



IDEA AT MODL

(Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility)

2024-2028 Strategic Plan

Land Acknowledgement¹

We acknowledge that we are located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people, who, in 1725 first signed the Treaties of Peace and Friendship with the British Crown. Those treaties did not deal with the surrender of lands and resources, but instead recognized Mi'kmaq title and negotiated a path toward an ongoing relationship between nations. We acknowledge we carry out our daily work in Mi'kma'ki.

We convey our respect to all indigenous peoples living in this region, to the knowledge keepers, and to their brave and resilient leaders, past and present.

At the Municipality of the District Lunenburg (MODL), we recognize that the work towards creating a fairer and more just workplace for more people, and the efforts we make to recognize and ameliorate the conditions that perpetuate injustices among us, must begin by also recognizing the injustice that lies at the base of the place we live and work. And then, together, we move towards a more just world for all of us.

Introduction

MODL is committed to making our community more inclusive, diverse, equitable and accessible. **IDEA at MODL** reflects the commitment to advance inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility of equity-deserving groups. The plan incorporates the principles of the **Accessibility for Nova Scotians Act, the Dismantling Racism and Hate Act, Count Us In: Nova Scotia's Action Plan in Response to the International Decade for People of African Descent and the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action**.

Goals

The **IDEA at MODL** Plan aims to advance an environment with a fundamental shared commitment to respectful engagement and human dignity. This strategic plan seeks to establish and affirm an inclusive, diverse, equitable and accessible workplace culture, from the grassroots to the senior-most levels. It sets out strategic directions and senior-level accountabilities intended to empower employees and departmental units to engage and assist in the advancing of IDEA at all levels.

It includes a set of proposed structures and approaches with explicitly desired outcomes that will support efforts across our community as we seek to become more inclusive, diverse, equitable and accessible. However, this is not a top-down plan. Every employee has a role to

¹ A territorial or land acknowledgement involves making a statement recognizing the traditional territory of the Indigenous people(s) who called the land home before the arrival of settlers, and in many cases still do call it home. Indigenous peoples have been acknowledging the land at the start of gatherings, ceremonies, and events for time immemorial.

play in achieving our collective goals. We must take deliberate action informed by promising practice and institutional data. Working together, we can ensure IDEA thrives in our workplace and enriches the lives of all.

Timeline

IDEA at MODL intends to generate lasting transformation for employees and residents. To this end, the Plan uses a phased approach to set the groundwork for change. It adopts a continuous improvement approach – building on successes and drawing on lessons from less successful initiatives.

Year One: Foundation Building

The first phase of the Plan lays the foundation for IDEA. The foundational step includes:

- assigning a staff member with an add on responsibility for IDEA at MODL
- putting personnel policies in place,
- developing accountability and governance models,
- making connections and,
- collecting data.

The first phase involves planning and allocating resources for future IDEA investments and ongoing expenditures of new programs and initiatives. The outcome for this phase is an increased awareness in the workplace and promotion of the benefits and values of IDEA.

Year Two and Three: Investment and Implementation

The second phase prioritizes the investment and implementation of the Plan. This is the phase where the planned programs and activities are carried out (listed in the **Action Plan**).

Year Four and Five: Monitoring, Evaluating, Adapting

The Plan's final phase involves evaluating and improving the IDEA policies, procedures, and initiatives.

We will build upon successes and improve areas where we fell short of reaching our goals. We will also evaluate social changes and opportunities for new approaches to the Plan.

Vision

MODL is committed to cultivating a culture that values, supports, and promotes equity, human rights, respect, and shared accountability. Our workplace encourages and supports individual and collaborative efforts to identify and address inequities. We welcome and enable contributions of all voices as we engage with diverse ideas, knowledge, and perspectives to pursue inclusive service delivery.

Mission

MODL will work to achieve an inclusive, diverse, equitable, and accessible place to live and work. We are committed to achieving equitable access and opportunities in employment, retention, and advancement; and to a working environment free from discrimination, bullying, and harassment.

We envision—and will cultivate—a community that recognizes equity and diversity as fundamental to achieving inclusive excellence in service and community engagement. We acknowledge that this commitment requires identifying and addressing obstacles, barriers, and biases that limit equitable and accessible opportunities. We will intentionally pursue and implement system-wide equity and access initiatives and embed diversity and inclusion in all MODL structures, programs, policies, and practices. Determined to influence those formal and informal structures and mechanisms that limit access and equity, we will use principles of fairness and evidence-based policies and practices to support decision-making; collect and analyze disaggregated data; establish equity goals and benchmarks; and develop and implement policies.

Recognizing that achieving IDEA goals requires responsible and accountable leadership at all levels, we will regularly evaluate and report on progress towards achieving inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility.

Principles

Diversity: We commit to increasing diversity, expressed in myriad forms, including race and ethnicity, gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, language, culture, national origin, religious commitments, age, or (dis)ability status.

Equity: We commit to working actively acknowledging the systemic power and privilege and distribution of resources to enhance access and inclusive outcomes for equity-deserving groups. We will create spaces that value, celebrate, amplify our diversity. We are committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons.

Inclusion: We commit to pursuing deliberate efforts to ensure that our workplace embraces difference, and that every individual feels a sense of belonging. By building a critical mass of diverse groups in our workplace and creating a vibrant climate of inclusiveness, we can more effectively leverage the resources of diversity to advance our collective capabilities.

Accessibility: We commit to removing barriers to full and equitable access to participation in work and community life. We recognize that accessibility involves removing all obstacles and addressing social and attitudinal barriers to inclusion.

Human Rights: We are committed to promoting the dignity of all persons and taking focussed actions to prevent discrimination and hate for equity-deserving groups.

Continuous Improvement and Evaluation: We are committed to centering IDEA in all aspects of our work at MODL. We acknowledge that IDEA requires ongoing effort, reflection, and adaptation. We commit to engagement with the MODL community to ensure that our actions are meaningful in meeting our IDEA vision and goals.

IDEA at MODL Action Plan

This Action Plan is a comprehensive approach to IDEA at MODL. It includes five core categories: IDEA centered Employment practices, Leadership and Accountability, Community and Culture, Service Delivery, and Learning and Development.

We identified dimensions of IDEA under each of the broad categories and have developed activities, initiatives, and timelines to achieve long-term goals.

1. IDEA Employment

The goal for employment at MODL is to maintain equitable and inclusive recruitment and retention practices, advancement, and compensation practices which value diverse perspectives. It also cements the commitment for leaders at MODL to model and promote IDEA. We have considered dimensions of recruitment, candidate selection, onboarding and orientation, assessment and advancement, personnel review committee plan and workplace policies.

1.1 IDEA Personnel

- 1.1.1 MODL will hire a .2 FTE IDEA Coordinator, responsible for overseeing the implementation of the plan, advise leadership, and plan champions. This will be an add-on responsibility for a current MODL employee.
- 1.1.2 Enrol MODL staff member responsible for IDEA in EDI Certificate at Dalhousie University.

1.2 Workplace Census

- 1.2.1 Research best practices and respectful terminology (Employment Equity Act) to create baseline workplace census.
- 1.2.2 MODL will regularly administer workplace census.
- 1.2.3 MODL will use the results of the census to create a responsive recruitment plan to attract employees from equity-deserving groups.

1.3 Recruitment

- 1.3.1 Review job descriptions to identify on the job training versus skills the candidates must already possess.
- 1.3.2 Develop employment equity statement and include on all job postings. Encourage applicants to self-identify and provide designated groups first consideration for roles.
- 1.3.3 Develop list of community partners that can assist in recruiting from designated groups.
- 1.3.4 Share all new job postings with community partners from equity-deserving communities. Provide partners with information to assist candidates to successfully apply and demonstrate key competencies.
- 1.3.5 Identify new markets to advertise employment at MODL.

1.4 Candidate Selection

- 1.4.1 Develop standard interview questions and consistent scoring to ensure applicants are measured based on the same criteria. Circulate interview questions prior to enable candidates prepare answers.

1.5 Onboarding and Orientation

- 1.5.1 Continue to engage in social onboarding (e.g., assign a buddy outside training and management staff, welcome from management and staff).
- 1.5.2 Continue to schedule new employee orientations to assist employees in completing tax and benefits documentation, provide overview of corporate policies and introduce departmental leads and management team.

1.6 Employee Assessment and Advancement

- 1.6.1 Ensure employees are aware of the skills that will be measured, the performance standard and enable self-measurement opportunities.
- 1.6.2 Review career pathways to advancement at MODL to identify and remove identity related barriers.
- 1.6.3 Explore ways to prioritize advancement to equity-deserving candidates in middle and upper management.
- 1.6.4 Ensure external recruitment of senior leadership positions prioritize finding candidates from equity-deserving groups.

1.7 Social Equity Policy Review

- 1.7.1 Develop Social Equity Policy Review framework which considers who is impacted by each policy and potential risks to inequitable application.
- 1.7.2 Prioritize policy review according to their impact on IDEA at MODL. Develop a schedule for review and amendments to policies, and schedule for routine reviews of policies.
- 1.7.3 Based on results of review, internal IDEA committee will recommend amendments to and introduction of IDEA personnel policies.

2 Leadership and Accountability

Transparency and accountability are important levers to drive IDEA. Accountability towards IDEA ensures ownership and defines answerability, liability, and reporting. MODL will develop monitoring systems to hold leadership accountable for meeting IDEA commitments.

Inclusive leadership and accountability are crucial to achieving the IDEA goals and targets. This section focuses on three critical dimensions of this category: leadership commitment and business case, consensus building, committees, and reporting structure.

2.1 Leadership Commitment and Business Case

- 2.1.1 Leadership will draft a statement of commitment to achieving the goals set forth in IDEA at MODL.
- 2.1.2 Leaders will demonstrate their commitment to IDEA by sponsoring initiatives, participating in events, inviting IDEA conversations, and articulating how they are advancing IDEA at the departmental level with accountabilities with the Champion of IDEA at MODL.
- 2.1.3 Leaders and decision makers will include IDEA targets in their departmental business plans and projections through the Annual Budget document.

2.2 Consensus Building

- 2.2.1 Develop internal and external communications plan restating commitment and encourage employees and residents to participate in achieving IDEA goals.
- 2.2.2 Establish a variety of methods to collect disaggregated data of the MODL staff complement and external community. Disaggregated data is information that has been broken down by detailed sub-categories, for example by marginalised group, gender, region or level of education.
- 2.2.3 Use results from data collection to address the concerns and issues identified. Plans may include education and awareness campaigns, communications plan that addresses and discredits common myths about IDEA and creating welcoming communities.

2.3 Committees and Reporting Structure

- 2.3.1 Ensure recruitment plan for Accessibility Committee (NS Accessibility Legislation requirement) is intersectional to attract representations from diverse equity-deserving communities.
- 2.3.2 Establish internal IDEA committee to collaboratively identify steps towards creating an inclusive and welcoming MODL.
- 2.3.3 Departmental managers will provide regular updates to IDEA initiatives and targets. Leadership performance evaluations include metrics of IDEA.

3 Community and Culture

We aim to embed IDEA within MODL policies, practices, and formal and informal gatherings. MODL will systemically involve community involvement in decision-making and prioritize initiatives that promote IDEA and sustainability.

3.1 IDEA Branding

- 3.1.1 Identify successful IDEA brand campaigns, consult with graphic designers, and gather community feedback that highlights key components of IDEA.

- 3.1.2 Create an accessible design that highlights aspirational elements of IDEA in MODL (e.g., eye catching logo, easy to read promotion materials, fact sheets).
- 3.1.3 Ensure that IDEA logo and "more information" links are included in all communications and publications, featuring IDEA logo and information on promotional material including tourism guides.

3.2 Community Outreach and Partner Engagement

- 3.2.1 Create more opportunities for solutions-based community gatherings with question-based agendas (e.g., ask residents, “What can we do to improve housing equity in MODL?”)
- 3.2.2 Identify community leaders within equity-deserving communities and plan opportunities for consultation/engagement (e.g., a series of townhalls, round tables and one on one meetings) to seek feedback and build consensus for MODL IDEA initiatives.
- 3.2.3 Create awareness of IDEA at Council and invite presentations from equity-deserving groups and organizations. Reserve time on agenda for IDEA-specific presentations.
- 3.2.4 Raise Mi’kmaq, African Nova Scotia, Rainbow, and Trans Flags. Ensure diverse and respectful representation in décor, statues, and tributaries, etc.

3.3 IDEA Workplace Culture and Employee Engagement

- 3.3.1 Continue to provide regular opportunities to enable employees to interact socially (e.g., monthly lunch or potluck, games and sports, group wellness activities).
- 3.3.2 Co-create annual calendar of cultural observances/days of significance and recognize holidays or significant dates through a variety of ways (e.g., host celebrations to commemorate holidays and significant dates and serve culturally appropriate foods sourced from local vendors).
- 3.3.3 Develop a policy for Land Acknowledgement, Equitable and Accessible Meeting Practices, IDEA sourced refreshments and gifts.

3.4 Truth and Reconciliation

- 3.4.1 Plan to implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s Calls to Action with focus on Professional Development and Training for Public Servants.

4 Service Delivery

MODL aims to create IDEA policies and practices to equitably serve an increasingly diverse community.

4.1 Policies and Procedures

- 4.1.1 MODL will become a signatory in the Recreation Nova Scotia Anti-Racism Charter.

- 4.1.2 Create outcomes-based decision making/risk assessment model when developing services and initiatives (e.g., ask “what are the possible implications for the populations served?”).
- 4.1.3 Contact customers/residents/organizations that have identified poor service delivery to understand what went wrong and how can we do better.
- 4.1.4 Update the Customer Complaints Handling Policy 092 to include citizens rights to be treated fairly, free from discrimination and to produce equitable outcomes. This document will outline expectations for citizens to refrain from abusive or offensive behaviours, and potential consequences from violations. It should allow customers to report incidents of discrimination, bias, or unequal outcomes. Develop process to address incident (e.g., complainant directed approach), examine what conditions needed to prevent similar incidents (e.g., education, policy changes).

4.2 Accessibility

- 4.2.1 Invest in initiatives that promote equitable access to working and living at MODL. Make accessibility a standing agenda item for Senior Management Team meetings.

4.3 Safer Spaces

- 4.3.1 MODL will create guidelines for MODL staff posting on public forums.
- 4.3.2 Review signage, online information, physical spaces, for ease of understanding, variety of formats, use of images and symbols, ensure language is not out-dated or offensive.

5 Learning and Development

MODL will provide ongoing learning and development resources to employees and prioritize ongoing collective awareness and growth on IDEA related topics. MODL is committed to provide opportunities for employees to learn and grow together.

5.1 Onboarding Education

- 5.1.1 All employees are provided with information about IDEA policies and goals and are required to routinely review and acknowledge they have reviewed and understand the policies.
- 5.1.2 Employees are routinely provided with engaging education to describe key IDEA concepts and expectations for inclusive behaviours in the workplace.

5.2 Employee Development

- 5.2.1 Research educational suppliers, internal resources, speakers, workshops, seminars, and the resources needed to acquire/develop learning tools.

- 5.2.2 Job-relevant learnings (managers, customer service); mandatory education, incentivized opportunities to participate in external IDEA education. Employee training and education review schedule to ensure training consistent with best practices.
- 5.2.3 Develop framework for managers and employees to identify learning resources that will improve their IDEA awareness and skills. Create policy to ensure employees have paid time to attend self-identified and performance related educational programs.

Summary

We recognize that making MODL a more inclusive, diverse, equitable, and inclusive community will require participation and engagement from leaders, employees, residents and local organizations and businesses. We would like to thank the significant contribution of employees and residents in creating this plan and their IDEA efforts in everyday life. Although we acknowledge there is much left to be done, we are excited to begin the journey towards **IDEA at MODL**, together.