

# Creating an Equitable Museum: A Framework to Create a Safe, Respectful and Healthy Workplace

October 2020

---

## Purpose

This document provides us with a framework for rebuilding the foundations of our organization and creating a safe, respectful and healthy workplace. It was created with input from the Board of Trustees, staff, volunteers and advisors of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR). It was informed by consultation with these groups and with community partners, as well as the recommendations of an external reviewer.

**The fundamental purpose of this document** is to provide a clear focus that can guide us on the road ahead, with sights firmly set on the following desired outcomes:

1. Hearing and considering diverse perspectives;
2. Cultivating a deep understanding of human rights principles;
3. Respecting and valuing each other in our workplace;
4. Ensuring meaningful relationships with our community; and
5. Demonstrating respect for the lived experiences of others in how we care for and tell their stories.

## Background

In early June 2020, several former and current employees of the CMHR publicly shared their experiences with discrimination in the workplace. In response, the CMHR engaged an independent expert to conduct a review designed to assess the degree to which systemic racism and oppression was affecting the organization and its staff. The reviewer was asked to provide an immediate assessment on an interim basis, and to generate recommendations for remediation and further inquiry.

On July 31, 2020, the external reviewer's Phase One report, [\*Rebuilding the Foundation\*](#), was provided to CMHR's Board of Trustees. On August 5, it was shared with all CMHR staff and then made available to the public.

Since July 2020, we have met formally and informally with employees, contractors, volunteers, community organizations, leaders and advisors to discuss how we can better serve our staff and our community.

These consultations have been essential to developing this plan.

## The Path Forward

- **We acknowledge that systemic racism and discrimination exists in Canada and in our Museum.** Our path forward must therefore be directed to systemic solutions as opposed to quick fixes. It must identify the systems in our organization that have created the barriers and begin the work to dismantle them.
- **We acknowledge the courage of every individual who has taken a stand against discrimination in all forms** and the harm to our staff and the communities that support us. We will create a safe and healthy work environment where staff feel respected and empowered to call out discrimination.
- **We will refocus on the fundamental principle that every person is free and equal in dignity and in rights.** We will ensure that we view our relationships with each other and with our visitors and community through this lens. Our work will be ongoing and evolving. It cannot be viewed as a stand-alone project or initiative.

The Phase One report recommendations have provided us with a useful accountability framework, enhanced by discussions among staff and community. We will take an intersectional approach to systemic change to address racism and oppression, colonialism, sexism, heterosexism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, ableism and all other forms of discrimination.

- **We have identified key outcomes and strategies that will bring us together with a common purpose of creating a safe, respectful and healthy workplace.** Accountability targets and performance indicators will be developed using new and existing management-driven or staff-led processes or consultation with external experts as required. Our President and CEO will report directly on these targets and indicators to our Board of Trustees.
- **Our work to address systemic discrimination will be thoughtful, deliberate and transparent.**
- **We will be guided by our expectations of each other and our community.**

## **Our Approach**

The section below sets out five outcomes. They were formulated by identifying themes that emerged from the 44 recommendations of the [Phase One report](#), as well as discussions among staff, the Board and community members. Under each outcome is a list of broad strategies, which reflect the spirit and intention of each recommendation.

For ease of presentation, the outcomes and strategies have been organized into a table. However, that does not mean we will approach our work as a check list to complete. Rather, it should be viewed as an accountability framework that we have developed together.

Our next step will be to incorporate and integrate these strategies in our work. By doing so, we will build our capacity to identify and address all forms of systemic discrimination and oppression.

With a common vision of what we expect from each other, we will identify specific accountabilities and measurable goals. We recognize addressing systemic racism and other forms of oppression is ongoing work which will require our collective effort.

## **Outcomes, Strategies and Rebuilding the Foundations Report Recommendation**

### **Outcome 1: We hear and consider diverse perspectives**

#### **CMHR Strategies (Outcome 1):**

- Update Board governance structure, including standing and ad hoc committees, to ensure the Board's oversight covers a breadth of issues and reflects diverse voices.
- Strengthen Board operations and management reporting practices to improve oversight and accountability.
- Update the Board's skills, knowledge, and experience matrix to reflect the value of diverse lived experiences.
- Review Board policies to screen for bias and make changes as necessary.
- Develop new policies (or make revisions to existing policies) to demonstrate a forward-thinking commitment to diversity and inclusion.
- Create a program to recruit and develop staff from underrepresented groups, at all levels of the organization and review recruitment tools.

- Improve opportunities for community input in exhibition, program planning and online story development and review cycle.
- Establish recruitment practices that are accessible and promote equality of opportunity for all individuals.
- Evaluate retention rates and whether there is positive change in workplace culture.
- Assess job qualifications for all positions to distinguish between required and preferred qualifications and make changes as necessary.
- Collect and report demographic data on a regular basis.
- Create a comprehensive staffing plan that includes development and career pathways and identifies temporary, permanent, full-time and part-time needs in each area,
- Establish criteria to determine appropriateness of hiring on a term basis.

#### **Rebuild the Foundations Report Recommendation (Outcome 1):**

4. Amend the terms of reference for the Diversity and Inclusion Committee to require not fewer than one Black person, one Indigenous person (and ideally representatives from First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples) and one person who identifies as LGBTQ2+ at all times, in addition to members of additional equity groups.
5. Review all board policies to screen for bias, and to ensure that board policies promote and support equity.
7. Set goals for the CEO to promote a culture of equity, inclusion and accountability within the Museum.
12. Prioritize recruitment of BIPOC and LGBTQ2+ executives and managers.
15. Move immediately to anonymizing resumes/ applications in assessment process.
16. Recognize in assessment criteria that persons from diverse backgrounds bring different experiences and knowledge that are assets to the Museum.
17. Permit scoring on equivalent experience for certain requirements to recognize transferable skills.
18. Screen mandatory requirements for all positions and assessment criteria for implicit bias.
19. Terminate use of full-time and part-time contracts with assigned hours for all new hires (and replace with offers of permanent employment with a six-month probationary period).
20. Prioritize racial equity when using an external recruitment agency.
21. Review all applications when using an external recruitment agency.

**22.** Ensure all hiring committees have at least one BIPOC member, whenever possible

**23.** Analyze employment practices to identify further issues to be remediated

**24.** Evaluate all positions with regard to fluency requirements for both official languages

## **Outcome 2: We have a deep understanding of human rights principles**

### **CMHR Strategies (Outcome 2):**

- Create a comprehensive education program for the Board that includes self-directed, online, and in-person modules.
- Create a comprehensive education program for staff that includes self-directed, online, and in-person modules.
- Create opportunities for sharing and learning amongst staff about lived experiences of racism, homophobia, and all forms of discrimination.

### **Rebuild the Foundations Report Recommendation (Outcome 2):**

**6.** Engage the Board in mandatory, ongoing antiracist and anti oppression education, both by way of self-learning and through scheduled training sessions.

**13.** Allocate sufficient resources to enable a mandatory education training cycle for CEO and staff (to include anti-racism, unconscious bias, decolonization, sexual harassment, etc.).

## **Outcome 3: We respect and value each other in our workplace**

### **CMHR Strategies (Outcome 3):**

- Identify Board performance objectives for the CEO that include promoting a culture of anti-racism, equity, respect, inclusion, and accountability.
- Identify performance objectives for every member of the Executive team that promote strong internal communications and create a culture of anti-racism, equity, respect, inclusion, and accountability.
- Set expectations for all staff regarding identifying and responding to discrimination and harassment, in the workplace.
- Review and restructure organizational design and related accountabilities to promote anti-racism, equity, respect, inclusion and accountability in all dealings.
- Ensure that key staff, including at the executive level, have explicit responsibilities related to addressing diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

- Create a staff advisory committee reporting directly to the CEO.
- Set clear expectations for all staff regarding promotion of anti-racism and anti-oppression in the workplace.
- Review complaint mechanisms to identify behaviours that involve discrimination, harassment, oppression, and disrespect and ensure all staff are familiar with it.
- Consider and discuss with the union any impact related to workplace changes derived from the Phase One report.
- Review all visitor-facing resources (including publications, signage, name tags, website, digital and print communications) to ensure they are accessible and inclusive, and respect gender diversity.
- Ensure all processes to collect, store and share personal information are accessible and that they respect gender diversity.
- Designate spaces and resources, including spiritual care, to support staff who educate or engage with the public.
- Set expectations for the public around respect for our staff and the stories we tell.

### **Rebuild the Foundations Report Recommendation (Outcome 3):**

- 10.** Include a performance objective for every executive team member that requires commitment to and modeling of anti-racism, equity, and accountability.
- 11.** Create a Chief Equity Officer and anti-racism practice lead with sufficient budget and staffing to carry duties related to leading the organization to be anti-racism and equitable.
- 14.** Ensure policies and practices conform with terms of collective agreement.
- 25.** Ensure pronouns in all internal and external documents are pluralized and non-binary.
- 26.** Provide visitors with location of women's, men's, and universal washrooms on arrival (and ensure appropriate signage).
- 27.** Adopt the practice of listing preferred pronouns in all correspondence.
- 28.** Consult with front-facing staff about including preferred pronouns on name tags.
- 29.** Review all communications (digital and print) to identify and remove gender binaries.
- 35.** Designate a place for staff and contractors to smudge, pray meditate, converse, or debrief about difficult situations.
- 36.** Require human resources staff to undertake further training (and regular training) on investigating harassment complaints.
- 37.** Train all staff in the area of unconscious bias in harassment investigations.

38. Clarify current practice of requiring all staff to report sexual harassment to human resources.
39. Review Respectful Workplace Policy to explicitly clarify harassment complaint process.
40. Produce a Visitor's Code of Conduct, together with supporting materials and signage.
41. Further explore strategies to create additional emotional safety for staff interacting with the public (including doing VIP, donor, and stakeholder tours).
43. Further explore barriers to employment for persons with disabilities.
44. Further explore extent to which sexism may operate within the Museum.

#### **Outcome 4: We have meaningful relationships with our community**

##### **CMHR Strategies (Outcome 4):**

- Reach out to existing community partners to share information and seek input on how CMHR can better serve our community.
- Reach out to community groups to develop new relationships and seek input on how CMHR can better serve our community.
- Ensure former employees have a means of providing input on how CMHR can address issues of discrimination and harassment in the workplace.
- Establish a contact management system to enable cross-departmental relationship development.
- Communicate our actions to create a more respectful, inclusive and accountable workplace, to the public with a focus on rebuilding trust and relationships.
- Set expectations for partners and others we engage with around their business practices to eliminate all forms of discrimination.

##### **Rebuild the Foundations Report Recommendation (Outcome 4):**

8. Require the CEO to engage in meaningful community relations with Black, Indigenous and LGBTQ2+ communities, and to ensure meaningful community relations with transgender/gender diverse and Two-Spirit communities in particular.
9. Ensure stakeholder relations continue to include Indigenous communities and that relationships with Black, Indigenous and LGBTQ2+ communities are developed (in particular trans/gender diverse and 2S individuals).

**42.** Issue a meaningful apology to Black and Indigenous people which is action-based and further explore avenues for reconciliation, including remediation of financial harm in demonstrable cases.

**Outcome 5: We demonstrate our respect for the lived experiences of others in how we care for and tell their stories**

**CMHR Strategies (Outcome 5):**

- Review collection processes to ensure we decolonize how we acquire and care for artifacts, images and oral histories.
- Review all current exhibits and digital presence to identify areas where stories of people from Indigenous, Black, LGBTQ2+, and disability communities have not been adequately included, and make changes as necessary.
- Develop new content to reflect Canada’s history of oppressing Black Canadians and the associated advocacy and struggles of this community for justice.
- Review tour and program delivery model to ensure it serves to effectively educate the public, and make changes as necessary.
- Review tour and program content for integrity and to ensure it effectively educates the public, and make changes as necessary.

**Rebuild the Foundations Report Recommendation (Outcome 5):**

- 30.** Review Indigenous peoples’ content, Black Canadian content and LGBTQ2+ content (with particular attention to 2S voices).
- 31.** Adopt a general approach with regard to Black Canadian content that makes clear Canada’s history in the oppression of Black Canadians from slavery to the present.
- 32.** Ensure tours and programs with primarily Indigenous content are delivered only by Indigenous people (including the Kairos blanket exercise).
- 33.** Examine the physical environment in which the Mikinak-Keya tour is delivered to ensure it is delivered in accordance with the teachings of the Elders Circle Seven.
- 34.** Develop a tour for Black Canadian history within 12 months, which includes meaningful community consultation.