

## BACKGROUNDER: *Safe Harbour: Respect for All* program



The Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC, an affiliation of 85 member agencies whose mission is to provide leadership, advocacy, and education for anti-racism, human rights, and social justice, coordinates the national *Safe Harbour: Respect for All* program.

Originating in Nanaimo in 2004 by the Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society, and expanding into a national initiative through an increasing array of partnerships, *Safe Harbour: Respect for All* embodies a vision in action: creating opportunities for storefront businesses, institutions, agencies, and municipalities to be proactive in creating welcoming and inclusive workplaces and communities across Canada.

### **How does *Safe Harbour* work?**

Safe Harbour is coordinated in Manitoba by the Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council Inc. (MIIC). Each *Safe Harbour* community has a [Community Organizer](#), a non-profit society dedicated to serving newcomers, Aboriginal peoples, or other multicultural groups. The Community Organizer invites representatives from business, non-profit agencies, public institutions, local governments, libraries, and other publicly accessible storefronts to support and welcome diversity in their workplace and serve as temporary sanctuaries for people who experience racism or hate and briefly need a safe place to go. The free *Safe Harbour* two-hour Orientation helps managers and staff create more inclusive workplaces where employees, clients and customers of diverse backgrounds know they will be respected and safe from discrimination.

### **Where does *Safe Harbour* operate?**

Safe Harbour has expanded into 26 BC communities, ten Alberta communities, seven communities in Manitoba, and Halifax, Nova Scotia. In Manitoba, we are working in Winnipeg, Steinbach, Russell, Roblin-Cartwright, and Morden. Over 550 organizations and businesses have signed on as Safe Harbour-certified locations, with many more registered for training. A sample of these include: RONA, Lougheed Town Centre, Sun Life Financial, TD Canada Trust, the Medicine Shoppe, the YMCA, Ten Thousand Villages, the City of Burnaby, Edmonton Public Libraries, and Grande Prairie Regional College.

### **Who benefits?**

The *Safe Harbour* model is evolving and there is a deepening understanding of the contribution *Safe Harbour* is making to the development of welcoming communities and workplaces. The knowledge gained by businesses and agencies offers them proactive ways to provide equitable treatment to all and diffuse tense situations. Newcomers, visible minorities, Aboriginals, people of diverse sexual orientations, people with disabilities, and other diverse community members can rely on *Safe Harbour* as a symbol of trust in their neighbourhoods. Socially-conscious consumers can feel good about supporting *Safe Harbour*, knowing they are bringing their business to places that reflect their values. *Safe Harbour* also allows employees to feel pride in their work, knowing that a commitment to diversity is a company-wide policy.

The need for further brand recognition is driving AMSSA's national *Respect for All – Pass It On* marketing campaign. We welcome individual diversity champions to sign up to receive a free *Respect for All* wristband and our monthly *Respect for All E-Newsletter*:

<http://www.safeharbour.ca/manitoba/stories.cfm>

For more details, please contact Lindsay Marsh, National Safe Harbour Program Coordinator at AMSSA: 604.718.2776, Toll-free: 1-888-355-5560, Email: [nationalsafeharbour@amssa.org](mailto:nationalsafeharbour@amssa.org)  
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For further information, please visit: [www.safeharbour.ca](http://www.safeharbour.ca)

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