



# INCREASING DIVERSE REPRESENTATION ON THE NORTH SHORE: HOW TO GET STARTED

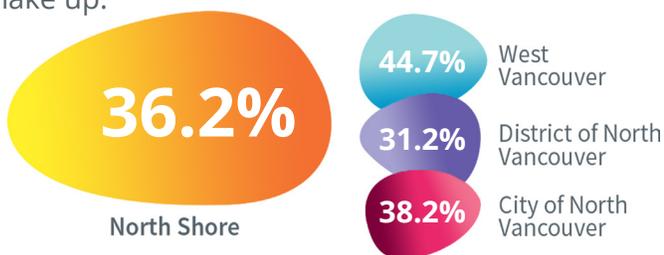
In 2016, we surveyed the levels of diversity on North Shore boards, councils, and committees. The results suggest that the North Shore does not have meaningful levels of diversity on many of its decision making bodies, but these groups want to make diverse representation a reality.

This information is designed for boards, committees, recruiters, and others looking for support to increase the diversity of their groups. It includes our findings from our survey as well as a collection of best practices and resources to support organizations with their diversity initiatives.

## THE NORTH SHORE COMMUNITY IS RICH IN DIVERSITY

Embracing diversity encourages innovative ideas, builds collaborative communities, and elevates the work of organizations.

Proportionate to the total population, immigrants make up:\*



- About **1900 new immigrants** choose the North Shore as their home every year.\*
- Immigrants to the North Shore come from more than **76 countries worldwide**.\*
- Just **over 31%** of residents on the North Shore **speak a language other than English or French** as their mother tongue.\*

\*Census 2016



## 2016 SNAPSHOT: DIVERSITY ON OUR BOARDS, COMMITTEES, AND COUNCILS

### How diverse are North Shore boards, committees, and councils?

There is a lack in representation from the diverse immigrant community.

- Just 7 of the 37 total respondents indicated their board or committee **currently includes at least one person** who has immigrated to Canada within approximately the last 10 years

### Do they see diversity as an issue?

Yes, diversity is seen as an important issue and many are trying to take action.

- 76% viewed the issue (diversity on boards, committees, and councils) as **very important**
- 38% said they **already have a diversity policy**. Of those who didn't, 57% said they **want to develop a diversity policy** for their boards/committees
- 57% said they recruit for diverse representation

### What's stopping them?

Of many reasons, a lack of knowledge, resources, and inability to find the right match were highlighted.

- 52% said they would like to attract more diverse candidates but are **uncertain how to**
- 31% said they are actively seeking diverse candidates but are **unable to find any with the skills and experience needed**
- 50% said they **lack time and resources** required to identify diverse candidates



Photo by: Paul McGrath

### DID YOU KNOW?

- In 2017, NSIIP ran a pilot project to match established immigrants with positions on boards and advisory committees at local non-profits and civic institutions.

Candidates were recruited from across the North Shore by outreach through the North Shore News, the *Library Champions* program, and other means.

18 candidates received training on board skills, mentoring, and were referred to boards and committees at institutions including Silver Harbour Seniors Centre, North Van Arts Council, Elder College, and the District of North Vancouver.

Learn more about the project and find more resources on how you can build for diversity at:  
[www.nsiip.ca/board-diversity/](http://www.nsiip.ca/board-diversity/)

## QUICK TIPS: HOW TO BUILD FOR DIVERSITY

- **Conduct a Diversity Audit** and find out what level of diversity and gaps exist on your board/committee. Use this to inform your actions.
- **Develop a strategic approach** to diversify your board. This might include setting up a diversity committee and setting measurable goals.
- **Build diversity into the entire process** – including outreach, interview questions, screening, and recruitment.
- **Avoid tokenism** – aim for a significant number.
- **Publicly state your organization’s commitment to diversity.** This can help attract diverse members and help the organization identify clear ways to support diversity internally.
- **Recruit for skills** your board needs in **diverse communities.**
- **Create a culture of inclusion** within your board that encourages positive participation.
- **Continuously train all board members on diversity.**
- **Provide orientation and mentorship** for new board members to ensure higher retention.
- **Encourage diverse members to take on responsibilities** such as leading committees or projects.
- **Continue to be transparent** in your efforts and report on your organization’s efforts.

**!** Find a list of local diversity trainers and consultants to support you at:  
[www.nsiip.ca/trainers/](http://www.nsiip.ca/trainers/)

## DIVERSITY POLICIES

A public commitment to diversity is an important step towards improving diversity within an organization.

### A strong diversity policy contains:

- A *values statement* expressing commitment to diversity
- An *explanation of the value* of implementing the policy
- A *measurable implementation plan*
- *Resources allocated to support* the implementation of the policy

### A LOCAL EXAMPLE

Excerpts from *Family Services of the North Shore's* Anti-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity Policy:

*“The Agency will not discriminate against employees, prospective employees, interns, volunteers or contract workers based on their race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age... The Agency reviews its employment patterns and strives to ensure that staff members reflect the diverse population we serve. In addition, the Agency may, from time to time, plan, advertise, adopt or implement an employment equity program that has as its objective the amelioration of conditions of disadvantaged individuals or groups who are disadvantaged because of race, colour ancestry, place of origin, physical or mental disability, or sex. When gaps are identified, the efforts are made to designate positions as they become available as targeted.”*



## A SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS:

### THE WEST VANCOUVER MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Felicia Zhu was appointed as West Vancouver Memorial Library's first Chinese-Canadian trustee in 2014. With a background in education planning in China and front-line volunteer experience at the library, she credits being asked directly to apply for the position as a key factor in her recruitment.

**"I saw notices about the opportunity and was interested, but I wasn't really confident enough to apply until library staff asked me and encouraged me to put my name forward,"** says Zhu.

Once appointed, Zhu was matched with a senior trustee in a semi-formal mentoring relationship. The two met for coffee weekly for the first few months of Zhu's tenure to review meeting agendas, minutes and supporting documents.

"Libraries operated quite differently in China; I had so many questions at the beginning but I didn't want to slow down the board meetings with them." Coffee meetings enabled Zhu to ask questions and get up to speed with her responsibilities in a comfortable, supportive environment.

At the time, there was a range of new activities at the service delivery level of the West Van Memorial Library such as the Library Champions Program and other initiatives for newcomers but there was a self-identified gap at the policy level.

Director of Library Services, Jenny Benedict recalls that, "the discussions on the composition of the board led us to deliberately reconsider our recruitment and orientation practices."

With an existing system to support new trustees, and good intentions, they were able to successfully recruit Felicia. **"We now think more broadly about the library's service to the whole community and Felicia's presence gives us a range of thought in making that happen."**

## TAKE ACTION!

Find more information on taking your next steps, how to connect with diverse communities, and other valuable resources at:

[www.nsiip.ca/board-diversity/](http://www.nsiip.ca/board-diversity/)



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