

City of Kingston Workplace Inclusion Charter

**Expansion
to Municipal
Corporations and
Small or Rural
Communities**



Partners



The Diversity Institute conducts and coordinates multi-disciplinary, multi-stakeholder research to address the needs of diverse Canadians, the changing nature of skills and competencies, and the policies, processes and tools that advance economic inclusion and success. Our action-oriented, evidence-based approach is advancing knowledge of the complex barriers faced by under-represented groups, leading practices to effect change, and producing concrete results. The Diversity Institute is a research lead for the Future Skills Centre.



The Future Skills Centre (FSC) is a forward-thinking centre for research and collaboration dedicated to driving innovation in skills development so that everyone in Canada can be prepared for the future of work. We partner with policymakers, researchers, practitioners, employers and labour, and post-secondary institutions to solve pressing labour market challenges and ensure that everyone can benefit from relevant lifelong learning opportunities. We are founded by a consortium whose members are Toronto Metropolitan University, Blueprint, and The Conference Board of Canada, and are funded by the Government of Canada's Future Skills Program.



Kingston's vision of being a smart, livable, 21st century city is fast becoming a reality. History innovation thrive in our dynamic city located along the beautiful shores of Lake Ontario, an easy drive from Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal, in the heart of eastern Ontario. With a stable and diversified economy that includes global corporations, innovative startups and all levels of government, Kingston's high quality-of-life offers access to world-class education and research institutions, advanced health care facilities, affordable living and vibrant entertainment and tourism activities.

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Executive Summary

Municipal governments are major employers and play a critical role in reflecting and shaping the communities they serve. Yet there has been limited research on their approaches to equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) internally or externally and even less on the levers they use to shape practices in their communities.

Municipalities face challenges in the work of enhancing equity. These include:

- Limited financial resources,
- competing demands on staff time,
- uncertainty over the best approach to this kind of work,
- disbelief that inequities exist,
- lack of political will,
- limited knowledge of the value of using an intersectional lens.

Recent research has analyzed the representation of women, Black and racialized people, and Indigenous Peoples in 10 large regions in Canada, considering

representation in municipal councils, administration and agencies, as well as on boards and commissions. The data shows significant variations in the demographics for each region, as well as the representation across various sectors.

Research from the Diversity Institute suggests that municipalities are at different levels of maturity with respect to EDI practices. Some are at the initial stages of developing strategies, others have strategies in place that they are updating to address issues such as anti-Black racism, Truth and Reconciliation and trans inclusion, and others have implemented strategies that are producing results.

Charters are a tool used to signal commitments to advance EDI. Diversity charters are voluntary codes indicating an organization's commitment to promote diversity and equal opportunity in the workplace. In recent years, more attention has been paid to the role of voluntary codes in advancing EDI in leadership roles, along with Canadian legislation to advance employment equity and representation for equity-deserving groups. To date, we have identified 12 Canadian municipalities that have become signatories to EDI charters.

The Workplace Inclusion Charter is a project launched in 2019 by the City of Kingston, Ont., in partnership with KEYS Job Centre, as a system to guide employers, service providers and equity-deserving groups in the labour market in creating more inclusive work environments and facilitating access to new talent among local businesses and employers.

The second phase of the Future Skills Centre (FSC) project is the current project, Workplace Inclusion Charter expansion to municipal corporations and small and rural communities, which can from February 1, 2022, to September 30, 2023. Building on the knowledge acquired through Phase 1 testing about what works, this new project sought to expand the Workplace Inclusion Charter (including its principles, components and model) to municipal corporations and small and rural communities.

No formal evaluation was conducted; however, preliminary findings suggest a need and appetite for support with EDI initiatives among smaller municipalities. Given the challenges in getting uptake on the charter from municipalities, this points to an opportunity to reflect on the



*Research from the Diversity Institute suggests that **municipalities are at different levels of maturity with respect to EDI practices.** Charters are a tool used to signal commitments to advance EDI.*

status of municipalities and whether they are at the appropriate stage of maturity in their EDI journey. It may be that, while charters are an important and useful tool for municipalities that have reached a certain level of progress in implementing EDI plans and strategies, for those at more preliminary stages, other tools may be required to lay the groundwork for a successful charter commitment.





Context

Municipal governments are major employers and play a critical role in reflecting and shaping the communities they serve. Yet there has been limited research on their approaches to equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) internally or externally, and even less on the levers they use to shape practices in their communities.

There is considerable evidence to suggest that the contexts in which EDI initiatives operate vary dramatically depending on the region and size of the community as well as its socio-economic and cultural context. For example, the challenges facing large centres like Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver are much different than the challenges in smaller cities like Markham, Niagara Falls, Halifax or Kingston. In turn, the situations in smaller, rural and remote towns produce unique issues.

The challenges around EDI also vary significantly based on the demographics of a community, such as the proportion of youth and seniors, racialized, immigrant and Black residents, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities and those identifying as 2SLGBTQ+.

The social and economic fabric of the community also varies dramatically, with

some dominated by public sector employers or large corporations and others by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). For example, small and rural municipalities may face specific challenges such as young people leaving and taking talent with them, gaps in services and infrastructure, and new people moving in—either newcomers from other regions or from outside Canada—who are not yet connected to the social fabric of the community.

In addition, small populations can mean little diversity, so community members are not used to interacting across differences, and it might mean that there are not a lot of services to support people who experience exclusion and discrimination. Funding for municipal projects may be stretched, and staff resources may be limited.¹

Given these differences, it is important to consider the variation across municipalities and meet them where they are at. Further, it is not surprising that the tools and approaches employed by municipalities are wide-ranging. An EDI lens is critical at the municipal level, since local governments are responsible for policies and programs that can profoundly affect the daily lives of residents. More inclusive municipalities

are wide-ranging. An EDI lens is critical at the municipal level, since local

governments are responsible for policies and programs that can profoundly affect the daily lives of residents. More inclusive municipalities stand to gain as a collective and may enjoy potential economic and social benefits, as well as improved trust, loyalty and respect.²

However, systemic and persistent forms of discrimination still exist in communities, leading to inequities in resources, access and power. Municipalities are responsible for the quality of life of their residents, including addressing social inequities to ensure the inclusion of all residents is cost-effective at a time of shrinking city budgets.³



The roles of municipalities

Municipalities face challenges in the work of enhancing equity. These include limited financial resources, competing demands on staff time, uncertainty over the best approach to EDI work, disbelief that inequities exist, lack of political will and limited knowledge of the value of using an intersectional lens, which is crucial to help understand how different people experience policies and programs.⁴

Different perspectives on EDI in municipalities have been examined. In 2016, the largest share of legislators in Canada worked in local, municipal or regional governments (46%),⁵ and women accounted for 31.7% of elected officials.⁶ Recent research has analyzed the representation of women, Black and racialized people, and Indigenous Peoples in 10 large regions in Canada, considering representation in municipal councils, administration and agencies, as well as on boards and commissions. Across cities in Canada, women make up a relatively consistent proportion of the population, about 50%. However, the proportion of racialized and Indigenous Peoples vary considerably. Populations of racialized people, excluding Black people, range from 11.3% in Halifax to 52.2% in Vancouver. Populations of Black people range from 1.6% in Vancouver to 7.9% in Montreal. Similarly, populations of Indigenous Peoples range from 0.7% in Toronto to 12.5% in Winnipeg. Therefore, while 3.1% of board directors at municipal agencies, boards and commissions (ABC) in Vancouver being Indigenous indicate an over-representation of Indigenous Peoples, this number in Winnipeg means Indigenous Peoples are under-represented on municipal ABCs.

Taking this into consideration, researchers should expect to see variations in levels of representation of racialized peoples and Indigenous Peoples on boards and senior management teams across the analyzed cities. While the level of representation of racialized peoples and Indigenous Peoples on boards of directors, senior management and municipal councilors is often considerably lower than the city population in each of the cities, some exceptions have been found and are marked with an asterisk in the tables below.



*Populations of racialized people, excluding Black people, range from **11.3% in Halifax** to **52.2% in Vancouver**.*

TABLE 1

Representation on municipal councils across 10 Canadian cities

City	Women		Racialized People (Excluding Black People)		Black People		Indigenous Peoples		Total
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	No.
Edmonton	61.5*	8	23.1	3	0	0	0	0	13
Halifax	47.1	8	0	0	11.8*	2	0	0	17
Hamilton	43.8	7	12.5	2	0	0	0	0	16
London	26.7	4	6.7	1	6.7*	1	0	0	15
Montreal	34.3	37	1.9	2	2.8	3	0	0	108
Ottawa	33.3	8	8.3	2	4.2	1	0	0	24
Vancouver	45	49	10.1	11	0.9	1	0	0	109
Winnipeg	31.3	5	12.5	2	6.3*	1	0	0	16
Total	39.6	126	7.2	23	2.8	9	0	0	318

Source: Diversity Institute. (Forthcoming). Diverse Representation in Leadership: A Review of 10 Canadian Cities.

Role in governance

While municipalities are governed by elected officials, they make appointments to a range of agencies, boards and commissions that oversee everything from policing to libraries. Again, we see significant variations in the levels of representation across regions.



TABLE 2
Representation on boards of directors of municipal agencies, boards and commissions

City	Women		Racialized People (Excluding Black People)		Black People		Indigenous Peoples		Total
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	No.
Edmonton	37.7	61	15.4	25	4.9	8	0.6	1	162
Halifax	34.6	100	2.8	8	3.1	9	0.3	1	289
Hamilton	40.5	68	8.9	15	3.0	5	0	0	168
London	38.1	32	4.8	4	0	0	0	0	84
Montreal	53.2	66	4.8	6	11.3*	14	0.8	1	124
Ottawa	22.4	11	2	1	2	1	0	0	49
Vancouver	42.3	190	15.8	17	3.8*	17	3.1*	14	449
Winnipeg	39.0	60	7.1	11	2.6	4	4.6	7	154
Grand Total	37.7	588	9.5	141	3.9	58	1.6	24	1,479

Source: Data from Diverse Representation in Leadership: A Review of 10 Canadian Cities; totals calculated by author.



Role in the private sector

Municipalities also play a significant role in their community’s economic development, using a range of levers, including policy, regulation, procurement and culture building. Again, the data available focuses only on large corporations and show significant variations across communities.



TABLE 3
Representation on corporate boards

	Women		Racialized People (Excluding Black People)		Black People		Indigenous Peoples		Total
City	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	No.
Edmonton	50.2	33	4.9	4	1.2	1	1.2	1	82
Montreal	34.9	160	3.7	17	1.7	8	0	0	459
Vancouver	39.7	104	8.4	22	1.5	4	0.4	1	262
Winnipeg	34.4	42	5.7	7	0.8	1	0.8	1	122
Total	35.5	329	5.7	53	1.4	13	0.2	2	927

Source: Data from Diverse Representation in Leadership: A Review of 10 Canadian Cities; totals calculated by author.



Role in the private sector

Municipalities engage with non-profits in a variety of ways; they often co-fund or provide support through grants and other instruments.

TABLE 4

Representation among voluntary sectors

City	Women		Racialized People (Excluding Black People)		Black People		Indigenous Peoples		Total
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	No.
Edmonton	46.7	115	8.9	22	2.8	7	1.6	4	246
Halifax	40.9	55	0.9	1	5.6*	6	0	0	108
Hamilton	44.2	53	7.5	9	4.2	5	2.5*	3	120
London	43.8	39	9	8	3.4	3	0	0	89
Montreal	39.2	104	9.1	24	8.3*	22	0.8	2	265
Ottawa	51	155	12.2	37	5.3	16	1.0	3	304
Vancouver	46.6	109	22.2	52	0.4	1	4.3*	10	234
Winnipeg	44.4	108	8.6	21	1.7	4	7.8	19	243
Total	51.2	609	9	107	2.7	32	2.2	26	1188

Source: Data from Diverse Representation in Leadership: A review of 10 Canadian Cities; totals calculated by author.

The data shows significant variations in the demographics in each region, as well as the representation across various sectors. For example, there is a strong representation of women on municipal councils in Edmonton (Table 1). The representation of Black people on municipal councils also exceeds that of the city's population in several cities,

including Halifax, London and Winnipeg; however, racialized people are under-represented compared to the respective city's population across all selected cities and there are no Indigenous Peoples represented. Similarly, the data on the representation on municipal ABCs, shows that the selected equity-deserving groups

are overwhelmingly under-represented, with the exception of Black people in Montreal and Vancouver, and Indigenous Peoples in Edmonton (Table 2).

Regarding the data on representation on corporate boards, all equity-deserving groups were under-represented in comparison to their representation in their respective city. Representation on corporate boards in the voluntary sector is slightly improved, with Indigenous Peoples in Hamilton and Vancouver surpassing the benchmark for those cities, along with the representation of Black people in Halifax and Montreal.

Municipal approaches to equity, diversity and inclusion

Research from the Diversity Institute suggests that municipalities are at different levels of maturity with respect to EDI practices. Some are at the initial stages of developing strategies. Others have strategies that they are updating to address issues such as anti-Black racism, Truth and Reconciliation or trans inclusion. Others have implemented strategies that are producing results. Some municipalities are still focused on internal human resources practices while others are applying an EDI lens to service delivery and to their engagement with the broader community.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities provides tools, information and training to support municipalities on their EDI journeys. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has an international coalition along with global examples of best practices. While almost a decade old, Ottawa's guide to inclusion

remains relevant. There is considerable information on the strategies that individual municipalities have implemented which are quite divergent in their approaches and priorities. A sample of strategies and approaches can be found in the Appendix.

Municipal charters and voluntary codes to advance equity, diversity and inclusion

Charters are a tool used to signal commitments to advance EDI. Diversity charters are a voluntary code indicating an organization's commitment to promote diversity and equal opportunity in the workplace. Evaluation of diversity charters initiated more than a decade ago shows promise. Indeed, an assessment of the use of diversity charters in 13 EU countries showed that,

“Organizations adopting the charters reported several positive outcomes, including more respectful behaviour patterns, fewer conflicts among employees, opportunities in new markets, attraction of talented people, increased innovation and creativity from staff members.”

Despite their promise, little peer-reviewed literature has evaluated charters or their impact.

In recent years, more attention has been paid to the role of voluntary codes in advancing EDI in leadership roles—along with Canadian legislation to advance employment equity and representation for equity-deserving groups. These voluntary codes, such as the 30% Club, the BlackNorth Initiative and the 50 – 30 Challenge, have driven many

organizations to engage in EDI initiatives.












The Bow Valley Community is a fine example of a municipality using charters successfully. The Bow Valley Immigration Partnership (BVIP) brings immigrants and stakeholders from multiple sectors together to identify and implement strategies that promote integration; the partnership collaborated with community service agencies and local employers to develop the Bow Valley Workplace Inclusion Charter (WIC). The charter sets out voluntarily adopted policies “designed to increase inclusive practices in the workplace and promote integration of newcomers into the community.”

The Bow Valley WIC was designed to increase access to key social determinants for immigrants. Its development was informed by the community’s foreign-born residents, who participated in a needs assessment, as well through ongoing feedback provided by members of BVIP’s Immigrant Advisory Group. Through an iterative process, needs were prioritized into four major areas: improving access to language learning opportunities; improving employment standards knowledge and adherence; connecting newcomers to community services; and increasing cultural competence and inclusive practices in the workplace. The priorities were then translated into actionable workplace commitments. The following criteria were used to select the commitments incorporated into the WIC: necessity (commitments addressed known local integration gaps); efficacy (commitments, as worded, would help close such gaps); practicality (commitments were feasible for employers of varying sizes); and simplicity (commitments were written in plain language and did not require interpretation).

In the Bow Valley example, once the WIC

was developed, employers were recruited with the help of local business associations to sign a declaration of endorsement. Employers were asked to complete at least five commitments and received support to do so through policy guidelines, information about best practices and lists of community resources. The Bow Valley Immigration Partnership staff also provided support.

The outcomes of the project included that eight Bow Valley employers became signatories; six of the eight fulfilled at least five commitments ;and four employers fulfilled 10 or more commitments. The evaluation also identified factors that facilitated adoption. To date, we have identified these Canadian municipalities that have become signatories to various EDI charters including:

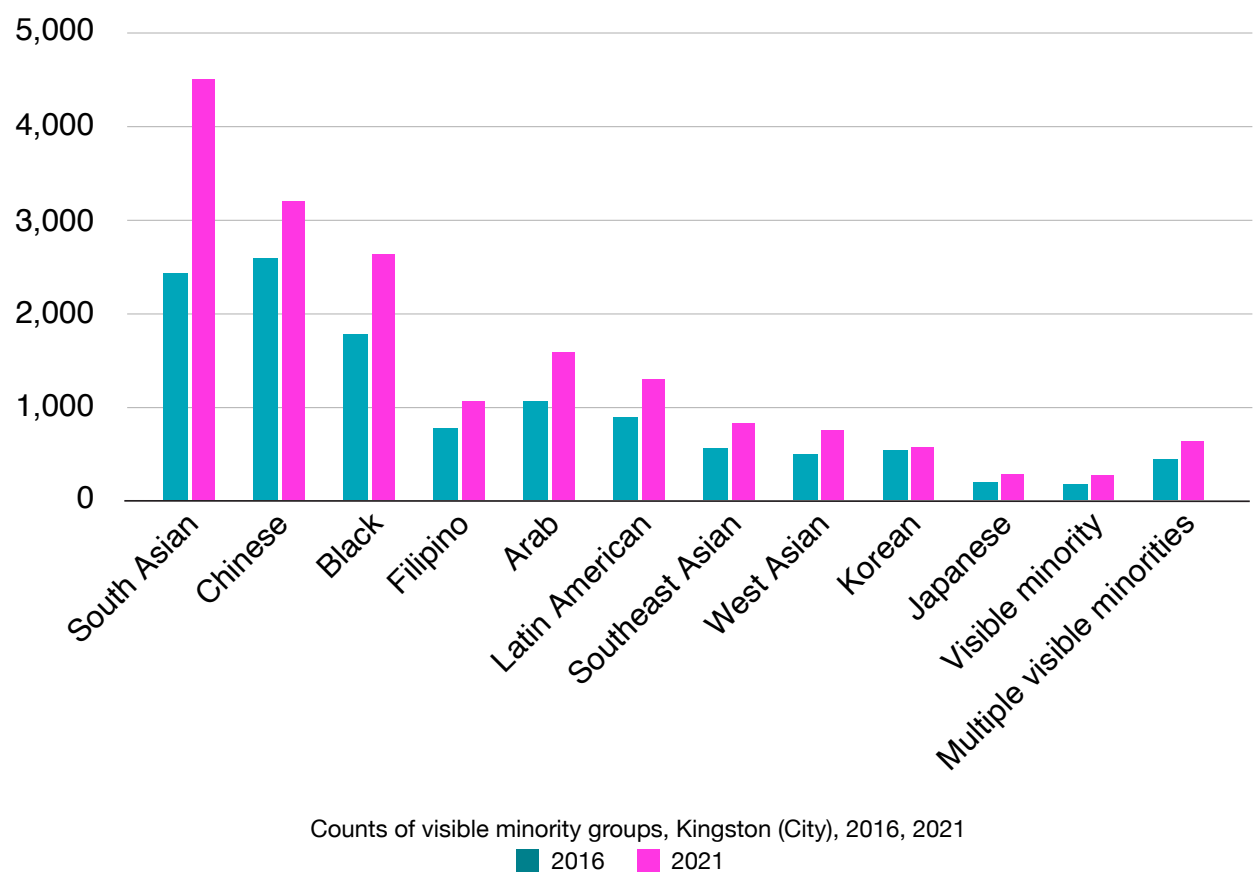
- | | |
|--|--|
|  Belleville, Ont. |  Peel Region, Ont. |
|  Bow Valley, Alta. |  Saint John, N.B. |
|  Kingston, Ont. |  Red Deer, Alta |
|  Lethbridge, Alta |  Timmins, Ont. |
|  Markham, Ont |  Vaughan, Ont. |
|  Perth County, Ont. |  Wood Buffalo, Alta |

Other communities, such as the Niagara Region, have demonstrated plans to become signatories or implement inclusion charters.⁷

The Kingston charter

As of 2021, the City of Kingston’s population was 132,485. A growing proportion are newcomers, racialized people (13.4%) and other equity-deserving groups, including an Indigenous population of 4.2%. Overall, representation of racialized groups is increasing in the city (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1
Representation of racialized groups in the City of Kingston, 2016 and 2021



Source: Statistics Canada, Counts of visible minority groups, Kingston (City), 2016, 2021.

In addition, Kingston has the largest proportions of transgender and non-binary people across Ontario Census Metropolitan Areas.⁸

The City of Kingston has made some progress in its EDI efforts. For example, it is implementing its comprehensive Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Workplan 2023–2026.⁹ The plan articulates vision and mission statements, as well as core values, mandates, priorities and accountabilities, and outlines key actions and timelines.

Next to Ottawa, Kingston is the largest city in the eastern region. It is surrounded by more than 15 towns, including Belleville, Brockville, Perth, Gananoque, Picton and others.

The workplace charter was developed by the City of Kingston’s Inclusive Workplaces Working group—which is composed of municipal representatives, private sector employers, immigrant professionals and non-profits—in the context of implementing its Workforce Development and In-Migration Strategy.¹⁰

Launched in 2019, the pilot phase of the charter focused on newcomers to Canada and was completed by April 2020. The second phase of the project—Workplace Inclusion Charter Expansion (WICE)—occurred from April 2020 to June 2022. This phase applied the blueprint established for newcomers and expanded the model to support three new equity-deserving groups: racialized people, persons with disabilities and Indigenous Peoples. During this phase, 52 employers from small, medium and large sectors within Kingston signed the charter with the city for the expansion of inclusion within their respective companies. As of June 2022, 40 signatories had completed the implementation process.¹¹

The charter includes a vision and set of principles that signatories, such as employers, service providers and groups, were asked to work together on achieving to creating more inclusive work environments. The charter articulates the following vision and principles:



Vision

We envision Kingston to be a place where:

- Residents feel respected, valued and supported to participate, succeed and stay in the workplace and the community.
- Employers celebrate diversity, encourage intercultural understanding, uphold worker rights and support colleague development.
- Employers are leaders in creating a welcoming and inclusive community.



Principles

Would uphold that:

- Diversity contributes to the strength and prosperity of our organizations and our community.
- Equity is fundamental to successful inclusion.
- Everybody deserves a safe and respectful work environment
- Employers play an important role in facilitating successful inclusion for Kingston residents.
- Inclusive, diverse and equitable workplaces benefit all.

From February 1, 2022, to September 30, 2023, the current phase of the charter was launched. The new project seeks to expand the Workplace Inclusion Charter—including its principles, components and model—to municipal corporations and small and rural communities, and to test the model.





Key highlights from Phase 1 results (St. Lawrence College Evaluation)

- Fifty-two employers from small, medium and large sectors within Kingston signed the charter with the City of Kingston for the expansion of inclusion within their companies. There were 34 small, seven medium and 11 large businesses. Of these, 40 received supports.
- Of these, nine businesses participated in an evaluation, including five from small businesses, two from medium businesses and two from large businesses. Within each of these segments, there were one to three individual respondents.
- About 78% of the small businesses, 71% of the medium businesses and 65% of the large businesses were positive about the overall experience of working on expanding inclusion within their company.
- About 73% of the small businesses, 83% of the medium businesses and 71% of the large business employers were positive about the useability of tools and action plans suggested by KEYS staff to meet their individual inclusion needs. Employers shared that they found the tools easy to follow, valuable and helpful. They also showed a willingness to continue working with KEYS staff.
- About 72% of the small sector, 67% of the medium sector and 72% of the large sector employers were positive about the execution of the project. Employers found KEYS staff receptive to feedback, and the process of the project was valued-added for them. Employers received various inputs like tools, education and knowledge required for smoother implementation. It was also indicated that participating employers were interested in continuing with the project if a next level were to be added.
- Nearly 72% of the small businesses, 100% of the medium businesses and 75% of the large businesses felt positive about expanding their understanding of diversity in the workforce. They shared that, after participating in this project, they were more aware of their biases, especially around hiring practices, and will further welcome diversity in the workforce.
- About 82% of the participants, which included seven inclusion coaches and one supervisor, were positive about the communication style and its effectiveness.
- About 87% of the participants, which include inclusion coaches and a supervisor, were positive about the support they received throughout the project.
- About 86% of employers shared that they had positive experience working

with the charter.

- 73% of the employers were strongly positive about the support received on their EDI needs.
- The testimonials include various stakeholders and employers. Sentiment analysis shows about 87% of the respondents shared strongly positive testimonials.

During Phase 1 of the project, the following important lessons were learned, which informed the design of Phase 2.

- The charter requires more ongoing support than initially anticipated. There is a need to strengthen the

sustainability model.

- The demand for the charter and its tools went well beyond the initial target audience of small and medium-sized businesses. Large employers and public sector organizations, such as municipalities, were also interested. These larger organizations do not necessarily have the EDI expertise and capacity we initially assumed they had.
- Organizations outside of our community have requested help and access to charter resources. Without an implementing agency like KEYS—with strong program delivery and community network capacity—scaling elsewhere will be difficult.





Project Design

Phase 2: Workplace Inclusion Charter expansion

The second phase of the FSC project is the current project—*Workplace Inclusion Charter expansion to municipal corporations and small/rural communities*—which ran from February 1, 2022, to September 30, 2023. Building on the knowledge about what works acquired through Phase 1 testing, this project seeks to expand the Workplace Inclusion Charter—including its principles, components and model—to municipal corporations and small and rural communities.

The new project builds on Phase 1 by:

- » Augmenting and refining the charter tools (i.e., extending its principles and components) to support the development and implementation of EDI initiatives in larger organizations, specifically in complex, municipal environments.
- » Expanding the charter model to three to five new small or rural communities in the region. The charter can offer an EDI employment solution for these communities.

- » Testing a different project delivery format to understand what works to address demand in small or rural communities. Our new project proposes to build smaller municipal corporations to set the stage for the expansion of the charter to businesses in those communities.

Project implementation objectives

- » Refine and build on existing charter tools to address the complexities of the municipal framework
- » Pilot enhanced toolkit at the City of Kingston, implementing a corporate-wide action plan that draws on all relevant tools
- » Share the charter model along with the expanded, action-oriented toolkit and City of Kingston's own EDI action plan with small and rural municipalities in our region as the next stage of scaling the charter
- » Build up small and rural municipal corporations as EDI champions to position them as leaders in their communities and to support local employers as they implement EDI in the workplaces (i.e., implement the charter)

- » Establish a “community of practice” to facilitate ongoing workplace EDI skills development among practitioners (inclusion coaches), employers and municipalities.

Project learning objectives

1. Are municipalities well positioned to inspire EDI strides in the community?
2. Is there a correlation between what the municipality does and what businesses do? Will businesses adopt EDI initiatives because the municipal corporation has done so?
3. Is the charter scalable? What adjustments are needed for it to be effective in small or rural communities?
4. Is “community of practice” a sustainable and effective solution for ongoing support?



Project Implementation

This project ran from February 1, 2022, to September 30, 2023.

TABLE 5

Activities of the Workplace Inclusion Charter expansion to municipal corporations and small/rural communities

Planned Activities	Actual Activities
Augment and adapt existing tools toward the development of EDI toolkit for municipalities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An employee census was conducted to establish a corporate baseline.• Employee census data was used to launch focused Employee Resource Groups (ERGs), including Mental Health Advocacy, Women's Network, Indigenous Circle, 2SLGBTQ+ Advocacy, IBPOC Advocacy and Disability (Visible and Invisible) Advocacy.• To support the work of the ERGs, the EDI team developed detailed Terms of Reference to address internal and external barriers.• Developed an ERG Guide featuring a definition of purpose and FAQs, as well as a kit that includes a checklist, the charter and a calendar template to support the shaping and future development of these groups.
Establish a corporate-wide action plan utilizing enhanced tools and pilot the toolkit within the corporation of the City of Kingston.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reviewed the social procurement policies in municipal corporations in Canada and internationally. This research will inform the subsequent redesign of the city's procurement policies.
Promote project to other municipalities ¹² and initiate development of a community of practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hosted an event on November 30, 2022, to recognize and celebrate the employers and inclusion coaches who participated in the Inclusion Charter Project.• Sourced inclusive imagery with the city's communications department to ensure that internal and external communications reflect the diversity of

Planned Activities	Actual Activities
	<p>our community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created four testimonial videos featuring two employers and two inclusion coaches who spoke about their experiences with the charter project and the impact of it on their personal and professional lives. • An EDI project analyst presented to the Rotary Club of Kingston regarding the impact of the city's EDI initiatives on the community. • Held presentations to promote the charter: Diversity Day in Brockville, Pathways to Prosperity in Montreal and Diversity Works Symposium in Kingston.
Share the Workplace Inclusion Charter model with municipalities and assist municipalities to assess their own EDI profile and develop action plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City of Kingston connected with two regional municipalities and initiated conversations on the charter expansion. • The charter launched in two regional municipalities.



Findings

Challenges

While no formal evaluation was designed at the outset of the project and data was not collected, here we discuss preliminary findings of an informal evaluation based on a discussion with two key informants, as well as learnings articulated in the project's quarterly reports.

- **The target for the municipalities that the City of Kingston would recruit was three to five. It was reported that, as of February 2024, two had completed and one had endorsed. The one that was endorsed was supported by KEYS.**

- **A key informant from the City of Kingston reported that:**

- South Frontenac was an easier recruitment because they had signed a service level agreement with Kingston.
- The City of Kingston engaged with Brockville because they

- were interested; however, it took several years before they were ready to proceed. It was speculated that this delay may have been due to demographics and the COVID-19 pandemic; Brockville found that people were not staying in the region after graduation.

- The City of Kingston also attempted to engage Belleville, but they were not interested at the time as they were going through internal changes. They have since expressed interest.

- Peterborough was hiring an EDI director and wasn't ready to join the effort; however, they have since reiterated interest.

- Gananoque (along with additional small municipalities that were approached) did not have the resources to participate. Their EDI efforts were being led by a coordinator who was overwhelmed and struggling to get the document approved by council.

In addition, activity reports from the project team highlighted the following key learnings:

- When working with municipalities, allow additional time for each step of the process. Complex, public organizations with a strict hierarchy move at a slower pace.
- When working with SMEs in municipalities, tailoring documents such as the charter can incentivize participation.
- Completing surveys can be a barrier for some organizations. They need to have clarity on alternative means of gathering information that can allow them to take the first step in implementation.
- The municipality is a great conduit for connections with local business organizations and business improvement associations, which can, in turn, host info sessions for SMEs, connecting them with the charter team.

Opportunities and learnings

Overall, preliminary findings suggest that there is a need and appetite for support with EDI among smaller municipalities. However, given the challenges in getting uptake on the charter from municipalities, this points to an opportunity to reflect on the needs of municipalities and whether they are at the right stage of maturity in their EDI journey. In this regard, it may be that the charter

is an important and useful tool for small municipalities that have reached a certain level of progress in implementing EDI plans and strategies; however, for municipalities at more preliminary stages, other tools may be required to lay the groundwork for the charter's implementation.





Conclusions and Recommendations

The Kingston project stages highlighted a significant lack of tailored resources for municipalities to develop and implement EDI strategies and mixed capacity for uptake

of tools. The evaluation also highlighted differences between large, medium and small municipalities and the need for adaptable and targeted solutions.

1

Varying levels of municipal readiness:

Municipalities are at different stages in their EDI journeys, which may affect the toolkit's adoption and implementation rates.

2

Resistance to change:

Some municipalities may resist adopting new EDI strategies due to perceived costs, resource constraints or cultural barriers.

3

Ensuring toolkit relevance:

It is important to tailor the toolkit to meet the diverse needs of municipalities across Canada, ensuring it is adaptable and applicable in various contexts.

4

Sustaining engagement:



Maintaining ongoing engagement and support for municipalities post-toolkit launch is key to ensuring the long-term success and adaptability of EDI initiatives.



Mitigation strategies include targeted engagement efforts, comprehensive training programs, flexible toolkit design and establishing a community of practice for ongoing support and collaboration.



Appendix

Equity, diversity and inclusion strategies and approaches: Selected municipalities


📍 Toronto		👤👤👤 Population*: 2,794,356
Internal	Leadership & Governance	Vision statement on access, equity and diversity People & Equity Division
	Human Resources	Workforce Equity & Inclusion Plan
	Culture	Communities of Inclusion are employee group sharing a common identity, lived experience or interests that meet regularly to network, dialogue, share best practices, build capacity, and learn and develop. Human Rights & Harassment Resources Accommodation Policy
Key Performance Indicators	Metrics & Targets	EDI performance monitoring is published in the City of Toronto Environmental, Social & Governance report. In 2022, 44% of women in senior management (increase from 41% in 2020). In 2022, 18% of racialized persons in senior management (increase from 14% in 2020).
External	Procurement	Social Procurement Program Fair Wage Policy
	Service Delivery	Data for Equity Strategy Multi-Year Accessibility Plan
	Community Engagement	Commitments to Indigenous Peoples Toronto Newcomer Strategy Toronto for All public education initiative



 Mississauga		 Population*: 717,961
Internal	Leadership & Governance	<p>Dedicated EDI subject matter experts hired and placed in the City Manager's Office and Human Resources.</p> <p>The City's most recent <u>Progress Report</u> highlights ongoing initiatives, including the EDI charter, integration of EDI in internal audit activities and research on best practices to embed EDI across all policies, programs and services.</p>
	Human Resources	<p><u>Workforce Inclusion and Diversity Surveys</u> inform initiatives and strategies for achieving a more equitable workplace. EDI recruitment initiatives identified in its most recent <u>Progress Report</u> include updated career website features, an inclusivity guide for job postings, an inclusive interview checklist and a candidate interview essentials guide and checklist.</p>
	Culture	<p>The Employee Equity Advisory Committee is a cross-departmental group that provides advice on building an organizational culture of shared responsibility for EDI.</p> <p>Endorsed Employee Resource Groups for racialized, Black, Indigenous Peoples, 2SLGBTQ+ people and people with disabilities.</p>
Key Performance Indicators	Metrics & Targets	<p>Standardized EDI KPIs and outcome measurements for divisions to be developed in 2023–2024.</p>
External	Procurement	<p><u>The Sustainable Procurement Policy</u> considers workplace diversity, inclusion and accessibility best practices among factors for procurement.</p>
	Service Delivery	<p>The <u>Accessibility at the City</u> initiative aims to make services, programs and facilities more accessible and inclusive. <u>Combating Racism, Discrimination and Hatred Advisory Committee</u> provides advice and information to the City Council and City staff to remove systemic barriers to services and programs, and build public awareness to combat racism and hatred.</p>
	Community Engagement	<p>The Indigenous Relations Office's mandate is to manage relations between Indigenous residents and partners and the city, and provide advisory support. The with Indigenous communities and organizations, as well as other community organizations committed to reconciliation.</p> <p>The <u>Black Community Engagement</u> initiative's objective is to address anti-Black racism, convening more than 900 community members, subject matter experts, locally elected officials and city staff.</p>

 Brampton		 Population*: 656,480
Internal	Leadership & Governance	<u>Equity Office</u> established in 2021
	Human Resources	
	Culture	
Key Performance Indicators	Metrics & Targets	
External	Procurement	<u>Supply Chain Diversity program</u>
	Service Delivery	Brampton's <u>2040 Strategic Plan</u> identifies culture and diversity as a key focus area and commits to workplace EDI under Government and Leadership. Brampton's Entrepreneur Centre contains resources available to support Black, racialized and Indigenous Peoples.
	Community Engagement	



 Markham		 Population*: 338,503
Internal	Leadership & Governance	<u>Diversity Action Plan (2022–2027)</u>
	Human Resources	
	Culture	Educational opportunities for staff to build their knowledge on EDI, anti-racism and allyship. On-site prayer and reflection rooms provided.
Key Performance Indicators	Metrics & Targets	Markham's <u>Diversity Action Plan</u> includes 26 key performance indicators across four pillars: Exceptional Services by Exceptional People; Engaged, Diverse, Vibrant and Thriving City; Safe, Sustainable and Complete Community; and Stewardship of Money and Resources.
External	Procurement	
	Service Delivery	
	Community Engagement	Consultations conducted with more than 200 community entities to inform the Diversity Action Plan.

 Ottawa		 Population*: 1,017,449
Internal	Leadership & Governance	
	Human Resources	
	Culture	
Key Performance Indicators	Metrics & Targets	
External	Procurement	
	Service Delivery	All contractors and their employees providing goods, services or facilities are required to receive accessibility training.
	Community Engagement	<u>Anti-Racism Strategy (2023–2028)</u>



 Calgary		 Population*: 1,306,784
Internal	Leadership & Governance	
	Human Resources	
	Culture	
Key Performance Indicators	Metrics & Targets	
External	Procurement	
	Service Delivery	The Social <u>Procurement program</u> includes giving a competitive advantage to SMEs owned by equity-deserving groups.
	Community Engagement	

 Kingston		 Population*: 172,546
Internal	Leadership & Governance	Workplace Inclusion Charter EDI office established in 2021 <u>EDI Workplan 2023–2026</u>



Internal	Human Resources	
	Culture	Employee Resource Groups (Woman Advocacy Group, 2SLGBTQ+ Advocacy Group, Mental Health Employee Resource Group, Racialized Employees Resource Group. A corresponding employee resource guide.
Key Performance Indicators	Metrics & Targets	
External	Procurement	
	Service Delivery	<u>The By-Law to Establish a Procurement Policy for the City of Kingston</u> was passed in 2022, which includes Social Procurement practices and considerations for diversity and inclusion.
	Community Engagement	



 Bow Valley ¹³		 Population*: 1,017,449
Internal	Leadership & Governance	<u>Workplace Inclusion Charter</u>
	Human Resources	
	Culture	
Key Performance Indicators	Metrics & Targets	
External	Procurement	
	Service Delivery	
	Community Engagement	



 Halifax		 Population*: 439,819
Internal	Leadership & Governance	<u>Diversity & Inclusion Framework</u> , established in 2018.
	Human Resources	<u>Recruitment involves</u> community engagement and prioritizes job postings for qualified candidates from equity-deserving groups. There is a focus on external hires. In 2022–2023, over 40% of new employees were from equity-deserving groups, the highest in five years. Halifax’s workforce is tracked in a regularly updated dashboard, shared quarterly with councillors.
	Culture	The Diversity & Inclusion Champions’ Table comprises members appointed by executive directors. Appointees monitor and report on the implementation of their business units’ diversity and inclusion goals.
Key Performance Indicators	Metrics & Targets	Progress along five EDI framework goals—inclusive public service, safe and inclusive work environment, equitable employment, meaningful partnerships and accessible information—is monitored and published in Halifax’s annual report.
External	Procurement	Halifax’s <u>Procurement Policy</u> includes Social Value Procurement and Supplier Code of Conduct, encompassing considerations for supplier and supply chain diversity, as well as the creation of inclusive employment opportunities.
	Service Delivery	<p><u>Women and Gender Equity Strategy</u> provides guidance on reducing barriers to inclusive municipal services.</p> <p>The <u>Immigration Strategy</u> was approved in 2022, outlining 34 action items to ensure municipal services are inclusive of immigrant and newcomer needs.</p> <p>The <u>Accessibility Advisory Committee</u> advises and assists the Regional Council on the impact of municipal policies, programs and services on persons with disabilities.</p>
	Community Engagement	Halifax Regional Council passed a <u>Statement of Reconciliation</u> in 2015 to support the municipality’s work with Mi’kmaq and Urban Indigenous communities.



 Vancouver		 Population*: 662,248
Internal	Leadership & Governance	<u>Equity Framework</u> approved in 2021.
	Human Resources	<p>The recent <u>Equity Framework Implementation Update</u> outlines progress and ongoing efforts in key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment: Initial analysis of self-reported demographic data in hiring to address barriers for equity-deserving groups; comprehensive review of recruitment practices with an equity lens in progress. • Advancement and Retention: Development of a succession planning program for exempt leaders, prioritizing equity; implementation of mentorship and talent development programs; introduction of identity-related questions in exit interviews; upcoming focus on updating the onboarding process. • Job Design, Classification and Compensation: Limited progress; upcoming discussions to initiate a fair wage policy.
	Culture	<u>Employee Resource Groups</u> <u>Respect in the Workplace Policy</u>
Key Performance Indicators	Metrics & Targets	Vancouver uses the global diversity, equity and inclusion benchmarks as a tool to self-assess the level of maturity in 14 areas of work. In its most recent <u>Equity Framework Implementation Update</u> , significant progress was observed in the areas of structure and implementation communications, learning and development, and partnerships and grants.
External	Procurement	<u>Sustainable Procurement</u> encompasses investments in equitable economic participation that advance outcomes of inclusion, diversity, reconciliation, equity and well-being.
	Service Delivery	<p><u>Accessibility Strategy and Accessibility Committee</u> formed to develop a public feedback mechanism.</p> <p><u>2SLGBTQ+ Advisory Committee</u> formed to advise Council and staff on enhancing access and inclusion.</p> <p>Women's Advisory Committee formed to advise Council and staff on enhancing access and inclusion for women and girls in city services and civic life.</p>
	Community Engagement	<p>Designated a <u>City of Reconciliation</u> when the Reconciliation Framework was adopted in 2014.</p> <p><u>Mentorship program</u> for newcomers.</p>

 Edmonton		 Population*: 1,010,899
Internal	Leadership & Governance	<u>Diversity & Inclusion Framework & Implementation Plan</u>
	Human Resources	<u>Talent Diversification and Inclusion Programs</u>
	Culture	Biennial Employee Experience surveys inform efforts to foster a diverse, respectful and inclusive workplace.
Key Performance Indicators	Metrics & Targets	30x30 Initiative to increase representation of women in enforcement to 30% by 2030.
External	Procurement	The <u>Sustainable Procurement program</u> takes into account suppliers' social, Indigenous and environmental contributions, as well as their commitment to ensuring opportunities are available for community members.
	Service Delivery	<u>Equity and the Zoning Bylaw</u> , came into effect in 2024. <u>Toolkits for diversity</u> and inclusion developed for senior-serving organizations.
	Community Engagement	<u>Indigenous Relations Office</u> <u>Anti-racism Advisory Committee's</u> mandate includes providing advice to Council regarding community perspectives on issues relating to racism. <u>Neighbourhood Services Funding Program</u> invests in social cohesion initiatives. <u>Anti-Racism Grant Program</u>

*Population size is derived from Statistics Canada's 2021 Census of Population.

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- 11 St. Lawrence College. (2022, October 19). Workplace Inclusion Charter expansion process evaluation. Internal document.
- 12 The scope of Objective 3 was expanded to include knowledge mobilization within the community by engaging with local groups such as the Rotary Club and developing a comprehensive communications plan that uses the collateral developed to introduce the wider Kingston community to the work of the Inclusion Charter Project.
- 13 Estimate based on the sum of 2021 Census population data for the communities of Lake Louise, Banff, Canmore and Bighorn Municipal District. (See: <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/Page.cfm?Lang=E&SearchText=Kananaskis&DGUIDlist=2021S0>)



