

## **Foreword**

The new *Employment Equity Act (EEA)* and Regulations came into effect on October 24, 1996. Under the terms of this Act, federal employers must analyze their workforce and review their employment systems in order to develop appropriate employment equity action plans, and to report annually on the representation in their workforce of persons from the four designated groups: Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities, members of visible minority groups and women.

What is significantly new in the Act is the inclusion of both private and federal public sector employers under the same legislative umbrella, and the authority given to the Canadian Human Rights Commission to audit the public sector.

Employment Equity issues are an important element of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade's Human Resources Strategy. In fact, ensuring an enabling culture, which includes dismantling barriers and building a workforce representative of Canadian reality and diversity is one of the department's three strategic human resources goals. During the past year, 217 employees received employment equity and diversity training, including: 7 ADMs, 18 DGs, 72 Directors and 120 Middle Managers.

Health Canada, in collaboration with Canadian Heritage, developed this guide to help managers recruit, retain and promote persons from the designated employment equity groups. The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade requested and received permission from these federal departments to adapt and republish the guide for use by its own managers.

This document focuses on two of the four groups: persons with disabilities and members of visible minority groups. A second document is expected to be released shortly focussing on the remaining two groups: women and Aboriginal people. However, much of the information provided here applies to the other designated groups as well. Moreover, a revised guide dealing with all four designated groups is expected to be released soon.

This document brings together a number of concrete suggestions designed to enable managers to identify and select diverse candidates, develop talent and empower employees. We hope that this guide will continue to assist managers in this inclusive approach to valuing people which will benefit all employees and the organization at large.

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