

Toward Greater Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in BC Amateur Sport

With the support of the provincial government and in collaboration with sport leaders, viaSport British Columbia leads the governance, promotion, and development of amateur sport in BC. The Ministry of Tourism, Art, Culture and Sport's [BC Pathways to Sport Strategic Framework](#)ⁱ, envisions a sport system that is accessible, welcoming, and inclusive of all British Columbians regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, culture, background, or ability.

viaSport acknowledges that inequitable access and barriers to positive experiences exist within the sport community. viaSport is committed to working to ensure all British Columbians can benefit from sport by promoting and advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).

Background

DEI, in the sport context, is the practice of identifying, recognizing, and reducing inequalities and inequities that exist within sport across Canada by creating and promoting environments and opportunities for underrepresented communitiesⁱⁱ.

Equity deserving groups are people who, because of systemic discrimination, face barriers that prevent them from having the same access to the resources and opportunities that are available to other members of society, and that are necessary for them to attain just outcomes.ⁱⁱⁱ This includes women and girls, Indigenous peoples, persons with a disability, people of colour, 2SLGBTQ+ individuals and newcomers to Canada. Equity-deserving groups face challenges that are underpinned by systemic power imbalance, cultural norms and socio-economic barriers.

Promoting diversity, equity and inclusion is an important step in tackling inequality and addressing discrimination in sport. By creating inclusive and diverse environments, research^{iv} suggests organizations can access more talent, increase engagement, and provide a positive social outlet.

Embracing diversity and inclusion fosters respectful environments. It broadens the voices at the table and addresses barriers to access. It enables a more positive sport culture where people from different backgrounds are encouraged to participate and supported to develop as athletes, coaches, officials and sport leaders.

Our Commitment and Approach

viaSport is committed to championing a culture that prioritizes experiences that are positive, inclusive and free from harm at every level of amateur sport within the province. viaSport aims to make sport better by providing leadership and guidance to ensure equity-deserving groups are recognized and supported within the sporting community of BC.

[viaSport's Strategic Plan \(2022-2027\)](#), outlines how viaSport is advancing and monitoring the following objectives by collaborating with the Designated Sport Organizations in BC to:

- Establish, collect and report greater diversity metrics.
- Increase the number of sector board members and sport leaders who identify as female to 50%.
- Achieve 100% participation in Indigenous cultural training for funded partners.

viaSport is committed to embedding actions into annual operational plans to drive meaningful change internally and within the amateur sport sector across the following areas:

Human Resources: viaSport strives to create an inclusive work environment where individuals feel valued, respected and empowered to contribute. viaSport actively promotes an inclusive culture through policies, practices and training.

Governance and Leadership: viaSport is dedicated to recruiting and retaining leaders from diverse backgrounds and providing equal opportunity for growth and development. viaSport seeks to attract and retain Board members and employees who reflect the diversity of British Columbia.

Programming and Initiatives: viaSport is committed to supporting sport organizations and leaders to deliver safe, inclusive and welcoming sport experiences. viaSport seeks to enable this through partnerships, sharing of effective practices, training and grant programs.

Marketing and Communications: viaSport is committed to championing DEI by leading campaigns that seek to elevate equity-deserving groups, celebrate diversity and inspire change in the sport community.

Across each of these areas, viaSport is committed to engaging with diverse communities, seeking feedback and assessing progress.

ⁱ Government of British Columbia (2020, March 1). *PATHWAYS TO SPORT: A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR SPORT IN BRITISH COLUMBIA*. www2.gov.bc.ca. Retrieved February 8, 2024, from https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/sports-recreation-arts-and-culture/sports/bc_sport_framework.pdf

ⁱⁱ Government of Canada (2023, November 11). Equity, diversity, inclusion and participation in sport. <https://www.Canada.ca/en.Html>. Retrieved February 29, 2024, from <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/sport-participation.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ Government of Canada (2022, December 28). Glossary – Young Canada Works. <https://www.Canada.ca/en> Retrieved July 22, 2024. <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/funding/young-canada-works/glossary.html>

^{iv} Government of Canada (2023, February 7). The 50 – 30 Challenge: Your Diversity Advantage. <https://www.Canada.ca/en.Html>. Retrieved February 29, 2024, from https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/ised/en/50-30-challenge-your-diversity-advantage#About_the_50/30