racialized persons.