



Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

2025 Annual Report

— *City of* —
PICKERING





Land Acknowledgment

We acknowledge that the City of Pickering resides on land within the Treaty and traditional territory of the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation and Williams Treaties signatories of the Mississauga and Chippewa Nations. This includes Alderville First Nation, Chippewas of Beausoleil First Nation, Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation, Chippewas of Rama First Nation, Curve Lake First Nation, Hiawatha First Nation and the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation. Pickering is also home to many Indigenous persons and communities who represent other diverse, distinct, and autonomous Indigenous nations. This acknowledgement reminds us of our responsibilities to our relationships with the First Peoples of Canada, and to the ancestral lands on which we learn, share, work, and live.

Equity, diversity, and inclusion practices and policies are often conflated with Indigenization, Decolonization and Reconciliation. It is important to recognize that, though they share common ground, Indigenization, Decolonization, and Reconciliation require distinct and focused efforts that address settler colonialism, honour Indigenous self-determination and sovereignty, and advance reconciliation as defined by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

Indigenous peoples have lived on Turtle Island, the land also referred to as North America, as stewards of the lands and waters since time immemorial with their own unique cultures, identities, traditions, languages and institutions. As the City of Pickering advances Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, we honour all Indigenous Peoples as rights holders and commit to building relationships of trust, respect, reciprocity, and friendship.

By actively engaging in relationship building, challenging colonial structures, and centering Indigenous knowledge and perspectives, we are reminded of our roots as Treaty peoples with responsibilities toward one another, protecting and preserving the safety, well-being, and inherent dignity of all people wherever this may be challenged.

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR

Chief Administrative Officer

I am pleased to share the City's third annual Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Report. This report represents more than a summary of activities. It reflects the continued work of embedding EDI into our organization, our services, and our responsibility to respond to the needs and experiences of Pickering's diverse community.

Since the adoption of our first EDI Strategy in 2024, we have remained focused on advancing five key priority areas: Education and Awareness; Structure and Resources; Community Consultation and Engagement; Policies, Programs, and Practices; and Measurement and Accountability. Together, these priorities provide a strong framework to guide our work and ensure meaningful progress.

Over the past year, the City continued to advance EDI through a range of learning opportunities, internal initiatives, and community-focused engagements. EDI-focused training sessions were delivered to senior leadership, staff, and Council, helping to build a shared understanding of our collective responsibility in advancing equity across the organization. In 2025, the City delivered or supported 30 EDI events, initiatives, and engagements across Durham Region and engaged over 350 staff members through 17 EDI-focused workshops, trainings, and learning sessions. These included learning opportunities on anti-racism, reconciliation, accessibility, and gender and sexual diversity, as well as the Human Resources Leaders' Forum Program, which supported senior leadership in applying an equity lens to organizational decision-making, people management, and hiring practices. I encourage you to explore this report and learn more about the initiatives and achievements that are helping to shape a more inclusive, accessible, and welcoming Pickering for all.

Looking ahead, we will continue to build on this momentum by deepening our engagement with the community, embedding EDI principles into our policies and decision-making processes, and strengthening our ability to measure and report on progress. This work is ongoing, and it requires continued collaboration, openness, and accountability. In 2026, this will include continued work to support the opening of an All Faith and Wellness Room, the development of organization-wide EDI learning modules, and ongoing initiatives that strengthen accessibility, inclusion, and well-being across the organization and in the communities we serve. These projects reflect our commitment to ensuring that EDI is not limited to individual events or initiatives, but is integrated into the everyday experiences, systems, and spaces that shape our workplace and community.

Together, we are creating a stronger, more inclusive city, one where everyone feels valued, respected, and a true sense of belonging.

Sincerely,

Marisa Carpino

Chief Administrative Officer
City of Pickering



Summary of 2025 Events and Initiatives

- Jan. 30:** Unpacking Islamophobia with Canadian Council of Muslim Women
- Feb. 1:** Cultural Expressions Black History Month Celebration
- Feb. 5:** Together We Rise Durham: Black History Month Celebration
- Mar. 5:** International Women's Day Celebration
- Mar. 30:** Royal Canadian Legion Ladies Auxiliary International Women's Day Celebration
- May 1:** National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and Two-Spirit People/ Red Dress Day Flag Raising Ceremony
- May 2:** Staff Learning: Red Dress Indigenous Beading Workshop
- May 4:** Community Indigenous Beading Workshop
- May 26:** Council approves City of Pickering corporate membership of the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program
- May 31:** Pickering Public Library Drag Queen Storytime
- Jun. 1:** Youth Pride Durham
- Jun. 3:** Pride Month Flag Raising Ceremony
- Jun. 7:** Pride Durham Annual Pride Parade and Festival
- Jun. 17:** Staff Book Club: Disfigured by Amanda Leduc
- Jun. 19:** Leaders' Forum: Introduction to Intersectionality: Creating an Equity-Centred Mindset, and Developing tools for Meaningful Action
- Jun. 20:** National Indigenous Peoples Day / National Indigenous History Month Flag Raising Ceremony
- Jun. 20:** Durham Community Health Center Big Drum Social
- Jul. 30:** Durham Region Emancipation Day Celebration
- Jul. 31:** Durham Opening Celebration Ceremony - Emancipation Day Freedom Train Ride
- Aug. 27:** Pickering Anti-Black Racism Taskforce International Day for People of African Descent Community Celebration and Movie Night
- Sep. 29:** National Day for Truth and Reconciliation / Orange Shirt Day Flag Raising Ceremony
- Sep. 29:** Staff Learning Session: Drop-in learning session on the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation
- Sep. 30:** 4th Annual Truth and Reconciliation Community Gathering
- Oct. 22:** Leaders' Forum: Inclusive Hiring Practices for Managers
- Nov. 13:** Staff Learning Session: Introduction to Carnival Culture and History
- Nov. 14, 15:** Pickering Anti-Black Racism Taskforce Black Joy Holiday Market
- Nov. 19:** Staff Learning Session: Treaty Relations and Indigenous Ways of Knowing
- Nov. 27:** Staff Training: Workplace Inclusion for Gender and Sexual Diversity with Egale Canada



Education and Awareness



The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy priority area of focus one identifies Education and Awareness. Creating intentional learning opportunities is the first step in integrating EDI within all facets of the workplace and broader community. Focusing on areas such as anti-racism, decolonization, reconciliation, gender diversity, accessibility and social justice aims to challenge our own unconscious biases, address systemic inequalities and enhance cultural understanding.

Addressing and understanding these topics works to dismantle systemic barriers that exist within the public sector. This knowledge can empower staff and community leaders to challenge and change discriminatory practices, policies, and procedures. It allows individuals to develop a deeper appreciation for the diverse perspectives, experiences, and contributions of their colleagues and the communities they serve. This understanding fosters collaboration, empathy and respect, creating a more inclusive and equitable City that serves the needs of all communities.

Learning Opportunities

In 2025, staff were invited to respond to calls to action for continuing education with the following series of EDI-focused workshops, trainings and learning opportunities, engaging over 350 staff members across the organization:



Red Dress Indigenous Beading Workshop with Janet Dugan and Judith Keesic

In honour of Red Dress Day and National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and Two-Spirit People (MMIWG2S), staff were joined by Indigenous Artisans Janet Dugan and Judith Keesic who guided participants through beading their own Red Dress Awareness pin using traditional beading techniques, and traditional medicines and materials.

Unpacking Islamophobia with Canadian Council of Muslim Women

In honour of the National Day of Remembrance of the Quebec City Mosque Attack and Action Against Islamophobia, staff were invited to participate in a virtual learning session. Facilitated by the Canadian Council of Muslim Women, the workshop provided a basic historical and knowledge-building context on the history of Islam and Islamophobia to unpack the myth of the Muslim monolith. Participants gained tools and tips to engage in allyship and solidarity with Muslim communities as well as ways to engage in courageous conversations to foster inclusion.

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation Share and Learn with Valerie Bayers

In honour of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation / Orange Shirt Day, staff were invited to a Drop-in learning and sharing session facilitated by Pickering Public Library's Indigenous Relations Outreach Associate, Valerie Bayers. Participants were given the opportunity to have open conversations, learn honest truths, and take-home resources, and Orange T-Shirts to support future education.



Introduction to Carnival Culture and History with Toronto Caribbean Carnival

Facilitated by Toronto Caribbean Carnival (TCC) CEO Mischka Crichton and General Manager Adrian Charles, staff were invited to discover the world of Caribbean Carnival history and culture. Known as the largest Caribbean festival in North America, with heavy participation from the Caribbean community in Pickering and across Durham, Toronto Caribbean Carnival, often referred to colloquially as Caribana, attracts over 1 million visitors to Toronto and the GTA per year. With a history dating back almost 60 years, and recent designation as a part of Canada's cultural heritage by UNESCO, participants learned about TTC's important history of resistance and contemporary innovation through knowledge sharing, music and food.

Sharing Circle: Treaty Relations & Indigenous Ways of Knowing with Grandmother Kim Wheatley

In honour of Treaties Recognition Week and in line with the cities' ongoing commitment to Truth and Reconciliation, Traditional Anishinaabe Grandmother and Ancestral Knowledge Keeper, Kim Wheatley facilitated a sharing circle for staff. Participants explored Indigenous ways of knowing and being and how to navigate with confidence topics such as: terminology, land acknowledgements, nation naming and treaty territorial importance—including discussions of the TRC Report, MMIW, and the Indian Act, and their contemporary impacts.

Workplace Inclusion for Gender and Sexual Diversity with Egale Canada

Staff were joined by leading subject matter experts from Egale Canada for a 90-minute virtual training on Workplace Inclusion for Gender and Sexual Diversity. This interactive session was designed to help participants build supportive workplace environments and strengthen relationships with 2SLGBTQIA+ colleagues and community. The session provided practical strategies and inspiration to begin fostering positive change within individual roles and across the organization.





Staff Book Club in partnership with PPL

In collaboration with Pickering Public Library staff participants were provided with the chosen novel to read independently and later gather for an open sharing circle and discussion. In November, staff read *Disfigured: On Fairy Tales, Disability, and Making Space* by Amanda Leduc and came together to discuss, dissect, and share their thoughts on the novel.

Education Cards

Education cards were first developed by the EDI Team in 2021 as a tool for community engagement and learning. More than 1,800 educational resource cards were distributed across municipal facilities and throughout Durham Region, recognizing various days of significance. In 2025, the EDI Team expanded this collection to include and acknowledge various days of significance including, National Indigenous Languages Day, International Day of Sign Language, and Treaties Recognition Week.

Education cards are used to facilitate the dissemination of information and resources, inspire individuals to take action, and promote a culture of continuous learning, engagement, and collaboration towards creating positive social change. These cards were designed to provide concise and impactful information on various topics while including important community resources for individuals seeking knowledge, understanding, and support. Education Cards can be found at the following city locations: City Hall Customer Care Front Desk, Pickering Public Library Central Branch, George Ashe Library, and Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Center.



Structures and Resources

The EDI Strategy priority area of focus two identifies Structure and Resources. Advancing EDI in a meaningful and sustained way requires a strong organizational foundation. The structures that are established and the resources that are allocated demonstrate the City's commitment to embedding EDI across all areas of operation. Having the appropriate supports in place promotes consistency, alignment, and shared responsibility. A strong foundation enables EDI to be integrated more effectively into each department and daily work, contributing to a more inclusive and equitable workplace and community.

EDI Steering Committee

In support of strengthening internal structure and capacity to advance EDI, an internal EDI Steering Committee was established in 2025, consisting of staff representatives from across all City departments. This cross-functional approach supports the integration of EDI considerations throughout the organization by ensuring that diverse operational perspectives are reflected in ongoing initiatives and decision-making processes.

The EDI Steering Committee plays an important role in supporting organizational alignment and fostering shared responsibility for EDI. By creating a dedicated space for collaboration, knowledge sharing, and consultation, the Committee helps to embed EDI more consistently into departmental work and contributes to building internal awareness and capacity.

In 2025, the Committee provided input and guidance on several key initiatives, including the development of the All Faith and Wellness Room and the associated staff survey, the Accessibility Plan Survey, and participation in the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program and internal training initiative. Through this work, the Committee supported efforts to enhance accessibility, inclusion, and overall employee well-being across the organization.





Community Consultation and Engagement



The EDI Strategy identifies Community Consultation and Engagement as its third priority area of focus. Building an inclusive city relies on ongoing dialogue and relationship-building with residents, community groups, and partners. Meaningful engagement creates space for diverse voices, experiences, and perspectives to inform the City's work. Incorporating community input strengthens the City's ability to respond to evolving needs and priorities. This approach supports building meaningful relationships, fosters trust, and ensures that decision-making is informed by those it impacts, contributing to a more inclusive and connected community.

Pickering Anti-Black Racism Taskforce

Established in January 2021, the Pickering Anti-Black Racism Taskforce (PABRT) is a Council appointed body of community members, whose mandate is to address and combat anti-Black racism in all its forms within the City of Pickering and broader community. The PABRT actively works to dismantle systemic barriers and discriminatory practices that disproportionately affect Black communities, while aiming to increase understanding and awareness of the historical and contemporary issues faced by Black individuals. PABRT members play a vital role in fostering dialogue, advocating for change, and promoting social justice within the community. In 2025, the PABRT both partnered in and hosted various community initiatives throughout the year including:

Together we Rise Durham: Resistance, Resilience, Possibility Black History Month Celebration

February 5, 2025: The 2025 Together We Rise Durham: Resistance, Resilience, Possibility Black History Month celebration was hosted by the Region of Durham, in partnership with Durham Regional Police Service, Canadian Jamaican Club of Oshawa, City of Oshawa, City of Pickering, DurhamOne, Lakeridge Health, Municipality of Clarington, Ontario Shores, Pickering Anti-Black Racism Taskforce, Town of Ajax, Town of Whitby, Township of Brock and Township of Uxbridge. The celebration took place at the Audley Recreation Centre, bringing over 300 community members from across the Durham Region together for an uplifting evening featuring keynote speaker, Dr. Andrew B. Campbell (Dr. ABC), performances and a celebration of champions, including awards for and recognition of community members.

Royal Canadian Legion Ladies Auxiliary International Women's Day Celebration

March 30, 2025: The International Women's Day Celebration hosted by the Royal Canadian Legion Ladies Auxiliary took place in Pickering's Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex to bring together community members, thought leaders, and professionals across various fields to highlight women's achievements and empower women from all walks of life. PABRT was invited to host an information table and the PABRT Chair, Denise David was invited to sit on the discussion panel.

Durham Opening Celebration Ceremony – Emancipation Day Freedom Train Ride

July 31, 2025: Durham Region's first annual coordinated participation in the 12th annual Emancipation Day Underground Free Train Ride was hosted by the Durham Family Cultural Centre in partnership with the Pickering Anti-Black Racism Taskforce, Ajax Anti-Racism Taskforce, and Blackhurst Cultural Centre. The opening celebration took place at the Durham Family Cultural Centre Head Office, followed by chartered transportation to the Blackhurst Cultural Centre's Emancipation Day Underground Free Train Ride at Vaughn Metropolitan Centre, to honour the abolition of slavery in the British Empire and the legacy of the Underground Railroad in Canada.





International Day for People of African Descent Community Celebration and Movie Night

August 27, 2025: PABRT hosted the 3rd Annual International Day for People of African Descent Community Celebration in partnership with the Pickering Public Library's Anti-Black Racism Working Group, Durham Family Cultural Centre (DFCC), Durham One, and in Pickering's Esplanade Park. Attended by over 100 community members, the day included a resource village of local community organizations, performances and cultural activities for all ages, concluding with a movie screening in the Park of Drumline.

4th Annual Black Joy Holiday Market and Afro-Caribbean Food Basket Initiative

November 14 and 15, 2025: PABRT partnered with the DFCC to join the City of Pickering's Winter Nights City Lights Festival, bringing the 4th Annual Black Joy Holiday Market to the community as a 2-day initiative at the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex. Open to all community members, the holiday pop-up market included over 85 Black-owned local businesses, youth entrepreneurs, artists, and performers, and had more than 3000 people attended over its two days. The event coincided with a holiday food basket drive that provided Black families with culturally significant, Afro-Caribbean diasporic food baskets, distributed to families experiencing financial hardship and/or food insecurity in the Durham Region.



Indigenous Relationship Building Action Plan

In 2020, the City of Pickering adopted a multi-year Indigenous Relationship Building Action Plan that focused on establishing meaningful and international relationships with diverse Indigenous communities. This led to the formation of the Indigenous Relationship Building Circle (IRBC), a local network of Indigenous residents, Indigenous-led organizations, and allies that come together to provide guidance and leadership on community initiatives that center the voices and honour the contributions, history and cultures of First Nations, Metis and Inuit Peoples.

Responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Call to Action 14 on "...the preservation, revitalization, and strengthening of Aboriginal languages and cultures..." and Call to Action 79 calling on government "...in collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal organizations, and the arts community to develop a reconciliation framework for Canadian heritage and commemoration," the Indigenous Relationship Building Action Plan supported the following community initiatives:

Community Dangle Earring Beading Workshop

May 4, 2025: Facilitated by Indigenous Artisans, Janet Dugan and Judith Keesic, this workshop provided an opportunity for the community to engage with traditional Indigenous art and culture through the practice of beadwork. The workshop introduced participants to foundational beading techniques while sharing the cultural significance and history of Indigenous artistic expression. In a hands-on and welcoming environment, participants were supported in creating their own dangle earring pieces.



Durham Community Health Centre Big Drum Social

June 20, 2025: In honour of National Indigenous Peoples Day and National Indigenous History Month, Durham Community Health Centre partnered with the City of Pickering to bring the Annual Big Drum Social to Esplanade Park. A traditional celebration filled with music, dance, storytelling, and more, this event is Durham Region's largest gathering for National Indigenous Peoples Day, where all are welcome to celebrate, learn, and connect with the community.



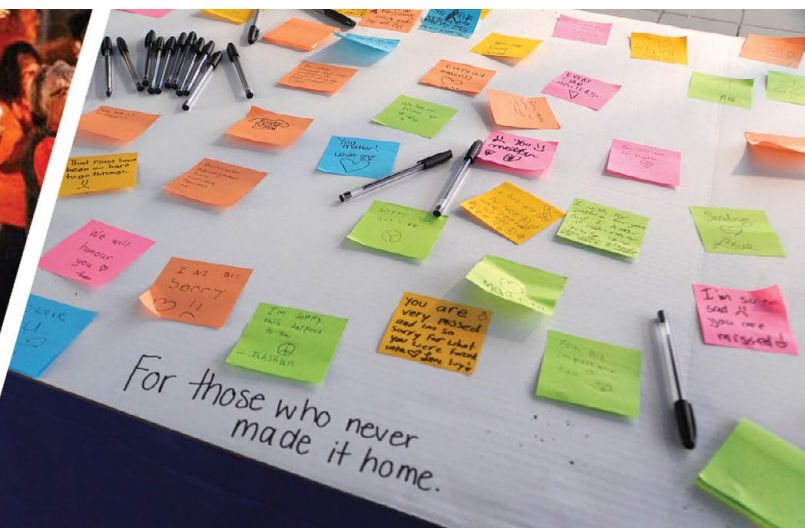


4th Annual Truth & Reconciliation Community Gathering

September 30, 2025: In commemoration of the ongoing legacy of residential schools, the IRBC and the City of Pickering partnered with the Town of Ajax, the Ajax Indigenous Advisory Circle, and community organizations to host a two-part community gathering for youth and community members, featuring reflections, teachings, and traditions with Indigenous community leaders. This was Durham Region's largest National Truth and Reconciliation gathering in 2025, garnering participation from over 800 community members, residents, schools, and community organizations.

The Youth programming brought together students in Grades 6–12 for a meaningful, youth-centered learning experience focused on Truth and Reconciliation. Activities began with spiritual grounding and community intention-setting at the Indigenous Healing Garden, followed by teachings and reflections led by Indigenous Elder and Knowledge Keeper Grandmother Kim Wheatley and Community Leader and 60s Scoop Survivor, Noreen Labelle. Youth participants engaged in guided dialogue on what Truth and Reconciliation means to today's generation and explored how they can act as allies in supporting ongoing pathways of healing and understanding. The program provided a safe and supportive space for learning, reflection, and connection.

The evening featured an Indigenous Arts & Wellness Vendor Market and powerful Indigenous-led programming with Traditional Healer Grey Cloud (James Carpenter), storytelling by Acclaimed Chef Joseph Shawana and Noreen Labelle and performances by Juno Award winner The Smoke Trail Singers and Meegwans. The gathering concluded with a candlelight vigil to honour survivors and remember those who were lost to the Canadian Residential School System.



Community Initiatives and Partnerships

Community initiatives and partnerships play a vital role in the City's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy. Creating meaningful relationships with community organizations, partners, and other municipalities provides invaluable resources and support while navigating EDI spaces and discourse. These relationships have resulted in joint programming, sharing of best practices, and achieving a wider impact across communities in the Durham Region. Engaging in equity, diversity and inclusion initiatives with a collaborative approach fosters a sense of community and shared responsibility, leading to sustainable and meaningful outcomes.

International Women's Day Celebration

March 5, 2025: The Region of Durham partnered with municipalities and organizations across the region to host the annual International Women's Day celebration, held in Pickering at the Chestnut Hills Developments Recreation Complex. As part of Durham Region's largest annual event recognizing International Women's Day, the celebration honoured the achievements and contributions of women in our communities. The 2025 theme, "The Time is Now – Women Driving Change," guided the event, which featured performances from local artists, a panel discussion with women leaders, and opportunities for networking and connection.

Pickering Public Library Drag Queen Storytime

May 31, 2025: In partnership with Durham Children's Aid Society and Youth Pride Durham, all libraries in Durham Region presented Drag Queen Story Time, featuring two local drag queens. This family-friendly program hosted at the Pickering Public Library Central Branch showcased stories celebrating diversity and inclusion, followed by musical performances and activities for children.

Youth Pride Durham

June 1, 2025: The City of Pickering partnered with Youth Pride Durham to bring a safe, inclusive celebration for youth, children and families who are part of 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, as well as allies. This event championed acceptance through an afternoon of performances, music, dancing, and a community resource village.



Pride Durham Annual Pride Parade & Festival

June 7, 2025: The City of Pickering was a proud partner in the 2025 Pride Durham Annual Pride Parade, hosted in the Town of Ajax. With support from more than 20 City staff members from various departments, volunteer community members, family, and friends, the City of Pickering was well represented while walking alongside the community. The Pickering walking group also featured a Pickering Fire Services vehicle as part of its parade presence.

Durham Region Emancipation Day Celebration

July 30, 2025: The 2025 Rooted in Resilience: Embracing Empowerment Emancipation Day Celebration was hosted by the Region of Durham in partnership with the City of Pickering, Pickering Anti-Black Racism Taskforce and municipal partners and community organizations across the Region. This family friendly event took place at Pickering's Esplanade Park, featuring live performances from local talent and black-owned local business vendors and community organizations. Attended by over 300 community members, this celebration was an opportunity to address anti-black racism through education Emancipation and create an avenue for community members to connect and learn in a welcoming and engaging environment.



Community Recognition

Throughout the year, the City of Pickering collaborated with local community organizations to recognize and honour days of significance that aim to foster a culture of respect, understanding, and belonging within our community. These acknowledgements allow both City staff and community members to engage in meaningful conversations and learning that promote awareness and appreciation for different cultures, histories, and lived experiences. Going further, recognizing these days helps to raise awareness of the ongoing challenges faced by marginalized communities, encouraging dialogue and reflection.

2025 Flag Raisings and Ceremonies

May: National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and Two-Spirit People/ Red Dress Day

June: Pride Month

June: National Indigenous Peoples Day/ National Indigenous History Month

August: Emancipation Day

August: International Day for People of African Descent

September: National Truth and Reconciliation Day/ Orange Shirt Day

November: Treaties Recognition Week

November: Transgender Day of Remembrance





Policies, Practices and Programs

The EDI Strategy priority area of focus four identifies Policies, Practices and Programs. The systems and processes that guide organizational work play a critical role in shaping equitable outcomes. Applying an EDI lens to these areas helps ensure that they are inclusive, accessible, and reflective of the diverse community the City serves. Examining policies, practices, and programs through this lens creates opportunities to identify and address barriers. This ongoing approach supports equity in service delivery and contributes to an environment where all individuals can access and benefit from City services.

In 2025, the City expanded the EDI team with the addition of an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Specialist. This role plays a key part in advancing the Policies, Practices and Programs priority area by supporting the review of existing policies, procedures, and organizational practices through an EDI lens.

Through this work, the position helps to identify systemic barriers, highlight opportunities for improvement, and support the integration of more inclusive and equitable approaches across departments. The addition of this role aims to strengthen the City's capacity to embed EDI considerations into decision-making processes and service delivery, contributing to more responsive and inclusive outcomes for the community.



Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program

In 2025, the City of Pickering formally endorsed participation in the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program through Council approval (May 26, 2025, Resolution 740/25). This globally recognized initiative supports individuals living with non-visible or hidden disabilities by providing a discreet way to indicate that they may require additional time, understanding, or assistance when accessing services or navigating public spaces.

The program is centered around the use of the Sunflower symbol, which can be worn as a lanyard, pin, or wristband to signal to staff that additional support may be needed. Participation in the program includes staff training to build awareness and understanding of hidden disabilities, which can include a wide range of physical, cognitive, sensory, or mental health conditions that may not be immediately visible.

This initiative was coordinated through the City's Accessibility Coordinator and represents an important step in embedding accessibility and inclusion into service delivery. By increasing staff awareness and capacity to respond to diverse needs, the program supports more inclusive, respectful, and responsive interactions with the community. Training efforts are ongoing, with a goal of reaching 80 percent of staff, reinforcing the City's commitment to reducing barriers and enhancing equitable access to programs, services, and spaces.

Human Resources Leaders' Forum Program

The Leaders' Forum Program was developed in collaboration with Human Resources to strengthen leaders' capacity to apply an equity lens to organizational practices and decision-making. These sessions supported the ongoing work of identifying and addressing barriers within internal systems, with a focus on fostering more inclusive leadership, reducing bias, and embedding equitable approaches into people management and hiring practices. By building shared understanding and practical skills among leaders, the program contributed to advancing more consistent, fair, and inclusive practices across the organization.

In 2025, two targeted learning sessions were delivered through the Leaders' Forum as full-day trainings for managers and supervisors. The first, *Introduction to Intersectionality for Municipal Governments*, was facilitated by the EDI Supervisor and external EDI consultant, Kianna Bonnick, providing an overview of intersectionality theory, supported by interactive activities and municipal case studies. The second session, *Inclusive Hiring Practices for Managers*, was delivered by the Region of Durham's Director of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, Allison Hector-Alexander and focused on recognizing and mitigating personal bias, removing barriers to attracting diverse talent, and applying inclusive hiring principles through case study analysis.





Measurement and Accountability

The EDI Strategy priority area of focus five identifies Measurement and Accountability. Understanding progress is essential to advancing EDI in a meaningful way. Thoughtful measurement and reflection help to ensure that commitments are being translated into tangible outcomes. Creating space for accountability encourages continuous learning and growth across the organization. It reinforces the importance of transparency and shared responsibility, helping to build trust while supporting the City's ongoing efforts to foster equity and inclusion.

2025 Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Overview



In 2025, the EDI Team disseminated over **1800 education cards** throughout Durham Region.



In 2025, the EDI Team engaged over **350 staff members** in a total of 17 EDI focused workshops, trainings, and learning sessions.



In 2025, the Pickering AntiBlack Racism Taskforce hosted a two-day Holiday Market attended by **over 3000 people** across Durham Region.





In 2025, the Indigenous Relationship Building Action Plan supported the City of Pickering's 4th Annual Truth and Reconciliation Community Gathering attended by over **600 local students** from various elementary and secondary schools and **200 community members**.





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