

EQUITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

Equity and Inclusion Policy

Confidential Document

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NOTE: This text is a draft. We hope you will forgive any small errors that may have been overlooked.

1. Introduction and goals of this policy

Projet Montréal (hereinafter, the party or PM) is deeply attached to its progressive roots and stands out from the other municipal parties due to the democratic life of its organizations and the emphasis it puts on quality of life and on citizen involvement and participation. This policy is part of the party's effort to invite all Montrealers to join with it in building a city that is in keeping with their identity.

1.1 Introduction to the policy

Equity and inclusion are values that are very dear to Projet Montréal. Since it was founded, the party has recognized the importance of ensuring that all Montrealers are represented and can participate, regardless of their gender, age, origin, religion, sexual orientation, political affiliation, disability or any other individual characteristic. True to its fundamental values, through this Equity and Inclusion Policy PM is conveying a set of directives for ensuring that its organizational culture is inclusive and equitable.

The aim of this policy is to support and promote equity and inclusion. In this way, the party hopes to develop a diversified environment and an inclusive culture by recognizing and reducing the systemic barriers that hinder the participation of certain groups.

This policy is complementary to the standards, provisions, policies and regulations in the Working Conditions Policy, the Code of Ethics of the Governing Council, the Projet Montréal Constitution and all other official documents governing the conduct of our members. It does not in any way replace the *Constitution and Bylaws* document, which remains the party's ultimate reference.

This *Equity and Inclusion Policy* is intended to be complementary to the legal framework related to human rights and the fight against discrimination, including the *Charter of human rights and freedoms*, the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, and the *Act respecting labour standards*. It neither limits the scope of the applicable legislative texts nor acts as a substitute for recourse under the provisions of the law.

1.2 Principles and values

This policy is based on the following two fundamental principles:

- All people have the right to be treated equitably, with dignity and with respect for their physical and psychological integrity;
- All people have the right to be treated equally, without discrimination or harassment based on their sex, their “race¹,” their colour, their ethnic or national origin, their age, a disability, their religion, their gender identity and expression, their social condition, their sexual orientation, or any other unlawful motive for discrimination.

Accordingly, in a spirit of solidarity and justice, the party is advocating through this policy for equity, respect, and individual and collective responsibility for the creation and preservation of safer environments for society’s most marginalized groups.

1.3 General objectives

The objectives of this policy are:

1. To provide the party with a tool for combatting all forms of direct or indirect discrimination within the organization based on one of the grounds listed in the *Charter of human rights and freedoms*;
2. Promote and ensure equity and inclusion within Projet Montréal and within all the entities of the party by limiting the obstacles to the representation and participation of groups that are marginalized in society;
3. Establish a complaint handling process for victims of practices, acts or language that are forbidden under this policy;
4. Foster the development and adoption of equity and inclusion practices, in particular by raising awareness among party members and staff and by educating them.

¹ To acknowledge the social understanding of racism, quotation marks are used for references to the notion of “race” in this document, as a reminder of the social process behind the categorization of individuals into “races” based on certain characteristics. In the same way, the adjective “racialized” designates groups and individuals who are victims of this process. The only exceptions will be excerpts or quotations from other sources and references to legal categories or documents.

2. Definitions

“Abuse of power”: An abuse of power is the excessive exercise of a power granted under the party constitution. In more concrete terms, it would consist of a member, a candidate, an elected representative or an employee making use of his or her power for personal gain or for the benefit of another person. Abuse of power also includes situations where there is a relationship of authority or a hierarchical relationship, such as between adults and minors.

“Accommodation”: An accommodation consists of the adjustment of a standard or a broadly applicable practice in order to afford different treatment to a person who otherwise would suffer negative effects due to the application of said standard or practice. Accommodation is not equivalent to privileged treatment; rather, it is a legal obligation derived from the *Charter of human rights and freedoms*, to which all organizations are subject. Accommodation corrects for discriminatory effects and only applies in exceptional cases. An accommodation can only be granted if it is reasonable and feasible; in other words, if it does not impose any excessive constraint on the establishment with regard to considerations like the costs related to it, its effects on normal operations, its impact on the rights of others, and other considerations.

“Direct discrimination”: A distinction, exclusion or preference based on one of the grounds prohibited by the *Charter of human rights and freedoms*.

“Diversity”: Visible and invisible differences that exist between individuals, particularly, but not solely, sex, “race,” ethnic origin, physical and mental capacities, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, social condition, language, religion, nationality, education and more. This list is neither exhaustive nor restrictive. Increasing diversity means ensuring that there is equitable representation of the entire population within an organization.

“Entity”: A term that includes the Convention, the General Council, the Governing Council, the Executive Committee, the local associations, the local councils, the sub-committees, the caucus of elected officials and the Conciliation Commission.

“Equity”: Equity refers to a feeling or the perception of justice with regard to a given situation. This concept tends to ensure that all individuals have an equal chance to make the most of their lives and their skills. Equity is based on justice and impartiality. Equity recognizes that, historically, certain groups of people with particular characteristics, such as racialized persons, persons with disabilities, women and LGBTQ+ persons, have been victims of discrimination.

“Harassment”: Conduct that is manifested in offensive, condescending, hostile or undesired language or behaviour toward one or more persons and that negatively impacts such persons’ dignity or physical or psychological health. A single serious act can also constitute harassment if it produces a continuing harmful effect on the victim.

“Inclusion”: In its broadest sense, inclusion reflects the notion of openness to everyone and allows every person to participate in the common aspects of society. For the purposes of this policy, it consists in ensuring that all people can participate fully in the party’s activities in the manner and at the time that they wish, in the same way as other participants.

“Inclusive visual representation”: Refers to the use of images, illustrations, photos, etc. that include a diverse range of societal groups (women, Indigenous persons, racialized persons, seniors, young people, disabled persons, etc.).

“Indirect discrimination”: A distinction, exclusion or preference based on the application of a rule, a policy or a practice that, on the face of it, appears to be neutral, but that in fact has harmful effects on a person or a group of people due to a personal characteristic, and that thus compromises or prevents the full exercise of one of the rights or freedoms protected by the *Charter of human rights and freedoms*.

“Private event”: An activity solely reserved for members of Projet Montréal.

“Public event”: An activity organized by Projet Montréal that is open to all Montrealers.

“Safer environment”: A space, created through actions and words, that is free of discriminatory bias, conflict, criticism, threats, actions, ideas and conversations. The word “safer” emphasizes the impossibility of providing a completely safe environment for all people.

“Staff”: Mainly refers to permanent and temporary employees and contract employees of the party. This also includes political staff, such as political attachés, chiefs of staff, consultants, advisers, collaborators, researchers and all those who work for a party elected official, whether paid by Projet Montréal or not.

“Systemic discrimination”: Discrimination resulting from the dynamic interaction between decisions and attitudes tinged with prejudices, as well as organizational models and institutional practices that have prejudicial effects, whether desired or not, on groups protected by the *Charter of human rights and freedoms*.

“Respondent”: The individual or entity that is the subject of a complaint.

3. Scope of this policy

This policy applies to the activities of the party, including:

- The administrative activities that fall to the permanent staff, such as recruitment, training and promotions;
- Member activities related to the internal life of the party in all its entities, such as meetings of committees, sub-committees, the Governing Council and local borough associations;
- Public and private events such as conventions, leadership races, candidate nominations, coffee meetings, speeches or information evenings and the other events organized by an entity of the party;
- Electoral or partisan activities such as phone banking, door-to-door canvassing or other public activities such as consultations.

It concerns:

- PM staff;
- Volunteers recruited to support party activities;
- Members of an entity of the party;
- Projet Montréal elected officials and candidates;
- Those who are members of a campaign team, including volunteers and contract employees recruited in the context of an election campaign;
- Any person who participates in an activity organized by the party.

4. Commitments

Projet Montréal wants to create an environment where all people are treated equitably, with respect and dignity.

Consequently, the party condemns all manifestations of sexism, discrimination, racism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, ageism, abuse of power or any other type of behaviour or practice that results in the exclusion of, or physical or psychological harm to, any other person in the course of the activities of the party.

Projet Montréal recognizes that creating an inclusive organizational culture is a continuous process that does not end with the drafting of policies. The party therefore commits to implement concrete measures to pursue the objectives of this policy.

Finally, as an employer, the party adheres to the principle of equal access to employment in order to ensure that there is diversity among its staff members. PM commits to do the same with regard to the composition of its campaign teams, candidates and elected officials.

For the purposes of this policy, the party undertakes to:

- Have zero tolerance when it comes to the language and behaviours forbidden by this policy;
- Develop action plans, particularly for the Governing Council, that include concrete measures, objectives and conclusive indicators regarding equity and inclusion, and evaluate them regularly in the aim of continually improving them;
- Assign the task of applying and evaluating this policy to a member of the permanent staff with the relevant education and/or professional experience, and clearly indicate this person's name and contact information through various methods of communication (brochure, website, etc.);
- Help prevent the actions and behaviours forbidden by this policy through awareness-raising activities and training;
- Promote this policy to party members and sympathizers and all those participating in a party activity.

4.1 The party's statement of commitments on equity and inclusion

The following statement is meant to be read aloud and to be included with documents distributed on the occasion of all official party events, such as conventions, fundraising

events, etc., following the declaration of recognition and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

The vision of Projet Montréal is that of a party in which all people feel respected, included and safe. Our strength lies in the diversity of our voices. That is why, as a party, we declare the following:

We, the members of Projet Montréal, believe that each person has the right to be treated equitably, with respect and dignity. It is our collective responsibility to foster a welcoming, inclusive and safe atmosphere.

We encourage the participation of historically marginalized persons through the creation of a safer and more inclusive environment.

Consequently, we condemn all behaviour and language that negatively impacts the dignity of a person or a person's rights or physical or psychological safety, in particular harassment and discrimination.

Finally, we recognize that the work of inclusion is a continuing process and that it is not limited to a policy or a statement.

5. Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples

The island of Tiohtiá:ke (in the Kanien'kehá:ka language), now known as "Montréal," is the home of several peoples, and in particular, a diverse Indigenous population. The historical, current and future presence of First Nations requires Projet Montréal to pay attention to fostering amicable and respectful relationships with the Indigenous communities in Montréal.

The party recognizes that, due to colonialism and racism, there are barriers to the participation and representation of Indigenous peoples in its organization. In the aim of promoting the participation and representation of Indigenous people in the party, PM undertakes to include sessions on the history, knowledge and culture of Indigenous peoples and the development of intercultural skills in the training it offers to its members.

Finally, as part of the process of reconciliation, the vision that Projet Montréal offers to Montréal's population through its program must take into account the reality, the needs and the experiences of Indigenous people living in Montréal.

5.1 Territorial acknowledgement

The following statement is meant to be read aloud and to be included with documents distributed on the occasion of all official party events, such as conventions, fundraising events, coffee meetings, etc.

"We acknowledge that we are in a thousand-year-old unceded Indigenous territory, a place of meetings and diplomacy between peoples and the location of the signing of the Great Peace Treaty. We thank the Kanien'keha'ka (Mohawk) nation for its hospitality in this territory."

6. Complaint handling process

A person or a group of persons who feels that their rights have been violated through a party activity can invoke the *Equity and Inclusion Policy* and lodge a complaint with the person responsible for ensuring that this policy is applied (for example, the person responsible for diversity and inclusion).

Everybody has the right to invoke this policy without fear of reprisal, unless the claim is made with the intention to mislead by means of a false statement.

Discretion and reserve must be applied in the exercise of this right. All information related to a complaint, as well as the identity of the people concerned, is to be handled confidentially as far as possible by all the people involved in the process until a decision is made, unless this information is required for the complaint to be evaluated, for an inquiry to be carried out or for further actions to be taken.

6.1 Complaint handling committee

Depending on the gravity of the case reported, a complaint handling committee (hereinafter, the committee) may be established for the entire duration of the complaint handling process.

The person responsible for the application of this policy is responsible for assessing the need for the establishment of a committee, in particular when the complaint concerns the

party or is reporting a situation that is deemed to be serious. The complainant may also request that the complaint be evaluated by the committee.

The committee must receive the management support required for it to carry out its mandate (access to internal or external resources as needed). The complaint handling committee is made up of three people:

- One member of the permanent staff of the party;
- Two members of the Conciliation Commission.

The Conciliation Commission determines which of its members will sit on the committee. At least one of the people on the committee must be a woman. The composition of the committee must also, where possible, include representation of the diversity in the case to be handled.

If there is a conflict of interest with regard to the members of the permanent staff or the Conciliation Committee, a member of the Governing Council may be invited to sit on the committee.

6.2 Lodging of a complaint

Anyone who wishes to lodge a complaint must contact the person in charge of applying this policy.

The complaint may be communicated by email, by telephone or in person. In cases where the complaint is made orally, the person in charge of applying this policy must record the allegations and relevant information in writing as soon as the complaint is received.

If the case so requires, the complaint is communicated to the members of the complaint handling committee as soon as possible.

If an employee or a member of one of the entities of Projet Montréal becomes aware of a discriminatory situation or any other behaviour, language or practice prohibited by this policy, including informally, he or she must provide the complainant with all the information needed so that the complainant can formally lodge the complaint.

6.3 Evaluation process

As soon as the complaint is received, the person in charge of applying this policy carries out an initial evaluation of the complaint.

To be admissible, the complaint must meet the following criteria:

1. The complaint concerns a practice or conduct prohibited by this policy;
2. The practice or the conduct took place in the context of a party activity;
3. The complaint was lodged within two (2) years following the last manifestation of the prohibited practice, language or act;
4. The complaint concerns:
 - a. Any person identified in section 3 (“Scope of this policy”) of this policy, or
 - b. The party as a whole.

Further to this initial evaluation, three decisions can be taken:

- If the complaint is deemed inadmissible, the complainant is informed of the inadmissibility of the complaint and follow-up is performed until the end of the process. The complainant has **30** days to appeal this decision. After this time limit, the complaint is considered to be resolved.
- If the complaint is deemed admissible and urgent, the person in charge of applying this policy evaluates, with the complainant, the possibility of quickly and reasonably resolving the immediate causes of the complaint. If the complainant is satisfied, the complaint can be considered resolved. If not, the process can lead to a formal inquiry, as described below.
- If the complaint is deemed admissible and not urgent, an inquiry is launched. First, the respondent is informed that a complaint has been made against him or her. The person in charge of applying this policy, or the complaint handling committee, is responsible for collecting testimony and statements from the victim, the respondent, and possible witnesses. The information collected is recorded in a report that is submitted to the Governing Council at the end of the inquiry.

During the evaluation of the complaint, the committee or the person in charge must also advise the stakeholders that interim measures may be taken to facilitate the process and ensure a safe environment for the complainant and the respondent.

If necessary, the committee may consult with the other members of the Conciliation Commission or an external expert for support in carrying out the work, while ensuring that the confidentiality of the process and the identities of those concerned are protected.

Depending on the complexity of the case, upon the request of the committee, the Conciliation Commission can decide to increase the committee to four (4) or five (5) people sourced from either the permanent staff, the Governing Council or the Conciliation Commission.

The evaluation process for the complaint must conclude within a timeframe ranging from **30** to **90** days after the date when its admissibility was communicated to the concerned parties.

The Director General must be informed of all complaints and is responsible for archiving them.

6.3.1 Complaints about the party

If a complaint that is deemed admissible is about the party, the person responsible for applying this policy informs the President of the party, who acts as the respondent.

The President is responsible for representing the party throughout the complaint evaluation process and until its resolution. The President may also choose to assign another member of the Governing Council or the party's Director General to represent the party.

6.4 Mediation

At any point in time during the process, mediation can be offered to the two parties.

If the concerned parties agree to mediation, an accredited mediator is appointed.

For a complaint to be considered to have been settled through mediation, the mediator must deliver an amicable settlement agreement signed by the concerned parties.

A copy of the settlement agreement is sent to the Director General, who is responsible for archiving it and seeing that it is applied.

The stakeholders may withdraw from mediation at any time. In such case, the complaint handling process will continue.

6.5 Conclusion of the complaint handling process

Based on the inquiry carried out, the committee or the person in charge of applying this policy determines the measures to be taken. These measures must take into account the seriousness of the language, behaviour or practice reported, whether it was repeated or systemic, and the relationship of authority between the concerned parties.

The evaluation of the complaint must also include the true or probable consequences of the behaviour, practice or language at the origin of the complaint on the party's organizational culture.

Depending on the nature of the complaint, four types of conclusions are possible:

- No measure taken

If the evaluation of the complaint makes it impossible to conclude that any discrimination or any other practice, language or behaviour prohibited by this policy took place, no action may be necessary.

- Non-restrictive measures

If the complaint is determined to be minor in terms of gravity, the respondent must make a written commitment to cease the harmful behaviour and may be the subject of measures aiming to symbolically remedy the harm caused. The complainant must have been consulted as part of the choice of the remedy and his or her opinion must have been taken into account.

Examples of non-restrictive measures:

- The respondent acknowledges the actions that gave rise to the complaint and his or her responsibility;
- The respondent writes a letter of apology to the complainant or a party entity;
- The party organizes an awareness-raising session for its members;
- The respondent agrees to participate in informative or awareness-raising sessions on discrimination, harassment, or any other relevant subject.

- Sanctions

If the complaint is deemed to be moderate or major in terms of gravity, sanctions may be recommended. These sanctions must help create a safe and respectful environment for the victim and for others involved in the party and, if necessary, provide them with some

distance from the problematic person in an appropriate manner. These measures may be temporary or permanent.

Examples of sanctions:

- Installing an access ramp to make a venue accessible;
 - Having the Governing Council submit a motion to the Convention, Special Convention or the General Council for the purpose of rectifying a discriminatory practice;
 - Forbidding communication between the concerned parties;
 - Banning the person from certain entities of the party;
 - Suspension of member status for a certain period of time;
 - Expulsion from the party and withdrawal of member status.
- External procedures

If the complaint consists of circumstances that are very serious or potentially criminal, the complainant may be directed to contact the police or other relevant external resources.

In addition, the committee or the person in charge of evaluating the complaint may suggest measures to the Director General and the Governing Council for protecting the alleged victim's physical and psychological safety.

In the case of a practice that is deemed discriminatory or detrimental to the inclusiveness of the party, measures must be suggested to the Governing Council, the General Council, or ultimately the Convention in order to put an end to the practice or reduce its harmful effects.

This policy does not replace legal reporting steps. The alleged victim can decide to opt for a formal accusation process and, in such case, must receive the party's support in doing so.

6.6 Suspension or withdrawal of a complaint

The complainant can decide to suspend or withdraw his or her complaint at any time by informing the committee or the person in charge of applying this policy. The complaint resolution process is interrupted or closed, in that case.

The General Director, the Governing Council and the respondent are informed of the end of the complaint handling process.

The General Director must archive the file. The complaint is then considered resolved.

6.7 Appeal process

A request for an appeal can be sent to the chair of the Governing Council within 30 days after the decision if the complainant, the alleged victim or the respondent feels that one of the following is true:

- The measures chosen are not in keeping with the seriousness of the situation;
- The resolution committee did not act impartially;
- Procedural errors or errors in the application of this policy adversely affected the process;
- Significant new information has come to light;
- Any other exceptional situation.

The members of the Governing Council evaluate the request for appeal and decide if it is admissible. If the request is deemed admissible, a new resolution committee made up of three different people from the initial committee is created and a new resolution process is begun. The decision following the appeal process is final and no other means of appeal exists.

7. Accessibility

In the aim of eliminating barriers limiting the participation of people with a disability, Projet Montréal espouses the principles of universal accessibility. Accordingly, Projet Montréal undertakes to include these principles in the evaluation of all its initiatives so that universal accessibility is included, right from the outset.

Similarly, the party, in consultation with disabled members, must adopt accessibility measures to facilitate participation in party activities for members and staff with a disability. The party also commits to make its head office accessible. To do this, the party is including a budget item specifically for accessibility.

The party will systematically communicate the details on the accessibility measures taken in the descriptions of its activities, particularly in invitations, in its documents, and on its website.

Examples of accessibility measures:

- Organizing all of its activities in accessible locations with, at a minimum, a level threshold and a functioning automatic door at the entrance and an accessible washroom;

- Ensuring that all of its documents are accessible, by offering different formats or means of reading them (simplified text, web accessibility, etc.);
- Providing sign language interpretation for anyone who asks for it.

In consultation with members with a disability, the party will ensure that it keeps its accessibility practices up to date, with a view to continuous improvement.

7.1 Accommodations

If Projet Montréal is not able to keep its commitment regarding accessibility, the party must, in all cases, take reasonable measures to accommodate people with a disability.

The party will identify a person who will be responsible for receiving, evaluating and responding to requests for accommodation. This person will work in collaboration with the people organizing the activity, such as the event organizer and the committee or local association coordinator.

8. Communication

8.1 Relations with linguistic minorities

As the official language of Quebec is French², that is the language in which Projet Montréal mainly communicates.

However, the party recognizes that the language can be an obstacle for those who have not mastered it. In order to keep its commitments in terms of equity and inclusion, Projet Montréal will offer translated versions of its communications in other languages³, particularly English, where possible.

8.2 Inclusive visual representation and writing

² Section 1 of the *Charter of the French language*

³ The choice of languages is based on Montréal's linguistic demographic data. The three most frequently spoken languages in the population will be favoured.

Projet Montréal believes in the power of words and images to strengthen stereotypes and prejudice or to bring them down. The party wishes to ensure that all people feel represented and appreciated in its communications.

PM therefore favours inclusive writing⁴ and visual representations in all its communications.

9. Final provisions

9.1 Adoption of the policy

This policy enters into force upon its adoption by the Governing Council, that is, on August 14, 2019.

9.2 Review of the policy

This policy will be reviewed every four (4) years. The Director General is responsible for assigning a member of the permanent staff to that task and, if amendments are deemed necessary, the staff member will submit recommendations to the Governing Council.

⁴ Refer to Projet Montréal's language policy.