

The Human Rights-Based Approach Framework



A how-to for advocates
and researchers



Ontario
Human Rights Commission
Commission ontarienne des
droits de la personne

Learn more about how the [Human Rights-Based Approach \(HRBA\) framework](#) can help you apply a human rights lens to your research and campaigns, and build human rights capacity and expertise to move the dial on specific issues.

What is the HRBA Framework?

The HRBA Framework is a web-based analytical and educational tool available to service providers, including non-profits and government services, employers, researchers, advocates as well as provincial and municipal governments.

It supports the user in planning, developing and delivering human rights-focused, inclusive, equitable and accessible policy, programs and services, and helps mitigate discrimination and disproportionate adverse impacts on *Human Rights Code*-protected groups.

Through probing human rights questions and considerations, the HRBA Framework educates and supports users to think differently – and leads to better outcomes – no matter the work we do.

Asking the right questions will help you make sure human rights inform your advocacy efforts by:

- Strengthening your advocacy and research through analysis of human rights
- Providing evidence-based research, analysis, and rationale for your advocacy campaigns or human rights claims
- Revealing issues of systemic discrimination and placing them in the context of human rights obligations.

Ontario's Human Rights Code

The Ontario [Human Rights Code](#) is for everyone. It is a provincial law that gives everybody equal rights and opportunities without discrimination in areas such as jobs, housing and services. The *Code's* goal is to prevent discrimination and harassment because of [17 protected grounds, in five social areas](#).

The OHRC [educates](#) people and organizations across Ontario about human rights obligations and policies. We also provide tools, such as the HRBA Framework, to help put those policies into practice.

Why should I use the HRBA Framework in my advocacy and research?

The HRBA Framework can help you:

1. **Identify the human rights context** of the policies and programs you are advocating for or researching.
2. **Consider every aspect of your campaign or project** and how it relates to human rights and advocacy.
3. **Review existing government policies, programs or services** with a human rights lens.
4. **Support your research and analysis** to consider and reflect human rights obligations and principles.
5. **Develop options and recommendations** based on human rights principles and obligations that centre the human rights of impacted communities.
6. **Monitor to assess** the human rights **impacts** of government and other duty holders' policies and programs.
7. **Capture your evidence-based research, analysis and rationale** for future reference (for example, for use during campaigns).

Case study – The power of focusing on human rights

In 2011, the OHRC led a [consultation](#) on human rights, mental health and addictions. Many people with mental health or addiction disabilities told the OHRC that they were largely unaware of the *Human Rights Code*-protected right to be free from discrimination based on a psychiatric disability or addiction in housing, employment and when receiving services.

The OHRC also heard that many service providers were unaware of their responsibilities under the *Code* to uphold the human rights of people with mental health disabilities or addictions. These same organizations told the OHRC that they need guidance on how to meet their duty to accommodate the individual needs of people with mental health or addiction disabilities.

This situation is not unique. Across many sectors, discrimination persists because many service providers and other duty-holders are unaware of their *Code*-related responsibilities, and systemic discrimination goes unaddressed.

This is where advocacy organizations and researchers – equipped with human rights capacity developed with the support of the HRBA Framework – can align their research, recommendations and other advocacy activities around legal obligations of governments and service providers to uphold human rights.

Related OHRC policies to support advocates

To get the most out of the HRBA Framework, the OHRC recommends using it in conjunction with other related OHRC policies:

[Policy statement on human rights in COVID-19 recovery planning](#)

[Policy on ableism and discrimination based on disability](#)

[Policy on preventing discrimination based on mental health disabilities and addictions](#)

[Policy and guidelines on racism and racial discrimination](#)

[Policy on human rights and rental housing](#)

[Count me in! Collecting human rights-based data](#)

[COVID-19 and Ontario's Human Rights Code – Questions and Answers](#)

[Policy on preventing discrimination because of gender identity and gender expression](#)