



Kentville

Equity and Belonging Plan
2025

Overview

The Town of Kentville's Equity and Belonging Plan is one step toward addressing discrimination and hate within the community and municipal organizational structure. This plan highlights Kentville's previous equity initiatives as well as outlines the staff's approach to the future development of an Equity Framework and Action Plan.

Background

The Nova Scotia Dismantling Racism and Hate Act (the Act) was passed on April 1, 2022. The Act was the first of its kind in Canada and signified the provincial government's commitment to addressing systemic hate, inequity, and racism in government policies and programs. Municipalities and villages are the first public sector bodies prescribed under the Dismantling Racism and Hate Act, requiring them to have plans to address systemic hate, inequity and racism. Since the announcement of provincial commitment, the Town of Kentville has been involved in the work of equity and belonging in various ways. In 2022, the Town of Kentville was one of the first signatories of the Recreation Nova Scotia Anti-Racism Charter, which was created as a resource to name and address the harm and exclusion caused by racism in communities.

Furthermore, the Town of Kentville has taken steps towards decolonization by enacting initiatives such as the Names Committee, which resulted in the renaming of Cornwallis St. to Bridge St. as a step toward reconciliation. In 2023, the Kentville Inclusion and Access Advisory Committee of Council also approved the creation of the Diversity and Belonging Task Team (DBTT) as a sub-committee, made up of community members who represent the voices of equity owed communities, with the initial mandate to inform the municipality with first voice and cultural representation. Though steps have been taken, there is more work to be done.

In 2023, town staff developed an Anti-Racism Policy, and the Task Team provided first-voice and lived expertise feedback. As a result of conversations with the Task Team, the Town was advised to first focus on creating a framework from which the anti-racism policy can be generated. Town staff utilized that feedback to develop the proposed direction of the Town of Kentville Equity and Belonging Plan to meet the provincial Equity and Anti-Racism Plan mandate. With the development of the provincial mandate for Equity and Anti-Racism Plans, the Town of Kentville can take the next step in solidifying a commitment to fostering an equitable and inclusive community.

This document is the Town of Kentville Equity and Belonging Plan, which will guide the development of a future Equity Framework and Equity Action Plan for the Town.



Equity and Belonging Plan

Next Steps

As a result of intentional conversation with the Diversity and Belonging Task Team, now known as the Equity and Belonging Committee, and community partners combined with the provincial mandate to have an Anti-Racism plan in place for April 2025, the Town of Kentville is implementing an Equity and Belonging Plan that includes the development of a Equity Framework to inform the approach to guide and inform the Town of Kentville's goals and objectives to enhance community equity, anti-racism and belonging.

The diagram below outlines the milestones of the Equity and Belonging Plan. Over the next three years, the Town staff, in collaboration with the Equity and Belonging Committee and community, will develop the Equity Framework to inform the Equity Action Plan. Actions will then be implemented as part of the ongoing evaluation of the Plan and changes within the Town of Kentville organizational structure as a result of a commitment to Anti-Racism and Anti-Hate.

Equity and Belonging Plan Milestones



Town of Kentville

Previous actions to work toward Equity and Belonging

To inform the Equity and Belonging Plan, staff compiled a list of some previous actions toward equity taken by Town staff in partnership with community. This is not a full comprehensive list, but it highlights a variety of examples of actions or initiatives the town has implemented within the organization or in partnership with community.

In each case, staff have learned valuable insights on how to keep improving programs and services to increasing equity and belonging. Additionally, previous actions will inform the next steps regarding developing an Equity Framework and Action Plan for the Town of Kentville.

List of Previous Steps Toward Equity and belonging

2015

- The Kentville Business Community, in partnership with community members, launch the Multi-Cultural festival. The Festival has continued into 2025

2020

- Kentville Parks and Recreation staff worked to implement create ways to access recreation at home during the COVID19 pandemic, through gear loan delivering and diverse at-home program kits.

2021

- The Kentville police hire a Community Engagement Officer and non-uniform Community Crisis Navigator to enhance relationships with diverse community groups.
- The Kentville Business Community and the Town launch the Kentville Mural Festival to enhance the Downtown and celebrate diverse stories and perspectives through visual art

2022

- The Town of Kentville is one of the first organizations to sign the Recreation Nova Scotia Anti-Racism Charter

2023

- Recreation staff host the first annual Community Partner Gathering to discussion new recreation priorities and partnership opportunities.
- Town staff begin working with the local African Nova Scotian community to create Project Ubuntu, an initiative aimed at fostering cultural recognition and community development.
- Town staff and community representatives approach the Kings County Museum to establish an African Nova Scotian History Exhibition.
- Town staff and the Inclusion and Access Advisory Committee works with the Indigenous community to rename Cornwallis Street to Bridge Street, recognizing the importance of decolonization and reconciliation.
- Town staff and the Inclusion and Access Advisory Committee host a celebration to recognize the street renaming in downtown Kentville.
- As a result of signing the Recreation Nova Scotia Anti-Racism Charter, an Anti-Racism Policy is created, reinforcing Kentville’s commitment to racial equity and inclusion.

2024

- Town staff supports a community member in establishing Elevate Cultural Enrichment Society, an organization focused on African Nova Scotian cultural empowerment.
- The Town of Kentville partners with the African Nova Scotian community to plan and host a Valley African Nova Scotian re-engagement event for summer 2025.
- The African Heritage Walk is created on the Harvest Moon Trail in Kentville, celebrating local African Nova Scotian history. This work is now celebrated on the Town’s website, as an on-going acknowledgement of community history - [Kentville African Heritage](#)
- As a sub-committee of the Inclusion and Access Advisory Committee, the Town of Kentville’s Diversity & Belonging Task Team is officially formed.
- Town staff collaborate with the Valley Afro-Caribbean community to host Afro-Caribbean Day in the Park, scheduled for 2025 in Kentville.
- Town staff work with the DBTT to host Municipal Mosaic, a community event to promote cultural diversity and representation within municipal politics.
- The DBTT hosts Community Connects, a public event designed to encourage dialogue and belonging with candidates running in the 2024 municipal election and members of equity-deserving community groups.
- The Town Partners with the Annapolis Valley Filipino Community to co-host the Filipino Thanksgiving Fiesta Cultural day.

The imagine below is a graphic that was created at the 2024 Community Partner Gathering where equity and belonging was discussed.



Next Steps Towards Equity and Belonging

The Town of Kentville is committed to a intentional approach to Equity and Belonging. Throughout the process, Town staff in collaboration with Town Council, will be initiating ongoing improvements to programs, processes and services. Town staff will do so in the following ways:



Engage with equity-deserving community members

- Council approved to transition the Diversity and Belonging Task Team to a the Equity and Belonging Committee of Council
- Work with the Equity and Belonging Committee to inform and develop the Framework.
- Incorporate the Anti-Racism Charter resources into Framework Development.
- Review the Equity Framework, once developed, with Council, community and community partners.



Celebrate the voices and histories of equity-deserving community members

- Utilize the Equity Framework Development process to continue learning about the diverse of history within the community and amply those stories.
- Continue to identify opportunities to centre community diversity in recreational programs and offerings.



Implement initiatives for the Town, to identify and eradicate racism and hate within the organizational structure and operations

- By completing an Equity Self-Assessment in partnership with the Association of Municipal Administrators.
- By collaborating with the Kentville Police Service on Equity Framework Development, community engagement and implementation
- By completing community engagement to highlight opportunities to improve equity, access and inclusion throughout Town of Kentville services, resources, leadership and programming.

Building toward Equity and Belonging is an on-going process.

The Town of Kentville is looking forward to continuing the work with the organization at large as well as with community and Equity and Belonging Committee. Throughout the process, Town staff in collaboration with Town Council, will be initiating ongoing improvements to programs, processes and services.

In addition, this Plan will be under annual evaluation as staff work with the Equity and Belonging Committee to create the Equity and Belonging Framework and Equity Action Plan.

For more information:

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