



## ADRIO Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy Framework

### Background

In November 2020, the following statement was approved by the ADRIO Board and sent to our members:

*In Canada, systemic racism against Indigenous people, Black people and people of colour, continues to cause devastating consequences for individuals, families and communities. The ADR Institute of Ontario unequivocally condemns racism, in all its forms, as it is unjust and wrong.*

*Systemic racism occurs when institutions or systems create or maintain racial inequity, often as a result of hidden institutional biases in policies, practices and procedures that privilege some groups and disadvantage others.<sup>1</sup>*

*As an alternative dispute resolution organization, ADRIO must confront the inequities of systemic racism and we commit to:*

- *support Members impacted by systemic racism;*
- *work towards breaking down barriers faced by Members from racialized communities in their ADR practices; and*
- *work towards diversity and inclusion within ADRIO and the broader ADR sector.*

*As a membership association for dispute resolution professionals, ADRIO plays a key role in enhancing the quality and effectiveness of ADR practices, through providing opportunities for continuous professional development. Part of this development must include ways to understand and address systems that work to exclude, marginalize and oppress.*

*We will engage Members in dialogues and actions towards the above commitments and report back regularly on progress of ADRIO's work.*

ADRIO's commitment to confront the inequities of systemic racism forms the foundation of this policy framework for diversity, equity and inclusion. This policy framework is meant to be a living document that will be enhanced over time, based on experiences built and lessons learned from its implementation.

### Vision

ADRIO's vision for diversity, equity and inclusion is built upon the following understanding<sup>2</sup>:

- **Diversity** within an organization is the presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes. The dimensions of diversity include, but are not limited to, ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, age, language, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, all visible and invisible disabilities and socio-economic status.
- **Equity** is the fair, inclusive and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences.
- **Inclusion** is the situation in which individuals are fully involved in the economic, social, cultural and political dimensions of their societies. It requires an atmosphere where everyone feels welcome, respected, able to

<sup>1</sup> Government of Ontario. (2017). *Anti-Black Racism Strategy*. Retrieved from Government of Ontario website: [https://files.ontario.ca/ar-2002\\_anti-black\\_racism\\_strategy\\_en.pdf](https://files.ontario.ca/ar-2002_anti-black_racism_strategy_en.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> The stated understanding of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is inspired by the policy framework of the Ontario Trillium Foundation - <https://otf.ca/framework-diversity-equity-and-inclusion>



participate fully and valued. An inclusive organization ensures the right conditions are in place for diverse individuals to contribute their ideas, experiences and talents to the fullest.

Starting with our own organization, ADRIO envisions the ADR sector in Ontario to be always welcoming of new talents and insights and to consistently foster a culture of inclusion for all.

## **Commitment**

ADRIO commits to living the values of diversity, equity and inclusion and ensuring our organization reflects the diversity of those we serve. We also commit to evolving our organization's understanding of diversity, equity and inclusion, as we learn from implementing and enhancing this policy framework.

ADRIO celebrates the unique differences, diverse backgrounds and experiences of all our members, employees, board directors and volunteers. We commit to supporting and promoting diversity, equity and inclusion in the governance and operations of our organization and in our service to the ADRIO membership.

## **Elements for Success**

Commitment from the Board and Senior Leadership – Directors on the ADRIO Board and senior leadership on staff must be visible champions for diversity both inside and outside of our organization. We will put our collaborative efforts towards ensuring that ADRIO offers a diverse and inclusive environment and identifying opportunities and supporting leaders in their roles as champions.

Involvement of Employees and Volunteers – Both individually and collectively, ADRIO's employees and volunteers have a role and voice in supporting and contributing towards diversity, equity and inclusion.

Engagement of Members – ADRIO will foster a deeper understanding of diversity, equity and inclusion among our members. We will ensure our member recruitment, engagement and retention practices are based on the values of diversity, equity and inclusion.

Accountability and Reporting – We will establish clear accountabilities for our diversity and inclusion initiatives and commitments. The Executive Director is accountable to the Board for the implementation of this Diversity, Equity and Inclusion policy framework. Accountability and reporting include:

- communicating on ADRIO's policies and strategies related to diversity, equity and inclusion;
- advancing initiatives necessary to meet our objectives;
- discussing learning opportunities for members, employees, board directors and volunteers;
- monitoring key activities and tracking performance;
- engaging employees in ongoing conversations and learning how we achieve our equity and inclusion vision;
- reporting annually on our progress in implementing this policy framework to the Board and membership.

Tracking Progress – We will use self-identification surveys to track diversity among members, employees, board directors and volunteers. This information helps identify gaps and opportunities for improvement.

Communications – Clear, consistent and open communication is essential for a healthy and productive organizational culture. ADRIO will communicate regularly on the progress of our diversity, equity and inclusion efforts and share learning, experiences and effective practices.



## Action Plan

Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reach out to and build relationships with all communities, including those not traditionally involved with ADRIO and engage thought leaders from those communities when developing strategies and making decisions.</li> <li>- Ensure our services meet the diverse needs of the ADR sector across the province.</li> <li>- Integrate equity principles into our outreach, policies, practices, partnerships and services.</li> <li>- Make ADRIO communications vehicles accessible and reflective of Ontario's diversity.</li> <li>- Ensure employees and volunteers are adequately trained and knowledgeable about equity principles and Ontario's diversity.</li> <li>- Review ADRIO's practices in the recruitment, support and development of members to ensure we:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o foster a welcoming, barrier-free environment</li> <li>o recruit members from diverse communities</li> <li>o enable diversity and inclusion learning</li> <li>o foster inclusive leadership</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Engage employees in fostering a welcoming, barrier-free environment and in strengthening our culture of inclusion.</li> <li>- Recruit and develop people from diverse communities.</li> <li>- Enhance practices to identify talents and accelerate professional development.</li> <li>- Enable and promote work practices that foster diversity of thought and build diverse teams.</li> <li>- Strengthen ADRIO's work culture through the application of equity and diversity principles in internal communications and employees' contribution to decision-making.</li> <li>- Increase our knowledge of effective equity and diversity practices to enhance individual and organizational performance.</li> <li>- Address any potential barriers to career advancement.</li> <li>- Enable diversity and inclusion learning, including addressing unconscious bias.</li> <li>- Foster inclusive leadership.</li> </ul>
Board Directors and Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Build the required capacity among board directors to ensure alignment of all ADRIO policies with the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion policy framework.</li> <li>- Support board directors and volunteers in understanding the importance of and reflecting the diversity of our communities and ensure fairness and inclusivity are a part of everything we do in delivering on our mission.</li> <li>- Recruit board directors and volunteers that reflect the diverse communities of the province and address gaps.</li> <li>- Increase board directors' and volunteers' knowledge and understanding of effective equity and inclusion practices.</li> </ul>