



# **Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Reconciliation, and Accessibility Framework 2023-2027**

March 2025

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# Introduction

We are excited to share Hearing and Speech Nova Scotia's first Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Reconciliation, and Accessibility (EDIRA) Framework, which will guide our organization's work to advance EDIRA for our clients, families, caregivers and people.

We want to acknowledge and thank the people who share their insights, experiences and advice with us as we tackle persistent issues related to discrimination, systemic racism, and health disparities.

*Hearing and Speech Nova Scotia EDIRA Committee*



**BALSAM**  
Indigenous Reconciliation  
Education & Advisory

**isans**

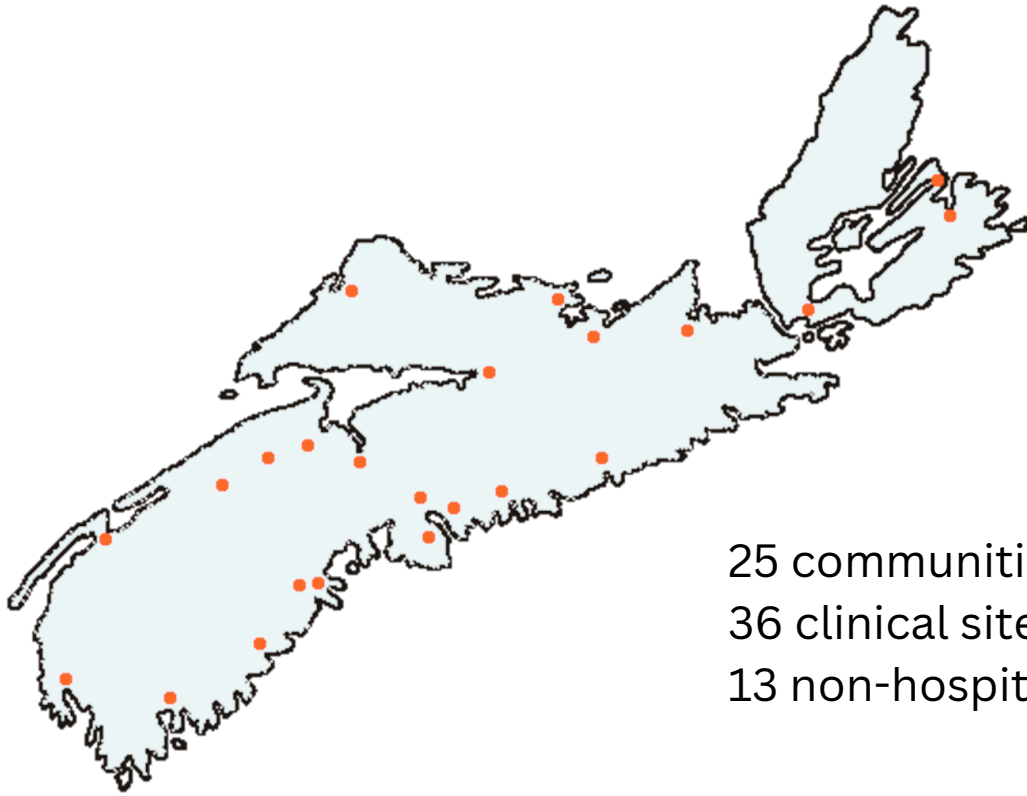
Immigrant Services  
Association of Nova Scotia



Our clients

# Vision

**Every person deserves a voice.  
Every voice deserves to be heard.**



25 communities  
36 clinical sites  
13 non-hospital sites

Our vision at Hearing and Speech Nova Scotia is that every person has a voice and that every voice will be heard. We know that this can only happen when we uncover and eliminate systemic racism and discrimination in our workforce and for our clients. We also recognize and celebrate the rich heritage of Nova Scotia, fostering a culture of inclusivity, respect, and belonging for all. This framework will guide our work.

**Our Vision:** Every Person Deserves a Voice. Every Voice Deserves to be Heard compels everyone at HSNS to listen, reflect, uncover and eliminate systemic racism and discrimination in our organization.

We know that systemic racism is a persistent problem in Nova Scotia and is rooted in our colonial history. We are excited to share Hearing and Speech Nova Scotia's (HSNS) first Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Reconciliation and Accessibility (EDIRA) Framework, which will guide our organization's work to advance EDIRA principles in all we do.



Over the past four years, the EDI Task Force has committed to making HSNS more inclusive for our staff, our families and clients by providing education, resources and increasing overall awareness of EDIRA principles across the organization.

In January 2025, it was decided that the EDI task force should become a provincewide standing committee and, change its name to EDIRA and build a framework to **reflect**, **uncover** and **eliminate** systemic racism and discrimination based on:

- gender
- gender identity
- race
- colour
- culture
- language
- beliefs
- income
- neurodiversity
- literacy level
- employment
- housing status
- health status
- social status
- migration status
- ethnicity
- history
- sexual orientation
- age
- ableism
- physical disability
- different language modalities (AAC, sign)



## Our journey

Since the beginning of the EDI task group, we have:

- Added EDIRA as a standing agenda item to our Labour Relations Committee meetings
- Initiated greater awareness and education at all levels of HSNS related to:
  - EDIRA
  - Anti-Black Racism
  - Microaggression
- Built a partnership with ISANS to educate our Board and staff.
- Formation of the mEDIRa club, where EDIRA resources are shared and discussed across the organization
- All staff training to improve awareness and understanding of:
  - Cultural Black Nova Scotia
  - Neurodiversity
  - Indigenous
  - 2SLGBTQI+ and
  - Disabled Community

- Designed our first staff experience survey to get a baseline understanding of the identities of HSNS’s team related to equity, diversity and inclusion.
- Added key documents to staff and Board SharePoint sites:
  - United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)
  - Truth and Reconciliation Committee's Calls to Action (TRC)
  - National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls report (MMIWG)
  - In Plain Sight report and other relevant jurisdictional documents, such as the BC Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA)
  - BC's Métis history and the Indian Act (including its negative impacts) and others
- Successfully negotiated the addition of “designated positions” and flexible holidays into our collective agreement (SP2024 target)
- Developed EDIRA principles to guide clinical standards and procedures (SP2024 Target)
- Engagement with affected community members



# Values

We actively support and promote EDIRA by including these values in everything we do.

C

**Client-centred Care:** Focusing on our clients' needs and ensure they receive respectful and personalized care.

L

**Leadership:** Setting a good example by promoting EDIRA in everything we do. This encourages others to do the same and helps create positive changes.

A

**Accessibility:** Removing barriers so all people can get the help they need.

S

**Support:** Giving support to our clients and staff, understanding that everyone has different needs and challenges.

S

**Safety:** Ensuring our environment is safe and welcoming, where people can be themselves without fear of discrimination or harm.

I

**Integrity:** Being honest and transparent in our work. We stick to EDIRA principles and strive to do what is right and fair.

C

**Collaboration:** Teaming with clients, communities, and groups to promote EDIRA to create a fair and inclusive environment.

## EDIRA Pillars

The EDIRA Framework includes specific phased-in objectives to reflect, uncover and eliminate systemic racism and discrimination across these five pillars of our organization:



# Goals



## **Workplace Culture:**

- Transition the EDI Taskforce to the EDIRA Committee
- Conduct the first Demographic Census Survey to provide a baseline understanding of needs and issues related to EDIRA at HSNS and identify action priorities.
- Create a safe culture for incident reporting, including complaints of identity-based discrimination and harassment.



## **Policies and Procedures:**

- Integrate EDIRA and client's voice into HSNS policies and procedures
- Provide learning and development of EDIRA principles
- Build partnerships with community members with lived experience, ISANS, and other knowledgeable groups.



## **Client/Family Centred Care:**

- Provide key materials and communications—including the Reconciliation Action Plan, the Anti-Systemic Racism Plan, and the EDIRA Plan—in both official languages and offer services in multiple languages to promote inclusivity and accountability.
- Track complaints of racism and discrimination among staff and clients
- Promote EDIRA through our People-Centred Care strategy to advance health equity.



### **Recruitment and retention:**

- Establish two language/minority-designated positions within the next year
- Enhance EDIRA training upon onboarding
- Implement a voluntary, confidential process within our application platform to collect demographic information from candidates, ensuring compliance with privacy regulations and reinforcing our commitment to EDIRA.



### **Communication :**

- Establish an EDIRA report to evaluate outcomes and progress on all initiatives
- Update our Engagement Plan to build partnerships with the diverse communities of Nova Scotia
- Leverage social media (website, Facebook, LinkedIn)
- Continuously assess barriers and opportunities for improvement
- Begin providing key materials and communications in both official languages within the next year, promoting inclusivity and accountability

## Strategic Themes

HSNS' strategic themes - **Access, Communication, and Engagement (ACE)** - are intricately aligned with Nova Scotia's Health Equity, Inclusion, Diversity, and Anti-Racism Framework.

The **Strategic Plan 2024** supports EDIRA tasks within these directives:

### EDIRA principles guide patient/family centred care



## Supporting documents

- EDIRA Action Plan 2023-2027
- Reconciliation Action Plan
- Anti-Systemic Racism Plan

