

Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Implementation Guide

[Updated December 2023]

The Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression (ARAO) Implementation Guide offers guidance for organizations adopting or adapting the sector-wide Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Policy developed by OCASI.

This document is meant to guide organizations and is not intended to function as a plan for implementing the Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Policy. The guide supports and provides organizations and agencies with information and considerations they may utilize to help introduce this ARAO Policy or an adapted version in their organization.

Organizations are encouraged to align practices and procedures that contribute to the implementation of the policy, promote social justice, and foster equity, anti-racism, and anti-oppression in the immigrant, migrant and refugee serving sector.

We recognize that organizations and agencies may be at various stages of development and implementation of ARAO policies and practices. We hope that using the policy can help align organizations in their efforts to address and confront racism and oppression in their organizations.

From Intention to Action: The Development of a Policy and Implementation Guide

How the Policy and Implementation Guide came to be

Developing a sector-wide Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Policy (ARAO) and Implementation Guide builds on the recommendations from the OCASI Anti-Racism Environmental Assessment conducted in 2021. The ARAO Policy and Implementation Guide aims to support OCASI's direction of addressing and confronting racism and oppression within the im/migrant and refugee serving sector. In addition, the Policy and Guide are available to organizations in their efforts to address and confront racism and oppression.

Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Policy

As one of the recommendations from the environmental assessment, we revised our ARAO Policy. Under the guidance of the OCASI Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression (ARAO) Advisory Panel and the third-party consultant ASHARE Group Inc., the new policy was developed using

anti-racist, intersectional¹, and feminist² lenses that honour and support OCASI's operational framework. The new policy is available to all member agencies to adopt or adapt voluntarily and will guide the sector in addressing and confronting racism and oppression in Ontario.

Implementation Guide

The Implementation Guide is a secondary document that will supplement the ARAO Policy and be available to all members. The guide's purpose is to support organizations in adopting or adapting the policy and identify practices that organizations can consider throughout their introduction and implementation of the policy.

See Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Overview

Foundations: Guiding Principles and Practices

IDENTIFY ← → ADVOCATE ← → PROMOTE ← → CHANGE

Building on the work and relationships established during the drafting of the original policy, the revised ARAO Policy utilized a similar method of participatory approach involving extensive discussions, conversations, and decision-making with various employees, stakeholders, and networks/councils/collectives.

The process of this consultation demonstrates the benefits of democratic and collective work across levels. Through this collaborative effort, the Policy is created and based on principles and practices that collectively intend to:

1. Support Sector Progress
2. Promote and Advance Strategic and Organizational Action
3. Proactively and Systematically address Racism and Oppression
4. Foster Practices of Community, Care and Accountability
5. Encourage and Support the Settlement and Participation of im/migrants and refugees

¹ <https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1052&context=uclf>

² bell. *Feminism Is for Everybody: Passionate Politics.*, 2000. Print. and hooks, bell. *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center.* Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2

Support Sector Progress	The purpose of a sector-wide available ARAO Policy is to the ARAO Policy aims to foster anti-racism and anti-oppression values and attitudes and develop anti-racism-anti-oppression knowledge and practices within the im/migrant and refugee service sector.
Promote and Advance Strategic and Organizational Action	The ARAO Policy will be available to the OCASI membership-to adopt/adapt. The organization commits to aligning with the purpose and goal of 'OCASI's mission to address and confront racism and oppression in Ontario. The organization will be autonomous/independent and accountable for introducing, implementing, and upholding an ARAO Policy in good faith.
Proactively and Systematically Address Racism and Oppression	While understanding the subject matter of anti-racism and anti-oppression will vary, the policy asserts and supports challenging racism and oppression within organizations and the sector by confronting systemic and institutional inequities through practice knowledge building and policy.
Foster Practices of Community, Care, and Accountability	Intersectionality supports reframing the experiences of non-white and marginalized groups and centers on new and collaborative ways of producing and utilizing knowledge and forms of community development and care.
Encourage and Support the Settlement and Participation of im/migrants and refugees	The im/migrant and refugee serving sector continually works toward ensuring equitable access and full participation of im/migrants and refugees in Ontario and Canada through support, availability of information, active participation, and ongoing practices and commitment.

Referencing the OCASI Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Kit

Member organizations and agencies who wish to adopt or adapt the OCASI Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Policy will have access to the OCASI ARAO Kit to support the introduction.

The Kit aims to provide general guidance and information to support organizations and agencies in leading meaningful action and change to address racism and oppression in their organizations and the sector.

The package includes four (4) documents: Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Policy, Overview, Glossary, and Implementation Guide.

- **Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Policy (7 pages)**
 - Policy organizations and agencies can adopt or adapt to fit an organization.
- **Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Overview (6 pages)**
 - An overview of the ARAO policy and provides background and contextual information about its development, processes, intended uses, and application.
- **Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Glossary (7 pages)**
 - A list of key terms organizations can refer to and are specific to support level-setting understanding of words/phrases used to address racism and oppression. The list is not exhaustive.
- **Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Implementation Guide (10 pages)**
 - The Implementation Guide aims to support organizations and agencies to plan for introducing an ARAO Policy into organizations and agencies.

Considerations for Introduction

We understand that organizations and agencies may be at various places concerning anti-racism and anti-oppression. We have invited organizations to introduce and implement an ARAO Policy that meets their organizational needs.

The creation of the Implementation Guide is to support organizations in introducing or supplementing existing Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression policies in their organization to address and advance social justice in the sector.

For this reason, organizations and agencies are invited to participate in a sectoral commitment by adopting or adapting a version of this ARAO Policy. Below are descriptions of what each option might look like in your organization. Four Pillars for Consideration have also been outlined to support organizations aligning internal policies with this Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Policy.

Adoption of Policy

Members who adopt this Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Policy will use it without making any changes to the policy/document.

Adaptation of Policy

Members who adopt this Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Policy may change or use parts of the document to supplement another Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Policy or other internal policies.

Pillars

Four policy areas have been outlined as considerations organizations can refer to when adopting or adapting a version of this Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Policy.

The four Pillars align with specific policy areas and have been identified to create consistency across member organizations choosing to adopt or adapt a version of this policy.

Organizations can refer to the pillars to align with policy objectives to support internal implementation, other policies, and OCASI's mission to combat racism and oppression.

Organizational Accountability (Mission, Values and Beliefs)	Identify what the organization champions (mission, values, beliefs), overall commitment (why/how the organization stands behind its mission, values, and beliefs, and aims (impact) (1.1)
Organizational Guiding Principles	Identify a commitment to address, challenge, and eliminate racism and other oppressions within organizational systems, policies, and practices and influence/impact societal changes (2.2) Identify Commitment to advancing solidarity with First Nations, Metis & Inuit peoples through relationship building and repair with Indigenous communities (2.2) Specify the intended purpose of the policy (2.1)
Organizational Implementation	Identify persons who will be responsible for implementation, upholding, and oversight of the ARAO Policy (3.1)

Related Policies	Identify and list related policies or resources that will support the implementation, oversight, and upholding of the ARAO Policy (4.1, 4.2)
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Guide for Introduction and Implementation

We understand an organization can promote, change, and engage with this policy in different and unique ways and recognize that an organization can implement changes in multiple ways. With this in mind, we have collaboratively engaged various and dynamic voices within the sector to support the development of the policy and guide.

Through this process, we aimed to capture the uniqueness of member organizations and agencies and support efforts to address racism and oppression within organizations, the sector, and Canada more broadly. We offer one perspective of guidelines for introduction and early implementation.

Step-by-Step Considerations for Introduction

Review the Policy

- Assess organizational preparedness (e.g., what is our current culture, how are we currently addressing anti-racism and anti-oppression, etc.)
- Strike a team of leaders, a committee, or an advisory to review the policy.
- Discern whether the adoption or adaptation of policy is best suited for your organization.
- Determine and develop policy content.

Communicate Introduction

- Determine the best method of communication based on your organization (for example, you may bring leadership/champions/facilitators together to assess and plan the introduction)
- Inform staff of the upcoming review and state the purpose, goal, expectations, process, and timeline.
- Lead presentation, open forum, survey, or discussion for employees to ask questions or concerns.

Contextualize Introduction

- Consider the organizational goals, proposed outcome, and the intended implementation plan.
- Discern the organizational focus and how to align the introduction or implementation of this ARAO Policy or an adapted version of the ARAO policy with internal initiatives and efforts.

Develop a Plan for Implementation

- Set a timeline, goals, risks, alternative plans, and commitments for implementation.
- Question and plan how the organization will engage staff.
- Communicate updates and Implementation Plan

Creating Supporting Resources

- Create a resource hub, sessions, or spaces for dialogue.
- Provide opportunities for regular check-ins, tracking, follow-up, and support.
- Use challenges and gaps as opportunities for learning and inquiry

Following the environmental/organizational assessment of readiness and policy introduction, organizations are encouraged to reflect on what information resulted regarding opportunities, potential challenges, gaps, further research requirements, and areas for improvement. This information can support the next steps the organization may wish to take with implementation.

Step-by-Step Considerations for Implementation

Policy Leads and Champions (Stakeholder Support)

Gather support and engage various employees across the organization to support the socialization of the policy.

- Define roles and discuss an implementation plan (e.g., next steps, communication plan, department leads, etc.)
- Assess current progress (introduction phase), action plan and items, commitments, and goals.
- Develop resources for policy leads and champions (e.g., point of contact, monthly meetings, documents, guides)

Communicate with Employees

- Communicate the next steps employees take the most appropriate approach for your organization. For example, the organization can design an 'order of introduction' for socialization that works for the workplace (e.g., introduce policy, meet with managers, employee forum for questions, and formally adopt as an organization).

Organizational Alignment

- Review internal policies and procedures that support ARAO.
- Align organizational practices to support policy implementation.

Training, Awareness, and Support

- Formally introduce the ARAO policy to the organization, outlining the purpose, goals, and expectations
- Provide organizational-wide resources and training delivered in various formats.
- Organizations can offer various resources and support to their employee's learning and development, e.g., spaces for dialogue, committees, resource groups, coordinators, specialists, etc.)

[Implementation Guide Sample](#) - Template with Plan Examples

Appendices

Sample Implementation Plan (example)

Implementation Goal	Strategies	Timeline	Person(s) Responsible	Resources Needed	Anticipated adaptive challenges	How will we know if we are progressing?
Organizational Culture, Equity, and Anti-Racism						
Exploration	Develop an understanding of current needs and gaps, including knowledge and capacity. Develop a committee or team to support the work	May - June 2023	Leadership, Equity Specialist/Consultant, and Committee	Time for the task team to engage, participate, and meet	Identifying team members who can support and provide paid working time to accommodate the time required to participate in Partial buy-in	Leadership engagement and Assessment of response to callouts and leadership
ARAO Policy Development						
Introduction	Review current policies and identify gaps Engage employees in discussions or feedback surveys Establish resources and supports to support socialization effectively Provide training and resources to lead/managers/supervisors/committees	July - September 2023	ARAO Policy Team	Time to establish resources, training, and develop and introduce team	Time to discuss communication strategies, plan shared language for consistency, and integrate any feedback received	Identifying gaps and a list of recommendations that lead to adopting or adapting the ARAO Policy to respond to specific organizational needs. Develop appropriate support and resources to help the socialization process and ongoing practices. Create consistency across policies and ensure that procedural changes are done to support socialization and integration
ARAO Policy Integration						
Socialization	Develop a communication plan and	October 2023 - ongoing	ARAO Policy and Dedicated Equity and	Dedicated team or team member to	Limited resources and support to	Support, response, and feedback from managers and

	regularly share information across the organization Provided training and knowledge opportunities for learning and discussion Create accessible resources for policies and identify the person(s) who can support ongoing initiatives and responsibilities		Workplace Well-being Employee	monitor progress and continue to analyze, assess, and promote equality within the organization	continue regular meetings, discussions, and information sharing Lack of dedicated personnel or employee	the Policy Team about the socialization process
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Refer to for detailed implementation plan example: [Implementation Guide Sample](#).

Sample Best Practices

Policy Development

- Develop a policy and supporting practices that identify and action ways your organization will integrate the policy.
- Develop a strategy or plan naming how your organization will facilitate and engage in ongoing learning.

Practices and Procedures

- Create channels and opportunities for staff to input and demonstrate ideas and perspectives and share knowledge that is valued and reflected.
- Create transparent and accountable practices and be clear when sharing how decisions are made.
- Communicate with clear, concise, consistent, and easy-to-read language.
- Set benchmarks and goals to reflect the community and the community's needs.
- Build understanding and shared knowledge into practices and procedures.
- Plan, establish and share communication methods.
- Establish resources and set funds aside to support various stages of consultations and implementation of policies and programs.

Training, Development, Feedback, and Knowledge Building

- Provide learning opportunities to all levels of employees in the organization.
- Collectively collaborate with staff, communities, and leaders to understand current practices, programs, and process
- Develop mentorship programs or employee resource groups to support and advance practices to promote employee relations.
- Provide mentorship and coaching opportunities to help support the work of racialized and Indigenous communities working to advance social justice in Canada.

Supports, Personnel and Oversight

- Establish support and resources for staff to engage in discussion and self-reflection practices.
- Provide tools to support staff to apply specific lenses or practices to their departments and work.
- Ensure materials are available and accessible in various formats and languages.
- Develop mentorship programs or employee resource groups to support and advance practices to promote employee relations.
- Create spaces or resources for sharing feedback, questions, or concerns.

Advocacy and Community Engagement

- Support communities and groups in their independent guided learning and provide anti-racism and anti-oppression awareness and education to community members.
- Continue to advocate for equitable access to rights, protections, and services for all im/migrant and refugees, racialized communities, and Indigenous Peoples
- Create and build relationships with communities.
- Support communities and groups in their independent guided learning and provide anti-racism and anti-oppression awareness and education to community members.
- Continue to advocate for equitable access to rights, protections, and services for all im/migrant and refugees, racialized communities, and Indigenous Peoples

Conclusion

The processes, commitment, and contributions of individuals across the sector to revise the ARAO Policy and create an ARAO Kit reflect the ongoing work required to address racism and oppression in the Im/migrant and Refugee-Serving Sector. This collaborative effort is only possible with the experiences and voices of diverse people who collectively wish to see change and support the action required to make change happen. The ARAO Policy and Kit aim to be a starting point for certain organizations, an addition to current practices for others and hope for a more equitable society for all.