Access and Equity Policy

*Last updated April 2020*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Policy number | [insert number] | Version | [insert number] |
| Drafted by | [insert name] | Approved by Board on | [insert date] |
| Responsible person | [insert name] | Scheduled review date | [insert date] |

### Introduction

* 1. The Access and Equity Policy set out in this document is drawn up on the model of the Australian Government’s [Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society](http://www.immi.gov.au/multicultural/_inc/publications/charter/charter.htm). The Charter is the key document guiding the Australian Government’s Access and Equity strategy. It helps to ensure that government programs (and those programs funded by the government but delivered by contractors, including not-for-profits) meet the needs of our culturally and linguistically diverse society.

### Purpose

* 1. [Organisation] acknowledges that its legal and moral responsibilities cover the areas of:
* access in the provision of services offered by [Organisation]
* access in employment by [Organisation]
* access in the provision of information offered by [Organisation]
* access to any training and development offered by [Organisation]
* access to events hosted by [Organisation]
	1. The Charter integrates a set of service delivery principles concerning cultural diversity into the strategic planning, policy development, budget, and reporting processes of service delivery, irrespective of whether these services are provided by government agencies, community organisations, or commercial enterprises.

### Policy

* 1. Access

As a service provider, [Organisation] will make services available to everyone who is entitled to them, free of any form of discrimination on the basis of a person’s country of birth, language, culture, race or religion.

* 1. Equity

As a service provider, [Organisation] will develop and deliver services on the basis of fair treatment of all those clients who are eligible to receive them.

* 1. Communication

As a service provider, [Organisation] will use all necessary strategies to inform eligible clients of the services available, their entitlements, and how they can obtain them. Providers shall also consult with their clients regularly about the adequacy, design and standard of services.

* 1. Responsiveness

As a service provider, [Organisation] will be sensitive to the needs and requirements of clients from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and be responsive as far as practicable to the particular circumstances of individuals.

* 1. Effectiveness

As a service provider, [Organisation] will be focused on meeting the needs of clients from all backgrounds.

* 1. Efficiency

As a service provider, [Organisation] will optimise the use of available public resources through a user-responsive approach to service delivery that meets the needs of clients.

* 1. Accountability

As a service provider, [Organisation] will have a reporting mechanism in place which ensures it is accountable for implementing access and equity objectives for its clients.

## Access and Equity Procedures

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Procedure number | [insert number] | Version | [insert number] |
| Drafted by | [insert name] | Approved on | [insert date] |
| Authorised person | [insert name] | Scheduled review date | [insert date] |

### Responsibilities

* 1. It shall be the responsibility of the CEO to implement this policy and to report to the Board annually on its progress.

### Procedures

* 1. All [Organisation] staff shall, wherever feasible, have adequate support and training to provide services and information accessible to all people.
	2. [Organisation] will ensure its programs are designed and constructed to provide equal access for all users.
	3. [Organisation], in its role as an employer, will ensure all people have equal access to advertised positions, interviews, equipment, office accommodation, staff training and promotion.
	4. [Organisation] shall, wherever feasible, assess proposals for any new (or substantially revised) policies or programs for their direct impact on the lives of people from a range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds prior to any decision to pursue such proposals.
	5. Any new (or substantially revised) policies or programs that impact in different ways on the lives of people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds shall, wherever feasible, be developed by [Organisation] in consultation with people from those backgrounds.
	6. [Organisation] shall, wherever feasible, for any new (or substantially revised) policies or program initiatives have a communication strategy developed and sufficiently resourced to inform people from relevant cultural and linguistic backgrounds of these changes.
	7. [Organisation] shall provide resources so that publicly available and accessible information on its policies and programs is where necessary communicated appropriately to people from a range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and especially to those identified as having a high level of non-compliance.
	8. [Organisation] shall institute complaints mechanisms that enable people (regardless of cultural and linguistic backgrounds) to address issues and raise concerns about its performance.
	9. [Organisation] shall require that any agents, contractors, or partners of [Organisation] deliver outcomes consistent with this policy, and shall, in bidding for tenders or contracts, budget, where appropriate, for special provision for linguistic and cultural diversity.
	10. [Organisation] shall, where necessary and feasible, provide for the special needs of clients from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds by providing language assistance through the use of interpreters or facilitators.
	11. [Organisation] shall, where necessary and feasible, provide for the special needs of clients in remote areas through developing outreach and community liaison arrangements.
	12. [Organisation] shall consider cultural diversity issues in the design and delivery of any training programs it provides.
	13. [Organisation] staff shall, where necessary, receive ongoing cultural diversity training so that they develop knowledge and skills to work effectively from a cultural framework.
	14. [Organisation] shall, where necessary and feasible, provide information in languages other than English, and through print, electronic media, and disability-appropriate methods of communication.
	15. [Organisation] shall, where appropriate, consult with other providers and government agencies to ensure co-ordination of services appropriate to clients' needs.
	16. [Organisation] shall promote diversity in the membership of its boards, committees and working groups.
	17. [Organisation] shall keep in its client data collection record, where appropriate, such data as birthplace; whether a person's first language spoken was English; Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background; Australian South Sea Islander background; date of birth; year of arrival in Australia; birthplace of parents; sex; and religion (the collection of data will not always include all these items, as the relevance of these data items will vary depending on the service delivery context).
	18. [Organisation] shall protect the privacy of individual clients when collecting this data. Consideration will be given to:
* collecting only data essential to the particular service delivery or evaluation purpose;
* guaranteeing anonymity; and
* ensuring that all data collection proposals are non-intrusive.

### Related Documents

* [Affirmative Action Policy](https://www.ourcommunity.com.au/files/policybank/AffirmativeActionPolicy2015.doc)
* [Staff Recruitment Policy](https://www.ourcommunity.com.au/files/policybank/StaffRecruitmentPolicy2015.doc)
* Affirmative Action Practices
* Staff recruitment Practices

About this document

This policy sample has been developed by the [Institute of Community Directors Australia](https://www.communitydirectors.com.au?utm_campaign=policybank&utm_medium=doc&utm_source=website&utm_content=template) (ICDA) and is free for any not-for-profit organisation to download and use, so long as it is for a non-commercial purpose and that the organisation is not paying a consultant to carry out this work. [Click here](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/general/general_article.jsp?articleId=2153#16) for our full copyright guidelines.

### Important notes

* You can't (or shouldn't) rely on these sample policies and procedures alone. They’re a starting point, but you will have to adapt them to suit your own language and requirements.
* Most samples include both policies and procedures (the policies provide guidance on standards, while procedures give instructions on implementing standards). We recommend adopting policies at a board level, while procedures can be developed/signed off by the organisation's CEO.
* We use the term ‘board’ to cover boards, committees of management, or anybody that has final authority in your organisation. And the term ‘CEO’ extends to executive directors, or your chief administrator. You should change the terms in these policies to match those used in your organisation.

### Other policies

There are numerous policies available on the [Community Directors website](https://communitydirectors.com.au/tools-resources/policy-bank). You can hunt for what you need with our site search function.

### Make a deposit

If you have some great policies that your organisation thinks would be of use to other groups, email them to service@ourcommunity.com.au. We'll review them, amend them so that they're applicable to the greatest number of not-for-profits possible, push them into our format, and load them up.

### Join us!

ICDA is a best-practice governance network for the directors serving on Australia’s 600,000 not-for-profit boards, committees and councils, and the senior Workers who support them.

ICDA members get access to a range of educational, capacity building and networking opportunities that build knowledge, connections and credentials.

If you appreciated this free policy, we would appreciate your ongoing support by joining ICDA from only $65 p.a

### The benefits of membership

1. Receive ‘responsible person’ status – ICDA members are recognised by the ATO under ‘responsible person’ rules
2. Recognition – three membership post-nominal options, providing community and professional recognition for educated and engaged not-for-profit members
3. Capacity building publications – current trends, issues and emerging areas of risk via member-only newsletters governance help sheets
4. Policy alerts – receive notification when changes are made to governance, human resources, financial management, values and communications policies you’ve downloaded through the Policy Bank
5. Preferential member pricing – members receive discounts for the Festival of Community Directors events and online Compact Courses
6. Alumni events – access to deep connections and a vibrant network of believers and doers. There’s an online forum, as well as regular invitations to events like Communities in Control Conference
7. Access to forums, networks, information and opportunities – boost your confidence (and competence) and open career doors
8. Budget-friendly – for as little as $65 a year you get all the benefits outlined above and so much more.

### Legal advice at a pre-agreed price

Please note that this is a template policy for guidance only. For assistance in tailoring this policy to suit your organisation, or for legal advice at a pre-agreed price or training in this area, please do not hesitate to contact Our Community’s preferred legal supplier [Maddocks](https://maddocks.com.au).

E: NFPHelp@maddocks.com.au | W: <https://maddocks.com.au>