

Sebastian Rodrigues
CEIU National Vice President – Human Rights
Fall 2019 Report

It has become apparent that our members with a disability continue to struggle in the workplace. For example, members who have a sensitivity to scent/perfume or chemicals are impacted when this concern is neglected or not adhered to immediately. This is an ongoing concern and we are continuing to push for a more formal policy in the workplace.

Members who are deaf or hearing impaired struggled with the Armed Intruder Awareness on-line training. I spoke to an employee with a disability (this person is deaf and cannot speak at all), as well, to other employees with some kind of a disability, who have expressed similar concerns like during an emergency evacuation or during an armed intruder invasion. I addressed these concerns through the Human Resource's Union Management Consultation Committee meeting and I have it as an agenda item for the upcoming PSAC-National Human Rights Committee meeting in October.

At the HRUMCC meeting on June 10, an update on Diversity and Employment Equity Action Plan was provided and elaborated on where the Department is moving to ensure recruitment and retention of personnel in the areas where improvements are deemed necessary:

Visible Minorities:

Management stated that their self-identification campaign held from October to December 2018 was successful by the Department in approaching 5,000 visible minority employees. The department will leverage the information obtained from the newly issued 2016 Labour Market Availability rate.

Aboriginal Peoples (Indigenous):

In response to an inquiry as to whether the terminology used should be 'aboriginal peoples' or 'indigenous', Todd Burke (Director Human Resources, ESDC) confirmed that the word 'indigenous' is the preferred term and that further presentation material will reflect this.

The Employment Equity Act does make a reference to 'Aboriginal People' and that official documentation still requires the use of this term.

LGBT2Q: I enquired if there is a Diversity Champion identified for the Ontario Region, the employer stated they were not aware and would look into this. Management is actively encouraging and pursuing Positive Space Ambassadors.

Self-identification appears to be a concern due to privacy reasons stated by employees.

Persons with Disabilities:

I mentioned that based on the recent self-identification information, this is the only EE group for which the representation of new hires at ESDC is lower than their workforce availability.

In response, management agreed that the word 'gap' used throughout the EE dashboard. This is problematic, as the term does not describe the whole of the situation. Management further agreed with me that numbers do not seem to grow for the reason described above.

The number of persons with disabilities also increases as employees age and thus acquire new health issues, which in turn can become disabilities. Management stated that a departmental strategy is being prepared to ensure that we can meet the 'gaps' but also recognize the particular challenges for these group of employees.

On another note, mental health plays a vital role in our wellbeing, if neglected mental health can have serious consequences to the employee and to others around them. It is very important to acknowledge and identify mental health problems before they lead to a severe disability, which could cause harm to the individual or others.

In closing, it is important to note that the completeness and accuracy of employment equity data for the core public administration (CPA), for which the Treasury Board is the employer depends on the willingness of employees to self-identify and on departments providing opportunities for them to do so. In addition, it is equally imperative for our members to **self-identify within the Union** as well, so that the Union can monitor the level of equity members in our organization, particularly when it affects our members during Work Force Adjustment, recruitment and retention programs. Please take a moment and self-identify (<https://www.ceiu-seic.ca/ceiuforms>) if you have not already done so.

Respectfully submitted.

In solidarity,

Sebastian

National Vice President Human Rights &

Chair National Human Rights/Race Relations Committee

"We are way more powerful when we turn to each other and not on each other, when we celebrate our diversity... and together tear down the mighty walls of injustice." Cynthia McKinney

(S. Rodrigues NVP-HR) Activity Report for the period (April 2019 to September 2019):

- April 12-14 2019 - HRRR Committee meeting
- April 29th 2019 - NE emergency conference call
- May 17th 2019 - NCR-HRRR Committee meeting
- May 31-June 1st 2019 - Ontario President's conference
- June 7th 2019 - MWD network
- June 10th 2019 - HRUMCC meeting
- June 12th 2019 - National Steering Committee for Diversity and Inclusion
- June 22nd 2019 - CEIU Ont. IRB/IRCC Conference
- June 22nd 2019 - HRRR Conference call at 2-3pm
- June 25th 2019 - NLMCC – IRB
- July 10th 2019 - NE Conference call.
- August 17-18 2019 - Toronto District Conference
- September 12-13 2019- HRRR Committee meeting-Winnipeg
- September 14-15 2019- HRRR 2019 Conference-Winnipeg