

Special Program – Indigenous Recruitment

Reviewed Date		Number	<i>HR0213</i>
Revised Date		Approved Date	<i>September 10, 2026</i>

Introduction

The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) is committed to equitable employment practices, Indigenous inclusion, and culturally responsive public health services. SMDHU recognizes that First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples have experienced historic and ongoing discrimination resulting from colonization, residential schools, and the continuance of systemic racism and other barriers that affect equitable access to employment and career advancement.

This policy establishes a Special Program under Section 14 of the Ontario Human Rights Code to support improved employment opportunities for Indigenous peoples and strengthens SMDHU's ability to provide culturally safe and responsive services to communities across Simcoe Muskoka.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish the parameters for administering an Indigenous recruitment and hiring Special Program at SMDHU in accordance with section 14 of the Ontario Human Rights Code.

The policy is intended to improve employment opportunities for Indigenous peoples, reduce barriers in recruitment and selection, and support SMDHU's commitment to equity and reconciliation.

Legislative Authority

Ontario Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.19, section 14.

Nothing in this policy limits SMDHU's obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code, employment standards, privacy legislation, collective agreements or any other applicable legal or policy requirements.

Policy Definitions and Interpretation

- *Indigenous peoples*: First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.
- *Special Program*: A program established under section 14 of the Ontario Human Rights Code to relieve hardship or economic disadvantage, assist disadvantaged persons or groups to achieve equal opportunity, or contribute to eliminating discrimination.
- *Self-identification*: Voluntary disclosure by an applicant that they identify as First Nations, Inuit or Métis for the purpose of participating in this Special Program.

Policy

SMDHU may designate specific recruitment competitions as Special Program competitions where there is a demonstrated organizational need to improve Indigenous representation or to support culturally responsive service delivery.

- Eligibility for a designated competition may be restricted to applicants who identify as First Nations, Inuit or Métis and whose eligibility is confirmed through the process set out in this policy.
- Applicants must meet the minimum qualifications and requirements of the position and SMDHU is not required to hire an applicant who does not meet the position requirements.
- The Special Program will be administered in a fair, respectful, transparent and consistent manner.

Procedures

1. Human Resources and the hiring manager will confirm that the competition will be administered as a Special Program under section 14 of the Ontario Human Rights Code.
2. The posting and all recruitment materials will clearly state that the competition is an Indigenous-specific Special Program and is open to eligible applicants who identify as First Nations, Inuit or Métis. The posting will also list the position's essential qualifications and requirements.
3. Applicants who wish to participate in the designated competition will be asked to voluntarily identify as First Nations, Inuit or Métis. Human Resources will provide details as to why the identification information is being collected and how it will be protected.
4. Human Resources will use the self-identification information only to administer the Special Program. It will be kept confidential, shared only with staff who need it for the hiring process, and retained in accordance with applicable privacy and records management requirements.
5. Human Resources will follow reasonable, respectful and proportionate steps to confirm an applicant's eligibility for the Special Program. Only information necessary to confirm eligibility will be requested, with the same approach being applied to all applicants.
 - Accepted information may include First Nation status, citizenship or membership; Métis organization membership; an Inuit beneficiary card; letter of confirmation about community connection; or other relevant documentation or attestation provided by the applicant and deemed sufficient.
 - Human Resources will not require one specific form of proof when doing so would create an unreasonable barrier.
 - Eligibility information will remain confidential and will be reviewed only by Human Resources staff who need it to administer the hiring competition.
6. Human Resources will monitor whether the Special Program objectives remain relevant, whether barriers to employment persist despite the program, whether equity

is promoted, or if any revisions are required. The review may consider workforce demographics, recruitment outcomes, program implementation experience, and feedback from Indigenous communities and employees where appropriate.

Related Documents

- [Ontario Human Rights Code](#)
- Ontario Human Rights Commission, [Policy statement on Indigenous-specific hiring](#)
- [HR0202 – Recruitment Section and Hiring](#)
- [SMDHU Indigenous Engagement Learning Journey, Situational Assessment Report, 2023](#)

Related Policies

Related Forms

Final Approval Signature: _____

Review/Revision History: