



## COLLEGE OF OPTICIANS OF ALBERTA

### Our Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

#### Introduction

As set out in the Governing Policies of the College of Opticians of Alberta ("COA"), it is the intention of the COA Council to operate within the mandates of the *Alberta Human Rights Act* concerning the rights of any individual with respect to equal treatment regardless of race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical disability, mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status, or sexual orientation ("protected grounds").

The COA recognizes the dignity and value of every person and will not tolerate harassment or unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of any kind. Accordingly, Council members, volunteers, and staff will not:

1. Participate in unwelcome, inappropriate, intimidating, or insulting remarks, gestures, jokes, innuendoes, or taunting with respect to any protected grounds;
2. Display sexually suggestive pictures, racist, derogatory, or other offensive materials;
3. Commit any unnecessary or unwanted physical contact such as touching, patting, or pinching;
4. Commit any sexual solicitation or advances with implied consequences; and
5. Refuse to work with or share facilities with others because of any protected grounds.

#### How We Demonstrate Our Commitment

The COA acknowledges that demonstrating our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion requires ongoing reinforcement and demonstrated action. Here are some of the steps we have taken so far:

1. Our Council has adopted the following values and reads these values aloud at the outset of all Council meetings: *Accountability, Ethicality, Fairness, Effectiveness, Openness, Transparency.*
2. Our Council has adopted a land acknowledgment to recognize the COA's privilege to operate on Treaty 6 territory: *The College of Opticians of Alberta (COA) is located on Treaty 6 territory, the*

*traditional and ancestral lands for diverse Indigenous peoples whose histories, languages, and cultures continue to influence our vibrant community.*

3. Every COA meeting must include a land acknowledgment and we encourage meeting chairpersons to offer a personalized acknowledgment based on their location and experience.
4. Our Council has adopted an anti-bias and anti-discrimination statement to foster an inclusive culture: *The COA does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of any protected grounds in its activities or operations. We are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for the public, registrants, volunteers, staff, and other stakeholders.*
5. Discrimination and Harassment Agreements must be signed by each Council member, volunteer, and staff member.
6. All Council members, staff, and disciplinary volunteers must complete mandatory Trauma Informed Training for Regulatory Organizations to learn how to take a trauma-informed approach when addressing complaints of sexual abuse and sexual misconduct against a regulated health professional.
7. Our Council has adopted a statement on the usage of personal pronouns: *The COA acknowledges the diversity of its members and staff and welcomes the optional display of personal pronouns by staff, volunteers, and Council members.*
8. In collaboration with optician regulators across Canada, the COA has adopted a Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) program to recognize the diverse qualifications and experiences of newcomers seeking licensure in Alberta.
9. The COA has assessed its practices against fair registration guidelines and ensured registration requirements are transparent, objective, impartial, and procedurally fair for all applicants.
10. Our Council reviews its Governing Policies on an annual basis and makes revisions as necessary to address gaps or adopt best practices with respect to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
11. The COA staff team completed diversity, equity, and inclusion training and engages in ongoing discussion, collaboration, and learning on these topics.

## What's Next?

### *Diversity Leads*

The COA is reviewing its policies and procedures against the 2020 [Diversity Leads Report](#) to assess whether any improvements are required in the following organizational areas:

- Governance, Leadership, and Strategy
- Values and Culture
- Marketing and Communication
- Stakeholder Relations
- Recruitment and Selection
- Training and Retention
- Promotion and Termination
- Measurement and Tracking
- Procurement and Service

The Diversity Leads report by the Ted Rogers School of Management's Diversity Institute analyzes the representation of women, Black people, and other racialized persons on boards of directors, agencies, boards, and commissions, hospitals, the voluntary sector, and educational institutions. The report also explores the board-related experiences of people who identify as Indigenous, LGBTQ2S+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, and two-spirit), and persons with disabilities.

### *Indigenous Cultural Safety and Humility*

The COA is currently participating in cultural safety and humility projects coordinated by the National Alliance of Canadian Optician Regulators (NACOR). These projects aim to develop tools for registrants and optician regulators to better understand and address systemic racism in the healthcare system.

To learn more about cultural safety and humility in the meantime, please see the following resources:

[What is Indigenous Cultural Safety—and Why Should I Care About It?](#)

[First Nations Health Authority: Cultural Safety and Humility \(Webinars\)](#)

[Aboriginal Health: For the Next Seven Generations for the Children \(Course\)](#)

[In Plain Sight: Addressing Indigenous-Specific Racism and Discrimination in BC Health Care](#)

[First Peoples, Second Class Treatment: The Role of Racism in the Health and Well-being of Indigenous Peoples in Canada](#)

## Contact Us

The COA welcomes perspectives from the public, registrants, and other stakeholders on our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion and its implementation. Please contact us for more information or if you have any comments or questions.

Jennifer Bertrand, CEO & Registrar

587.760.1884

[ceo@abopticians.ca](mailto:ceo@abopticians.ca)