

EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Policy

Family Service Toronto (FST) re-affirms its commitment to building a city which is equitable and inclusive. This means that in all aspects of its operations and at all levels of the organization, FST works to ensure that there is no discrimination on the basis of, but not limited to, ethnicity, language, race, age, ability, sex, sexual or gender identity, sexual orientation, family status, income, immigrant or refugee status¹, nationality, place of birth, generational status², political or religious affiliation.

FST further recognizes that the increasing diversity among residents in Toronto has added cultural, social and economic benefits to our community. It is also sensitive to the fact that oppressed groups experience marginalization and encounter barriers to full access and participation in the community. FST seeks to increase access and participation, especially for those who are marginalized, disadvantaged or oppressed.

FST encourages individuals to participate fully and to have complete access to its services, employment, governance structures³ and volunteer opportunities. It shall make every effort to see that its structure, policies and systems reflect all aspects of the total community and to promote equal access to all. To this end, FST strives to ensure that:

- Discriminatory or oppressive behaviours are not tolerated;
- Individuals who engage with FST for service are valued participants who have opportunities to shape and evaluate our programs;
- Community programs and services are developed and delivered to give priority to individuals in marginalized communities and are sensitive to the needs of diverse groups;
- Programs are delivered in such a way that systemic barriers to full participation and access are eliminated and so that positive relations and attitudinal change towards marginalized groups are promoted;
- Services are provided with sensitivity to the influence of power and privilege in all relationships, including service relationships, and are delivered in keeping with anti-oppression principles;
- Communication materials present a positive and balanced portrayal of people's diverse experiences.

This policy is intended to act as a positive force for equity and the elimination of oppression.

¹ FST recognizes that barriers to employment and services may exist due to immigration or refugee status based on legislation and/or contractual funding obligations.

² Generational status is intended to protect individuals with Canadian citizenship who are first, second or third generation immigrants from discrimination.

³ FST governance structures include: the board of directors, committees of the board and any board working groups that may be convened.

Scope

This policy applies to all FST clients, employees, volunteers and students.

Procedures

1. FST has and will continue to work to embed the principles detailed in this policy within all relevant FST policies and procedures to ensure that equity and inclusion guides FST in all of its endeavours.

2. Individuals who believe that they have experienced harassment or discrimination in an FST context are encouraged to use the following policies and procedures to have their concerns or complaints addressed:
 - Clients and community members may refer to the *Service User and Community Member Complaints* policy
 - Employees, volunteers and students may refer to the *Harassment and Discrimination* policy
 - Unionized employees may elect to use the *Harassment/Discrimination* provisions of the *Collective Agreement*

3. FST staff, volunteers and students may also refer to the *Discriminatory Requests for Service* policy for guidance in addressing clients or community members who make such requests.