

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy

2025-2029



THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF DURHAM HEADQUARTERS

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POWERING INCLUSION

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Land Acknowledgement

The Region of Durham exists on lands that the Michi Saagiig Anishinaabeg inhabited for thousands of years prior to European colonization. These lands are the traditional and treaty territories of the Nations covered under the Williams Treaties, including the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation, Alderville First Nation, Hiawatha First Nation, Curve Lake First Nation, and the Chippewa Nations of Georgina Island, Beausoleil and Rama.

We honour, recognize, and respect Indigenous Peoples as rights holders and stewards of the lands and waters on which we have the privilege to live. In our efforts towards reconciliation, we continue to build and strengthen relationships with First Nations, as well as the large Métis communities and growing Inuit communities here in Durham. We commit to learning from Indigenous values and knowledge, building opportunities for collaboration, and recognizing that we are all connected.





Labour Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that Durham Region has profited from the free labour of enslaved people of African descent who were uprooted from their homelands and forced into labour to generate wealth for this nation. We also acknowledge the labour of immigrants- voluntary, forced, or undocumented- whose work has shaped this land. This includes the Chinese Railway Workers, whose efforts in building the transcontinental railway continue to underpin so much of our prosperity today.

We offer these acknowledgments with respect and gratitude, along with the intention to affirm fundamental human rights and improve equity and justice in all our programs and services.



Introduction

The Region of Durham has been steadily working toward a more inclusive and equitable future across its services, programs and partnerships. This Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Strategy builds on that foundation by offering a stronger, more unified path forward: one that not only connects the important work already underway but also sets goals, a shared vision and a long-term commitment to meaningful change.

Shaped by the voices of employees, community members, service providers and Council, the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy honours the progress made while clearly identifying where renewed focus is essential. It introduces five strategic goals, each supported by meaningful objectives to guide impactful implementation over the next four years.

As the Region continues to grow and evolve, so too must its approach to equity, inclusion and belonging, ensuring all residents and employees feel seen, valued and supported. This document is more than a plan; it is a framework for transformative action, continuous learning and deeper collaboration.



Message from the Regional Chair

This Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy offers a thoughtful, long-term commitment to building communities where everyone feels they truly belong.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion are not only organizational goals; they are public responsibilities that call on us to lead with integrity, vision and accountability. It is essential to reflect on how well our systems, services and relationships represent and respond to the communities we support and serve. That reflection is foundational to building lasting trust. This strategy marks an important step forward in deepening connections across Durham.



John Henry, Regional Chair

On behalf of Regional Council, I want to extend sincere thanks to the many residents, service providers and employees who contributed to shaping this strategy. Your experiences and insights have given this plan its direction and its heart.

We are proud to champion its implementation and reaffirm our commitment to the vital role Council will continue to play in ensuring that the Region of Durham is a place where connection, care and opportunity are lived realities for everyone.

Message from the CAO

The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy represents a significant step forward in the Region's enduring commitment to building diverse, inclusive and equitable communities. Across departments and service areas, employees have been advancing DEI-related work for many years. This strategy offers a way to bring those efforts into alignment, support them with the right structures and ensure that progress is both meaningful and lasting.

Throughout this process, we clearly heard from employees, residents and community partners that the Region is ready to elevate and strengthen coordinated action. This strategy helps us do just that – with shared direction, clearly defined roles, and space to reflect, grow and adapt as we learn. Thank you to all who took time to contribute so meaningfully to this work.

As CAO, I am deeply committed to championing implementation at all levels of the organization and within our programs and services. That includes aligning our internal systems and our community work with the priorities identified in this strategy; as well as investing in learning and capacity-building to ensure that teams across the Region are equipped to embed DEI into their everyday work. Together, we will build on the strong momentum that already exists and move forward with purpose, ambition and accountability.



Elaine Baxter-Trahair,
Chief Administrative Officer

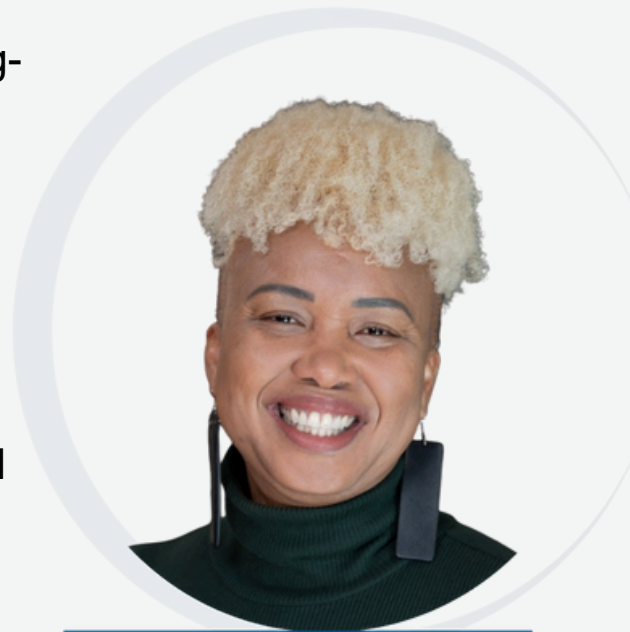
Message from the DEI Director

DEI advancements are underway across the Region; in conversations, in policy shifts, in program design and in the persistent efforts of employees and community members who have been pushing for change for decades. What hasn't always existed is a clear, connected way to support that work, align it, and hold ourselves accountable to its commitments.

That's why this Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy matters. It's a powerful response to what we have consistently heard: that if we are truly committed to long-term impact, our efforts must be more coordinated.

The DEI Division was created to help guide that shift. Our role is to work across the organization and alongside communities to build systems and structures that make DEI a shared responsibility, not a separate initiative. This strategy is a key tool in that effort. It helps us focus our actions, clearly articulate our responsibilities, and track our progress in real and visible ways.

I am deeply grateful to the many people who contributed to this process and to those who have been leading and championing this work. This strategy belongs to all of us, and so does the responsibility to bring it to life with intention, courage and care.



Allison Hector-Alexander,
Director, DEI

Durham - Our DEI Journey

The Region of Durham has taken meaningful steps in recent years to foster a more welcoming, respectful, and inclusive workplace and community. Through a series of assessments and resulting initiatives, these efforts have generated valuable insights that continue to shape the Region's ongoing journey toward equity.

Over the past year, the Region has been focused on developing a long-term strategy to deepen and strengthen DEI across its services, operations, and community partnerships.

To inform the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy, the Region undertook a thoughtful, multi-phase process grounded in research, reflection and engagement. This included learning from current initiatives, exploring leading practices from other municipalities and global organizations and conducting a comprehensive review of internal and external programs, policies, and reports. Equally important, it involved meaningful listening - through surveys, interviews and discussions with employees, leadership, community members, Council and service providers.





What emerged is a clear, more unified picture of where we are and where we need to go. We heard that while progress is underway, the path forward must be more consistent, connected and bold. Internally, employees called for stronger accountability, expanded learning opportunities, and better alignment across departments. Externally, community members and partners emphasized the importance of equitable access to services, more representative decision-making, and greater follow-through on public commitments.

This Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy brings those insights together. It honours the work already in motion and offers a purposeful roadmap for sustained, long-term change, one that is rooted in lived experiences and designed to move the Region forward with clarity, integrity, and collective resolve.



What we heard

"Be engaged. Care about each other."

"Leadership inspires others to engage"

"Speak to your neighbours, help them be aware of events and opportunities."

"There needs to be more inclusion of the new demographic in activities, programs and spaces."

"Provide education opportunities related to disability awareness and acceptance."

"Funding is key - education is key - people can't change what they yet do not understand."

"Make sure the LGBTQ+ community, especially trans individuals, feels safe and welcome."

"Establish, measure and communicate performance to demonstrate continuous improvement."

"Provide education opportunities related to disability awareness and acceptance."

"Support each other and work together with all different backgrounds."

"Advocate for improved policy infrastructure, including toolkits and resources to translate DEI education into action"

"Leverage diverse skills and experiences to come up with solutions"

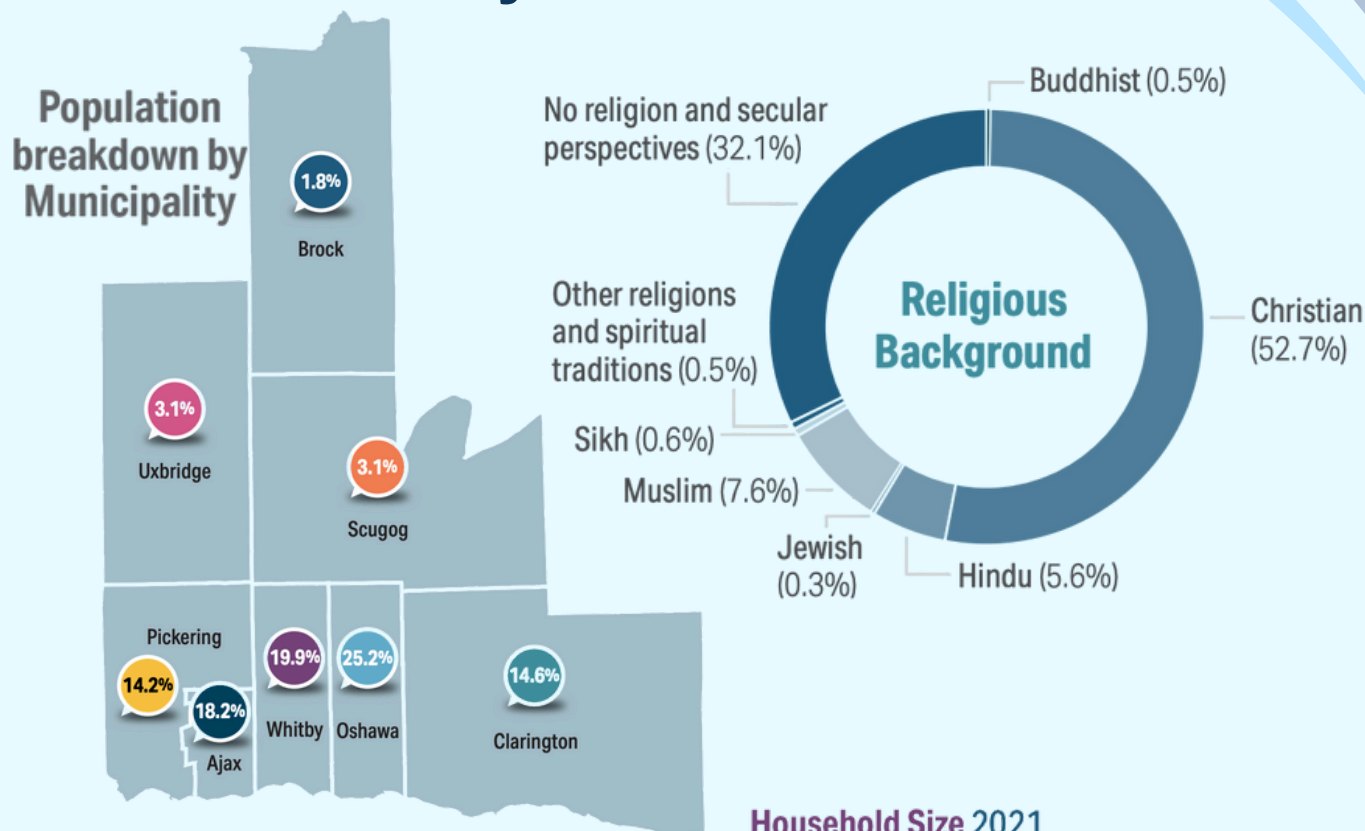


Our Region- What do we stand for?

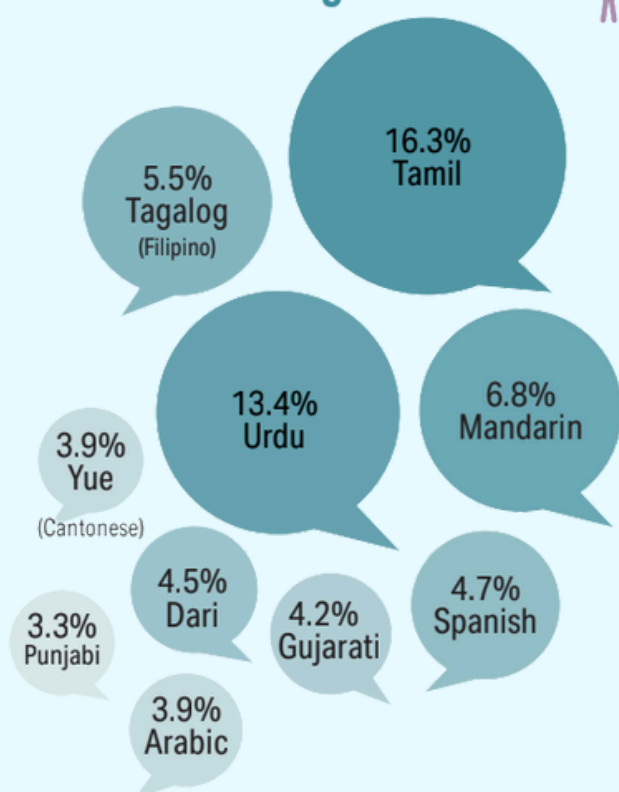
Our DEI strategy is a bold commitment to building a stronger, more inclusive Region—one that empowers every voice, unites our efforts with purpose, and drives lasting, meaningful change for Durham's people and communities.



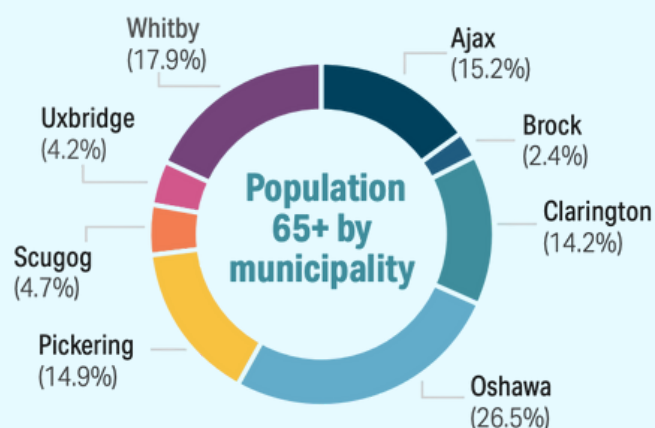
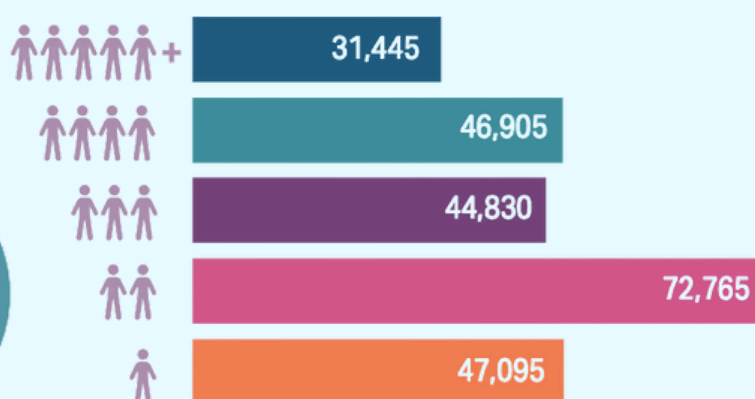
Our community- Who do we serve?



Languages spoken most often at home other than English

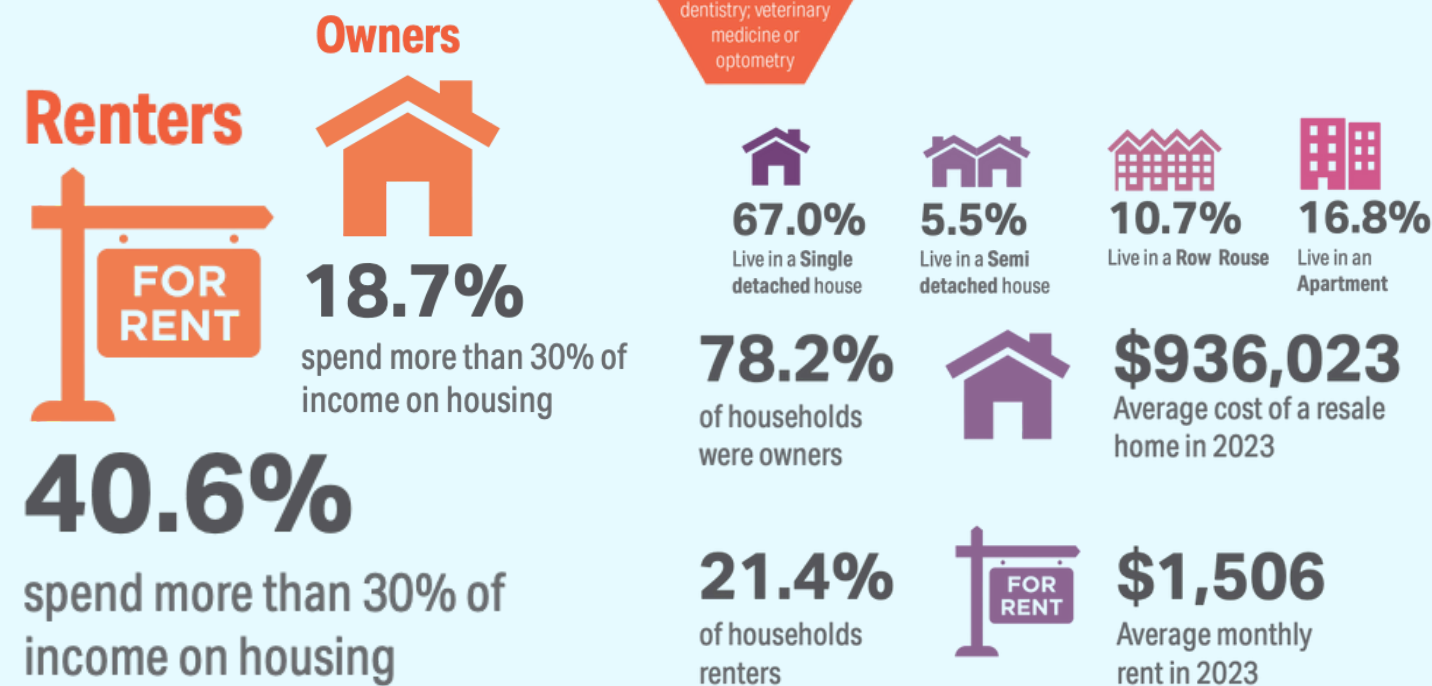
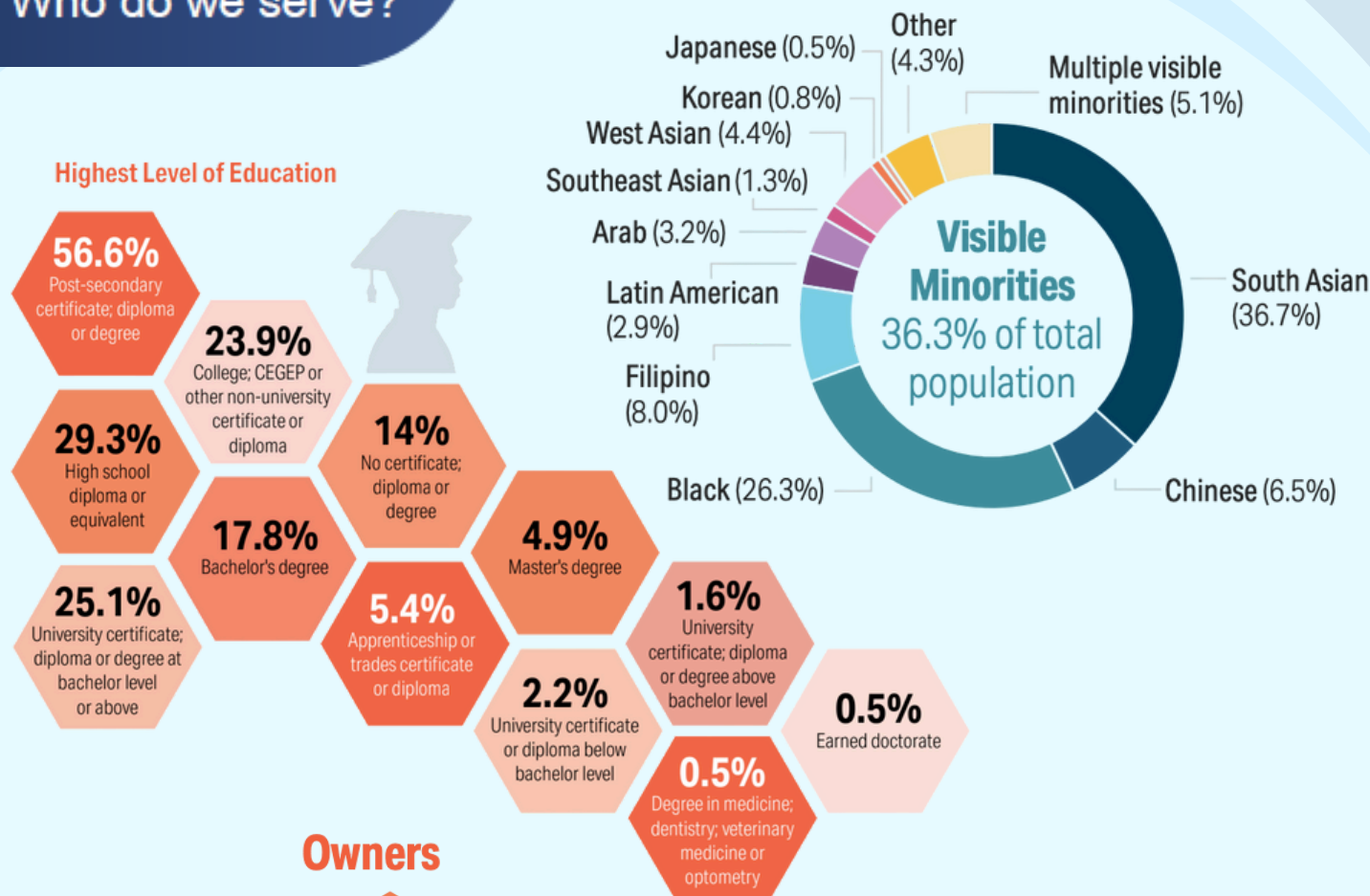


Household Size 2021



Source: Durham Region Profile-Demographic and Socio-Economic Data: Oct 2024

Who do we serve?



Source: Durham Region Profile-Demographic and Socio-Economic Data: Oct 2024



Building

inclusive excellence

The impact of DEI on our people,
programs, and communities



Why is DEI important to our **employees**?

DEI is vital because it inspires a workplace culture where every person is seen, heard and empowered to contribute with authenticity and purpose. It reflects our shared commitment to creating a workplace grounded in dignity, fairness, and belonging, where diverse voices shape decisions and drive innovation.

When we champion equity internally, we build the foundation for delivering services that are not only inclusive but deeply responsive to the needs of all communities. DEI is more than a core value, it is the bridge between a thriving workforce and a more just, compassionate and equitable future for everyone we serve.



Why is DEI important to our communities?

DEI is important to our communities because it affirms the inherent dignity, worth and potential of every person who calls Durham Region home. It represents a promise that all voices, especially those that have been historically underrepresented or marginalized, are not only heard, but meaningfully included in shaping the policies, programs and spaces that affect their daily lives.

By embedding equity and inclusion into every facet of community engagement and service delivery, we build trust, foster belonging and create conditions where everyone has a fair opportunity to thrive. DEI is how we honour the richness of our diversity and work together toward a more just, welcoming, and connected future for all.



Why are DEI initiatives important to our **community**?

DEI initiatives are essential to the sustainability of our community because they ensure that regional services are designed and delivered with fairness, accessibility and dignity at their core. Equity is not a separate agenda; it is the thread that connects all aspects of community life, shaping how people experience safety, opportunity and belonging. When DEI principles are embedded into daily decision-making, they help uncover and remove systemic barriers, ensuring that no one is left behind. These initiatives create pathways for meaningful participation, responsive service delivery and inclusive growth, enabling a community where everyone, regardless of their background, has the chance to thrive and contribute.



What does **DEI** mean for all of us?

DEI shapes how people experience life in Durham Region. Whether applying for a job or accessing a service or ensuring someone feels safe in a public space or sees themselves reflected in decisions that affect them, DEI is about how people show up for one another in real, everyday ways.

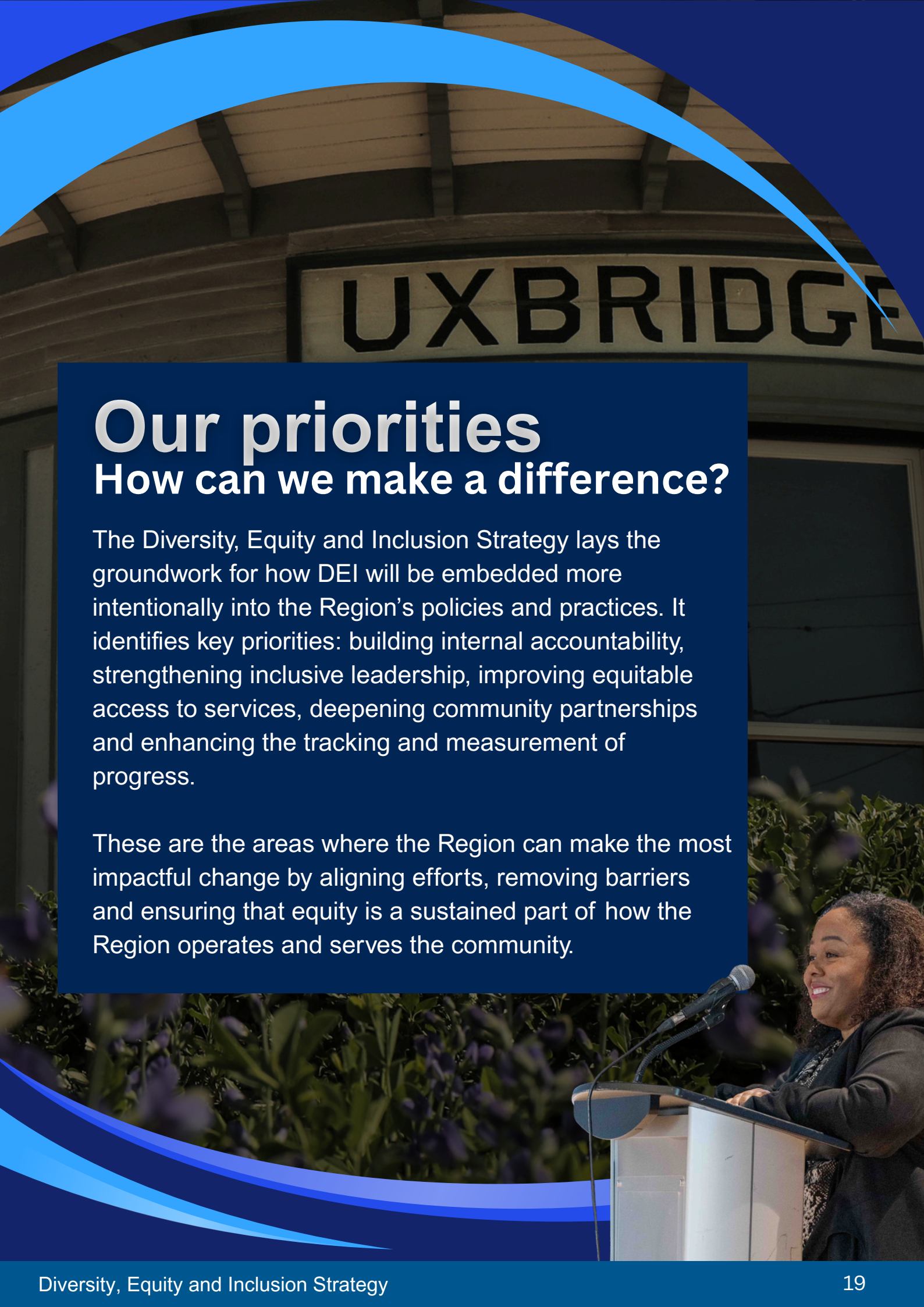
Diversity is about recognizing and respecting that each of us is different. Those differences might be visible or invisible, and can include things like age, gender, culture, language, race, ability, religion, income and sexual orientation. Diversity means valuing the range of identities and experiences that make up our communities, workplaces and institutions.

Equity is about fairness. It means understanding that not everyone starts in the same place or faces the same barriers – and that achieving fairness sometimes requires different approaches or support. Equity helps ensure that everyone has the opportunity to participate fully and benefit equally from life in Durham.

Inclusion is about creating spaces, in our workplaces, schools, neighbourhoods and systems, where people feel valued, respected and able to contribute meaningfully. Inclusion happens, for example, when people who have often been left out of decision-making are actively listened to and when their input leads to meaningful change.

Together, these principles form the foundation of this Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy. They reflect the kind of region Durham aspires to be: one where differences are valued, barriers are addressed and everyone can thrive.



The background of the slide features a photograph of a building with a sign that reads "UXBRIDGE". In the lower right corner, a woman with dark curly hair is seen from the side, smiling and speaking at a podium with a microphone. The image is partially overlaid by a large blue curved graphic element that starts from the top left and curves around the text area.

Our priorities

How can we make a difference?

The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy lays the groundwork for how DEI will be embedded more intentionally into the Region's policies and practices. It identifies key priorities: building internal accountability, strengthening inclusive leadership, improving equitable access to services, deepening community partnerships and enhancing the tracking and measurement of progress.

These are the areas where the Region can make the most impactful change by aligning efforts, removing barriers and ensuring that equity is a sustained part of how the Region operates and serves the community.

A large white water tower with 'Clarington' in a large blue script font and 'BOWMANVILLE' in a smaller blue sans-serif font below it. To the left of the tower is a blue square logo with a white stylized wave and the words 'DURHAM REGION' in white. The tower is supported by several white columns. In the foreground, there are out-of-focus red flowers and green leaves.

Clarington
BOWMANVILLE

Vision

A Region where everyone belongs, every voice is heard, and every community thrives.

We are building connected, caring, and welcoming communities where everyone belongs. Guided by equity, inclusion, and respect, we lead boldly, listen deeply, and act with purpose — creating spaces where every voice is heard, every person is valued, and prosperity is shared by all.

DEI Value	Guiding Principles	Aligned Corporate Value	Connection
Accountability	We take responsibility for our actions, we own our impact and commit to transparency, so we can improve and rise to our best, together.	Accountable	Accountability reflects shared responsibility, integrity and transparency.
Agility	We adapt to change, embracing new ways of thinking to better serve, live and lead together.	Innovative	Agility supports innovation through responsiveness, adaptability and future-focused thinking.
Curiosity	We seek to understand others and challenge our assumptions through open-minded learning.	Innovative	Curiosity fuels innovation by promoting continuous learning, reflection and openness to new ideas.
Empathy	We listen with care and compassion and honour each person's story and lived experience.	Caring	Empathy is foundational to caring; it ensures people feel seen, heard and valued.
Inclusion	We create spaces where all voices are heard, valued and empowered.	Inclusive	Inclusion ensures all voices are actively welcomed, heard and empowered.
Trust	We build relationships rooted in honesty, respect and a shared commitment to equity.	Collaborative	Trust enables collaboration by fostering respectful, equitable and reliable relationships.

Goal 1: Establish a Centralized and Coordinated DEI Structure

Corporate Strategic Direction: Strong Relationships
Connection: Fosters shared ownership and internal alignment by clarifying expectations for equity advancement and ensuring all programs follow a cohesive structure before moving into deeper implementation and accountability.

DEI Strategic Objectives:

- 1.1** Establish consistent, organization-wide DEI program frameworks to guide all initiatives and departments.
- 1.2** Define clear DEI governance roles and responsibilities for leaders, employees and programs across the organization.
- 1.3** Streamline department-level DEI planning through standardized resources and guidance.
- 1.4** Embed DEI governance frameworks into core operational processes such as onboarding, leadership development and program management.
- 1.5** Build sustainable internal capacity to forecast, plan, and resource DEI initiatives long-term.
- 1.6** Support tailored programming through phased implementation of department specific DEI roles aligned to the organizational DEI frameworks.



Goal 2: Implement an Integrated DEI Measurement and Accountability System for Sustainable Impact

Corporate Strategic Direction: Healthy People, Caring Communities

Connection: Embeds equity into internal operations and public-facing programs and services by measuring what matters, improving transparency and driving continuous improvement.

DEI Strategic Objectives:

- 2.1** Develop a comprehensive Measurement Framework to assess and evaluate DEI outcomes internally and externally.
- 2.2** Integrate DEI goals and competencies into employee and leadership performance management systems.
- 2.3** Increase transparency and accountability through public-facing DEI reporting and a real time data visualization tool.
- 2.4** Establish an ongoing review and improvement cycle for DEI measurement frameworks.
- 2.5** Enhance internal feedback mechanisms to strengthen inclusion, psychological safety, wellness and well-being and organizational learning.



Goal 3: Embed DEI into Service Delivery, Policy and Systems

Corporate Strategic Direction: Connected and Vibrant Communities

Connection: Embedding equity and accessibility into systems and services ensures that all residents can participate fully and benefit equitably from Regional initiatives.

DEI Strategic Objectives:

- 3.1** Integrate DEI frameworks into service delivery and departmental program design.
- 3.2** Apply a systemic equity lens to all new services, policies and capital projects.
- 3.3** Regularly assess and enhance the accessibility and inclusivity of services, infrastructure and other policy frameworks.
- 3.4** Ensure timely implementation of key DEI recommendations from assessments and reports (e.g., Equity Audit, Anti-Black Racism Pillar Report, Leading Equitable and Accessible Delivery etc.).



Goal 4: Foster Inclusive Leadership and Learning Culture

Corporate Strategic Direction: Resilient Local Economies.

Connection: A well-equipped, inclusive workforce enables the Region to better understand and respond to diverse community needs and support resilient economic growth with confidence and care.

DEI Strategic Objectives:

- 4.1** Build organizational DEI knowledge and competencies through a structured, tiered learning pathway.
- 4.2** Develop inclusive leadership capabilities aligned with DEI goals and culture change initiatives.
- 4.3** Strengthen employee and leadership capacity to foster understanding, engagement and lead inclusive organizational change.
- 4.4** Address equity in training to ensure learning access to all role types and work schedules across the Region.
- 4.5** Promote and celebrate internal DEI leadership and progress through recognition initiatives.



Goal 5: Enhance Community Engagement through Partnerships and Expand Access to DEI Learning

Corporate Strategic Direction: Strong Relationships, Environmental Sustainability and Climate Action

Connection: Builds public trust by deepening existing collaborations to create equitable, sustainable outcomes and making DEI learning and engagement accessible, relevant and impactful for all residents.

DEI Strategic Objectives:

- 5.1** Strengthen DEI community engagement mechanisms through collaboration and partnership.
- 5.2** Expand public access to DEI learning opportunities through multi-sectoral partnerships.
- 5.3** Foster grassroots-led equity initiatives through support and funding mechanisms.
- 5.4** Implement continuous feedback loops to adapt community engagement strategies based on resident needs.
- 5.5** Foster shared DEI principles amongst local institutions and partners by creating opportunities to harmonize efforts and align DEI strategies.



Our roadmap

To ensure the effective execution of the strategy, the Region will develop a comprehensive Implementation **Action Plan** that serves as a clear roadmap for translating these strategic goals into actionable, measurable outcomes.



Our shared responsibilities

Achieving meaningful change requires shared leadership and collective effort. This strategy will only succeed if it is lived out across the community. Here is how each of us can help move it forward.



Leadership

- Model equitable and inclusive leadership through decisions, communication and accountability.
- Create space for employees to engage in learning and reflection.
- Ensure DEI is built into department goals, processes and performance systems.

Employees

- Use an equity lens when making daily decisions.
- Participate in DEI learning opportunities to help create an inclusive culture.
- Share feedback and ideas to help improve policies and practices.



Community

- Take part in local events, programs and public engagement opportunities when you can.
- Help make spaces more welcoming by learning about different perspectives and by speaking out against discrimination and harassment.
- Stay informed about the Region's efforts and encourage others to do the same.



Service providers

- Work with the Region to improve access and responsiveness in services.
- Embed DEI principles into how programs are designed and delivered.
- Share your expertise and insights to help inform inclusive, community-focused solutions.



Glossary of key terms

Words matter. This list of terms supports a shared understanding of DEI in the Region of Durham. Some of these terms appear in the strategy, while others help create a common language to guide our conversations, actions and ongoing learning.

For more definitions, visit the Region's full glossary: www.durham.ca/DEI/glossary

2SLGBTQI+

An acronym that stands for Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Questioning and Intersex and additional gender identities and sexual orientations.

Accessibility

A general term for the degree of ease that something (e.g., device, service, physical environment and information) can be accessed, used and enjoyed by persons with disabilities. The term implies conscious planning, design and/or effort to make sure something is barrier-free to persons with disabilities. Accessibility also benefits the general population, by making things more usable and practical for everyone, including older people and families with small children. Ontario has laws to improve accessibility for people with disabilities, including the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), the Ontario Human Rights Code, and the Ontario Building Code.

Accommodation

Making adjustments to policies, rules, requirements and/or the built environment to ensure that people with Ontario Human Rights Code-related needs have equal opportunities, access and benefits. Accommodation is necessary to address barriers in society that would otherwise prevent people from fully taking part in, and contributing to, the community. Accommodation does not mean lowering essential qualification standards, which are the skills or attributes that one must meet for a particular job, to graduate from a class or program, etc. Accommodation is a shared responsibility. Everyone involved, including the person requesting accommodation(s), should co-operate in the process, share relevant information, and jointly explore solutions.

Allyship

An active and consistent practice in which a person in a position of privilege and power seeks to operate in solidarity with a marginalized group. Allyship is not an identity—it is a lifelong process of building relationships based on trust, consistency and accountability with marginalized individualized and/or groups of people. Allyship is not self-defined—a person's work and efforts must be recognized by the people they seek to ally themselves with.

Anti-Racism

An active and consistent process of change to eliminate individual, institutional and systemic racism as well as the oppression and injustice racism causes.

Barrier

An overt or covert obstacle that prevents a person from fully taking part in all aspects of society, including physical, architectural, information or communications, attitudinal, economic and technological. The obstacle can be in the form of policies or practices.

Belonging

Having a meaningful voice and the opportunity to participate in the design of political, social and cultural structures that shape one's life—the right to both contribute and make demands upon society and political institutions. Belonging requires mutual power, access and opportunity among all groups and individuals within a shared container (such as a society, organization, club, etc). It is a feeling of security, support and acceptance felt by a person within a space or a system.

Bias

The tendency, inclination or prejudice toward or against something or someone. Biases are mental shortcuts based on social norms and stereotypes.

Champion

A person who assumes leadership by working with others to create and influence change in the organization or the wider community.

Colonialism

When one country violently invades and takes over another country or territory. The invading country claims the land as its own and sends its own people to live on that newly acquired land. Colonialism is a practice of domination and involves the control or enslavement of one group of people to another. Europeans, through the Doctrine of Discovery, aggressively colonized what is now known as Canada and forcefully applied systems of law, government and religion on this territory which displaced Indigenous communities and disconnected them from traditions, culture, land, air and waters.

Community

A group of people having common goals, rights, responsibilities and privileges which enables them to communicate effectively and openly in order to work together toward goals identified as being for their common good. It means respecting, valuing and harnessing the richness of ideas, backgrounds and perspectives that are unique to each individual.

Culture

The customs, beliefs, behaviours and/or achievements of a particular time and/or people; behaviour within a particular group.

Dimensions of Diversity

The unique personal characteristics that distinguish us as individuals and groups. These include but are not limited to age, sex, gender, race, ethnicity, physical and intellectual ability, class, creed, religion, sexual orientation, educational background, lived experience and expertise.

Disability

An umbrella term covering impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions. An impairment is a problem in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations. Defining disability is complex and evolving.

Discrimination

Treating someone unfairly by either imposing a burden on them, or denying them a privilege, benefit or opportunity enjoyed by others, because of their race, citizenship, family status, disability, sex or other personal characteristics (note: this is not a legal definition).

Diversity

The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each individual is unique and recognizes our individual differences. These can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs or other ideologies. It is the exploration of these differences in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment. It is about understanding each other and moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual. Diversity can also be considered in terms of organizational, professional and societal differences.

Equal Access

Recognizing that “one size does not fit all” in diverse urban/rural communities, equal access to health programs and services for all individuals requires the removal of barriers associated with literacy levels, language, culture, geography, social factors, education, economic circumstance and mental and physical ability.

Equal Opportunity

Aims to ensure that all people have equal access; free of barriers; equal participation; and equal benefit from whatever an organization has to offer. Note that equal opportunity extends beyond employment.

Equal Treatment

Treatment that brings about an equality of results and that may, in some instances, require different treatment. For example, to give all students equal treatment in entering a building, it may be necessary to provide a ramp for a student who uses a wheelchair.

Equity

Equity is a principle and process that promotes fair conditions for all persons to fully participate in society. It recognizes that while all people have the right to be treated equally, not all experience equal access to resources, opportunities or benefits. Achieving equality does not necessarily mean treating individuals or groups in the same way, but may require the use of specific measures to ensure fairness.

Equity-Deserving Groups or Equity-Priority Groups

Communities that endure systemic discrimination; face barriers to equal access, opportunities and resources; and actively seek social justice and reparations. Equity-deserving groups experience exclusion based on characteristics not limited to age, citizenship status, disability, ethnicity, economic status, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation and race.

Equity Lens

The purpose of an equity lens is to be deliberately inclusive and to focus on equity in both processes and outcomes of policies and practices. An equity lens provides a framework to understand how decisions and actions either breakdown or reinforce the barriers that prohibit equal participation and benefit. Components of an equity lens include:

- Identifying barriers where they occur.
- Eliminating barriers by making adaptations that reflect the lived experience of those affected.
- Creating new ways of doing by considering inclusion at the earliest stages rather than at the end.

Harassment

Engaging in a course of comments or actions that are known, or ought reasonably to be known, to be unwelcome. It can involve words or actions that are known or should be known to be offensive, embarrassing, humiliating, demeaning or unwelcome. Harassment under the Ontario Human Rights Code is based on the prohibited/protected grounds.

Hate Activity

Comments or actions against a person or group motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on race, ancestry, nationality or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, marital status, family status, sexual orientation or any other similar factor. Examples are: hate crime, hate propaganda, advocating genocide, telephone/electronic communication promoting hate, and publicly displaying hate in notices, signs, symbols and emblems.

Human Rights

Affirms and protects the right of every individual to live and work without discrimination and harassment. Human rights policies and legislation attempt to create a climate in which the dignity, worth and rights of all people are respected, regardless of age, ancestry, citizenship, colour, creed (faith), disability, ethnic origin, family status, gender, marital status, place of origin, race, sexual orientation or socio-economic status.

Inclusion

Acknowledging and valuing people's uniqueness to enrich social planning, decision-making, and quality of life for everyone. In an inclusive municipality, we each have a sense of belonging, acceptance, and are recognized as valued and contributing members of society. Real inclusion takes place when those already included in the "mainstream" learn from those who are excluded and initiate change.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality, originally coined by American lawyer and legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw, is a framework centring the intersection, or crossover, of our many identities and how that affects how each of us experience life. These intersections occur within a context of connected systems and structures of power (e.g., laws, policies, state governments, other political and economic unions, religious institutions and media).

Land Acknowledgement

A territorial or land acknowledgement is an act of reconciliation that involves making a statement recognizing the traditional territory of the Indigenous Peoples who called the land home before the arrival of settlers. A land acknowledgement reminds us that we are accountable to respectful relationships with Indigenous communities and that accountability involves all of us listening, learning, and reflecting on the historic and ongoing injustices in these communities.

Marginalization

A social process by which individuals or groups are, intentionally or unintentionally, distanced from access to power and resources and constructed as insignificant, peripheral, or less valuable/privileged to a community or “mainstream” society. Marginalized groups or people are those excluded from mainstream social, economic, cultural or political life. Examples of marginalized groups include, but are by no means limited to, groups excluded due to race, religion, political or cultural group, age, gender/gender expression or financial status.

Systemic Barriers

Obstacles that exclude groups or communities of people from full participation in, and the benefits of, social, economic, and political life. They may be hidden or unintentional but are built into the way society works. Existing policies, practices and procedures, as well as assumptions and stereotypes, reinforce them.

Systemic Discrimination

The institutionalization of discrimination through policies and practices which may appear neutral on the surface but have an exclusionary impact on particular groups, such that various minority groups are discriminated against, intentionally or unintentionally. This occurs in institutions and organizations where the policies, practices and procedures (e.g. employment systems – job requirements, hiring practices, promotion procedures, etc.) exclude and/or act as barriers to racialized groups. Systemic discrimination may also result from some government laws and regulations.

A message from ediseed

POWERING INCLUSION

We are deeply grateful for the opportunity to support the Region of Durham in the development of this Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy. This work reflects the collective commitment of the Region's Leadership, Employees, Council, Service Providers and Communities to building a more inclusive future.

At ediseed, we viewed this project as a true partnership, one where shared insights and collaboration shaped every stage of the process. We also wish to acknowledge the dedication of our team members signed below, whose expertise and care helped bring this Strategy to life.

It has been a privilege to contribute to this important work. We look forward to building on this collaboration, further realizing our vision of connecting workplaces and communities to greater possibilities.

— The ediseed team

- Kevin Kamau (He/Him)
- Ekua Quansah (She/Her)
- Andisheh Fard (She/Her)
- Michael Bowe (He/Him)
- Zac Adore (He/Him)
- Osman Yousufi (He/Him)



Learn more about Region of Durham's DEI Strategy at
www.durham.ca/DEI