Rooted in Respect:
A Plan for an Inclusive Future

March 2025

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INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

The Municipality of Clare has created this plan to address Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Anti-racism (EDIA).

Rooted in Respect: A Plan for an Inclusive Future was created to meet requirements under the Dismantling Racism and Hate Act Regulations which require Municipalities to have a plan to address systemic hate, inequity and racism in place by April 2025. Throughout the following year, we will also work on updating our Accessibility Plan – which needs to be revised and resubmitted by February 2026. At that time, we will incorporate Rooted in Respect: A Plan for an Inclusive Future into our Accessibility Plan so that we are equipped with one wholesome and comprehensive planning document to guide our work and priorities.

This plan was prepared by municipal staff (Jessica Martin; Recreation Manager, Anique Dugas; Communications Officer, and Pam Doucet; Director of Community Development) and informed by a public survey, as well as the guidance and support of multiple partners including: Communauté francophone accueillante (CFA) de Clare, Université Sainte Anne, Association of Municipal Administrators of Nova Scotia (AMANS), Nova Scotia Accessibility Directorate, our Accessibility Advisory Committee and more.

Rooted in Respect: A Plan for an Inclusive Future contains an honest community analysis, details about our community consultation and survey results, a police reporting section, and our priorities and recommendations going forward. Our recommendations include allocating additional resources (human resources and financial resources), strengthening relationships with underserved groups and persons, training and education initiatives, establishing a working group, creating a municipal email address to act as a centralized point of contact for EDIA-related matters, and facilitating access to EDIA resources and information.

STATEMENT FROM COMMITTEE CHAIR

As Chair of the Municipality of Clare's Accessibility Advisory Committee and the Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism (EDIA) working group that will soon be established, I am honored to present this important first step in our journey toward a more inclusive, equitable, and welcoming community for all.

Clare has a rich cultural heritage, and we are fortunate to be home to an increasingly diverse population of newcomers and long-time residents. Rooted in Respect: A Plan for an Inclusive Future represents our commitment to ensuring that every person who lives, works, or visits Clare feels seen, heard, and valued.

This is not just a policy document, but a call to action. We recognize that meaningful change takes time, humility, and collaboration. We also recognize that systemic barriers and racism still exist, and that addressing them requires intentional and sustained effort. Through this plan, we are laying the foundation for building a more inclusive municipality—one where diversity is not only respected but celebrated.

On behalf of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, I would like to thank the community members, partners, and municipal staff who have helped to shape this plan. Your voices, experiences, and insights are central to this work. Together, we will continue to learn, grow, and take action to create a Clare where everyone belongs.

Réanne Evans

Réanne Evans
Chair, Accessibility Advisory Committee
Councillor, District 1
Municipality of Clare

COMMUNITY ANALYSIS

DEMOGRAPHICS AND HISTORY

The Municipality of Clare was first settled in 1768 and incorporated in 1879. Currently, Clare is the only municipality in Nova Scotia that officially works in both of Canada's official languages. The Municipality of Clare embraces its rural character and is comprised of dozens of small villages along St. Mary's Bay as well as further in land.

The municipal district of Clare accounts for 851 square kilometers in Digby County located in southwestern Nova Scotia. Nestled between the municipalities of Digby and Yarmouth, Clare has a population of 7,678 (2021 census) with a population density of roughly 9 people per square kilometer.

CENSUS DATA POINTS (2021)

Language

• Knowledge of English only: 2,275
• Knowledge of French only: 85
• Knowledge of both English and French: 5,165
• First official language spoken:
o French: 4,250
o English: 3,190
• Mother Tongue:
o French: 4,125
o English: 2,880
• Other languages spoken: 5-20 people
o Languages identified: Korean, Japanese, Spanish, Dutch, German, Russian, Tagalong, Arabic
• Note: No Indigenous languages spoken were identified in the 2021 census.

Visible minorities

• Indigenous Identity:
o Registered/Treaty Indian: 30
• Visible Minorities: Black, Latin American, Korean
• Total visible minorities identified: 205

Heritage & age

• Average age: 51
• Median Age: 56
• 90.2% of the population is 3rd generation or greater (meaning that 90.2% of people are at least the third generation to live in Clare)
• Average family size: 2.5
• Average children per family: 1.5

Income
Total median income: $33,200
• 3,290 are spending less than 30% of their income on shelter costs, while 315 spend 30% or more on shelter costs.
• 39% of households have a mortgage.

Education and employment
• Persons with a high school diploma (or equivalent) aged 25 – 64: 2,850 (73.6%)
• Persons without a high school diploma (or equivalent) aged 25 – 64: 1,015 (26.2%)
• Most common post-secondary degrees are in construction, mechanics, health professions, education, or business management.
• Employment rate: 44.9%
• Unemployment rate: 12.6%

GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTING UNDERSERVED PERSONS

Municipal staff have created a list of groups and organizations representing underserved people for internal use. We have also identified the strength of our relationships with each group/organization. Here are some of the organizations we have identified in our list:
• Association des Acadiens-Métis Souriquois
• Université Sainte-Anne
• Écoles Plus / groupe AGIS
• Communauté francophone accueillante (CFA) de Clare
• Clare Pride
• Société Acadienne de Clare
• Inclusion Clare
• Africadie
• Southwest Nova Pride Association
• Autism Nova Scotia

Many of these groups/organizations were consulted in the development of this plan. Our community contact directory also includes individuals who aren't necessarily part of a group/organization, but who have strong ties to underrepresented and underserved communities. As you read onward, you will notice that one of our priorities is to strengthen our relationships with these communities. We hope that strengthening our relationships will eventually allow us to work more collaboratively, so that we can truly serve our entire community. This list should not be considered complete, but rather a first step. Success will be measured by improving existing relationships or establishing new ones.

CURRENT CLIMATE

Acadia, Francophones and bilingualism
As noted in the census data outlined above, Clare is a primarily bilingual community with most people having Acadian descendance. The Municipality of Clare is very proud of its Acadian heritage and will

continue to work to protect it by ensuring municipal information and services are provided in both official languages (with some exceptions), and by continuing to support cultural initiatives, projects, events, groups, and organizations.

As a bilingual community, language can be an obstacle in ensuring everyone is represented and cared for properly. For instance, ensuring that municipal information and services are always provided in French and English can represent extra costs for advertising and translations, additional time to prepare materials, and additional requirements (bilingualism) to consider during the staffing process.
Some expressed concern through our survey about needing to protect our Acadian heritage rather than promoting EDIA efforts. Equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism efforts are not intended to replace or interfere with local culture, but rather to strengthen it by ensuring that all community members feel respected, valued, and included. These initiatives aim to create a welcoming environment where everyone—regardless of background—can participate fully and contribute to the cultural fabric of the community. Far from threatening tradition, EDIA efforts can help preserve and celebrate the unique aspects of local culture by making space for a broader range of voices and experiences, fostering a sense of belonging and unity.

2SLGBTQIA+ community
2SLGBTQIA+ members in the community are few or are cautious to identify themselves. Although the municipality has been hosting pride events since 2020, slurs are still commonplace in community conversation and pride events are not well attended. Improvements have been gradual over recent years, but lack of education and acceptance makes progress slow.

Indigenous communities
Indigenous relationships are delicate in Clare. Primarily a fishing community, tensions are present as disagreements about fishing rights continue to plague relationships and make repairing and changing attitudes difficult.

As a majority Acadian community, where Acadians are seen as a first-language minority in Canada, with heritage ties to the fishing industry, both parties feel cultural rights and ties to an industry that is currently seeing scarcity. We hope to help remind the community that it was a friendship and the knowledge of the Mi'kmaq that helped many Acadians survive during the great upheaval. Times of difficulty are made easier through banding together, not through dividing.

Women
Clare has many women that lead the community in sport, creative outlets, education, and in caring for their community. As of the 2024 elections, Clare now has three female councilors, and municipal staff sees a healthy representation of women in administration, community development, and medical staff. Of the five senior municipal leadership positions, two are occupied by women.
Juniper House, a support for women experiencing violence holds an office at the municipality's Cultural Hub and partners with the municipality on occasion when appropriate. However, violence against women is present, as well as sexism and patriarchal systems that tend to be present in rural communities.

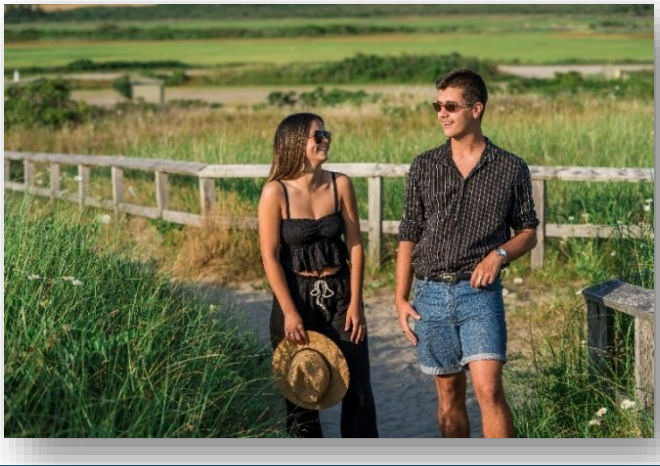
Newcomers

Clare has benefitted from the federal Communauté francophone accueillante (CFA) program, establishing welcoming francophone communities in partnership with Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). Initially a municipal program, it is now being managed by the Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle Écosse (CDÉNÉ) and works in close partnership with the municipality on its EDIA efforts to create welcoming spaces and events for newcomers. While the CFA program is a great resource for newcomers wishing to settle in French, a major program limit is that it is not geared towards English-speaking newcomers (i.e. information and services are provided in French). We do understand and acknowledge that the CFA program aligns with the federal government's strategy and willingness to attract more French-speaking newcomers to rural Canadian communities, but we also recognize that this program structure simultaneously creates limits.

Youth

Clare currently is facing a challenge with its youth. While on a global and federal scale youth may not be considered a minority, in this context we are considering it as such. High numbers of youth do not stay in our community after high school, and even more leave when they've completed their post-secondary education. This may be due to not feeling engaged, accepted, or because they can't see themselves in the community.

To help address this, we are hoping to engage with youth 16-25 to empower them to become more active in their communities and to build the community they want to see, rather than seeking it elsewhere. We will be reserving a seat on our EDIA working group for a member under 25 and will be working to engage with local high schools so that conversations about identity and belonging can take place during a crucial development age for youth. Additionally, we will support and advocate for the creation of a youth committee under the municipal Council so that a direct link can be established.



COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

In preparation for the creation of this plan, it was established that the best course of action would be to create a community survey. The community survey was available online, in print, or by phone.
A web page with information on the Plan and the survey was created on the municipal website and additional marketing of the plan and survey were done by:

• Sending emails directly to community partners

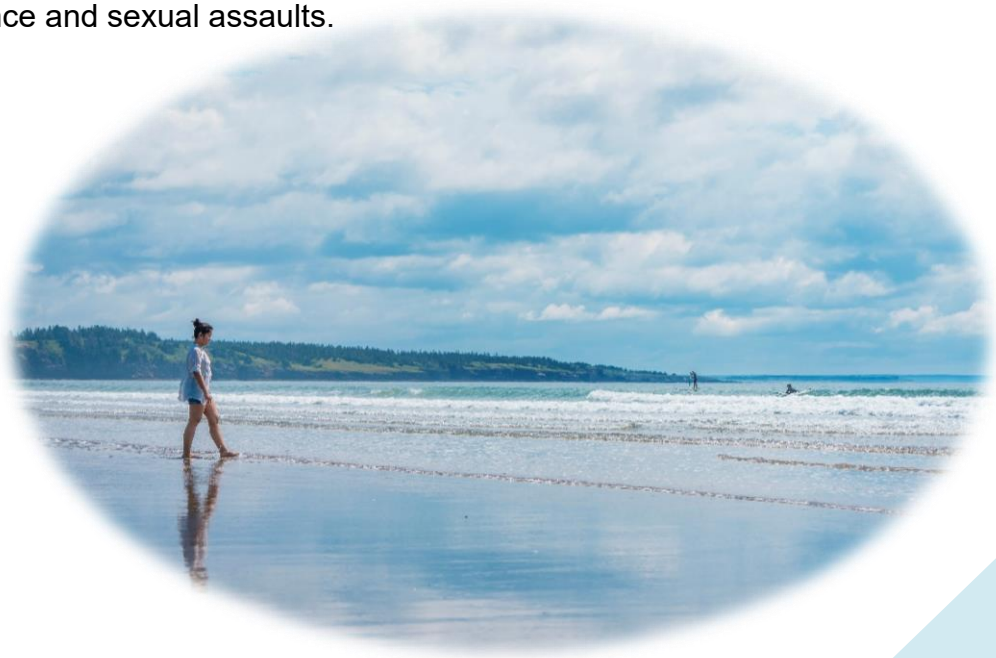
• Through social media
• Print media in our local paper (Clare Shopper) and our municipal newsletter
• On electronic municipal signage (LED sign at Clare Veterans Centre and TVs in municipal office space and at the Rendez-vous de la Baie Visitor Information Centre).

SURVEY RESULTS

From a total of 103 responses, 47 were in French and 56 were in English. Here are some key results from the survey:
• 14 respondents expressed interest in the proposed Working Group
• All survey respondents who expressed fear of losing Acadian heritage filled out English versions of the survey. Conversely, French respondents reported feeling as though it's better to be anglophone than a non-Acadian francophone to be accepted.
• 72.9% of respondents said that discrimination exists in Clare

POLICE REPORTING

According to the Meteghan RCMP detachment, here are some statistics on offences in our community:
• Hate-motivated crimes: From January 2021 to February 2025, there were 6 reported cases of hate-motivated criminal actions. All these reported cases saw Indigenous victims.
o Of these, two hate-motivated crimes were reported in 2024, one of which is an arson case and the other is an assault with a weapon case.
• Domestic violence crimes: In 2023, the Meteghan RCMP detachment responded to 132 incidents involving domestic violence. In 2024, the Meteghan RCMP detachment responded to 166 incidents involving domestic violence.
o Unfortunately, standard reporting statistics do not track the gender of the victim.
o The Department of Women and Gender Equality Canada (a federal government entity) reports that approximately 78% of victims of domestic abuse are women.
o More reliable information and data about Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is available here.
• RCMP Officers are required to complete additional training regarding responding to incidents of domestic violence and sexual assaults.



MAIN PRIORITY AND RECOMMENDATION: DEDICATING ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Human resources

This project and the fundamental change it requires within our community necessitates too much time and dedication for the current leaders to give them the attention it truly deserves.

Our top priority and recommendation for this plan is to dedicate an additional staff member whose only focus would be equity, diversity, inclusion, accessibility and anti-racism in Clare. The municipal staff currently working on this file have a full workload and do not have the capacity to take on this important work with the tact it deserves and requires. We recommend that a resource be added to advance the priorities identified in both our EDIA and Accessibility plans, as well as to work on the development of future plans.

Financial resources

A further recommendation is a dedicated municipal budget to be able to provide training, increase capacity, support community programs, and make improvements to spaces to make them more welcoming and accessible.

ADDITIONAL PRIORITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Once the appropriate resources have been dedicated to this work, we suggest the following actions take place to start addressing equity, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism in our community.

Establishing, building, and strengthening relationships with underserved groups and individuals

Action 1. Create a community buddy program
Create a bank of community members willing to be "buddies" where they sign up under the languages they can speak and types of activities, they are willing to support.

- Community members that would like to attend a recreation program or community event but are facing a barrier such as transportation, language, different abilities, or because they are new to the area and don't feel comfortable attending alone would be able to request a Community Buddy to be matched to them for the event.
- If the event is paid, the Community Buddy will have their registration fees covered by the municipality. If the event is free, the Community Buddy will be given a small stipend to account for gas and time.

Action 2. Create an action plan to remove barriers in accessing municipal venues for underserved groups within our community.

Action 3. Explore partnering with Université Sainte-Anne to offer a weekly Women's Hockey program with childcare offered on-site by recreation staff.

Support for the renewal of Clare Pride

Action 4. Promote the reestablishment and participation of community members.

Action 5. Support the rebuilding of this organization by providing coordination, meeting space, printing services, and organizational support by the municipal coordinator until such a time as it is run independently.

Action 6. Partner with Southwest Nova Pride to grow interest and strengthen relationships in the area.

Involvement of Clare Recreation services

Action 7. Continue to involve Clare Recreation services in the planning of events such as Pride events, Access Awareness Week, Terry Fox Run, National Acadian Day, and other culturally and socially important events and activities.

Action 8. Provide program funding to support and encourage new ideas from underserved groups and respond to new requests in a timely fashion, establishing trust and building capacity within the community.

Action 9. Continue to collaborate with CFA to support welcoming community programs.

Training and education initiatives

Municipal staff and council training

Action 10. Purchase an employer subscription to the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI).

Action 11. Provide training to permanent staff of Clare's recreation department on anti-racism in recreation and invite people to sign the charter.

Action 12. Provide mandatory basic EDIA training for staff and Municipal Council (including temporary and seasonal staff).

Action 13. Provide additional EDIA training for medical staff.

Action 14. Provide additional EDIA training for Department of Community Development staff.

Action 15. Provide basic American Sign Language (ASL) training to customer-facing staff.

Action 16. Provide training to summer camp staff on supporting campers with additional needs.

Action 17. Provide training to the person responsible for coordinating EDIA
EDIA Coordinator to receive additional training in supporting difficult community conversations, how to identify victims of violence within the community, and “train the trainer” techniques on the extensive list of topics required to properly support the implementation of this plan.

External training

Action 18. Offer free basic training in American Sign Language to RCMP and volunteer fire department members free of charge.

Action 19. Explore the possibilities for offering free training sessions to the broader public.

Denouncing hatred, racism and discrimination

Action 20. Include a statement in the Warden’s address that denounces violence, racism, hate, and discrimination in our community during Canada Day celebrations.
Reiterate the safety and welcome of all, regardless of their gender, income, skin color, abilities or how long they have been among us.

Awareness raising campaign

Action 21. Create a page on the municipal website that will include public access to vetted information and resources on health, safety, racism, violence, and how to report it and seek support.

Action 22. Partner with RCMP to create community posters and social media content on where and how to seek support in case of violence.

EDIA Governance

Action 23. Establish a working group

A key element to strengthening ties with underserved groups and people will be the establishment of an EDIA working group. The EDIA working group will support carrying out the priorities identified in our EDIA plans and help shape future versions of our EDIA plans to ensure all marginalized members of our community are heard, represented, and supported in their daily healthy living.

- The Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) Chair will also be the Chair of the EDIA working group.
- The AAC Chair and Accessibility Coordinator are expected to attend all meetings.
- EDIA working group will meet at least as frequently as the AAC (Quarterly)
- Le EDIA working group will be comprised of at least 6 members (AAC Chair and AC Included) and a maximum of 10 members.
- EDIA working group will advise on EDIA plan content and initiatives.
- EDIA working group will be comprised of members that identify as or represent one or all of the following:
  - Newcomers (to Canada or Nova Scotia)
  - Visible Minorities
  - Indigenous persons
  - 2SLGBTQIA+ members
  - Youth (under 25)
- EDIA working group will support community projects, programs and events within the Municipality with an EDIA lens.
- EDIA working group members will lead in the community as an example of equitable, welcoming behaviour.
- Once annually, the EDIA working group and AAC will have a combined meeting.
  The EDIA working group will seek to:
- Call attention to and identify patterns of inequitable outcomes.
- Hold the community accountable and ensure that underserved people and groups are safe and welcome.
- Critically reassess policies and practices.
- Demonstrate race-consciousness.
- Understand the social and historical context of exclusionary policies and practices.

The EDIA working group will aim to:

- Identify and draw attention to inequitable outcomes.
- Hold the community accountable and ensure that underserved individuals and groups are safe and welcome.
- Critically reassess policies and practices.
- Demonstrate racial consciousness.
- Understanding the social and historical context of exclusion policies and practices.

Action 24. Create an EDIA email address

To provide clear and efficient communication, we recommend a municipal email address be established to send and receive emails related to EDIA efforts, inquiries, initiatives, projects, complaints, reports, and more. Currently, project leader emails are provided as a point of

contact (i.e. recreation@munclare.ca). Establishing an email address for EDIA specific related inquiries would centralize information, increase trust, and simplify communications.

Action 25. Develop municipal magnetic nametags

Creation of magnetic nametags to be designed and distributed to public-facing municipal staff with first name, pronouns, and languages spoken indicated.

The goal is to make everyone feel at ease by easily identifying municipal staff and being able to address them by name, in their spoken language, and by their preferred pronouns.

Applies to:

- Administrative staff
- Councillors (to be worn during public events)
- Medical Centre staff

Continuous improvement

As we detail our plan and goals, we commit to treating this plan as a living document and remain open to changes as new priorities may arise. We commit to this being a plan on how to reach a foundation on which we can build an open, welcoming community where anyone who loves it, is loved back. Approval of this plan is a commitment by municipal project leads, council members, and all staff to live by example in the principles we are encouraging by attending any training, sharing messages of respect, listening to all voices, and advocating for safety in all corners of our community.

APPENDIX A – RESOURCES

Provincial and national resources

Association of Municipal Administrators of Nova Scotia – Inclusive, Diverse, Equitable, Accessible Support
Nova Scotia Accessibility Directorate
Nova Scotia Dismantling Racism and Hate Act
Nova Scotia Human Rights Act
Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission
Canadian Human Rights Act
Canada Human Rights Commission
Women and Gender Equality Canada

Local resources

Juniper House
Communauté francophone accueillante de Clare
Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion - Université Sainte-Anne
Municipality of Clare Accessibility Plan
Meteghan RCMP Detachment