

Local Communities function at the most practical level and are most involved in the lives of their residents. They are the ideal place to develop policies, programs and strategies, and take meaningful action toward eliminating racism and other forms of discrimination.

Welcoming and Inclusive Communities Newsletter

Welcome to the first issue of the Welcoming and Inclusive Communities Newsletter!

Over the past year I have had the opportunity to work with several municipalities that are actively engaged in combating racism and other forms of discrimination in their communities. I have consistently been impressed by the passion and dedication that Councils and community members have demonstrated in working to ensure their communities are safe, supportive environments where everyone feels able to fully participate.

In this issue you will find information on including your welcoming and inclusive initiatives in your municipal sustainability plans, the Provincial Network of Welcoming and Inclusive Communities, and the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination (CMARD). There is also information on and links to three resources that can be an asset to your diversity work.

In future issues of this newsletter we would like to profile the incredible work that is being done by Alberta municipalities. If you would like to share your best practices, innovative programming ideas and even your challenges and lessons learned with other municipalities please email me. This information will also be featured on our new website.

I look forward to continuing to work with you as we move this important work forward.

Marc Colbourne
Senior Project Coordinator
Welcoming and Inclusive Communities

The Welcoming and Inclusive Communities Initiative is a partnership between the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association, the Alberta Human Rights Commission and the Human Rights branch of Alberta Culture and Community Spirit.



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Government of Alberta ■
Culture and Community Spirit

Welcoming and Inclusive Communities and Your Municipal Sustainability Plan



It is strongly recommended that municipalities take a broad view of sustainability by developing a comprehensive long-term plan that includes and integrates the five dimensions of sustainability: social, cultural, environmental, economic and governance. Taking efforts to become more welcoming and inclusive falls within the development of your municipal sustainability plan (MSP). Specifically, these initiatives meet requirements under the social and cultural dimensions.

Social Dimension—Harmonious and Inclusive. Allowing the growth of communities in a way that promotes stability, diversity, affordability and a high quality of life for all.

- Does your MSP respond to the needs and interests of a diverse population regardless of age, income, culture or physical ability?
- Does your MSP provide equitable access to community services by all citizens including low-income persons, persons with disabilities, visible minorities, aboriginals, seniors or others?

“We commit to being a welcoming community—a place for everyone. We will create a safe community by knowing and respecting one another. Trust and compassion are created through multi-generational and multi-cultural events. We embrace diversity. We will actively reach out to fellow citizens encouraging them to participate in this community.”

- Fort Saskatchewan’s Sustainability Plan

Cultural Dimension—Identity and Sense of Place. Celebrating vibrant and festive communities for the expression and enhancement of a distinct identity and strong sense of place.

- Does your MSP contribute to the creation of a sense of community identity and belonging?
- Does your MSP encourage opportunities for the expression and celebration of diverse cultural backgrounds and identities?

Grande Prairie has signed onto the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination (CMARD) and has included the following in their MSP:

- Supporting and assisting the multicultural community.
- Increasing awareness, educating and implementing the Safe Harbour Program.
- Facilitating Human Rights workshops.

Drayton Valley, also a CMARD member, has included:

- Ensure recreation facilities provide barrier free access for those individuals with mobility issues.
- Facilitate social inclusion through accessible and affordable community transportation and recreation facilities



Participants at the September meeting of the Provincial Network of Welcoming and Inclusive Communities. Left—Right: Mitra Zarei, Grande Prairie; Angela Renwick, Edmonton; Cam Stewart, Calgary; John Reilly, Edmonton.

Provincial Network of Welcoming and Inclusive Communities

The Provincial Network of Welcoming and Inclusive Communities is comprised of Alberta municipalities who are actively engaged in combating racism and other forms of discrimination. They are working to ensure that their communities are safe, supportive environments where citizens feel able to participate in all aspects of community life.

The objectives of the Provincial Network include:

- To provide networking opportunities amongst participating municipalities.
- To provide an opportunity for the sharing of best practices and resources.
- To provide support to municipalities as they work to become more welcoming and inclusive.
- To broaden the reach of welcoming and inclusive initiatives throughout the province.
- To increase the number of Alberta municipalities actively engaged in becoming more welcoming and inclusive.

The Provincial Network has established four working groups: Research, Internet Presence, Membership Strategy, and Provincial Campaign. To find out more about these groups or to become involved please get in touch.

To find out more information about the Provincial Network of Welcoming and Inclusive Communities and to learn how your municipality can benefit from membership please contact Marc Colbourne at 780.989.7419 or via [email](#).

About This Newsletter...

The Welcoming and Inclusive Communities Newsletter is an opportunity to share resources and information amongst municipalities.

If you would like to contribute to future issues of the newsletter or share best practices from your municipality please contact Marc Colbourne at 780.989.7419 or via [email](#).

If you would like more information about including WIC initiatives in your MSP please contact Joanne McGill, Provincial Coordinator—AUMA Municipal Sustainability Project at 780.989.7409 or via [email](#).

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The Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination (CMARD)



The Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination (CMARD) is part of a larger international network of municipalities working together to combat discrimination in their communities. This initiative is being promoted by UNESCO. In Canada, the Coalition is supported by the Canadian Commission for UNESCO. The Alberta Human Rights Commission and the Human Rights and Citizenship branch of Alberta Culture and Community Spirit have championed and promoted the Coalition in our province. To date, nine Alberta municipalities have passed resolutions to join the Coalition.

The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo is a very diverse region.... Through the leadership of the Mayor and Council we have made a commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion in our Corporate Vision: "A balanced future with opportunity for all". ...It is our goal in joining the Coalition to put equality, diversity and inclusion on the agenda for our region.

- Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo

How Will Municipalities Benefit from CMARD Membership?

- Become part of a larger network of municipalities who share your vision of creating a welcoming and inclusive community.
- Document and advance work within your own jurisdiction.
- Exchange practices and expertise among municipalities.
- Publicly acknowledge your municipality's commitment to building a safe community.
- Cooperate and share responsibility with other local organizations and citizens to take action.
- Develop shared resources.

Joining the Coalition is simple. Council must first pass a resolution to join the Coalition. The resolution must be forwarded to the Canadian Commission for UNESCO and the AUMA. Once a member, the municipality agrees to develop and implement a plan of action for addressing racism and other forms of discrimination in their community. One of the strengths of CMARD is that it can be highly individualized to reflect the local realities of each municipality. It doesn't cost to become a member of CMARD. Financial resources may be required to develop or implement your action plan but, again, that depends on your municipality's unique reality.

To learn more about CMARD please contact Marc Colbourne, Senior Project Coordinator— Welcoming and Inclusive Communities at 780.989.7419 or via [email](#).

Signing onto the commitment sends the message to the community that its local government is willing to take a leadership role in creating an inclusive and welcoming environment for all citizens and employees. It provides leverage for moving forward on anti-discrimination/ oppression initiatives .

- City of Calgary

Resources

Welcoming and Inclusive Communities Webpage

The Welcoming and Inclusive Communities Webpage is now online! You can access it through the AUMA main page (www.auma.ca) or by [clicking here](#).

We are excited to announce that we are in the process of developing WIC's own microsite! The Internet Working Group of the Provincial Network of Welcoming and Inclusive Communities is looking for your feedback on the current site to ensure that the new one meets your needs. Please [email](#) your comments to Marc Colbourne, Sr. Project Coordinator—Welcoming and Inclusive Communities.



Annotated Bibliography of Diversity Resources

The goal of the Human Rights Education and Multiculturalism (HREM) Fund is “full participation of all Albertans”. In the context of the fund, “full civic participation” means that all Albertans have the opportunity to be involved in and benefit from all aspects of society without encountering discrimination because of their race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, disability, age, ancestry, sexual orientation or the other characteristics protected in the Alberta Human Rights Act. Specifically, this means that Albertans have the opportunity to participate in the social, cultural, political, and economic life of the provinces without discrimination.

This annotated bibliography is part of the HREM Fund's commitment to assist organizations to build the skills and resources to implement effective diversity programs and to encourage collaboration with one another. Whenever possible this annotated bibliography provides links to online resources or project sponsors.

To access the Annotated Bibliography of Diversity Resources please [click here](#).

Hate Crimes: What You Should Know & What You Can Do!

By 2017, Alberta, like the rest of Canada, will see increasing numbers of allophones: persons whose mother tongue is neither English nor French. Albertans will witness more visible minorities in their communities and an increasing number of people with diverse religious backgrounds. Along with ethnoracial, language and religious diversity, Alberta sees an increasingly open and visible gender and sexual identity community, and persons with mental and/or physical disabilities becoming part of our community.

As Alberta's diversity increases, we hope this guide will empower Albertans with the tools to intervene should a hate crime or bias incident occur in their community. Most people are usually caught off guard when a hate/bias crime or incident occurs and are unprepared or fearful to intervene. Such incidents can make individuals and communities feel powerless or helpless. However, there is evidence that society can intervene to reduce or prevent hate induced crime or violence. This guide was inspired by active witnesses who continue to intervene on behalf of hate crime victims. Too often our silence signals our consent in acts of hate or discrimination. (*Excerpted from Introduction to the guide*).

To access the full document please [click here](#).

Human Rights in the Workplace Public Workshops

The Alberta Human Rights Commission is offering full-day and half-day workshops, intended for managers, supervisors, team leaders, human resource professionals, union leaders, and small business owners,. These workshops will provide participants with:

- an overview of Alberta's human rights legislation,
- information on preventing harassment in the workplace and developing effective harassment policies in the workplace, and
- information from the workshop module Duty to Accommodate.

For more information on these public workshops (including the schedule) or to inquire about custom workshop opportunities please [click here](#).



A Welcoming and Inclusive Community is one which is free from discrimination and where residents feel able to participate in all aspects of the social, cultural and economic life of the Province.

Share Your Municipality's Successes!

The Welcoming and Inclusive Communities Initiative is interesting in hearing about the successes you are having in your municipality!

Please email your best practice tips, lessons learned, action plans or innovative programming ideas to Marc Colbourne, Senior Project Coordinator—Welcoming and Inclusive Communities.

Your municipality will be featured in an upcoming issue of the Welcoming and Inclusive Communities Newsletter and on our new website.

Are You Tuned In?

EVENTS CALENDAR

The AUMA and other organizations host a number of conferences and events throughout the year that are of interest to small communities. To find out about events that are key to your community, click [here](#) to visit the AUMA web site calendar.

WEEKLY DIGEST

Each week the AUMA and AMSC release a Digest that covers information on advocacy efforts, AMSC services and other topics of interest to municipal politicians and administrators. Make sure that you are in the know by subscribing via the AUMA web site. [Click here to subscribe](#).

