

Anti-Racism Charter in Recreation



Introduction

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Recreation Nova Scotia is located in Mi'kma'ki, the traditional unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people. This territory is covered by the "Treaties of Peace and Friendship" which Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) Peoples first signed with the British Crown in 1725. The treaties recognized Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) title, and established the rules for what was to be an ongoing relationship between nations; they did not deal with surrender of lands and resources. We are all Treaty people.

We recognize that African Nova Scotians are a distinct people whose histories, legacies and contributions have enriched that part of Mi'kma'ki known as Nova Scotia for over 400 years.

Nova Scotia is home to many diverse communities that have shaped and enriched the province. While racism is the focus of the Anti-Racism Charter, we acknowledge that there are additional forms of discrimination that can negatively impact one's ability to participate in recreational activities. We also acknowledge that many people living in Nova Scotia have intersecting identities which may expose them to more than one form of discrimination.

Recreation Nova Scotia is grateful to all of the recreation participants, staff and volunteers involved in recreation who helped shape and bring the Anti-Racism Charter to life. Insights and feedback shared during the development of the Anti-Racism Charter has helped make it a tool created by, and for, the recreation sector in the province.

ABOUT RECREATION NOVA SCOTIA

Recreation Nova Scotia is a provincial, not-for-profit organization. In partnership with the volunteers and professional recreation community, the organization advocates on behalf of all Nova Scotians for recreation and leisure opportunities to promote the values and personal, social, economic, and environmental benefits of recreation and leisure.

Recreation Nova Scotia membership includes professionals, volunteers, educators, students, interested citizens, elected officials and commercial organizations. The organization is open to everyone who has an interest in recreation, parks, fitness, sport, facilities, aquatics, therapeutic recreation, camping, the arts, culture or other related sectors.



WHAT IS RECREATION?

Recreation Nova Scotia describes recreation as the experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community well-being.¹

Here in Nova Scotia, there's a wide range of recreation activities to engage in based on our rich geography and demographics. While recreation may look different in urban or more rural settings across the province, it is the activities we engage in for leisure, enjoyment and well-being that often bring Nova Scotian communities together in unique ways.

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1. This definition comes from the National Framework for Recreation, and has been adopted by the Shared Strategy for Advancing Recreation in Nova Scotia, <https://www.recreationns.ns.ca/shared-strategy.html>

About the Anti-Racism Charter

Why do we need a Charter specific to anti-racism in recreation?

Racism exists in Nova Scotia and it exists within Nova Scotia's recreation sector. The impacts of racist incidents on the psychological health and well-being of those affected are serious and is made worse by the lack of support available. As an organization, Recreation Nova Scotia seeks to better support individuals and communities facing racism and provide unifying guidelines for the recreation sector to address, combat and prevent systemic racism within the sector.

The Anti-Racism Charter in Recreation is needed to specifically acknowledge and address the harm and exclusion caused by racism in recreation. A proactive and systemic approach is required to make recreation welcoming and inclusive for everyone in Nova Scotia.



Some Helpful Definitions

In this section, we share a few definitions which are important to understanding the context of the Anti-Racism Charter. Thank you to the creators of The Inclusive Language Glossary & Workbook for allowing us to borrow from their excellent resource.

Racism occurs between individuals, on an interpersonal level, and is embedded in organizations and institutions through their policies, procedures and practices.

Systemic racism includes the policies and practices entrenched in established institutions, which result in the exclusion or promotion of designated groups. It differs from overt discrimination in that no individual intent is necessary.

Oppression results from the use of institutional power and privilege where one person or group benefits at the expense of another. Oppression can be a combination of bias, privilege and power.

Anti-Racism is defined as the work of actively opposing racism by advocating for changes in political, economic, and social life. Anti-racism tends to be an individualized approach, and set up in opposition to individual racist behaviors and impacts.

An **anti-racist person or organization** goes a step further than simply stating they are anti-racist. These individuals and organizations work to understand their own privilege, challenge their own internalized racism and call out racism when they see it impacting others.

An **inclusive recreation sector** means everyone believes and feels they can fully and safely participate in activities of their choosing, and that they can do so in reality.

An **equitable recreation sector** accommodates the different needs and expectations of diverse communities, particularly those that have been historically underrepresented within activities that enhance individual and community well-being.

How will the Anti-Racism Charter benefit the recreation sector in Nova Scotia?

The Anti-Racism Charter provides an opportunity to engage in dialogue, education, and actions which together will create a more welcoming and representative sector. It offers all organizations with a foundation to build upon and the ability to identify steps and actions that focus on anti-racism, equity and inclusion.

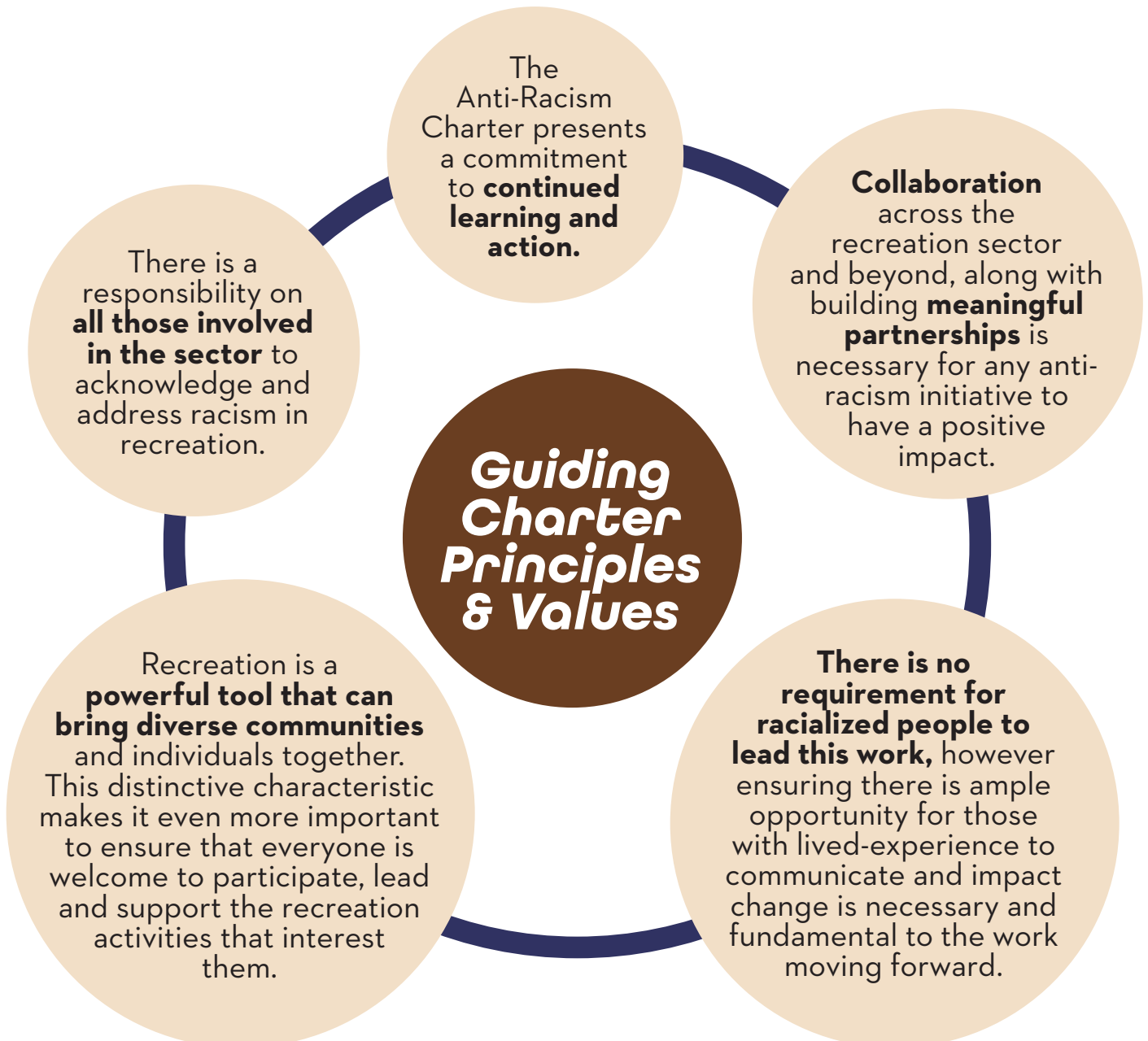
Who can adopt the Anti-Racism Charter?

The Charter is a tool that can be adopted and used by any organization in Nova Scotia, whether they are a member of Recreation Nova Scotia or not. Each path taken by signatories to acknowledge and address racism within their organization and the communities they serve will look different.

There are varying degrees of resources available across the recreation sector. Some organizations rely solely on volunteers, operate on a seasonal basis and/or have limited funds for initiatives beyond their programming mandate(s). Regardless of means, there are meaningful and purposeful actions all organizations can take to critically consider how their policies and practices perpetuate racism in recreation, and how they can meaningfully implement their decision to sign onto the Anti-Racism Charter.

Charter Mission

The Anti-Racism Charter is a practical tool, shaped by recreation employees, volunteers and participants, to engage in the work necessary to acknowledge and confront continued harms caused by racism in recreation. The tool will result in proactive steps taken by Anti-Racism Charter signatories, and a sector that is more representative of all those in Nova Scotia.





Anti-Racism Charter Actions & Commitments

Signatories to the Anti-Racism Charter will undertake the following actions and commitments:

Acknowledge & Address Racism – Commit to zero tolerance of all forms of racism and develop practical processes to address racist acts and behaviours. Acknowledge and update discriminatory policies that encourage or perpetuate the exclusion of racialized populations.

Provide Ongoing Training & Educational Opportunities – Deliver continued learning opportunities that provide practical skills to combat racism in recreation at all levels of an organization. Promote, participate in, and support external opportunities that have the same objectives, while always considering the safety of all participants.

Build Racially Representative Communities – Meaningfully encourage participation and opportunities for racially diverse community members within your area of recreation, critically examine participation within the organization at all levels, while employing communication and engagement practices that proactively include first-voice representation.

Design Equitable & Inclusive Opportunities – Create opportunities for racialized people to take on leadership and decision-making roles at all levels of an organization, paying special attention to mentorship, business, and skill development opportunities. Mindfulness of emotional, psychological, and physical safety of racialized persons will be required, particularly in historically white and under-representative organizations.

5 Steps to Implementation



Action / Commitment 1: Acknowledge & Address Racism

Commit to zero tolerance of all forms of racism and develop practical processes to address racist acts and behaviours. Acknowledge and update discriminatory policies that encourage or perpetuate the exclusion of racialized populations.

Examples of inquiries, actions, and initiatives that can be undertaken:

Create or adopt an anti-racism and discrimination policy. Develop a plan to communicate the policy with the various audiences engaged by the organization.

Develop plain-language signage to be posted in facilities and/or adopted that can be read aloud during programming that clearly states the organization's commitment to zero-tolerance for racism and other forms of discrimination.

Create a process for safely reporting, addressing and acknowledging racist incidents when they occur. Communicate the processes to all those engaged by the organization.

Closely examine internal written, unwritten policies and practices to identify those that limit or exclude participation and membership of racialized populations at all levels of the organization. Review and update all language utilized in written documentation so that it is inclusive.

Identify opportunities for your organization to publicly recognize the historic and possibly continued exclusion of racialized populations from your organization or area of activity, with the goal of doing better moving forward. Capture the acknowledgement in your public organizational materials and/or policies.

Plan to revisit and update policies and practices related to anti-racism and increased equity and inclusion within your organization. Include timelines and opportunities to receive feedback from people and communities the practices and policies have been designed to support the most.

Action / Commitment 2: **Provide Ongoing Training & Educational Opportunities**

Deliver continued learning opportunities that provide practical skills to combat racism in recreation at all levels of an organization. Promote, participate in, and support external opportunities that have the same objectives, while always considering the safety of all participants.

Examples of inquiries, actions, and initiatives that can be undertaken:

- Create opportunities for the most senior members (employees and volunteers) of your organization to take part in anti-racism training and/or professional development offerings that are specifically designed for organizational leaders. Document a plan for senior members to take part in these types of offerings on an ongoing basis.
- Develop a list of free online resources, tailored to the programming or offerings your organization engages in, that deal with anti-racism, which can be shared with internal and external audiences. Update the list and re-share it on a regular and pre-determined schedule.
- If your organization engages seasonal, short-term, or part-time employees and/or volunteers, establish training and education related to anti-racism which can realistically be delivered to a group that is engaged with the organization in a more casual manner.
- Develop a policy that addresses in what situations payment and honorariums are offered to racialized people to lead training, discussions, or cultural teachings to help promote respectful and reciprocal collaborations. Create a plan to revisit the policy on a regular basis.
- Identify regularly occurring gatherings, for example annual general meetings, events, and conferences, where anti-racism training and related conversations can be meaningfully incorporated.
- Develop a protocol that offers organization-specific best practices, expectations, and ways to create safer spaces for participants of anti-racist trainings and dialogues. The protocol should specifically acknowledge how these sorts of discussions can be particularly triggering for racialized participants.

Action / Commitment 3: **Build Racially Representative Communities**

Meaningfully encourage participation and opportunities for racially diverse community members within your area of recreation, critically examine participation within the organization at all levels, while employing communication and engagement practices that proactively include first-voice representation.

Examples of inquiries, actions, and initiatives that can be undertaken:

Complete research or consultation to identify specific recreational programming gaps experienced by racialized populations that could be fulfilled by a partnership with your organization. Develop concrete plans to implement initiatives aimed at collaboratively addressing those gaps.

If there are racialized people already working to increase representation within the recreational activity that your organization is involved with, take steps to learn from and collaborate with those individuals.

If there are organizations not led by racialized populations, which have historically partnered with diverse communities to create programming for, and with, these populations, determine whether there are opportunities to learn from, and work with those organizations, to strengthen relationships with these communities, particularly in areas of the province which may not be very racially diverse.

Make efforts to take part in gatherings, celebrations, programming and other activities organized and hosted by community groups focused on servicing racialized populations in your area of recreation. Plan to regularly identify opportunities to support the initiatives lead by racially diverse groups and organizations.

Identify initiatives your organization can undertake to not only introduce your area of recreation to racialized communities, but to also ensure opportunities for continued and meaningful participation. Consider whether persons are able to engage in these activities with other members of their community using cohort models.

Review current communications (e.g. websites, newsletters, social media, printed materials etc.) to identify where gaps in visual representation of racialized people exist. Develop a plan to perform this sort of review on a regular basis.

Identify practical and financial barriers such as transportation, location of facilities, cost of participation, availability of appropriate nutrition and support for child and elder care responsibilities. Plan to address these barriers through such measures as fundraising, adapting budgets, organizational partnerships and lobbying funding and governing bodies.

Action / Commitment 4: **Design Equitable & Inclusive Opportunities**

Create opportunities for racialized people to take on leadership and decision-making roles at all levels of an organization, paying special attention to mentorship, business, and skill development opportunities. Mindfulness of emotional, psychological, and physical safety of racialized persons will be required, particularly in historically white and under-representative organizations.

Examples of inquiries, actions, and initiatives that can be undertaken:

Consider the racial makeup of board members, staff and volunteers, particularly among the highest levels of your organization. Put practical measures in place to actively and safely invite racialized community members into the organization and over time, increase the racial diversity of leaders and decision-makers.

When encouraging members of racialized populations to apply for board, senior staff and volunteer roles within your organization, make clear connections between their duties and their ability to engage their community in their work. Clearly state these opportunities in the posting for the position.

Adopt more equitable and inclusive practices at all stages of the recruitment and employment cycle (e.g. job posting, interviewing, onboarding and employee support).

Examine where your organization's money is spent. When identifying vendors for goods and services, employ purchasing and contracting processes that apply special consideration for businesses owned and/or operated by members of racialized populations, as a means of engaging groups historically underrepresented in the commercialization and administration of recreation. Formally adopt the policy, advertise it externally, and monitor for outcomes.

Invite racialized members of your organization to take part in (where available) opportunities that involve networking and skill development on regional, national and international levels. Adopt a policy that supports and encourages participation in training and advancement opportunities, both formal and informal, for everyone in the organization.



How to Create an Action Plan

The Anti-Racism Charter's four Actions & Commitments represent areas of focus for signatories to the Anti-Racism Charter. The examples of inquiries, actions and initiatives to be undertaken for each area of focus are suggestions to help guide implementation of each Action & Commitment and should not be seen as a prescriptive or exhaustive list.

The template Action Plan provides an outline for organizations to begin mapping out how they will take concrete steps to address and prevent racism. The template also considers implementation of timelines and evaluation measures to ensure ongoing support and resources are set aside for this work.

Signatories to the Anti-Racism Charter may want to add their own inquiries, actions and initiatives to their Action Plan and are encouraged to do so. Recreation Nova Scotia encourages signatory organizations to consider the expertise, experience, and resources readily available to help them set goals and move toward action.



Frequently Asked Questions

Who helped create the Anti-Racism Charter?

The Anti-Racism Charter is a **Recreation Nova Scotia** initiative with contributions from Recreation Nova Scotia staff and board.

Project Manager - **Graham Mounsey**

Project Consultant - **Wisdom2Action**, a social enterprise and consulting firm.

The project is funded by the **Government of Canada**.

A **Steering Committee** composed of leaders in the recreation sector, and a **Youth Advisory Council**, made up of youth with diverse lived-experience, helped inform the Anti-Racism Charter engagement activities and documents.

Steering Committee Members & Youth Advisory Council Members

- Colleen Belle
- Vanessa Hartley
- Ali Koperqualuk
- Nick Lenehan
- Fawn Logan-Young
- Heather MacNeil
- Josh Nicholas
- Crystal Watson
- Nicholas Williams

What engagement activities took place as part of the Anti-Racism Charter initiative?

- **An online survey** to understand how racism and discrimination exist and are experienced across the recreation sector, what training is needed to address racism in recreation and what should go into the Anti-Racism Charter. The survey was available in English, Arabic and Somali. Approximately 157 Nova Scotians completed the survey between April and September 2022.

- **In-person and virtual focus groups** to expand on the issues raised and feedback provided by survey respondents. A total of 10 focus groups were hosted across the province between April and July 2022. Approximately 76 recreation employees, volunteers, students and participants took part in the focus groups.
- **In-person training** that focused on addressing key themes shared via the survey and focus groups. Sessions were held in Sydney, Halifax and Birchtown with a total of 40 recreation service providers taking part.
- **Various meetings with policy makers and community members** to share details regarding the provincial consultation process and seek input on the Anti-Racism Charter development and adoption throughout the province.

Are there any other initiatives or reports that align with the Anti-Racism Charter?

- **The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action¹**, developed by the parties of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. While there are no Calls to Action that are specific to recreation, the 94 recommendations address the need for changes in youth programs, sports and other recreation-related sectors to “redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation”.
- **Bill No. 96: Dismantling Racism and Hate Act²**, outlines the Nova Scotia government’s approach to addressing systemic racism, hate and inequity.
- **Recreation Facility Association of Nova Scotia in partnership with the Tripartite Forum**, developed the Anti-Racism and Discrimination Policy Signage and Policy Template, developed to help recreational facilities prevent acts of racism.³

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1. Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action, Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2012, https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf
 2. Dismantling Racism and Hate Act, Nova Scotia Legislature, Bill No. 96, 2022, https://nslegislature.ca/legc/bills/64th_1st/1st_read/b096.htm
 3. Recreation Facility Association of Nova Scotia, <http://www.rfans.com/resource-centre/>

Are there any costs associated with signing onto the Anti-Racism Charter?

Recreation Nova Scotia will not charge signatories with any fees for their commitment to the Anti-Racism Charter.

How will Anti-Racism Charter signatories' information be used by Recreation Nova Scotia?

Organizations that sign onto the Anti-Racism Charter could be named in Recreation Nova Scotia's newsletters, annual reports, social media and other forms of public communication.

How will signatories be supported by Recreation Nova Scotia once they sign onto the Anti-Racism Charter?

Recreation Nova Scotia commits to support organizations in creating Action Plans around the Anti-Racism Charter's Actions/Commitments and to reconvene signatories and interested parties periodically to share progress on anti-racism work. Recreation Nova Scotia also commits to house resources related to the implementation of the Anti-Racism Charter and to share and promote training and learning opportunities.

Will signing onto the Anti-Racism Charter give Recreation Nova Scotia or Canadian Heritage the authority to make decisions regarding signatory organizations?

No, organizations that sign onto the Anti-Racism Charter will oversee the creation and implementation of their own action plan.

How can I get in touch with Recreation Nova Scotia?

If you would like to get in touch about the Anti-Racism Charter, please contact:

antiracism@recreationns.ns.ca



Recreation Nova Scotia Anti-Racism Charter Signatory Commitment Form



The Anti-Racism Charter is a practical tool, shaped by recreation employees, volunteers and participants, to engage in the work necessary to acknowledge and confront continued harms caused by racism in recreation.

GUIDING CHARTER PRINCIPLES & VALUES

- The Anti-Racism Charter presents a commitment to continued learning and action.
- There is a responsibility on all those involved in the sector to acknowledge and address racism in recreation.
- Collaboration across the recreation sector and beyond, along with building meaningful partnerships is necessary for any anti-racism initiative to have a positive impact.
- There is no requirement for racialized people to lead this work, however ensuring there is ample opportunity for those with lived-experience to communicate and impact change is necessary and fundamental to the work moving forward.
- Recreation is a powerful tool that can bring diverse communities and individuals together. This distinctive characteristic makes it even more important to ensure that everyone is welcome to participate, lead and support the recreation activities that interest them.

Organization: _____

Signature of Signing Authority: _____

Date: _____

5 STEPS TO IMPLEMENTATION

- **ENDORSE:** Show your organization's commitment by signing and submitting the signatory form to antiracism@recreationns.ca.
- **COMMIT:** Pledge to initiate goal setting, complete a scan of helpful resources and initiatives already in existence, and proactively work on an anti-racism action plan.
- **ANNOUNCE:** Share and celebrate your commitment internally and externally.
- **PURSUE:** Work toward regular check-ins and evaluation of action plan progress.
- **REPORT:** Communicate accomplishments and undertaken initiatives associated with the adopted anti-racism action plan.

ACTIONS & COMMITMENTS

- Acknowledge & Address Racism
- Provide Ongoing Training & Educational Opportunities
- Build Racially Representative Communities
- Design Equitable & Inclusive Opportunities



Recreation Nova Scotia Anti-Racism Charter Signatory Commitment Form

By completing the form below and submitting it to Recreation Nova Scotia, our organization commits to upholding the values and principles outlined in the Recreation Nova Scotia Anti-Racism Charter.

As a signatory, we commit to the implementation of actions necessary to address and acknowledge the impact of racism in recreation.

We understand that by submitting the form, our organization name will be added to a public registry of Anti-Racism Charter signatories.

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION
Organization Name:
Organization Contact Name:
Email:
Mailing Address:
Any additional contact information (e.g. the organization operates seasonally, organization email checked infrequently, phone is the best way to communicate with the organization):
COMMITMENT ADOPTION
How did your organization agree to adopt the Charter? Board Resolution Leadership Commitment Annual General Meeting Membership Vote Other:
Commitment to create an Action Plan: Within 6 months of adopting the Charter Within 1 year of adopting the Charter Other:
SIGNATORY INFORMATION
Signature of Signing Authority:
Name of Signing Authority (please print):
Title of Signing Authority:
Date (dd/mm/yy):