

## Employment

### Our Commitment

- To provide total access for potential employees, so that there is equal opportunity for all, despite physical challenges that may exist.
- To work in partnership with community groups and organizations to remove barriers and help integrate job seekers of all ages and abilities into the labour market, to find and maintain meaningful employment.

### Our Starting Point

#### Overview

- To initiate plans to remove barriers that might hinder an otherwise capable employee to be an effective employee.

#### Achievements

- To list barriers that have been successfully overcome
- Accessible building space for meetings
- Documents provided in various formats (large font, etc.) upon request

#### Barriers

- Add aids to allow those with disabilities to be able to overcome obstacles.

##### (MoB)

- some non-accessible workspaces for staff?

##### (General, not specific to MoDB staffing)

- Person's with disabilities, and of various age groups still face discrimination by employers, perceived notion that they cannot perform the duties of the job or will be an increased liability.
- Employers feel workplace accommodations would be costly, are unaware that most are not as costly as they would imagine (or have no cost at all), and unaware that funding may exist to help cover a portion or all of these costs
- Information is not always shared / available between various groups who can help aid job seekers find employment (Department of Community Services, TCRCE, NSCC, NS Works/ Southwest Employment Services, Municipal Units, Employers). Many community members are unaware of organizations that can assist them to find and maintain employment, also unaware of potential funding they may qualify for.

- Many job postings are now online (creating online profile to apply, complete assessments, etc.) – this isn't accessible for everyone who may not have the technology or knowledge required to apply for jobs online

### **Policies**

- To set down the policies so that there is a clear definition that can be followed.

### **Actions**

- List the actions taken that promote equal accessibility for all.
- Promote all municipal jobs in a variety of formats (online, printed, radio?, etc.)
- Discuss accommodations to all applicants in case they may be required (having a standard question in the interview process about being an equally inclusive employer, and asking if they have any accommodation needs may make applicants feel more comfortable disclosing their disability, rather than waiting for them to initiate the conversation about their disability / special accommodations required).
- Offer assistive technology/ accommodations to all employees if they feel this could help them be more successful at their jobs. Some current staff may have requirements not already disclosed for fear of judgement by co-workers or management.
- Promote accessibility and inclusion within the municipality (to staff, councillors and all community members). Including supporting persons with disabilities, older workers and other marginalized groups (African NS, Indigenous, Immigrants, etc.). Diversity and Inclusion training / events? Promote inclusiveness within the municipality which in turn may educate local employers on the value of this.

### **Top Priorities**

- These might include ensuring wheelchair accessible entrances, washrooms and corridors.
- Tactile signs or railings for those with visual difficulties.
- Update policies and procedures manual to include diversity and inclusion policy.
- Professional development for staff relating to D&I.
- Ensure all job ads indicate the municipality is an equal opportunity employer and that applicants are encouraged to specify in job ad if accommodations are required.

### **Other Priorities**

- Tools like computer aids, such as verbal command equipment.

- Work with other community groups to promote disability-related services throughout the community? (SASI, Department of Community Services, Nova Scotia Works?)
- Funding to hire persons with disabilities through various federal and provincial programs (example: local Nova Scotia Works office has an agreement with Service Canada to administer **Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities (OPPS) funding** – covering Shelburne, Yarmouth, Digby, Annapolis and Kings counties. This funding has various interventions including Self Employment benefits, Wage Subsidies and Skills for Employment (schooling) for PWD's / employers. The office also has access to **Direct Skills Link (DSL) funding** that provides funding for accommodations for persons with disabilities, experiential learning opportunities for PWD's and funding for employers to train PWD's. As well as access to other Employment Nova Scotia provincial programs not designated specifically for PWD's (START program, Job Creation Partnership, Skills Development, Self Employment). Non-financial support includes Job Coaching and employment maintenance supports, monitoring clients and employers and providing support when needed.
- Disability supports for post-secondary training - Disability-related supports available through Student Loans (Dept. of Education), **Skills Development Accessibility Supports** (for students receiving Skills Development funding to return to school) – these provide funding for disability services (example: tutoring and note taking) and disability-related equipment (specialized computer software, ergonomic products, etc). Assisting with training for PWD's will in turn lead to increased employment opportunities.