



# Town of Cochrane Policy

<b>Policy No.:</b>	1205-01
<b>Policy Title:</b>	Social Policy
<b>Approval Date:</b>	May 9, 2016
<b>Revision Date:</b>	
<b>Department:</b>	Community Services

## Policy Statement

The Town of Cochrane is a complete community that is inclusive and welcoming, striving to ensure that all residents have opportunities to fulfill their potential and healthy development through our thriving social, economic, and cultural life.

### Reason for Policy

- 1.1 The Social Policy signifies the Town's commitment to understanding how the municipality's practices and service delivery can systemically impact the well-being of its residents and acknowledges the intersecting factors of environment, social and economic practices required to develop a complete community with strong, healthy individuals and families.
- 1.2 Excellence of Municipal Service: Implementation of the Social Policy will support Town Administration to use best practices to reduce and prevent inequalities in our community by creating a person-centered system of high quality services and programming for all residents of Cochrane.
- 1.3 Participation, Safety & Social Inclusion: The Social Policy will help to advance Inclusion and Equity, reduce racism and discrimination, and promote a sense of cohesiveness and belonging. When people feel welcome and are involved in the community, safety and security are enhanced. The Policy will help to strengthen the trust, loyalty, and respect amongst municipal employees and residents by showing that Diversity is taken seriously, and there is a commitment to actions that improve Equity and Inclusion.
- 1.4 Innovative: Significant demographic changes and challenges to sustainability are emerging as a result of population growth, changing immigration patterns, and an aging baby boomer generation. These challenges are placing pressure on the cost,

Diversity, and types of services required by residents of Cochrane. The Social Policy will assist Town Administration to best serve the dynamic and changing needs of the residents.

- 1.5 Increased Efficiencies/Effectiveness: The Social Policy will enhance the cross sectoral coordination of community agencies and Town Administration so that resources are strategically allocated to have the greatest impact. Utilizing an Equity and Inclusion lens through strategic and coordinated planning for land use, transit, public health, housing, culture and recreation and immigrant services, will positively influence the quality of life and community well-being in Cochrane.
- 1.6 Place-Based Approach: The Social Policy embodies an understanding of the unique issues that intersect in the “place” of Cochrane. Using local perspectives, knowledge and resources to provide coordinated, locally-relevant responses to issues that are seen to be too complex and long-term to have simple solutions implemented by any one stakeholder.
- 1.7 Economic Driver: Social, economic, and environmental policies interact and complement each other (Triple Bottom Line). Strong economies are sustained by having communities that are attractive and welcoming, and strengthened by this Social Policy that will help staff and residents to maximize their full potential.
- 1.8 Increased Community & Individual Capacity: The Social Policy prioritizes a balanced coordination of activities, programs and services that build skills and resiliency in individuals and the overall community.

## **2. Related Information**

- 2.1 Alberta Social Policy Framework
- 2.2 Equity and Inclusion Municipality Lens Handbook
- 2.3 Welcoming & Inclusive Community Municipal Handbook
- 2.4 Let’s Touch the Sky’s Community Needs Assessment
- 2.5 Cochrane Sustainability Plan
- 2.6 Alberta Urban Municipalities Association Municipal Evaluation Tool
- 2.7 Federation of Canadian Municipalities Quality of Life Indicators Program
- 2.8 Truth & Reconciliation Council Report
- 2.9 Alberta Human Rights Act

### **3. Definitions**


- 3.1 Diversity: A wide range of qualities and attributes within a person, group or community.
- 3.2 Discrimination: The practice of unfairly treating a person or group of people differently from other people or groups of people.
- 3.3 Equity: A condition or state of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences.
- 3.4 Inclusion: Acknowledging and valuing people's differences so as to enrich social planning, decision making and quality of life for everyone.
- 3.5 Place-Based Approaches: Stakeholders engaging in a collaborative process to address issues as they are experienced within a geographic space, be it a neighborhood, a region, or an ecosystem.
- 3.6 Systemic Discrimination: Systemic or institutional discrimination consists of patterns of behaviour, policies or practices that are part of the social or administrative structures of an organization, and which create or perpetuate a position of relative disadvantage for certain groups or individuals.
- 3.7 Triple Bottom Line: An accounting framework with three parts: social, environmental (or ecological) and financial used to evaluate performance in a broader perspective to create greater business value.

### **4. Responsibilities**

- 4.1 Town Council to:
  - 4.1.1 Approve by resolution this policy and any amendments.
  - 4.1.2 Consider the allocation of resources for successful implementation of this policy in the annual budget process.
- 4.2 Chief Administrative Officer to:
  - 4.2.1 Implement this policy and approve procedures.
  - 4.2.2 Ensure policy and procedure reviews occur and verify the implementation of policies and procedures.
- 4.3 Senior Manager of Community Services to:
  - 4.3.1 Ensure implementation of this policy and procedure.

- 4.3.2 Ensure that this policy and procedure is reviewed every three years.
- 4.3.3 Make recommendations to the Chief Administrative Officer of necessary policy or procedure amendments.
- 4.4 Supervisor to:
  - 4.4.1 Understand, and adhere to this policy and procedure.
  - 4.4.2 Ensure employees are aware of this policy and procedure.
  - 4.4.3 Support and encourage staff involvement in the Equity and Inclusion Committee.
  - 4.4.4 Implement relevant recommendations from the Equity and Inclusion Committee.
- 4.5 All Employees to:
  - 4.5.1 Understand and adhere to this policy and procedure.

## **5. End of Policy**

	<h1 style="text-align: center;">Town of Cochrane Procedure</h1>
<p><b>Policy No.:</b> <b>Policy Title:</b> <b>Department:</b></p>	<p>1205-01 Social Policy Community Services</p>

## 1. Town of Cochrane Equity & Inclusion Lens

- 1.1 The Equity & Inclusion Staff Committee will create an Equity and Inclusion Lens that can be utilized through strategic and coordinated planning for land use, transit, public health, housing, culture and recreation and immigrant services to positively influence the quality of life and community well-being in Cochrane.
  
- 1.2 The implementation of an Equity and Inclusion Lens as a primary mechanism of procedure for the Town of Cochrane Social Policy will facilitate Town Administration to:
  - 1.2.1 Uphold the Social Policy statement, principles and intended outcomes.
  - 1.2.2 Increase awareness, at all levels of decision making and processes, of the importance of analyzing policy, planning, procedure and programming with a diversity of perspectives as an organizing principle.
  - 1.2.3 Develop strategies and business plans for departments that are adaptive and coordinated to specific resources.
  - 1.2.4 Analyze potential barriers in the workplace that may contribute to Systemic Discrimination and to strengthen the work environment to promote Equity and Diversity.
  - 1.2.5 Contribute to the achievement of the Town of Cochrane's goals and client service delivery.
  - 1.2.6 Enable all sections within the Town to be aware of Equity and Diversity in the development of their policies and programs that impact the delivery of Town services, the use of Town facilities, grants to external agencies and other outwardly focused activities.
  
- 1.3 The Equity & Inclusion Staff Committee will train and assist all Divisions & Sections in the utilization of the Lens for planning, policy, bylaw, administrative directive and procedure developments and review, program development and service assessment.

**2. Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) Municipal Evaluation Tool.**

- 2.1 AUMA Municipal Equity and Inclusion Evaluation will be completed by a diverse cross section of staff annually.
- 2.2 The outcomes will be used to create and implement action plans to improve identified areas of weakness.

**3. Community Needs Assessment**

- 3.1 Complete a needs assessment every 3-5 years, subject to the annual budget process, to identify current and emergent issues for Town of Cochrane residents.
- 3.2 Utilization of municipal specific indicators such as those developed by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities will supply valuable, consistent and municipality specific measurements.
- 3.3 Strategic plans, which identify coordination opportunities, will be developed to address the outcomes from the needs assessment.

**4. Appendices**

- 4.1 Cochrane Social Policy Framework
- 4.2 Equity & Inclusion Committee Conceptual Lens
- 4.3 Equity & Inclusion Staff Committee Terms of Reference
- 4.4 Definitions & Common Terms

**5. End of Procedure**

**Approval**

**Julian deCocq, C.A.O.**

*MAY 10, 2016*  
**Date**

## 4.1 Cochrane Social Policy Framework

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### **Policy Statement:**

*The Town of Cochrane is a complete community that is inclusive and welcoming, striving to ensure that all residents have opportunities to fulfill their potential and healthy development through our thriving social, economic, and cultural life.*

The long-term vision is strong, healthy families and a safe, viable community.

The Town of Cochrane believes that healthy development and social well-being occurs when:

- Residents and staff are treated with dignity and respect
- Diversity is recognized and viewed as an asset that enriches every aspect of people's lives
- Disparities between groups are reduced such that all residents have access to the basic necessities of life.
- All people have opportunity to participate in community life, contribute to society and develop their potential, irrespective of their age, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation or socio-economic position.
- All residents share in the responsibility of ensuring the quality of life within a community.

This Social Policy will function to guide and create a person centered-system of high quality services and programs, to enable collaboration and partnerships, reduce inequities and build individual and community capacity.

### **Municipal Scope for Social Policy**

Municipalities play at least three key roles in Social Policy:

1. They contribute valuable local knowledge and community networks.
2. Through planning for land use, transit, public health, housing, culture and recreation and immigrant services, they frame and influence the quality of life and community wellbeing; this needs to be done through an Equity & Inclusion Lens.
3. They convene and partner with the voluntary or third sector agencies who do collaborative work that can help build momentum and impact.

## Guiding Principles of Social Policy Development

- Municipal government as an influencer, convener, and partner.
- Social Policy recognizes that the municipal community is the intersection where federal and provincial policy is enacted in the lives of real people in a local context.
- Social Policy places emphasis on the integration and coordination between municipality, community agencies and stakeholders for resources and solutions to social issues.
- Social Policy will act as a tool to empower, facilitate and create opportunity
- Will focus on outcomes, quality, values and dignity.
- People are one of a community's most valuable resources. Investments made in the development and support of people enhances the quality of community life in all its aspects.
- Attention to our built environments
- Is critical to shaping the physical, psychological and social well-being of individuals and their communities.
- Policy balances prevention and intervention efforts through a combination of safety net and springboard components/opportunities.
- Policy supports residents to have the resources and competencies for success.

## Long Term Community Outcomes

**Participation and Social Inclusion:** There are adequate opportunities for all residents to participate in community life, civic engagement and experience a sense of belonging and identity.

**Respect for Diversity-** All people are treated equally, respected and supported in the community without Discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age or mental or physical disability.

**Shared Responsibility-**There is a strong sense of shared responsibility within the community for the social well-being of all of the residents.

**Strategic Resource Allocation-** Resources are strategically allocated based on the social need and identified service priorities for Cochrane.

**Collaboration** -A high level of collaboration will exist between the various services and sectors within the community to build common agenda's and set goals to address complex social issues in Cochrane.

**Coordination-** A strategic and coordinated process among and within the municipality, community agencies, and stakeholders will ensure policies and



programs are delivered to maximize individual and community capacity of Cochrane's residents to achieve success long-term.

## Place-Based Policy Approaches:

Place-Based Approaches can be most simply defined as stakeholders engaging in a collaborative process to address issues as they are experienced within a geographic space, be it a neighbourhood, a region, or an ecosystem. These approaches have a common set of characteristics:

- Are designed (or adapted) locally to meet unique conditions.
- Engage participants from a diverse range of sectors and jurisdictions in collaborative decision-making processes.
- Are opportunity-driven, dependent on local talent, resources, and constraints.
- Have an evolving process due to adaptive learning and stakeholder interests.
- Attempt to achieve synergies by integrating across silos, jurisdictions, and dimensions of sustainability.
- Leverage assets and knowledge through shared ownership of the initiative.
- Frequently attempt to achieve behaviour change.

# Town of Cochrane Social Policy Activities

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## Assumptions:

The implementation of an Equity and Inclusion lens as a prime activity in support for the Town of Cochrane Social Policy will facilitate Town Administration to:

- Increase awareness at all levels of decision making and process of the importance of analyzing policy, planning, procedure and programming with a Diversity of perspectives as an organizing principle (a way of conceptualizing information; a way of looking at the world).
- Uphold the Social Policy statement, principles and intended outcomes for Cochrane.
- Develop strategies and business plans for departments that are adaptive and coordinated to their specific resources.
- Eliminate barriers in the workplace that contribute to Systemic Discrimination and to develop a work environment that promotes Equity and Diversity.

- Contribute to the achievement of the Town of Cochrane’s business goals and client service delivery.
- Utilize the framework to assist all departments within the Town to embrace the spirit of Equity and Diversity in the development of their policies and programs that impact the delivery of Town services, the use of Town facilities, grants to external agencies and other outwardly focused activities.
- Prioritize areas of potential community coordination to maximize impact; and
- Increase civic engagement of residents by critically analyzing potential barriers to service or participation within the Town.

## Measurement:

**Internal:** Through annual use of the Alberta Urban Municipality Association (AUMA) Municipal Evaluation Tool, the Town will have a quantitative measurement to report to the public and to identify areas of potential action for their sectional and divisional work plans. This tool will assist the administration in utilizing a set of indicators that will measure our internal activities across the municipal sections.

**Community:** Through a regular community needs assessment, the Town will begin to develop some key areas of measurement for community well-being. Utilization of municipal specific resources such as The Quality of Life Indicators (which have been developed by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities) may help to develop clear and consistent measures.

**Individual:** Through the strategic coordination of Town programming and social services, shared community outcome indicators will be developed and integrated in all Town program and service evaluations to measure the impact of programming and services for individual residents.

# Value-Based Statements on Current & Emergent Issues

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Based on current and historical community needs assessments the following areas have been identified as warranting particular consideration in Town Administration decision making processes due to their potential to have compounding and intersectional effects on resident’s social, economic and cultural well-being. Utilizing an Equity and Inclusion lens across departments and prioritizing collaborative work

will help to responsibly identify potential issues and solutions, partners and resources by working collectively rather than in isolation.

**Housing:** Access to safe, suitable and diverse continuum of housing options appropriate to the incomes of Cochrane residents is an integral component to fulfill one's potential and healthy development for an optimal social, economic, and cultural life.

**Transportation/Accessibility:** The Social Capital created through affordable transportation includes improving a person or family's financial situation, improving the quality of a person's overall health, and improving a person or family's overall quality of life. Current literature shows unaffordable transportation or lack of transportation can cause social isolation and contribute to a cycle of poverty. This can lead to poorer health and a lower level of educational achievement. It can also increase a person's likelihood of being involved in crime. When transportation is affordable, residents living on low-income are better able to take care of essentials such as grocery shopping, attending medical appointments, or furthering their education and skills. Affordable transportation can be the catalyst to employment or a better job when that job/better job is located outside a person's local area.

**Child Care:** Cochrane's families need and deserve access to affordable, quality childcare. Early childhood development has a lasting effect on a child's life, and on the health and prosperity of families and communities. We need a system of childcare that meets everyone's needs, including parents who want their children to be cared for in a safe, healthy and stable environment while they attend school or work. Access to childcare outside of traditional working hours provides greater opportunities for individuals working shift work or service industry jobs. Typically those impacted by these barriers also have increased risk of being Marginalized across other systems (single parents and low income household members).

**Child Development:** All children have the right to an adequate standard of living, health care and play. All children have the right to express their views about things that affect them and to participate in communities, programs and services. All children have the right to be protected from abuse, neglect and exploitation and Discrimination (UNICEF, 1989). A strategic focus on child development initiatives and programming can produce outcomes that benefit the overall quality of life for individuals and families.

**Education and Literacy:** Education and literacy enhancing activities are key areas to provide opportunities for families to provide for themselves and develop a skilled workforce to the community where a sectoral need is identified.

**Food security:** Food is a basic need, but it also plays a huge role in our collective culture, recreation activities, community-building, ecological awareness, and economic stimulation, and personal and communal wellness. Food provides a multifunctional, multi-beneficial approach to addressing many of the issues that municipalities face including: hunger and chronic disease, greenhouse gas emissions, health and wellness, resilient communities, storm water management, land use planning, economic development etc. (Calgary Eats, 2012). A sustainable and resilient food system is one that takes all of this into consideration in its overall structure as well as its day-to-day operations within our community. It is diverse, self-reliant, collaborative and adaptable.

- Food is an economic driver,
- Food builds resilient communities, and
- Food is integral to healthy residents.

**Planning, Neighborhoods and Physical Infrastructure:** There is growing attention on the importance of our physical environment and spatial planning as primary contributors to enhance the well-being of individuals, families and communities in the development of complete communities. The strategic and mindful development of municipal neighborhoods and physical infrastructure can influence inclusion, place-attachment and resiliency of its residents. Place attachment has been positively correlated to increased civic participation, resiliency, safety, self-esteem and belonging. Public participation is considered as an essential element of the planning process. Increasing engagement strategies with residents means that planners will more frequently come in contact with emotional and value aspects that underlie spatial development (Huxley, 2000). Because emotional ties to place are strong driving forces behind a community's acceptance or resistance to development it is important for planners to acknowledge these (Sandercock, 1998). As Cochrane grows, the processes for engaging residents in the planning processes and assessing the diversity of needs can become more difficult. Building trust and equitable processes to gather information from residents will enhance developments, infrastructure services, accessibility and assist in building a complete community.

**Recreation and Culture:** Recreational and cultural activities are a key social lever to having a substantial return on investment for a community. The benefits of a diverse, accessible and inclusive recreational and cultural program, including open spaces and parks to promote creativity and free play, provides opportunities that have the potential to positively impact a broad range of positive outcomes for local communities. These potential outcomes include: physical and emotional health from children to seniors, reduced crime rate and increased civic engagement, reduced reliance on foodbanks and other subsidized safety nets, increased social cooperation and problem solving through skill development, and creative arts resulting in increased levels of Social Capital and economic development.

Culture and recreation provide the means to build Social Capital. They can take the form of arts or recreational programs, and community events or celebrations such as festivals, parades and block parties. Community events, in particular, help keep neighbours in touch with each other and reinforce the relationships that make neighbourhoods strong. Participation in cultural and recreational programs has been found to promote social connectedness in communities and shape civic behaviour later in life. Connections through trusting networks and common values enforce positive standards for youth and provide them access to mentors, role models, educational sponsors and job contacts. (CPRA, 2015).

**Safety:** All residents have the right to live free from fear of abuse, violence, racism and Discrimination. Prevention of all forms of violence requires a solid foundation through innovative legislation, crisis intervention, legal and police response, and community coordination and collaboration. Cochrane values itself as a Town where families, individuals and children are safe and free from violence, all forms of racism and bullying. We are making an investment in our communities by strengthening our social infrastructure and supporting the good work that agencies, private stakeholders, community partners and residents are doing to care for each other. Promoting gender equality, social Inclusion, education, building connections and social networks, promoting positive parenting and reducing poverty all contribute to preventing and reducing violence and bullying.

**Truth and Reconciliation Council of Canada- Calls to Action:** Cochrane is neighbored by the Stony First Nations Reserve. As the Town of Cochrane is located on Treaty 7 Land, community assessments and feedback have historically identified a need to build positive relationships with Morley. The aboriginal population has been identified as a key population that requires a specific plan of engagement and consultation. The Town acknowledges the call to action for all levels of government to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation supporting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation.

**Living Wage/Income:** Recognition that a living income has been established as an indicative measure that supports Cochrane families to:

- meet their basic needs which includes housing, transportation, adequate, nutritious food;
- Maintain a safe, decent, dignified standard of living;
- Save for future needs and goals; and
- Devote quality time to family, friends and community and will result in an increase to the overall health and well-being of individuals, families and the community.

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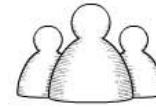
## Town Administration



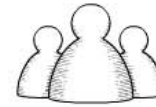
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- Administrative Directives & Standard Operating Procedures
- Publications & Advertising
- Programs, Services & Events
- Internal Inquiries



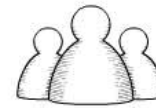
Equity & Inclusion  
Staff Committee



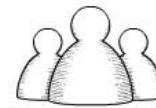
Other identified demographics



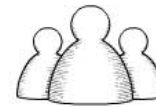
Immigrant Services Committee



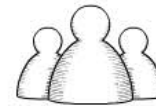
Seniors Advisory Committee



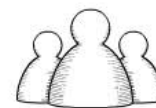
Mayors Youth Council



Accessibility Advocate



GSA+ Groups



Aboriginal Serving Agency



Affordable Housing



### 4.3 Equity & Inclusion Staff Committee



#### TERMS OF REFERENCE

**Purpose**

This committee will function to promote and assess municipal services, programming and organizational culture to ensure that all staff and residents of Cochrane have opportunities to fulfill their potential and healthy development through our thriving social, economic and cultural life.

**Committee Responsibility**

1. To develop and implement the Town of Cochrane Equity & Inclusion Lens for internal use to analyze and develop processes, programs and policies that advance equity and inclusion for the staff and residents of Cochrane.

2. To lead the development and implementation of a plan of action that supports the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination commitments.

3. To facilitate outreach activities through engagement and educational initiatives for divisions and sections that are not represented on the committee.

4. Report initiatives and developments to Senior Leadership Team and/or Town Council.

5. Distribute and collect the annual AUMA Municipal Evaluation Tool for measurement purposes.

**The Committee Members** are expected to:

**Member Responsibility**

1. Bring the learnings, initiatives and voice of the committee back to their division and sections for consideration of policy development/review, administrative directive development/review, and/or section work plans and staff meetings.

2. Facilitate the development/review of process, policy and procedures within the members Town section (as requested) to support this work and development of a sustainable culture of inclusion.

3. Report changes that occur in your division/section as a result of your involvement back to the committee.

4. Rotate shared leadership and chairing of committee meetings.

5. Attend regularly scheduled monthly meetings and participate and contribute to the fulfillment of the committee's purpose.

**Membership**

- Representation from all Town divisions with a mix of leadership and front line staff

## 4.4 Definitions & Common Terms

**Diversity:** A wide range of qualities and attributes within a person, group or community.

**Discrimination:** The practice of unfairly treating a person or group of people differently from other people or groups of people.

**Equity:** A condition or state of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences.

**Implicit Bias:** The bias in judgment and/or behavior that results from subtle cognitive processes (e.g., implicit attitudes and implicit stereotypes) that often operates at a level below conscious awareness and without intentional control.

**Inclusion:** Acknowledging and valuing people's differences so as to enrich social planning, decision making and quality of life for everyone.

**Marginalize:** To put or keep (someone) in a powerless or unimportant position within a society or group.

**Place-Based Approaches:** Stakeholders engaging in a collaborative process to address issues as they are experienced within a geographic space, be it a neighborhood, a region, or an ecosystem.

**Privilege:** The experience of freedoms, rights, benefits, advantages, access and/or opportunities afforded to members of a dominant group in a society or in a given context.

**Social Capital:** The relationships, networks and norms that support collective action. It is created when people come together out of a shared purpose or goal that goes beyond individual benefits and incorporates the idea of connectedness. Social capital is built through participation in associations or social structures of cooperation such as recreation, community, and agency. Social capital can be viewed from an individual and a community level.

**Social Exclusion:** Process by which individuals and groups are wholly (or partially) excluded from participation in their society. This can be a consequence of a number of issues, from low income to restricted access to employment, social benefits, services, and other aspects of cultural and community life. It is important to represent the issue of exclusion as one of social and community concern, rather than one of individual and personal responsibility.

**Systemic Barriers:** Obstacles that exclude groups or communities of people from full participation and benefits in social, economic and political life. They may be hidden or unintentional, but built into the way society works. Our assumptions and stereotypes, along with policies, practices and procedures, reinforce them.

**Systemic Discrimination:** Systemic or institutional discrimination consists of patterns of behaviour, policies or practices that are part of the social or administrative structures of an organization, and which create or perpetuate a position of relative disadvantage for certain groups or individuals.

**Triple Bottom Line:** (otherwise noted as TBL or 3BL) An accounting framework with three parts: social, environmental (or ecological) and financial. Many organizations have adopted the TBL framework to evaluate their performance in a broader perspective to create greater business value.

**Vulnerable:** Individuals or groups who—due to age, poor health, minority status, or their otherwise disempowered position in society—may be open to physical, emotional, financial, or psychological exploitation or deprivation.

**Visible Minorities:** Persons other than Aboriginal persons who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour.