



**Tool Box of Ideas for Smaller Centres:**  
*Attracting, Welcoming & Retaining Immigrants to Your Community*



Resource Handout #4

## **Glossary of Terms Used in Understanding Diversity**

### **Aboriginal/Indigenous**

These terms apply to First Nations people ("Indians"), Inuvialuit (Western Arctic), Inuit (Eastern Arctic), and Metis (mixed ancestry).

### **Culture**

The ideas, beliefs, values, knowledge & way of life of a group of people who share historical experiences.

### **Discrimination**

Treating people inequitably based on characteristics such as their ethnicity, nationality, language, religion, gender, disability, or sexual orientation. There are three types of discrimination—direct (interpersonal), indirect (unintentional) & systemic (through policies or practices).

### **Diversity**

Refers to all of the characteristics that define us as individuals. It can include characteristics of culture like religion, family structure, work ethic, language, etc. as well as other characteristics like age, physical ability, education, economic status, sexual orientation, etc.

### **Multicultural (*many cultures*) & Multiculturalism**

In Canada, the government policy of Multiculturalism includes a statement of commitment to understanding, acceptance, respect and inclusion of all people in society. Multiculturalism encourages the social, economic, and political participation of all Canadians.

### **Race**

Historically, the concept of race was used to classify humans based on physical characteristics, such as skin colour or eye shape. It has also been used to describe a group of persons related by common descent or heredity. Many scientists argue that the concept of 'race' has no biological validity as humans share 99.9% of the same genetic material.

### **Racism**

The belief that one group of people is superior to another. Racism may be present in organizational and institutional systems and programs as well as in the attitudes and behaviours of individual people.

### **Stereotype**

A simple statement or image of a group of people that does not account for individual differences.