



## **MEMO / NOTE DE SERVICE**

**Information previously distributed / Information distribué auparavant**

**TO: Finance and Corporate Services Committee**

**DESTINATAIRE : Comité des finances et des services organisationnels**

**FROM: Clara Freire, General Manager,  
Community and Social Services**

**Contact :  
Sonia Luberti,  
Director (A) Equity, Diversity,  
Inclusion, Indigenous Relations  
Sonia.luberti@ottawa.ca**

**EXPÉDITEUR : Clara Freire  
Directrice générale, Services sociaux  
et communautaires**

**Personne ressource : Sonia Luberti,  
Directrice, Service de l'équité des  
genres et des races, de l'inclusion et  
des relations avec les Autochtones  
sonia.luberti@ottawa.ca**

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**FILE NUMBER: ACS2025-CSS-GEN-015**

**SUBJECT: Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Update**

**OBJET : Mise à jour sur l'équité, la diversité, l'inclusion et l'appartenance**

### **PURPOSE**

This Information Previously Distributed Memorandum (IPD) provides an update on the work of the Equity Team and the development of the Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EDIB) Framework. The EDIB Framework brings together existing strategies to align and strengthen equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging work at the City.

In December 2024, Council directed staff to develop an EDIB Framework and committed to receiving a report in 2025 on its development, including performance measures, progress towards workforce targets and the next iteration of the Corporate

Diversity and Inclusion Plan. This update is being provided in fall 2025 to meet that commitment.

The Community and Social Services Department is sharing this update to highlight progress as the EDIB Framework takes shape, including establishing the strategic groundwork of developing the EDIB Framework, establishing corporate and community engagement structures and advancing Council's strategic priorities, particularly a city that has affordable housing and is more livable for all. The full report is scheduled for Council consideration in Q1 2026.

## **BACKGROUND**

In December 2024, Council received the report Corporate Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Framework [[ACS2024-CSS-GEN-013](#)]. The report presented an evaluation of three Council approved strategies, outlining their progress and identifying areas for further review and enhancement. It also introduced the plan to bring the strategies together under a single framework.

The three strategies that inform the EDIB Framework are:

- [The Women and Gender Equity Strategy](#) (2021-2025)
- [Corporate Diversity and Inclusion Plan](#) (2019-2024)
- [The Anti-Racism Strategy](#) (2023-2028)

These strategies reflect the diverse realities of residents who live, work and use services in Ottawa. They promote understanding of inequities experienced by different population groups and guide the City's efforts to build greater equity and inclusion and in particular, the Corporate Diversity and Inclusion Plan sets goals to foster a more inclusive and equitable workplace for City employees.

## **DISCUSSION**

In December 2024, Council approved an intersectional approach to address systemic inequities by aligning the City's three major equity strategies under one shared accountability framework. This framework, now called the EDIB Framework, is being developed to provide a tool for accountability and transformation.

The EDIB Framework will endeavour to embed equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging across City operations by aligning and leveraging existing corporate and departmental strategies. It aims to respond to Council and community priorities and highlight the impact of City programs and services, particularly for marginalized and equity-denied communities.

## **EDIB Framework development progress**

The EDIB Framework is being developed through collaboration with City departments, including a review of existing actions to identify duplication or overlap. Community input is also central to this work, guided by a Community Working Group and feedback gathered through engagement sessions.

## **EDIB Community Working Group**

The Community Working Group was established to guide the development of the EDIB Framework and support its implementation. In early 2025, 10 community members were appointed following a selection process. The community members represent organizations and agencies serving racially marginalized or equity-denied communities and bring lived or living experience, expertise or a record of accomplishment in anti-racism, anti-oppression and equity work. A memo introducing the [EDIB Community Working Group](#) was shared with Council on June 6, 2025.

The Working Group provides:

- Community perspectives and feedback to inform the EDIB Framework;
- Input on draft EDIB documents and the Performance Measurement Framework; and
- Collaboration between City departments and equity-denied communities.

The Group convened its first meeting in June 2025 and continues to meet regularly. Once the EDIB Framework is adopted, the Group's mandate, membership and Terms of Reference will be reviewed to determine the need for continuation.

## **Community engagement sessions**

In July 2025, the City held two community engagement sessions to provide updates on the Anti-Racism Strategy and Women and Gender Equity Strategy, and to gather feedback on the development of the EDIB Framework. Each two-hour session included a panel with key municipal staff representatives, followed by a facilitated discussion for participants to provide feedback and ask questions.

The sessions were attended by approximately 100 people. Feedback was reviewed by staff to inform a What We Heard Report, and attendees received one-pagers to support understanding of the strategies and available resources. These engagement sessions support informed decision-making and meaningful collaboration with the community. The next round of engagement is planned for Q1 2026.

## Learning and development initiatives

The Equity Team plays an important role in building internal staff capacity to advance work across the Corporation using an equity and inclusion lens and fostering a culture of continuous learning. Through coaching and information sharing, the development and implementation of learning tools, training programs and awareness campaigns, the team ensures that best practices and lessons learned are embedded into the City's operations and workplace culture.

Examples of key initiatives in 2025 include:

- **Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Leadership Training:** Delivered to the Senior Leadership Team starting in July, with sessions for the Extended Senior Leadership Team scheduled through September. The Equity Team offers these sessions to equip leaders to recognize and address systemic racism in policies, practices and workplace culture while embedding anti-racism into decision-making at all levels.
- **Learning and development tools and training:** The Equity Team provides resources and targeted programs to help staff integrate equity and anti-racism principles in their day-to-day work. This includes **Bias Awareness Training** for leaders and the **Anti-Racism Conversation Series** for staff across operational contexts. The series received the City Manager's Award of Distinction this year in the category of Inclusion and Belonging in the Workplace. Additional learning tools developed for City staff include a lexicon, a women and gender equity lens guide, an intersectional data analysis handbook, inclusive language guide and other interactive videos to support continuous capacity building.
- **EDIB Calendar:** Promotes and coordinates educational campaigns celebrating cultural, religious and historical milestones, including Black History Month, Asian Heritage Month, Jewish Heritage Month, Pride and 16 Days Against Gender-Based Violence.
- **Advice and coaching** on equity, inclusion and belonging in the workplace: The Equity Team responds to frequent requests from departments seeking guidance on how to address equity considerations in their policies, programs and workplace practices. This includes advising on inclusive language, reviewing program design, supporting employees and helping resolve issues related to bias or discrimination. In 2025, the team has responded to approximately 185 requests, providing tailored advice and hands-on support to ensure equity and belonging are embedded across the organization.

## **Corporate Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Plan (CEDIB) 2026-2030**

The City of Ottawa has maintained a Corporate Diversity and Inclusion Plan for more than a decade, aiming to build a representative workforce and an inclusive workplace. The work to refresh the plan under a new name, the Corporate Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (CEDIB) Plan began in 2025, following the evaluation of the CDIP 2019-2024 included in the 2024 report to Council. The new CEDIB 2026-2030 will reflect the City's continued commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging. It will incorporate lessons learned from the Corporate Diversity and Inclusion Plan while aligning with the Anti-Racism Strategy and Women and Gender Equity Strategy under a unified EDIB Framework.

The CEDIB Plan 2026-2030 emphasizes the use of informed practices, employment equity laws and labour market insights to build a more inclusive workforce at the City. An environmental scan was completed to benchmark Ottawa's efforts against other municipalities, identify emerging trends and highlight areas for growth. The Equity Team is working with Human Resources to develop the plan, which will be informed by City departments, community organizations and members of the EDIB Community Working Group to ensure alignment with organizational and community priorities. The revised CEDIB will be presented to the City's Senior Leadership Team for approval in Q1 2026. Once approved, the CEDIB's implementation will be integrated into the new EDIB Framework.

### **Anti-hate campaign**

In March 2025, the City launched **Ottawa Stops Hate Together** to respond to the rise in hate and bias-related incidents in Ottawa. The campaign builds on Council's 2023 motion to strengthen anti-hate work and is supported by a \$150,000 2025 City budget investment. The City partners with community organizations on this campaign, including Pinecrest-Queensway Community Health Centre and United Way East Ontario.

Key initiatives include:

- Highlighting the contributions of Ottawa's Chinese, Indigenous, African, Caribbean, Black, Jewish, Muslim and 2SLGBTQQIA+ communities.
- A research project in partnership with Carleton University and City Archives to explore the history of unpaid Black labour in Ottawa.
- A Train-the-Trainer Upstander Intervention program, delivered by SAFE (Strategies for Advocacy, Freedom and Empowerment), with 42 participants from community and City staff.

## **EDIB communications strategy**

To support the implementation and long-term sustainability of the EDIB Framework, the Equity Team will develop a communications strategy. This strategy ensures consistent, inclusive and transparent messaging across the organization and externally, fostering engagement, accountability and adaptability.

Planned deliverables include an EDIB messaging guide and visual toolkit, Councillor's toolkit, internal campaigns to promote EDIB values, regular updates through newsletters, intranet and town halls, partner engagement materials and translation and accessibility services. The Equity Team will continue collaborating with corporate communications colleagues to leverage expertise and identify opportunities to advance EDIB initiatives.

## **CONCLUSION**

Advancing anti-racism and equity work is an ongoing journey. Achieving meaningful change requires reflection, learning and accountability, and is strengthened through collaboration with staff, community partners and Council.

This IPD highlights key progress in advancing equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging at the City of Ottawa. The EDIB Framework will be presented to Council in Q1 2026.

Clara Freire, General Manager, Community and Social Services Department

CC: Sonia Luberti, Director, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Indigenous Relations