

## Goodwill Industries Ontario Great Lakes

### Cultural Competency and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan

*Last Review: April 2025*

*Next Review: April 2026*





# Cultural Competency and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan

## Introduction

Cultural competence is the ability to understand and interact effectively with people from other cultures and communities. Goodwill Industries, Ontario Great Lakes recognizes that Cultural Competence is a key principle that must be integrated within all aspects of service. Through our attitudes, organizational structures, policies and programs, we will strive to respond effectively to the needs and aspirations of all persons served and their families, stakeholders, employees, the community, from culturally and linguistically diverse groups.

The Board of Directors of Goodwill Industries, Ontario Great Lakes recognizes the rich diversity of the people it serves and appreciates the positive impact that this diversity has on the whole community. The Board recognizes that barriers exist that prevent people from participating fully in work and society.

Management establishes and implements policies and practices to ensure programs are in place to achieve:

- Racial equality
- Mutual respect
- Cultural sensitivity
- Person-centered approach
- Clear communication
- Equal access to services
- Hiring processes that reflect the community

## Importance of Cultural Competency

As Goodwill Industries continues to meet the needs and expectations of increasingly culturally and ethnically varied populations, a better understanding of cultural differences and their relationship to the hallmarks of quality service – respect, inclusiveness, and sensitivity – become essential. Serving diverse populations, after all, is not a “one size fits all” process. Diversity includes all differences, not just those that indicate racial or ethnic distinctions.

As part of our commitment to continuous improvement, Goodwill will respond to the changing needs and expectations of the people we serve and our stakeholders, in conjunction with the changing business needs of our organization. Through ongoing strategic planning, we will ensure that our leadership maintains a viable planning structure focused on our mission, vision and core ICARE values that guide our business practices.

The creation and implementation of our Cultural Competency and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan is an essential foundation to ensure that our staff, persons served, and other stakeholders develop awareness and sensitivity specific to the diversity of our service delivery areas.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion in terms of culture, age, gender, sexual orientation, spiritual beliefs, socioeconomic status, and language are addressed in this plan.

The framework for our Cultural Competency & Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan is based on CARF's ASPIRE to Excellence® model and uses the CARF standards as a guide to



ensure an ongoing process of continuous quality improvement.

### **Vision, Mission, Mandate, Values and Beliefs Drive Culture**

Culture at Goodwill is an expression of mission and values – values drive strategy, decision making, and performance. Goodwill is a ‘force for good’ that creates social and economic value for people and planet. Our culture and values drive achievement and change in ourselves and our communities. At the core of all our actions, beliefs and aspirations is that we are inclusive and care for one another; hence the I. C.A.R.E. abridgment to our values.

Values provide a lens that we look through to gain perspective, a ‘north star’ that guides, such that every decision made or action taken is in alignment with the values.

**Our Vision** ~ Everyone is working and thriving in sustainable communities.

**Our Mission** ~ Changing Lives and Communities through the Power of Work

*Goodwill Industries, a non-profit social enterprise provides work opportunities, skills development and employee and family strengthening for those who face barriers such as disability or social disadvantage; with the aim of advancing individuals, families and communities toward self-sufficiency and prosperity.*

**Our Values** ~ **I. CARE** Inclusion | **C**ompassion | **A**spiring Workforce | **R**espect | **E**mpathy

VALUES ~ I. C.A.R.E.	CORE COMPETENCIES
I-INCLUSION Embrace all people equally	We ensure all people are equal, valued as their unique self, have purpose and voice, have opportunity to grow and learn, and are treated fairly and justly.
C-COMPASSION Serve with heart	We lead with heart, kindness, and caring... and are committed to making others better off with positive action, emotion and thought.
A-ASPIRING WORKFORCE Together change lives through the power of WORK	We believe in, and harness the transformational power of work, the courage to change, and people no matter what barriers they face connecting and working together to make communities work.
R-Respect Uphold all people with dignity and trust	We embrace diversity and uphold all people with dignity, listening, and sharing openly with decency, valuing and trusting every voice and contribution.
E-Empathy Walk in each other's shoes	We acknowledge our own short comings and take on the burden of others, making sure not to diminish how others feel and build resilience – we are all a part of the story.

### **Our Mandate**

- Support people to overcome barriers to gain access to work and reach their full potential
- Create jobs
- Provide training, skills development and career placement advancement services
- Provide access to affordable goods for families, microenterprises, and social entrepreneurs
- Sustain the environment through reuse, recycling, and circular initiatives; and diverting waste from landfill
- Foster social inclusion, alleviate poverty, and reduce the stigma of mental illness and



- social disadvantage
- Maximize the social good from the community's generous donations
- Strengthen communities...when people WORK communities WORK

### **Our Person-Centred Philosophy**

- People are recognized for their unique qualities, aspirations and aims
- We are all in this together
- People are respected, and treated with dignity and fairness equally
- A 'hand up' not a 'hand out' is empowering

### **Our Beliefs**

That work is transformational and can form the cornerstone of a person's life and create healthy communities.

That work in and of itself can strengthen one's health and well-being and that everyone no matter what barriers they may face should have the opportunity to work.

That attitudinal barriers often stand in the way of a person's opportunity to succeed and that treating ALL people with respect, dignity, and actions that in every manner uphold inclusion and caring is essential to success.

That a social enterprise where mission is integrated into every dimension of the operation and where proceeds are directed to sustain the business and mission delivery framework; is a meaningful and entrepreneurial approach to creating work and skills development opportunities for persons facing barriers to employment; and to sustaining the environment.

That creating a positive organizational culture that supports innovation and risk-taking, values all people and celebrates success; is essential to prosperity.

### **Purpose of Cultural Competency & Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan**

To equip Goodwill employees with the awareness and knowledge to effectively respond to the diversity of our stakeholders, we will provide training on various topics including spiritual beliefs, holidays, dietary regulations or preferences, clothing, attitudes toward impairments, language, how and when to use interpreters, etc.

Our equity vision is to build upon our core values, creating an organization that is welcoming, safe, accessible, and inclusive. We are committed to:

- Ongoing implementation of our anti-racism/anti-oppression policy which promotes our vision
- Includes procedures for handling issues of discrimination
- Promoting equity principles as an integral part of our ongoing activities
- Developing and maintaining ongoing relationships with diverse populations and communities
- Encouraging and creating real opportunities for staff, customers, clients and volunteer participation at all levels
- Creating and implementing hiring and recruitment practices that are inclusive
- Ensuring that all print, visual, and other promotional materials reflect diversity and inclusivity
- Presenting positive images
- Promoting and conducting ongoing anti-discrimination/equity training



- Taking a leadership role in promoting equity within our agency and within the community

All employees, customers and clients have access to Goodwill's Cultural Competency & Diversity, Equity and Inclusion plan, included in our employee orientation manual and on our website at [www.goodwillindustries.ca](http://www.goodwillindustries.ca).

It is also available upon request.

### **Cultural Competency & Diversity, Equity, and Inclusive Practices**

Goodwill Industries Ontario Great Lakes seeks employees that are committed to their community and represent a variety of cultural backgrounds, particularly those often shut out of the labour market. Discrimination is not tolerated, and employees are expected to conduct services and interactions in a manner that recognizes, values, affirms, and respects the worth of everyone, protecting and preserving the dignity of each person.

When necessary and requested, translation services to persons served will be provided. The interpreter will assist with translating any intake, performance appraisals or evaluation, and meetings. If a client needs interpretive services, Goodwill makes appropriate arrangements for these services through community partnerships.

Comprehensive, theoretically based cultural competency trainings are offered, characterized by acceptance and respect for individual differences. Trainings are based upon the following learning techniques:

- Assessment and awareness of personal biases
- Content on general culture-specific attributes, using person-centred language

Specific training and certifications include but are not limited to:

- Cultural Competency
- Diversity Awareness
- Re-think Poverty
- Mental Health First Aid

Goodwill utilizes informal relationships with a wide variety of traditional and non-traditional organizations to enhance service delivery and maximize resources for our employees, their families, and our clients.

These include community resources such as housing supports, legal aid, credit counselling, social service clubs for community involvement, mental health and addiction services.

### **Person Centred Philosophy**

All policies are created from a person centred perspective, reflective of the employee population and stakeholders we represent. We focus on one's abilities – what they can do – instead of what they can't, respecting that each person is unique and should have access to opportunities that support personal growth and development.

*\*Please also refer to our ARAO Policy, Accessibility Policy and Discrimination and Harassment Prevention Policy.*



## Our Commitment

As a team, Goodwill Industries Ontario Great Lakes is committed to creating a welcoming, accessible, inclusive environment. We affirm our commitment by making the organization a “hands on” learning experience. We seek the education of culture and diversity from professional trainings and literature as well as learning from our team members. Through these experiences, we learn a great deal about others. More importantly, we learn even more about ourselves.

## Resources

- National Centre for Cultural Competence - [nccc.georgetown.edu](http://nccc.georgetown.edu)
- Indigenous Cultural Safety Collaborate Learning Series - [www.icscollaborative.com](http://www.icscollaborative.com)
- Human Rights Campaign Tools for Equity & Inclusion - [www.hrc.org/resources](http://www.hrc.org/resources)
- National Institutes of Health Cultural Respect - <https://www.nih.gov/institutes-nih/nih-office-director/office-communications-public-liaison/clear-communication/cultural-respect>
- A Practical Guide to Implementing the National CLAS Standards:
  - For Ethnic, Racial and Linguistic Minorities, People with Disabilities and Gender and Sexual Minorities - <https://www.cms.gov/About-CMS/Agency-Information/OMH/Downloads/CLAS-Toolkit-12-7-16.pdf>