


Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy

2022 to 2026

Toronto Community Housing



**Committed to Equity,
Diversity, and Inclusion**

Toronto Community Housing



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Introduction

Toronto Community Housing Corporation's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy (EDI Strategy) is a corporate wide framework to assist in understanding and addressing the unique and diverse needs of residents and staff at Toronto Community Housing and embed equity, diversity and inclusion in the culture and practices of Toronto Community Housing.

In developing the EDI Strategy, TCHC consulted staff with the goal to effectively listen, understand, and engage to build a framework that is flexible and response to the diverse perspectives and experiences of the people that live and work at Toronto Community Housing.

By utilizing our EDI Strategy in conjunction with our policies that deal with diversity, especially our Workplace Diversity Policy, Accessibility Policy, Accessible Customer Service Policy, Code of Conduct, Human Rights Policy (Staff), Human Rights, Harassment, and Fair Access Policy – Tenants, and Anti-Racism Policy, we are able to hold ourselves accountable to our staff members, our tenants, and the diverse community in which we serve.

In addition, we recognize the work of the City of Toronto and their EDI Strategy, which guides the work we do. As a municipal corporation, TCHC ensures that we are just as committed to the goals and outcomes of the City of Toronto's Strategy moving forward.

In order to remain responsive and flexible, the EDI Strategy must be viewed as a living document, as it will need to be adjusted and adapted to the evolving needs of our tenants and staff.

If you require an accessible version of this document, please contact Jamie Kramer, Senior Consultant, Diversity & Inclusion, at Jamie.Kramer@torontohousing.ca.

Vision, Mission, and Purpose

Toronto Community Housing is committed to building and fostering a fair and inclusive workplace which values diversity and encourages respect for dignity, beliefs, and ideas consistent with the principles outlined in the *Ontario Human Rights Code* (the "Code") and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* ("AODA"). Toronto Community Housing recognizes the value of identifying and removing barriers and promoting inclusion in the workplace.

Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility are essential in creating a safe, welcoming, and high performing organizational culture. We are working towards creating a more equitable workplace with our Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy. We are committed to confronting anti-black racism with our [Confronting Anti-Black Racism \(CABR\) Strategy and our Centre for Advancing the Interests of Black People](#). We will ensure Truth, Reconciliation, and Justice by meeting our requirements under the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action](#).

We are committed to continuing to build trust and foster relationships with staff members to ensure that all unique needs are being met and our employees are valued, respected, and listened to as we build new and inclusive practices.

Core Values

In keeping with our values of respect, accountability, community collaboration, and integrity, Toronto Community Housing will implement this EDI Strategy in accordance with the following principles:

Anti-Oppression: Anti-Oppression is the work of actively challenging and removing oppression perpetuated by power inequalities in society, both systemic oppression and individual expressions of oppression. Anti-Oppression is a way of naming oppression that happens based on a person's identities.

Anti-Racism: Anti-racism is the active process of identifying and eliminating racism by changing systems, organizational structures, policies and practices and attitudes, so that power is redistributed and shared equitably

Belonging: Belonging is the feeling of security and support when there is a sense of acceptance, inclusion, and identity for a member of a certain group. It is when an individual can bring their authentic self to work.

Dignity: Workplace dignity is defined as individual's perception about respect and trust, equal treatment, valuation of one's worth, fair-treatment, autonomy, and freedom of expression and decision making enjoyed by an employee at the workplace

Diversity: Diversity is about the individual. It is about the unique dimensions, qualities, and characteristics we all possess.

Equity: Equity refers to the fair and respectful treatment of all people. TCHC will proactively address systemic issues that will create a level playing field and equal access to opportunities. TCHC will also do everything they can to identify and eliminate unfair biases, stereotypes, or barriers that may limit full participation in our system.

Inclusion: Inclusion is about the collective. It is about creating a culture that strives for equity and embraces, respects, accepts, and values difference.

Justice: Justice is often specifically about dismantling systems and structures that create inequality, replacing them with systems that promote fairness, and creating opportunities for diverse groups of people to thrive together. In essence, justice is a product of creating a diverse, inclusive, and equitable society.

Psychological Safety: The feeling of being safe to express ideas, feelings, and questions or to make mistakes without repercussions.

Foundational EDI Efforts

There have been a number of specific initiatives that TCHC has already undertaken to create a more equitable and diversified workforce.

- Joint Union Management Workplace Diversity Team Created;

- Workplace Diversity Policy Developed and Approved;
- Changes in Recruitment (Developing Bias-Free Job Ads, Diversity Statement on Job Ads Outreach Strategy, Diverse Interview Panels and Diversity Awareness Interview Panel Training);
- Progressive Clause on Workplace Diversity negotiated into all three Collective;
- Agreements Negotiated and Ratified;
- Partnership with Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC);
- Mentoring Program established;
- Partnership Program with Goodwill and CUPE Local 416 established;
- Woman's group in Community Safety unit established;
- Education and Communication including the heritage mapping project and the development and distribution of a diversity DVD;
- Antiracism Program (study circle pilot project);
- Three Lens Approach to Workplace Accommodation (Health & Safety, Labour Relations and Human Rights & Equity);
- Cultural Celebrations (Black History and Asian Heritage Month, Caribana/Pride Parades);
- Diversity and Inclusion Strategy in 2015;
- Establishing the Centre and the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Strategy, and;
- Incorporating standard Diversity Training as an onboarding tool.

By understanding what has been put in place, and how this has impacted our equity-deserving groups, we created the initial draft of the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy. This EDI Strategy builds off of the work done and begins new projects to address further areas that negatively impact our equity-deserving groups.

Consultative Process

In order to understand the current challenges and barriers faced by our organization, we took many consultative steps. Each of these steps worked to understand what barriers, issues, and obstacles TCHC need to address to be more inclusive.

Literature Review

We reviewed a variety of current and updated versions of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategies from other organizations that are similar to ours in nature, as well as those that are currently demonstrating best practices on a global scale. Further, we analyzed the current best practices in the Global Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Benchmarks.

In doing so, we were able to determine other pain points that may have been missed through our Diversity and Inclusion Survey and through consultation with internal stakeholders, as they may not be aware of these practices.

Diversity and Inclusion Survey

From November 25, 2021 to January 31, 2022, TCHC ran a Diversity Survey for all employees to participate in. The survey was completely anonymous and confidential. Employee's individual responses will not be, and have not been, shared with anyone at TCHC. No one at TCHC will be able to identify who has or has not completed the survey.

This survey asked demographic questions, including about racial/ethnicity groups, age, length of services, etc., as well as inclusion questions on a Likert scale to determine how engaged people felt and how mature TCHC is in diversity. Each of these questions allowed for people to provide commentary on the topics, which allowed for more insight into the organization, current culture, and pain points for the organization.

We had a fifty-per-cent (50%) response rate from our employees, who submitted more than 1,000 responses from across our organization.

Here's what the survey results tell us about TCHC's diverse community:

- 51 per cent identify as male, 42 per cent identify as female, and 2 per cent identify under the trans* umbrella (transgender, nonbinary, agender, genderfluid, etc.);
- 22 per cent experience a disability, with mental health and chronic illness as the most common;
- 54 per cent were born in a country other than Canada;
- 70 per cent have dependent care responsibilities, with children and parents as the most common;
- Our staff wishes to be consulted more on organization changes, especially those that impact their day-to-day work;
- 73 per cent believe that they experience respect among individuals and groups with various cultural differences, and;
- 85 per cent feel their work contributes to the mission of TCHC.

Overall, the survey results tell us that:

- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion needs to be a priority from our Executive Leadership Team for it to have an impact on the culture of the workplace;
- Work needs to be done to combine the efforts of EDI and the Centre;
- We need to understand what barriers there are for people who were born outside of Canada to feel as though they belong in the workplace;
- The work we do to be more flexible and accommodating needs to be evaluated through a lens of dependent care;
- We need to be more forthcoming with information on what we're doing for equity, diversity, and inclusion, and;
- We need to review our current hiring practices to understand, address, and prevent barriers for our marginalized groups.

Internal Groups

Employee Networks

Meetings and discussions have taken place with the Black Staff Caucus, the PRIDE Network, and the Filipino Kababayan Network about their Strategic Goals for their Employee Networks.

These items have been taken into consideration as we build out our programs, incorporate different dimensions of diversity, and determine initial priorities for the EDI Strategy.

The Employee Networks have also been provided a copy of the EDI Strategy to provide insight and feedback.

Diversity Advisory Group

The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Advisory Group was established to gather and share multi-disciplinary perspectives on equity, diversity, and inclusion topics, especially related to strategic actions, priorities, and initiatives. The Advisory Group will support the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Steering Committee through offering feedback, input, and insight.

This groups meets on a monthly basis, incorporates various staff members with different dimensions of diversity, as well as levels of staff, unionization, and seniority in the organization.

The Diversity Advisory Group was provided with the EDI Strategy to give feedback and their valuable input on prioritization.

Diversity Steering Committee

The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Steering Committee was established to advance and strengthen equity, diversity, and inclusion related initiatives. The Diversity Steering Committee will assist in developing and informing strategy, action plans, and recommendations to support meaningful change across Toronto Community Housing. The EDI Steering Committee also works alongside the Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Group.

This group meets on a monthly basis, incorporates various staff members who have been actively involved in previous EDI efforts and includes union leaders, Employee Network chairs, and key stakeholders in divisions.

The Diversity Steering Committee was provided with the EDI Strategy to give feedback and their valuable input on prioritization.

Measuring and Evaluation

Maturity Model

Diversity and inclusion (D&I) maturity models offer a simple yet comprehensive snapshot of how mature an organization is in diversity and inclusion. This lets us know how we have been progressing as we implement different ideas, initiatives, and update programs.

We will be measuring progress using [the Global Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Benchmarks](#). These Benchmarks serve as a guide for us to understand the maturity of diversity, equity, and inclusion at TCHC and are used by organizations, small and large, around the world. The GDEIB helps organizations focus on results and offers organizations an opportunity to progressively and comprehensively address sustainable EDI growth and development.

The Benchmarks are designed to guide us as we work to achieve best practices through fifteen (15) categories which help us implement strategies that work as an integrated system. Each of these fifteen (15) categories incorporate five (5) different levels from Inactive, where no EDI work has been done, to Best Practice, where the organization is demonstrating current global best practices in EDI.

As we move through the different categories, our aim is to reach Level 5: Best Practice in each category; however, we should not be discouraged by progress that is in other levels of the GDEIB.

Maturity benchmarking will be done on an annual basis and included in our progress reports with specific examples of how we are at the specific level we are currently sitting within and what we will be doing in the next year to look to reach the next level.

Action Item Specific Measures

Each of the actions has their own set of measurable aspects and metrics to understand how they are working and any improvements or adaptations they may need to make. This will include qualitative and quantitative data sets collected, analyzed, and measured to see the type of impact that has been created.

Some of these specific measures will include, but are not limited to:

- Number of participants in a training program designed to educate about equity-deserving groups;
- Attitudes and behaviours of participants pre- and post-training;
- Collecting and analyzing human rights and Code based data, including around employment, tenants, and employees;

- Number of specific harassment and discrimination reports, especially those involving our equity-deserving groups and the results of the investigation;
- Changes in the Diversity and Inclusion Survey, especially around perception of belonging and diversity engagement as compared to the information from the 2021 Survey, as it is repeated over time, and;
- Inclusion of IDEA principles in the work that everyone does on a day-to-day basis.

These measurements and results will differ depending on the intended outcome of the program, the length of the program, and what it is intending to alleviate and work to identify, remove, prevent, and change in the organization's structure.

Progress Reports

Progress reports, both verbal and written, will be provided on an ongoing basis to our staff internally, to our tenants, when appropriate, and to our Board of Directors for accountability and transparency.

These will be specific to action items and initiatives that are under the EDI Strategy, including mentoring programs, employment system reviews, and training. In addition, there will be at least an annual report on progress, including where we are benchmarking within the Maturity Model.

When large projects have been undertaken, such as the Diversity and Inclusion Survey, we will aim to have the results and report on what we learned and how we will be addressing these issues to our staff members within ninety (90) days.

Goals

As we determine our strategies moving forward, we have identified four goals to further guide us in the process:

1. **Goal #1:** Identify and address systemic barriers within Toronto Housing.
2. **Goal #2:** Create programs to meet the needs of our equity-deserving groups.
3. **Goal #3:** Engage our diverse communities in a meaningful way.
4. **Goal #4:** Attract and leverage a diverse workforce.

These goals are tied to actionable items and objectives that have measurable results that will be used to achieve them that will be developed within each of the Phases.

Phases

In order to ensure adequate resources and ability to adjust to the ever-changing needs of our population, we have structured our EDI Strategy into three (3) phases:

1. Phase One: Internal Strengthening of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
2. Phase Two: Audit and Assess Goods, Programs, Services, and Information
3. Phase Three: Collaborate and Build More Inclusive Practices

Each of the Phases has their own set of Objectives and Action Items to achieve more awareness and understanding around EDI topics as well as remove barriers and proactively create EDI programs at TCHC.

We are prioritizing each item based upon resources, discussions with staff, the results of the Diversity Survey, and best practices. As new information arises, results and feedback from programs are provided, and our understanding of the culture shifts, we will adjust our priorities and update the Strategy accordingly.

Phase One: Internal Strengthening of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Our First Phase is focused on thoroughly examining TCHC through an equity, diversity, and inclusion lens. The goal of this Phase is conducting internal consultation and review with an aim of identifying visible and invisible systematic and attitudinal barriers in policies, practices, and procedures within the Corporation. This Phase has been started through projects that are currently in progress.

Objectives and action items have been identified under each of the four goals to show the next steps and priorities to be commenced during Phase One. Some of the action items noted will be completed during the Phase One process while other more complex, time consuming, resource heavy, or ongoing action items will extend past Phase One to continue in Phase Two with more specific details tied to the action items.

There are eight (8) key areas that need to be addressed in Phase One:

1. Enhance Communications Strategy to Showcase Our Diversity;
2. Develop Leadership Awareness and Accountability;
3. EDI As A Strategic Priority From Executive Leadership Team;

4. Establish Change Agents in Departments;
5. Improve Trust Between Staff Members, Management, and Human Resources;
6. Improve Organization-Wide Awareness and Understanding;
7. Increase Cultural Competence of our Leadership, and;
8. Update Policies and Procedures.

The intended outcomes of these areas are:

1. Leaders who have more cultural awareness and the competency to lead cross-cultural teams;
2. Equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility embedded into our communications;
3. Internal structures to support equity, diversity, and inclusion;
4. Adoption of an IDEA lens to identify systemic barriers in policies, procedures, and standard ways of operating;
5. Leadership accountability related to EDI;
6. Increased trust and respect between our staff members, management, and our Human Resources department;
7. EDI strategies that are supported with financial, human, and time resources, and;
8. Education, training, and awareness for our workforce, to build their knowledge and confidence when addressing issues.

Some of the intended actions to take place in Phase One include but are not limited to:

- Complete Intercultural Development Inventory Assessments with the Executive Leadership Team;
- Embed Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility messaging into team meetings and external documents;
- Develop a "Diversity and Inclusion Lens" for TCHC and implementation plan for rollout;
- Work to embed Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in all aspects of divisions, and;
- Educate employees on applying knowledge and skills to working in an inclusive and respectful manner.

Phase Two: Audit and Assess Goods, Programs, Services, and Information

Phase Two will overlap with Phase One, as learning, education, and awareness must continue while all phases are implemented. The areas listed below are concerns that were raised during the data gathering and analysis stages in developing the EDI Strategy. Many leaders, employees, and community members made note that the current structure of the Toronto Community Housing does not leave room for change, innovation, and diversity of thinking, engaging in meaningful ways, or "doing."

To ensure that we are taking diverse needs into consideration, we will work to audit and assess the way we create, advertise, adjust, and assess the success of goods, programs, services, and information. This will be coincided with the implementation of the EDI Lens creation and implementation to help our Staff assess using checklists and self-reflection.

There are eight (8) key areas that need to be addressed in Phase Two:

1. Evaluate Flexibility and Accommodation Practices;
2. Identify and Address Internal and External Perceptions of Discrimination;
3. Identify and Incorporate Ways Diversity and Inclusion Can Positively Affect All Divisions;
4. Identify, Remove, and Prevent Barriers in Succession Planning;
5. Identify, Remove, and Prevent Barriers in the Recruitment Process;
6. Identify, Remove, and Prevent Barriers to Tenants Accessing Our Services;
7. Identify, Remove, and Prevent Gaps in the Onboarding Process, and;
8. Monitor Services to Ensure They Are Accessible, Inclusive, and Equitably Provided.

The intended outcomes of these areas are:

1. Programs and services that have been audited, assessed and updated to eliminate systemic barriers
2. Staff members who understand harassment, discrimination, and violence and the perception of this at TCHC;
3. An understanding how to utilize flexibility and accommodations to reduce stigma and encourage employee engagement;
4. Succession planning programs that assist with hiring and promotions, especially for our equity-deserving groups;
5. EDI programs that work for each division and department individually;
6. Hiring strategies that take into consideration existing organizational demographics and representation/under-representation, so that diversity is reflected at all levels and in all areas.

Some of the intended actions to take place in Phase Two include but are not limited to:

- Audit our current programs and services to understand current use and barriers impacting equity-deserving groups;
- Review policies and procedures to determine if there are barriers to requesting or receiving accommodations;
- Work to break down the stigma surrounding needing flexibility and/or accommodations in the workplace;
- Conduct ongoing employee demographic surveys;
- Work to identify systemic barriers facing equity-deserving groups, and;
- Begin tenant consultation to ensure that we are meeting their needs;
- Work to identify and address the gender pay gap at TCHC.

Phase Three: Collaborate and Build More Inclusive Practices

Phase Three will analyze the Corporation through a tenant based lens that incorporates equity, diversity, and inclusion. In order to have complete information, we will need to utilize this Phase for further consultation with our tenants to understand their needs.

This tenant based lens focuses on the departments and employees that interact with the people who live, work, and play in the Toronto Community Housing buildings to ensure programs, policies, facilities, services, and procedures meet the needs of our tenants.

Identified through the CABR Strategy, as well as the GDEIB, we have identified action areas that need to be addressed to ensure that our tenants' needs are being met. As we work closely with our Operations colleagues, and learn more about our structures, staffing, and practices and begin to adjust them, our needs for our tenants and community may change our focus, as we work to ensure that our tenants and their needs are always a priority.

There are five (5) key areas that need to be addressed in Phase Three:

1. Create More Opportunities for Education and Awareness for Tenants;
2. Encourage More Tenant Engagement at Toronto Community Housing;
3. Improve Access to Information and Services for Our Tenants;
4. Strengthen Social and Economic Development Through Partnerships, and;
5. Update and Improve Our Procurement Process to Incorporate Responsible Sourcing.

The intended outcomes of these areas are:

1. Tenants who understand, appreciate and experience our commitment to EDI;
2. Programs and services that meet the needs of all tenants and their communities, including youth and seniors;
3. Tenants who understand how to access information and services from TCHC, and;
4. Strengthened and new relationships with community partners to support community involvement and economic development.

Some of the intended actions to take place in Phase Three include but are not limited to:

- Explore opportunities for creating speaking events and educational opportunities for residents;
- Explore opportunities to work with our Indigenous tenants, Elders, and surrounding Friendship Centres to educate tenants on Indigenous issues;
- Plan, encourage, and support events that promote and celebrate understanding and diversity;
- Identify opportunities for partnerships with local service providers and faith organization to explore ways of reducing barriers faced by diverse communities, and;
- Continue to examine our updated RFP and RFQ intake forms to keep with Best Practices for Responsible Sourcing.

Questions and Information

If you have any questions about the contents of the EDI Strategy document, please contact our Senior Consultant, Diversity and Inclusion, Jamie Kramer at Jamie.Kramer@torontohousing.ca.