



Canada Council
for the Arts

Conseil des arts
du Canada

2015 Narrative Report on Employment Equity

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Overview

The Canada Council for the Arts is the national public agency that supports the arts in Canada. The corporate mission of the Council as a Crown corporation created by Act of Parliament in 1957 is “to foster and promote the study and enjoyment of, and the production of works in, the arts.” The Council promotes and funds artistic excellence so that Canadians can take an active part in cultural life. Thanks to a wide range of grants and services to Canadian professional artists and arts organizations, the Council ensures the excellence, diversity and vitality of an arts sector that encourages the participation of Canadians, enriches their communities and gives artists and arts organizations access to international markets.

Through its activities in communications, research and arts promotion, the Council furthers public interest in, and appreciation for, the arts. Under the aegis of the Canada Council, the Canadian Commission for UNESCO promotes UNESCO’s values and programs in order to contribute to a peaceful, equitable and sustainable future. The Canada Council’s Art Bank administers programs for the rental of contemporary art works and helps to advance public engagement with the arts.

The Canada Council is governed by an 11-member Board of Directors. The Governor-in-Council nominates the members of the board as well as the Council’s Director and Chief Executive Officer. The Council also collaborates closely with federal, provincial, territorial and municipal organizations and ministries operating in artistic and cultural fields. As a Crown corporation, the Council reports to Parliament through the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages. The Council receives its funding from the government with income from endowments, gifts and legacies supplementing its annual budget. On 31 December 2015, the total number of employees at its Ottawa office was 219.

“Enhance the Council’s leadership role in promoting equity as a critical priority in fulfilling Canada’s artistic aspirations.”

Strategic Plan 2011-2016, Canada Council for the Arts

The Council believes in the essential importance and value of equity in the broadest sense. Equity was thus one of the five priorities in its *Strategic Plan for 2011-2016*. It is supported by two special offices with a mandate to promote the contribution of designated groups: the Aboriginal Arts Office and the Equity Office. With its *Strategic Plan for 2016-2021*, the Council foresees maintaining this priority and taking an integrated approach to all its activities.

Given that it firmly believes promoting equity in Canada starts with inclusion in its own personnel, the Council has adopted several measures to put employment equity to work. This commitment to an inclusive, equitable and diverse workforce allows all the employees to maximize their productivity and contribution, thus fostering excellence in every aspect of the Council's activities.

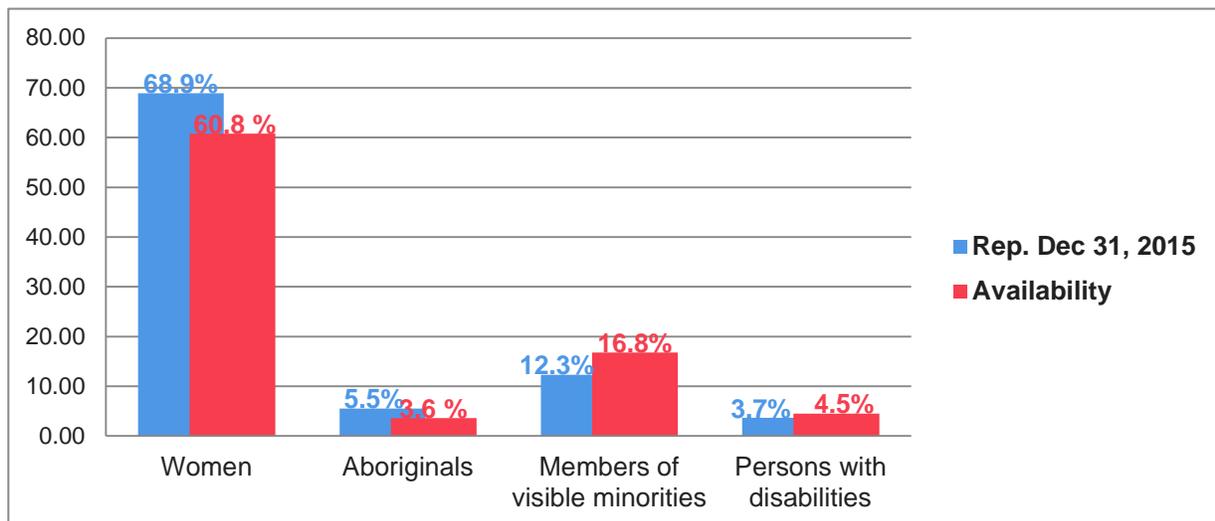
In 2015, several important announcements were made concerning changes in the Council's operations, following which the Council embarked on the most sweeping transformation of its mode of operation in more than 55 years of existence. A completely revised funding model will become operational in 2017. In order to take a strategic approach to establishing its priorities, the Council decided to postpone the development of a new *Action Plan on Diversity and Equity* until 2016 in order to include it in the new *Strategic Plan for 2016-2021*. It will then have performed the analysis of the staffing it needs to implement the New Funding Model and be in a position to formulate a plan that will take into account the new needs in terms of resources and new operational realities. Nonetheless, this has not prevented the Council from pursuing various measures indicated in the previous plan, as well as advancing initiatives that favour inclusion.

This report describes the progress that has been made regarding employment equity from 1 January to 31 December 2015.

Statistical Developments

Data regarding the composition of internal staff is based on information submitted by employees using the self-identification form. All new employees are provided with information that enhances awareness of the idea of employment equity and diversity. We also ask them to complete a confidential self-identification form to be included with the documents relating to their entry into employment. The employees of course have the option of completing a new form whenever they wish, whether their situation has changed or not. More than 95% of employees have completed this form; we therefore believe that the numbers fairly represent Council staff members as they wish to be identified for the purposes of this report.

Summary Profile as of December 31, 2015



On reading the summary table, we can see a high level of representation of women and Aboriginals among the Council's personnel. Nonetheless, the group of visible minorities shows a gap, with 12.3% of the employees relative to an estimated availability of 16.8%. The same is true for the group of persons with disabilities, which shows 3.7% compared with an estimated availability of 4.5%.

The Council maintains its commitment to staffing that is representative of the Canadian population, and will continue to make efforts to achieve this goal.

Recruitment and Promotion

The statistical data for regular staff show four (4) recruitments as well as four (4) promotions. While the designated group of women was highly represented in these moves, the other groups were unfortunately not represented. Nonetheless, the retention of positions seems relatively positive, since of the 17 employees who left the Council in 2015, only one self-identified as belonging to a designated group other than that of women.

It should be noted that movements of regular staff members were less frequent in 2015, owing to a decision by the Executive Management Committee to fill the majority of positions on a temporary rather than a permanent basis for a fixed, limited period, to allow for flexibility that would accommodate the changes to the Council's organizational structure. Once assignment of positions within the new structure has been confirmed, we should see greater mobility among the regular staff.

Measures Taken in 2015 and Results

The Council's abiding intention is to promote a workplace in which inclusion and diversity are reinforced. It therefore implemented various measures to achieve employment equity in the course of the past year.

Addressing Respect and Harassment in the Workplace

Following a survey regarding employee mobility in March 2014, we identified concerns about workplace discrimination and harassment. In response to these worrisome discoveries, we proceeded to update the *Policy on Harassment Prevention and Resolution in the Workplace* in December 2014. The policy's aim is to clearly define the resolution process for situations tainted by discrimination, harassment or disrespectful behaviour.

This policy was accompanied by a campaign of leading by example. That is why all members of the Leadership Forum – senior staff members, managers and strategic advisors – took part in sensitivity training sessions in fall 2015 and pledged to serve as models, in word and gesture, of behaviours that promote a culture in which civility and mutual respect take precedence in interpersonal interactions. This process is intended to prevent situations in which harassment and discrimination might be manifested.

Optimizing Accessibility to Our Premises

Being aware of the limitations on certain employees, but also in a long-term perspective of facilitating and encouraging the hiring of individuals with functional limitations, the Council recruited a specialist to study its premises and recommend opportunities for improvement. A number of adjustments had been made over the previous year and in 2015, the list of recommendations was completely addressed. In the end, renovations were made to improve the ease of use and access to the employees' lounge; the lounge's kitchen was also remodelled for the benefit of both staff and visitors.

We believe that the changes made will favour the inclusion of individuals with functional limitations in our workplace.

Recruitment

The Council places a high value on the diversity of its staff and is committed to creating a workplace that is inclusive and accessible to all employees and applicants for positions. All job postings issued in 2015 included a note encouraging applicants to make a voluntary declaration and offering appropriate measures of accommodation.

Our principal medium for job postings is our website. In 2015, improvements were made to the site to make information searches easier. Particular attention was given to the accessibility of our webpages, which will be of benefit to job seekers. It has thus become easier to look up our job postings.

In addition to posting announcements on our site, the federal government's job site (jobs.gc.ca) and our social media sites (Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn), we send our postings to various organizations serving the designated groups.

Employee Assistance Program

This year, we engaged a new service provider for the Employee Assistance Program. The short-term, confidential counselling service is open for all our employees to consult regarding any personal problems that might compromise their performance on the job. Thanks to a larger number of counsellors available, the new service provider can give us better access at numerous service delivery points in the region and the country. Our employees can therefore take advantage of the service more easily. The counsellors are widely recognized, and their higher qualifications enable them to provide assistance that is suited to the different kinds of needs they might encounter. The service is also accessible, as needed, via a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD).

Consultations

Committee for Equity Initiatives and Practices

The members of this multidisciplinary committee include employees at all levels of the Council, including the Human Resources counsellor and senior staff members; it also represents the four groups affected by employment equity. The committee's mandate consists in tracking the progress made regarding equity by providing oversight and follow-up. The committee also supervises and communicates with a designated senior staff member for equity in order to ensure that the value of equity is integrated into all aspects of work at the Council. The committee met once in 2015 to take stock of actions carried out and raise concerns related to the coming changes at the Council. A new committee for employment equity and diversity management will be established for 2016. This committee's mandate will include developing an *Action Plan on Employment Equity and Diversity Management*.

“Equi-Tea”

Since the mandate of the Committee for Equity Initiatives and Practices was coming to an end, a series of brown-bag lunch chats called “Equi-Tea” was initiated to address equity-related issues until another formal committee could be struck. During these congenial meetings, the participants, who are employees at all levels, both unionized and unrepresented, exchanged views on issues relating to inclusion and diversity over a cup of tea. These interesting exchanges clarified concerns and reinforced the Council's vision for promoting equity.

Outlook for 2016

The advent of major changes to the Council's funding model coincides with the adoption of a new Strategic Plan and the development of a new Plan for Employment Equity and Diversity Management. The Council is aware that gaps within its staff exist in terms of representation of certain groups relative to their current availability in the workforce. In order to identify specific measures to promote a progression that is at least proportional to availability in our recruitment areas, the Action Plan will address the shortfall in the representation of persons with disabilities (particularly in the professional category of Program Officer), and a similar shortfall in the representation of visible minorities (particularly in the category of administrative and office personnel).

The Council intends to be proactive in ensuring that all artists have equal access to its programs and that all Canadians feel that they are represented in our country's artistic landscape. These basic values will take root when connected to a workforce that is proud to be diversified, equitable and inclusive.