



# DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION POLICY

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A diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace enables employees to have their unique perspective heard and valued. It encourages every employee to be their authentic self with opportunity to thrive—harnessing their full potential. Diversity enriches our organization and makes us more innovative, adaptable, and responsive to the needs of our clients and our community.

The following are EastPoint's commitments and actions we take in support of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. We recognize DEI takes ongoing efforts and forms part of our strategic planning.

## Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination

We are committed to providing equal employment opportunities to all individuals, in accordance with the Canadian Human Rights Act, the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act, and applicable federal and provincial human rights legislation. Regardless of race, colour, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, or any other characteristic protected by provincial or Canadian law, we foster a workplace culture that is inclusive, diverse, and free from discrimination. We embrace the principles of equity and pledge to provide reasonable accommodations to employees, ensuring everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed in our organization.

## Talent Development, Recruitment, and Hiring

We actively seek diverse candidates, ensure fair and inclusive hiring processes, and promote diversity at all levels of the organization. We support partnerships with organizations that focus on talent pipelines to further increase the diversity of available resources to hire in the marketplace.

- ☑ **Talent Development:** We have played an active and long-standing role in working closely with non-profit, post-secondary, and professional associations to build connections and engage people at an early phase of their design careers. Staff are encouraged to participate in industry-related committees with mandates to increase diversity. Examples include staff leadership involvement with the Program Advisory Committee at Nova Scotia Community College, and the Women in Engineering Committee and the Networking and Mentorship Subcommittee at Engineers Nova Scotia. We also provide monetary support to programs as part of our community investment budget.
- ☑ **Recruitment and Hiring:** To attract a diverse pool of applicants, we ask for specific qualifications only where necessary (e.g., required professional accreditations to perform work), and consider alternative or non-traditional skills and experience where feasible. We develop job descriptions with clear, gender-neutral language. When practical, we remove personal information (e.g., names, addresses) from resumes to reduce unconscious bias during initial screenings. Interviews include predetermined questions to minimize bias and subjectivity.

## Inclusive Workplace

We foster a culture of respect, inclusion, and open communication where all employees can voice their opinions and ideas without fear of discrimination or retaliation.

- ✓ **Code of Conduct:** As part of our hiring contract, employees are required to agree to a code of conduct that promotes respectful and inclusive behavior (*EastPoint Employee Handbook*). The handbook outlines a processes for resolving conflicts and addressing discrimination or harassment issues in a fair and confidential manner.
- ✓ **Employee Feedback:** EastPoint has processes in place to provide structured feedback in addition to day-to-day informal feedback. All employees complete annual performance reviews, generating constructive two-way dialogue to focus on development goals, accomplishments, and challenges. We also hire an independent firm to advise and administer anonymous employee surveys. This encourages employee to provide honest, candid feedback about their experiences, concerns, and suggestions without fear of reprisal, and provides a more comprehensive view of the workplace from a broad diversity of perspectives. We use these tools for trend analysis of staff engagement and to identify areas requiring further efforts from our leadership.

## Training and Education

We support ongoing DEI education to all employees to promote awareness, understanding, and skills necessary for fostering an inclusive workplace.

- ✓ **DEIB Sessions:** We organize DEI and mental health awareness discussions and presentations for all employees. Subjects range from topics including unconscious bias and Truth and Reconciliation. These sessions have been a mixture of outside speakers and in-house-led sessions depending on the subject matter.
- ✓ **Resource Library:** EastPoint subscribes to Inkblot Therapy as a support service to all staff. The Canadian mental health technology company provides virtual mental health and therapy services, and includes an internal resource library with materials on DEI topics.

## Promotion and Advancement

We evaluate and promote employees based on their skills, qualifications, and contributions, without discrimination, and support their career development.

- ✓ **Annual Performance Reviews:** EastPoint completes annual performance reviews for all staff members. These reviews serve as a crucial platform for discussing career advancement opportunities, setting clear criteria, and mitigating bias in the promotion process. This program is managed by our Director of People and Culture, ensuring that every permanent full-time staff member undergoes the review process. In addition to an employee's immediate supervisor, the Department Manager and one of the Company Directors are required to participate in each review. This multi-layered approach supports a diverse and well-informed perspective, reducing the risk of bias in decision-making. Our promotion review process provides a platform for employees to understand the specific criteria for career progression within the organization. It enables open and constructive conversations, ensuring that employees are aware of what they need to achieve to advance in their careers.
- ✓ **Pay Equity:** During the hiring process, we thoroughly review and assess the compensation packages we offer to new employees. This initial step ensures that we start with a strong foundation of pay equity. To ensure that our compensation remains fair and equitable, we conduct comprehensive reviews of our pay structures twice a year. These reviews encompass all positions within the organization, with a focus on identifying and addressing any potential pay disparities based on job roles, experience, and performance. Pay equity is a fundamental value that underlines our commitment to fairness and equality within the organization.



## Reporting and Accountability

As part of our hiring practices, we ask employees to self-identify with any of the four designated groups as defined by the Employment Equity Act: women, visible minorities, Aboriginal peoples, or persons with disabilities. We track this information along with metrics such as age when hired. This self-identification process allows us to monitor and assess our progress towards achieving further employment equity.

We encourage all employees to report DEI-related concerns or incidents. Should incidents occur, we will take these reports seriously and with appropriate action to address the cause of the incident. Leadership will be held accountable for progress. We will regularly assess the effectiveness of our DEI efforts and make necessary adjustments to continuously improve our workplace environment.

