



**Equity Framework and Action Plan**  
February 2024

This policy document aims to articulate and codify Castlegar Sculpturewalk's key equity principles and practices.

The concepts laid out in the Equity Framework have been informed by Sculpturewalk's daily experience of providing programming for the community of Castlegar and the region. The Framework also draws upon the research and equity policies of the BC Arts Council, the Toronto Arts Council, and the Canada Council for the Arts, and incorporates some shared language and principles. Finally, the Framework document integrates current best practices observed in various Canadian non-profit institutions and sectors (including health, social services and education).

Since Castlegar Sculpturewalk views equity as a continuous process, the Equity Framework should be perceived as a "living" document that will be regularly updated in response to the shifting needs of the organization and to the latest research and proven methodologies in equity implementation.

For more information on Castlegar Sculpturewalk's Equity Framework and its implementation, please contact the Executive Director.

## **Introduction**

Sculpturewalk is an outdoor exhibit of original sculptures by local and international artists, located on a walking tour in downtown Castlegar. Viewers are encouraged to vote for their favourite sculpture via ballot, and the winner of The People's Choice Award is purchased for permanent display in the City. Sculpturewalk attracts world-class sculptural talent to our program which has resulted in Castlegar being trademarked the "Sculpture Capital of Canada".

Castlegar is situated in a rural, predominantly Caucasian community, and as a result, cultural understanding and competencies are key to ensuring all members of the artistic community feel valued and respected in our spaces. Sculpturewalk is proud to support vibrancy in Castlegar through the diversity of the artists, arts communities and audiences that it serves.

Diversity in Castlegar also comes in many forms. Women, people with disabilities, people living with mental illness, d/Deaf people, immigrants and refugees, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons, youth, people who experience socio-economic disadvantage, and people of different faiths all contribute to the city's make-up.

Castlegar Sculpturewalk recognizes that "Canadian" art is shaped by the culture of its Indigenous peoples, by the diasporic communities that have settled in Canada from around the world, and by the diverse geographic and identity-based communities that constitute its population. Sculpturewalk values and recognizes the unique contributions of all members of Castlegar's arts community both to the cultural life of the city and to its own operations, aspirations and vision.

Castlegar Sculpturewalk further recognizes that supporting a plurality of perspectives, voices, artistic practices, cultural expressions and aesthetics is critical to the growth, sustainability and evolution of the Castlegar arts community and is committed to ensuring that all qualified artists and arts organizations are provided fair and equitable access to its programs, services and decision-making processes. Equity and inclusion are guiding principles and core values of the Castlegar Sculpturewalk.

## **What is Equity?**

Equity is both a principle and process that promotes equality of opportunity and fair conditions for all persons to fully participate in society.[1] Equity recognizes the inherent dignity and equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family[2] but acknowledges that due to historical and ongoing oppression not all persons experience equal access to opportunities and benefits. Equity acknowledges the unique needs and experiences of individuals and groups in society and promotes active measures to eliminate barriers and level the playing field so that all persons can thrive and take full advantage of opportunities and benefits. As a process, equity may require treating individuals or groups differently in order to achieve fairness.

2] Excerpted from the Canada Council for the Arts' equity definition.

[3] Universal Declaration of Human Rights

## **Equity Guiding Principles**

Castlegar Sculpturewalk recognizes the inherent dignity and the equal rights of all human beings, as outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Castlegar Sculpturewalk is committed to ensuring that all individuals who apply to, work with or otherwise interact with Sculpturewalk are treated with fairness and respect and accorded equal opportunity.

In accordance with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Canadian Human Rights Act, and the BC Human Rights Code, Castlegar Sculpturewalk actively opposes any discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion or creed, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, family status, physical or mental health disability, linguistic background, social class, receipt of public assistance, and conviction of an offense for which a pardon has been granted.

In keeping with the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), Sculpturewalk recognizes the inherent rights of Indigenous peoples to self-determination and to “freely pursue their own economic, social and cultural development” without discrimination. Sculpturewalk also acknowledges the rights of Indigenous peoples to own and control their own

heritage and artistic products and actively challenges and resists cultural misappropriation. Castlegar Sculpturewalk is further committed to incorporating the principles and recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action into its programs and operations and to actively promoting reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

Castlegar Sculpturewalk is committed to eliminating any barriers that prevent a person with a disability from fully participating in its programs and operations because of his or her disability, including physical, architectural, attitudinal, technological, information or communications barriers and/or discriminatory policies or practices. Castlegar Sculpturewalk is further committed to actively challenging the stigma faced by people living with mental illness or disability.

In keeping with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Castlegar Sculpturewalk recognizes freedom of conscience and religion as a fundamental right, acknowledges and challenges religious discrimination in Canadian society—including Islamophobia and anti-Semitism—and encourages diversity of thought and belief in its programs and operations.

In accordance with the Employment Canada Act, Castlegar Sculpturewalk is committed to eliminating any barriers to employment at the organization that may be experienced by historically disadvantaged groups, including the four groups that have been formally designated as Employment Equity groups by the Federal government: women, people with disabilities, Aboriginal peoples, and members of visible minorities.

Castlegar Sculpturewalk acknowledges that while all qualified artists and arts organizations deserve equal access to its programs and services and to opportunities within the broader arts sector, certain groups in society have been historically disadvantaged as a result of systemic biases or other barriers related to race, culture, ethnicity, disability, geography, language, gender, sexuality or other personal and protected characteristics.

Castlegar Sculpturewalk supports and implements proactive policies and measures to ensure:

- equity of opportunity and equity of access to its programs, services, operations and decision-making processes;
- the removal of real or perceived barriers denying artists access to resources;
- And that Castlegar Sculpturewalk is fully inclusive and accessible to all qualified artists and arts professionals.

Castlegar Sculpturewalk is further committed to ensuring that:

- Castlegar Sculpturewalk's workforce and all of its decision-making bodies—including its Board of Directors, arts discipline committees and grant review panels—reflect the diversity of the arts labour force and the population of the City of Castlegar.
- Castlegar Sculpturewalk's employment and assessment processes are bias-free and safeguard that no person is denied employment or benefits for reasons unrelated to merit.
- Castlegar Sculpturewalk's application programs and processes, its services and its premises are accessible to all qualified Castlegar artists, including artists of colour, artists who are Deaf, have disabilities or are living with mental illness, Indigenous artists, artists who self-identify as 2SLGBTQIA+, newcomer and refugee artists, young and emerging artists.
- Castlegar Sculpturewalk's management, staff and board members are knowledgeable about equity and access policies, practices and legislation and implementing equity is viewed as both an individual and shared responsibility of all of Castlegar Sculpturewalk's personnel and volunteers.

Castlegar Sculpturewalk maintains a safe, equitable and anti-oppressive environment where:

- cultural difference is respected;
- each person feels empowered to contribute to decision-making and have their voices heard and input valued; and
- exclusion, marginalization, injustice, harassment, discrimination and violence are not tolerated.

### **Equity Priority Groups**

Castlegar Sculpturewalk acknowledges that there are a number of historically disadvantaged groups that confront barriers to full participation in Canadian society and the national arts sector. However, in order to address the most underserved communities and largest service gaps, Castlegar Sculpturewalk has identified specific equity-seeking groups that have experienced especially restricted access to funding, creation, production, and dissemination opportunities within the Canadian arts ecology. These communities have been designated as equity priority groups and specific equity measures have been adopted to ensure their full inclusion in Castlegar Sculpturewalk's programs and operations.

In naming its equity priority groups, Castlegar Sculpturewalk acknowledges that these communities are by no means mutually exclusive. Individuals may self-identify as belonging to more than one equity-seeking group. Castlegar Sculpturewalk also understands that the intersectional nature of social identities such as race, class and gender may result in individuals experiencing multiple, interconnected layers of oppression related to both visible (e.g. colour, physical disability, etc.) and invisible (e.g. sexuality, mental illness, etc.) difference. Individual members of equity-seeking groups may therefore experience varying degrees of disadvantage, discrimination, power or privilege, and may require different considerations or accommodations for equity to be achieved.

It should be noted that Castlegar Sculpturewalk strives to be responsive to the changing population of Castlegar and to the shifting needs of equity-seeking communities that face barriers or other forms of discrimination and disadvantage. As such, Castlegar Sculpturewalk will annually track its artist and participant demographics and may, from time to time, add or change its roster of designated equity priority groups in order to address identified funding gaps and ensure that its programs remain relevant and receptive to Castlegar's evolving arts sector.[1]

**Castlegar Sculpturewalk's current Equity Priority Groups are listed below in no particular order:**

- **Black**

Black refers to people of African descent across the diaspora including but not limited to African Canadian, Afro-Caribbean, Afro-Latinx, East African, West African, Southern and Central African, Afro-Arab, Afro-Indigenous, etc.

- **Persons of Colour**

Castlegar Sculpturewalk's definition of persons of colour includes individuals of African, Asian, Latin American, Middle Eastern and mixed racial descent[1] and corresponds with the Government of Canada's "visible minority" designation (e.g. persons other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour.).

*Note that Castlegar Sculpturewalk acknowledges that Persons of Colour is an umbrella term for a diverse spectrum of racialized peoples who have experienced vastly different historical disadvantages and barriers to participation in Canadian society and the arts sector, and recognizes its use as a term to build understanding and solidarity between people.*

- **Deaf Persons, Persons with Disabilities and Persons Living with Mental Illness**

Deaf persons include individuals who are culturally-Deaf, deaf, or have hearing loss, as well as those who identify as hard-of-hearing, oral-deaf, deaf-blind or late-deafened. Persons with disabilities and persons living with mental illness include individuals with physical, psychosocial or learning disabilities that may be long-term, temporary or fluctuating and may or may not be apparent.[2]

- **Indigenous**

Indigenous refers to Canadian Aboriginal people who self-define as First Nations (Status or Non-status), Métis or Inuit. Castlegar Sculpturewalk also acknowledges Indigenous people from all other regions of the world. Indigenous people are those who have a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies and consider themselves distinct from the dominant societies in which they live.

- **2SLGBTQIA+**

2SLGBTQIA+ refers to individuals who self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, queer, intersex, asexual, pansexual or two-spirited.

*Note that individuals who experience socio-economic disadvantage have not been identified as a distinct “equity priority group” as Castlegar Sculpturewalk does not collect information on its applicants’ personal income, expense levels or socio-economic status. However, Castlegar Sculpturewalk recognizes that poverty and class discrimination pose significant challenges to participation in the arts community.*

*Castlegar Sculpturewalk, therefore, endeavors to address socio-economic barriers and promote social equality through its broader equity initiatives.*

[1] Mixed racial descent refers to individuals who belong to more than one ethnic or racial group, including one of the aforementioned groups.

[2] Note that Castlegar Sculpturewalk subscribes to the social model of disability, which views disability as a consequence of environmental, social and attitudinal barriers that prevent people with disabilities from fully participating in society, as opposed to the medical model of disability that focuses on an individual person’s so-called physical or mental limitations. (Adapted from the Public Service Alliance of Canada’s definitions of models of disability.)

## **Equity Priority Policy**

Castlegar Sculpturewalk has adopted an Equity Priority Policy, which states that if there are multiple well-assessed applications of equal merit but insufficient funds in the budget to support all deserving candidates, projects proposed by artists that self-identify as belonging to one of Castlegar Sculpturewalk’s equity priority groups or that primarily involve or serve artists from these groups will be prioritized.



Individual applicants that self-identify on the Voluntary Self-Identification Question on our Application Form as belonging to one (or more) of Castlegar Sculpturewalk’s equity priority groups are automatically considered for this equity measure.

Note that when applying its Equity Priority Policy, Castlegar Sculpturewalk acknowledges intersectionality and the varying degree of equity-related challenges or barriers that individuals belonging to equity-seeking groups experience. Castlegar Sculpturewalk thus ensures that each application receives appropriate contextual consideration.

### **Representation and Peer Assessment**

Peer Assessment—which is predicated on the notion that artists and arts professionals are the most qualified individuals to assess, adjudicate and make recommendations on the work of other artists—is a fundamental principle of Castlegar Sculpturewalk.

Committee review panel members are selected to ensure balanced and equitable representation of artistic practices and specializations, as well as genders, generations, persons of colour, Indigenous people, Black people, persons who are Deaf or have disabilities and individuals who identify as 2SLGBTQIA+. The goal is to engage highly qualified assessors who collectively reflect the multiplicity of experiences, perspectives and communities that make up Castlegar’s diverse arts sector and population.

The Council has adopted the following equity measures to achieve equitable representation and reduce barriers to its peer assessment processes for all equity groups whenever possible:

- Castlegar Sculpturewalk aims to ensure that persons of colour, Black or Indigenous peoples are represented on its Artistic Merit jury and sculpture selection committee.

## **Implementation**

With the goal of furthering equity implementation at Castlegar Sculpturewalk, Sculpturewalk will review and update their Equity Action Plans outlining key equity goals and actions. These internal documents lay out realistic, achievable goals and related action items. Lines of accountability are noted. Castlegar Sculpturewalk's Equity Action Plans address various areas of the Sculpturewalk's operations, including application and adjudication processes, employment, governance, communications and outreach, and organizational culture.

In order to track its progress in realizing its equity goals and actions, Castlegar Sculpturewalk conducts an annual internal equity review to measure its accomplishments against its Equity Action Plan and identify ongoing challenges and opportunities.

## **Example Equity Action Plan**

We, the staff and leadership of Castlegar Sculpturewalk, are dedicating ourselves to creating paths that lead to a more inclusive and diverse institution. We must not only diversify our team, but also amplify the voices of Indigenous people, Black people, and people of color (IBPOC) and broaden the scope of thought and perspectives within our arts organization. Communities across the country continue to experience trauma and anguish as the nation confronts hundreds of years of sustained injustices due to systemic racism. We aspire to centre the voices of IBPOC communities because historically, they have been the most disenfranchised. We must reflect the plurality of our culture and our global audience.

The actions outlined in this plan cannot dismantle the structural inequities within our society, or undo the ways in which institutions like ours have played in benefiting from such inequalities. However, the plan can and will address steps we are committed to taking as an institution to become a more equitable place. The current moment demands that we reconsider the fundamental role that art organizations play within society at large: whom are these institutions for, what are they responsible for, and to whom should they be accountable? We are taking active steps toward antiracist work, which we embrace as colleagues and citizens in order to make sustainable change in our professional practices and public programs.

Becoming a more equitable organization will be an ongoing process. We will endeavor to work continuously to eliminate structural barriers to access and opportunity, and to embed equity in all we do. We stand behind this document as a collective vision for action. It will evolve and develop as we work toward accomplishing our goals together across every level of our organization. Our commitment to diversity, equity, access, and inclusion as an arts organization will remain unwavering throughout.

Based on the contents of this action plan, we as an organization commit to the following vision of success:

- An equitable and inclusive professional environment for all staff
- A welcoming experience for all attendees
- Actively diversifying our event by supporting current, emerging, and future professionals who are Black, Indigenous, and people of color
- Programs and partnerships that amplify diverse voices and create shared authority
- Support from the board of directors and senior leadership to realize these plans, including the necessary allocation of resources and prioritization of fundraising efforts
- Regular progress reports to the board and staff to ensure transparency, accountability, and collective feedback

In order to accomplish these goals, our plan enumerates actions and priorities that will be pursued in the following areas:

1. Staffing and Culture
2. Board Diversification and Governance
3. Exhibitions
4. Audience Engagement

## **IMPLEMENTATION:**

### Staffing and Culture:

Castlegar Sculpturewalk employees and contractors are the individuals whose daily actions guide and implement the overall program. As such, it is vital that, in partnership with the Board of Directors, they are educated and provided with resources on DEIA principles so that these can act as the foundation for all decisions related to the operations of Sculpturewalk.

Key Outcomes	Activity Commences
Refine recruitment and hiring practices to increase diversity of candidate pool for all vacant positions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Recruit 1st generation college students for CSJ positions/Internships</li> <li>● Review hiring procedures to ensure biases are removed</li> <li>● Promote job opportunities/artist applications with specific cultural groups in the community</li> </ul>	In Progress
Provide antiracism and cultural competency training for all staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Resource trainings through Resilience BC and other entities that provide accessible trainings</li> </ul>	In Progress
Review and strengthen policies and procedures for timely reporting and resolution of staff complaints (e.g., racism, bias, discrimination, retaliation, and safety) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Strengthen employee relations function in the Human Resources department</li> <li>● Develop new organizational structure and procedures to review grievances and complaints</li> <li>● Publicly share revised/new policies with all staff, contractors, and vendors</li> </ul>	In Progress

## **Board Diversification and Governance**

Board members steer Castlegar Sculpturewalk toward a sustainable future by adopting and practicing sound, ethical, and legal governance and financial management policies, as well as by making sure the organization has adequate resources to advance its mission.

There are many best practices that can help to diversify nonprofit boards. They tend to center around three main areas: identification, prospect development, and utilization. These approaches help define the strategy and framework for achieving board diversification and are included in the process map below. Overall, it is important to recognize that diversification of its board will demonstrate Castlegar Sculpturewalk’s commitment to IDEA and the items outlined in our action plan, and sets an example for the rest of the organization.

Key Outcome	Activity Commences
Endorse the DEAI Action Plan	In Progress
Launch DEAI Special Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Oversee and analyze progress of goals outlined in the organization’s DEAI Action Plan</li> <li>● Share semiannual report of activities with all staff</li> </ul>	In Progress
Launch subcommittee of Governance and Nominating Committee to focus on creating a more diverse and representative board <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Set goals for diversifying board composition</li> <li>● Reassess requirements for joining board</li> <li>● Announce appointments on an ongoing basis</li> </ul>	In Progress
Board to review hiring practices and develop appropriate reforms to ensure the recruiting, hiring, and retention of a more diverse team	In Progress
Establish a subcommittee to conduct a review of Sculpturewalk’s history <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Examine exhibition history over the past 13 years through the lens of racial equity and diversity and draw lessons to take forward</li> <li>● Present findings to board</li> </ul>	In Progress

## **Exhibitions**

Though Castlegar Sculpturewalk has intermittently endeavored to look beyond the work of white European and North American artists since its inception, we have not, until now, developed concerted, strategic efforts to expand the purview of Sculpturewalk’s interpretation and presentation of sculpture. These efforts seek to advance the exhibition of works by artists who are not white and will focus on ensuring that artists from non-Western regions, as well as Black and brown artists who have been traditionally underrepresented in our program will be seen. Sculpturewalk recognizes that more work needs to be done to balance our exhibition and given our history, we express our commitment to the ongoing diversification of our exhibition program.

Key Outcome:	Activity Commences:
Further diversify the exhibition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Source work by Black, Latinx, and Indigenous artists, especially including those of equity deserving ethnicities, gender identities, and sexualities</li> <li>● Identify list of artists, to be requested to apply for Sculpturewalk</li> </ul>	In progress
Consistently present a diverse exhibition and publications program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Study the last 13 years of exhibition history to determine patterns of representation</li> <li>● Make every effort to include representation of IBPOC artists, especially those of equity deserving ethnicities, gender identities, and sexualities, in each yearly calendar</li> <li>● Revise process for exhibition applications in order to ensure diversity in programming</li> </ul>	In progress

## Audience Engagement

With this DEAI plan, Castlegar Sculpturewalk will pursue two primary goals as they relate to audience engagement: 1) Look critically at the experience of participating in sculpturewalk and engaging with our content from the perspective of racial equity; and 2) Gather more and deeper data so we can track progress on diversifying our audience.

Key Outcome	Activity Commences
<p>Deepen engagement with diverse communities throughout Castlegar by building partnerships and developing outreach programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Secure funding to continue social practice initiative, focused on Castlegar based BIPOC artists and sustained community partnerships</li> <li>● Develop partnership with Selkirk College, offering free tours to students and launch student guide program</li> <li>● Ensure SD20 schools have the opportunity to participate in free tours in order to build relationships with students, parents, and teachers</li> <li>● Hire Cultural Support Workers in order to engage diverse audiences and provide new entry points to the event, as well as to ensure that appropriate protocols are abided by</li> </ul>	
<p>Prioritize seeking new funding to support DEAI initiatives and programs outlined in this plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Diversify membership base</li> </ul>	
<p>Commit to a participant experience that is welcoming to all</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Schedule ongoing training for staff on implicit bias, cultural competence, accessibility, de-escalation scenarios, and trauma-informed practice</li> <li>● Enhance surveys and analytics to develop more comprehensive data about Sculpturewalk participants</li> </ul>	