



Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Backlash? What Canadian Workers Really Think



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 equity-deserving 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 policy makers, 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](#).



The [Environics Institute for Survey Research](#) was established by Michael Adams in 2006 with a mandate to conduct in-depth public opinion and social research on the issues shaping Canada's future. It is through such research that Canadians can better understand themselves and their changing society.

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Authors

Wendy Cukier

Founder and Academic Director, Diversity Institute
Professor, Entrepreneurship and Innovation, Toronto Metropolitan University

Andrey Kasimov

Senior Research Associate, Diversity Institute

Andrew Parkin

Executive Director, Environics Institute for Survey Research

Contributors

Rongwei (Carter) Man

Research Assistant, Diversity Institute

Betina Borova

Senior Research Associate, Diversity Institute

Joy Wang

Research Assistant, Diversity Institute

Mingxin (Shayla) Wang

Research Assistant, Diversity Institute

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About the Survey on Employment & Skills

The Survey on Employment and Skills is conducted by the [Environics Institute for Survey Research](#), in partnership with the [Future Skills Centre](#) and the [Diversity Institute at Toronto Metropolitan University](#). In early 2020, the Survey on Employment and Skills began as a project designed to explore Canadians' experiences with the changing nature of work, including technology-driven disruptions, increasing insecurity and shifting skills requirements. Following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the survey was expanded to investigate the impact of the crisis on Canadians' employment, earnings and work environments. A second wave of the survey was conducted in December 2020, a third wave in June 2021, a fourth wave in March–April 2022, a fifth wave in March 2023, a sixth wave in October–November 2023, a seventh wave in May–July 2024 and an eighth wave in March–April 2025. Each wave of the study consists of a survey of over 5,000 Canadians aged 18 years and over, conducted in all provinces and territories. A total of 46,198 Canadians were surveyed across the eight waves. The survey includes oversamples of Canadians living in smaller provinces and territories, those under the age of 34 years, racialized Canadians and Canadians who identify as Indigenous, in order to provide a better portrait of the range of experiences across the country. Unless otherwise indicated, the survey results in this report are weighted by age, gender, region, education, racial identity and Indigenous identity to ensure that they are representative of the Canadian population as a whole.

Survey reports can be found online at:

> www.environicsinstitute.org/projects/listing/-in-tags/type/survey-on-employment-and-skills

> fsc-ccf.ca/research/2020-survey-on-employment-and-skills/

> www.torontomu.ca/diversity/research/future-skills/survey-on-employment-and-skills/

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Executive Summary

Context

Considerable media attention has focused on the backlash to equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI), particularly as a result of major court decisions and policy shifts in the U.S. Some corporations have scaled back their EDI efforts in response, although others have stood their ground. Spillover effects in Canada are evident, with some vocal opponents suggesting equity is antithetical to excellence and rising anti-immigration sentiment driven by an unplanned spike in new arrivals amid growing concerns about the cost of living and housing.

At the same time, the case for EDI has not changed, as the Canadian population is continuing to diversify, while the business benefits of EDI are as relevant as ever. Expanding the talent pool, responding to changing markets, building relationships with new trading partners and driving innovation continue to be linked to effective EDI strategies. Canada's foundational Charter of Rights and Freedoms and other legal frameworks and jurisprudence mean that organizations increase legal, financial and reputational risk by backsliding on EDI commitments. There has been limited data about how Canadian workers themselves feel about increased EDI workplace scrutiny and backlash. Our research reveals that despite some vocal opposition, the data shows that most Canadians view EDI measures in the workplace positively, with strong support among equity-deserving groups, younger workers and those with positive job experiences.

Methods

The analysis draws on data from the eighth wave of the recurring Survey on Employment and Skills, conducted by the Environics Institute for Survey Research in partnership with the Diversity Institute and the Future Skills Centre. A survey of 5,603 people was conducted between March 12 and April 15, 2025 to examine how Canadians perceive the role and impact of EDI initiatives in the workplace and how views differ across different demographic groups.

Findings

The majority of Canadian workers (54%) view EDI efforts in the workplace positively, while 27% say it is neither good nor bad, and only 16% view it negatively. Nearly one-half (47%) report that their employer's approach to EDI is having a positive impact on their work opportunities, while another 35% report no impact, and only 12% saying EDI has negatively affected them. Similarly, 46% of Canadian workers believe their employer gives EDI the right level of attention and 22% believe more attention to EDI is necessary, while 26% say their employer pays too much attention to EDI.



Support for EDI is strong across sectors, especially in the non-profit sector where 69% view it positively and only 3% report negative impacts. Across all sectors, most respondents report that EDI has had either a positive or no impact on their own opportunities at work. Support for EDI is strongest among employees in sales and services roles, and lower in transportation and labour, office, and professional and executive roles. Those who report having sufficient income are more likely to view EDI positively, both in overall views and perceived career impact.

Support for EDI is also strongest among equity-deserving groups, including Black (65%), South Asian (64%), Indigenous Peoples (63%), 2SLGBTQ+ (59%) and racialized respondents overall (61%). Support is lower among white respondents (50%), particularly older (55+ years old) white straight men (34%). While men are more likely than women to oppose EDI (20% vs. 12%), a majority of men (51%) and women (57%) view it as a good thing, and about 28% of each group believe it is neither good nor bad.

Support for EDI increases in tandem with support for immigration, with 70% of pro-immigration respondents viewing EDI positively. However, even among respondents who strongly believe there is too much immigration, nearly one-half (47%) still say EDI is a good thing.

Those who believe success comes from effort rather than inherited wealth show higher support and greater reported benefits from EDI. The data also suggests that respondents with a positive view of new technologies are more inclined to support and report a positive impact of EDI in their own careers relative to respondents with critical views. Notably, economic anxieties affect EDI support, but this impact has not been made worse by recent U.S. tariff threats, even when such threats raise general economic concerns among Canadians. Instead, it is personal economic insecurity, pessimism about the job market, income inadequacy or dissatisfaction with current roles that drive lower support for EDI, while those with greater confidence and satisfaction are more likely to view EDI positively.

Conclusion

Based on the survey findings, the major takeaways are as follows:

1. EDI enjoys broad support, and those who are not supportive mostly see it as neutral.
2. Opposition to EDI is lacking across all groups, never exceeding 15%.
3. EDI support is tied to personal values, job optimism and income satisfaction.
4. Economic insecurity and dissatisfaction with job market drive opposition to EDI, but tariff-related worries have not had an impact.

Context

Workplace equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) initiatives in the U.S. and Canada have recently faced intensifying scrutiny and backlash, framed by critics as incompatible with merit-based practices and often driven by coordinated attempts to generate division. While there have been push-backs against EDI since its inception, recent court decisions in the U.S. coupled with the deliberate spread of misinformation¹ and powerful voices from the White House legitimizing hate and discrimination have had spillover effects in Canada and created uncertainty. Some backlash narratives have migrated into Canada through media channels and political discourse, drawing directly on U.S. legal and cultural developments such as the repeal of affirmative action and prominent lawsuits targeting EDI programs.² The narrative is further amplified by social media, prominent figures like Elon Musk, who has publicly equated EDI with “racism,”³ and Mark Zuckerberg, who celebrated the resurgence of “Masculine energy,”⁴ and unfounded narratives about immigration.⁵



In response, some organizations have backed off their commitments or reframed them. For example, Meta, Amazon and Target have scaled back their EDI initiatives for inclusive hiring and supplier diversity.^{6, 7, 8} In Canada, law firm McCarthy Tétrault paused a specialized hiring program for Black and Indigenous law students, with the Chief Inclusion Officer leaving the company shortly after the pause,⁹ while tech giant Shopify disbanded its dedicated diversity team, provoking public condemnation from hundreds of Canadian tech leaders.¹⁰ Some organizations have reframed or evolved their initiatives, such as University of Alberta’s decision to replace “equity, diversity, and inclusion” with “access, community, and belonging,” citing concerns about polarization.¹¹

Not only is there evidence of spillovers in Canada, but there has also been significant shifts in attitudes to immigration, fuelled by an unplanned spike in new arrivals at time of growing public concerns with the cost of living in general and housing affordability in particular.¹² Canada’s recent reversal of immigration policies has been met with criticism, with 23 Quebec businesses launching a lawsuit against the federal government for reducing the number of temporary foreign workers entering Canada.¹³ Meanwhile, hate crimes have reached historic highs,¹⁴ while experiences of discrimination in the workplace continue.^{15, 16}

A historical perspective shows that backlash is not new¹⁷ and has often followed progressive social movements including the civil rights movement in the U.S.¹⁸ However, a clear sign that an initiative or social movement is gaining real traction is when it begins to face significant backlash.¹⁹

Even in the face of criticism, many leading organizations in the U.S. and Canada have continued to advance EDI, recognizing its strategic value and long-term importance. Costco’s board unanimously opposed a shareholder proposal demanding risk assessment of EDI policies, affirming their commitment to inclusion as both “appropriate and necessary,” and a key driver of customer satisfaction and product innovation.²⁰ Similarly, Apple and Merck successfully opposed anti-EDI shareholder proposals, while Walmart decisively



rejected an anti-EDI measure.^{21, 22, 23} Furthermore, companies like Microsoft, Patagonia, JPMorgan Chase, Delta Air Lines and Lush have all reaffirmed their endorsement of EDI and emphasized the business case for inclusive practices.^{24, 25, 26, 27} Collectively, these examples illustrate that principled leadership on EDI aligns strategically with both organizational values and business goals of companies across Canada and the United States.

These companies have maintained their stance for good reason. In Canada especially, extensive research supports the case for EDI across multiple fronts, from the business advantages of diverse teams to shifting demographics, ongoing talent shortages, and a legal and regulatory landscape that continues to uphold EDI as core principles.^{28, 29}

Canadian small businesses are facing intensifying HR challenges that underscore the urgency of inclusive talent strategies. One-third of small businesses report trouble

finding workers, with nearly one-half saying the talent shortage worsened due to the pandemic. Additionally, 32% are losing staff to competitors offering higher salaries, 29% cite departures from employees seeking career changes, and 17% report losing staff to more senior roles elsewhere.³⁰ These figures highlight the importance of expanding and diversifying the talent pool to address workforce gaps and improve retention. Embracing EDI can help organizations tap into underutilized talent sources, build loyalty and create more resilient workplaces.

Looking ahead, Canada's workforce will continue to diversify significantly. By 2041, racialized individuals are projected to make up between 42% and 47% of the working-age population, compared to 23% in 2016.³¹ The Indigenous population grew by 9.4% from 2016 to 2021, outpacing the non-Indigenous growth rate of 5.3%.³² Additionally, the number of people with disabilities is expected to rise by 1.8% annually over the next 13 years, about twice the pace of the overall population.³³ About 10.5% of youth aged 15 to 24 identify as part of the 2SLGBTQ+ community.³⁴ Moreover, women drive 75% to 80% of purchasing decisions, positioning them as crucial economic actors.³⁵ In this context, organizations that embrace EDI will be better positioned to respond to changing talent dynamics and attract younger workers, who increasingly seek employers that reflect their values and commitments to inclusion. Most importantly, the case for EDI remains strong, supported by clear links to innovation, financial performance, talent retention and access to new markets.^{36, 37, 38, 39}

Finally, the legislative frameworks that form the context in which businesses operate have not changed. Canada's constitutional, legislative and regulatory framework, including the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Employment Equity Act and provincial laws such as the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, along with human right codes and jurisprudence, provide a solid foundation and continue to create legal obligations. In addition to the legal framework, voluntary initiatives such as the 30%+ Club,⁴⁰ the Black North Initiative⁴¹ and the 50 – 30 Challenge⁴² are available along with industry commitments.

Despite the spillover from the U.S. and rhetoric in the media, there is limited research on the perspectives and experiences of Canadian workers themselves. To address this research gap, we analyzed data from a Canada-wide survey that asked Canadian workers about their experiences with EDI in the workplace.

Methods

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How do Canadians perceive the role and impact of EDI initiatives in the workplace?
2. How do views on the importance of advancing equity, diversity and inclusion vary across different demographic groups in Canada?

These questions are examined using data from the Survey on Employment and Skills, a collaboration between the Environics Institute, the Diversity Institute at Toronto Metropolitan University and the Future Skills Centre. Launched in early 2020, the survey was designed to explore Canadians' experiences with the changing nature of work, including technology-driven disruptions, increasing insecurity and shifting skills requirements. To date, there have been eight survey waves, each one encompassing over 5,000 Canadians aged 18 and over, conducted in all provinces and territories. A total of 46,198 Canadians have been surveyed across the eight waves. The survey includes oversamples of Canadians living in smaller provinces and territories, those under the age of 34, racialized Canadians and Canadians who identify as Indigenous, to provide a better portrait of the range of experiences across the country.

Data presented in this report is based on the eighth and most recent wave of the survey ($n = 5,603$) conducted between March 12 and April 15, 2025. Given the increasing interest in EDI, this wave included several questions about general attitudes of EDI in the workplace, the perception of EDI attention in the workplace, and employees' perceptions of how their employer's approach to EDI affects opportunities in the workplace.

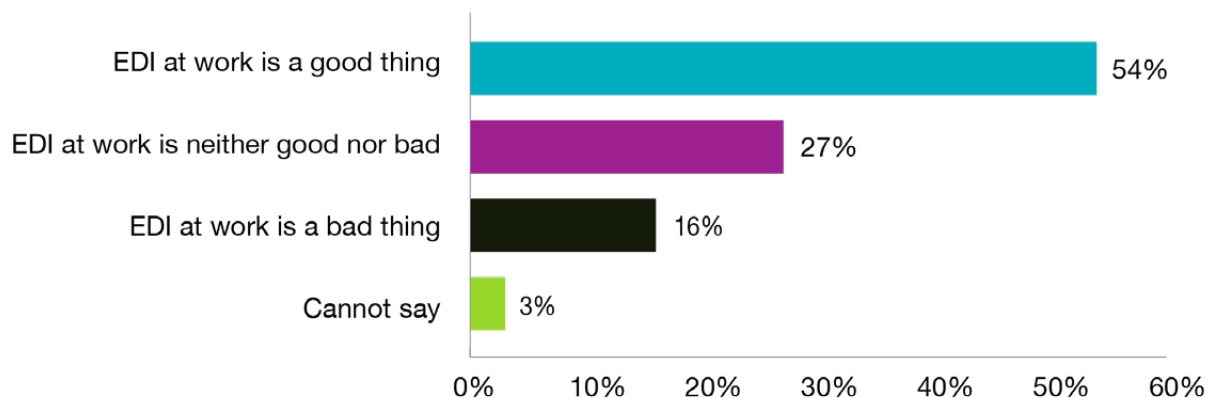
Findings

The findings reveal broad support for EDI across the Canadian workforce. However, there are still important differences across groups in how EDI is perceived and experienced. Attitudes vary significantly across demographic groups, especially when age and gender intersect, with equity-deserving groups generally more supportive and older white men showing the least enthusiasm. Workplace context also plays a key role. Factors such as job satisfaction and occupation shape how employees view EDI and whether they report personal benefits. Economic anxieties such as income adequacy and perceptions about the job market similarly affect support for EDI. Finally, perceptions about whether merit matters more than parents' wealth and openness to immigration emerge as strong predictors of support for EDI.

Overall support for equity, diversity and inclusion among Canadians

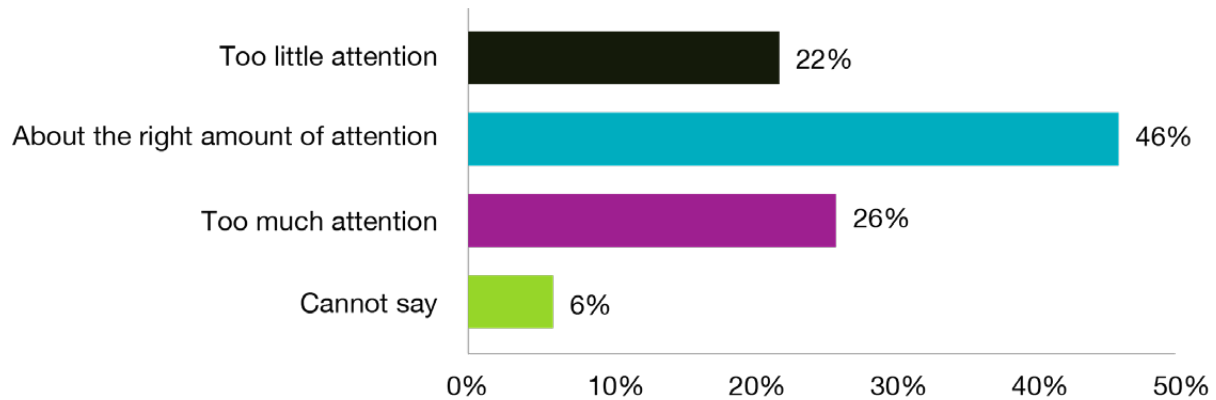
Most Canadian workers either support EDI or hold neutral views. Over one-half (54%) say focusing on EDI in the workplace is a good thing, while 27% say it is neither good nor bad, and only 16% consider it a bad thing (see Figure 1).

Figure 1.
Canadians' attitudes toward equity, diversity and inclusion



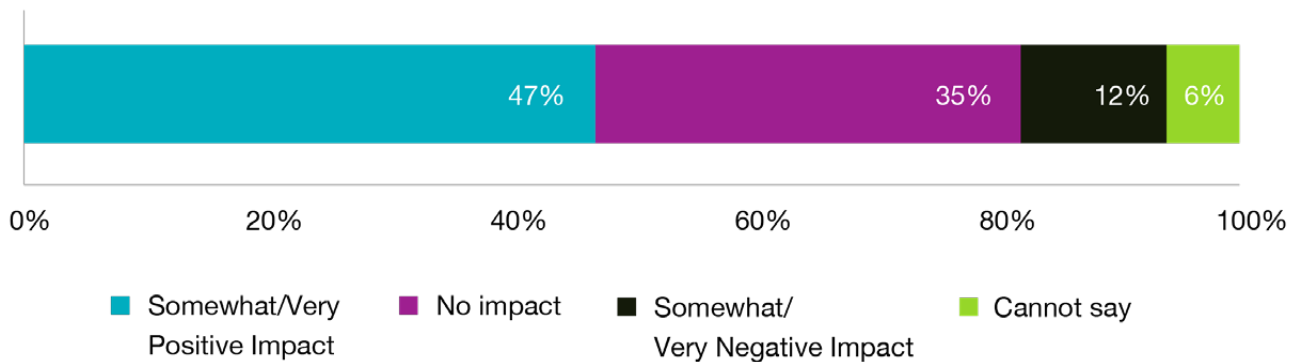
When asked about their employer's focus on EDI, 46% believe the level of attention is about right, 22% feel there is not enough attention and 26% believe there is too much (see Figure 2).

Figure 2.
Attitudes about how much attention employers pay to equity, diversity and inclusion



Nearly one-half (47%) report that EDI efforts have had a positive impact on their own opportunities, while 35% report no impact and just 12% say they have experienced a negative impact (see Figure 3). Most employees either see direct benefits from EDI or are at least untroubled by it, positioning EDI as a broadly accepted workplace norm in Canada.

Figure 3.
Self-reported impact of equity, diversity and inclusion on personal opportunities at work

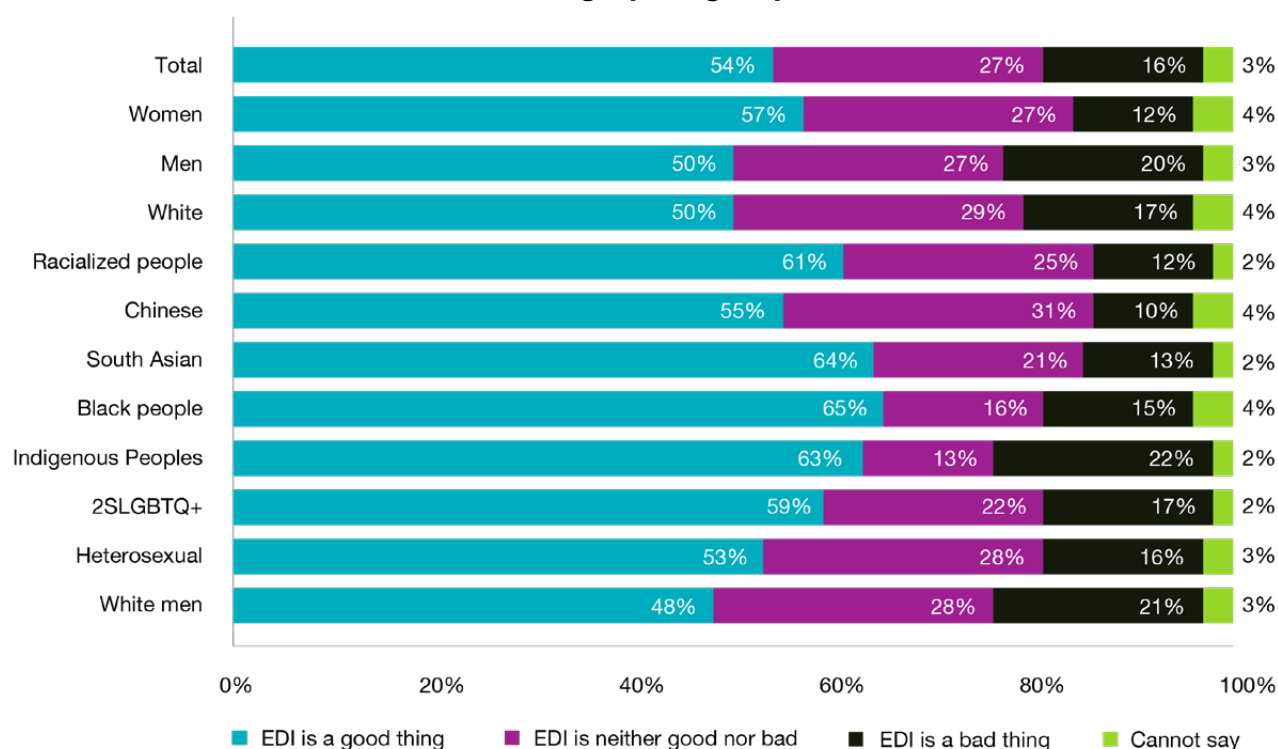


Demographic predictors of equity, diversity and inclusion sentiment

Race, gender and identity

Support for EDI is strongest among equity-deserving groups. Majorities of Black (65%), South Asian (64%), Indigenous (63%) and 2SLGBTQ+ (59%) respondents say EDI is a good thing, with only 12% to 16% in these groups viewing it negatively. In contrast, support is lower among white respondents overall (50%). Gender also plays a role, though the difference is surprisingly modest; 57% of women support EDI compared to 50% of men across different age and identity groups (see Figure 4).

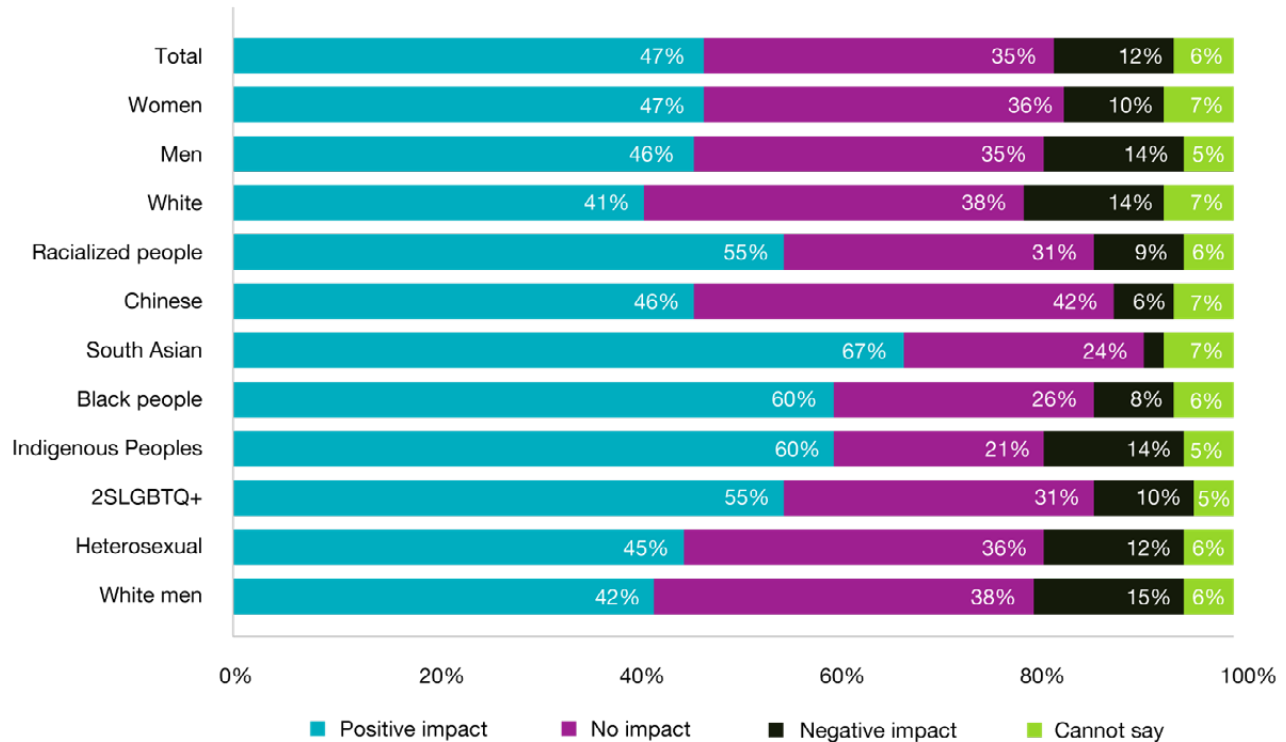
Figure 4.
Attitudes toward equity, diversity and inclusion across different demographic groups



Note: Rows may not total 100% as a result of rounding.

Perceptions of EDI's impact on personal opportunities at work follow a similar pattern. Equity-deserving groups are more likely to report positive effects, with South Asian (67%), Black (60%), Indigenous (60%) and 2SLGBTQ+ (55%) respondents most likely to say EDI has benefited their own job opportunities. Notably, in each case, the proportion reporting negative impact from EDI was low, with no group surpassing the 14% mark. In contrast, although 41% of white respondents report a positive impact, just 15% say EDI has negatively affected their job opportunities, while 38% report no impact at all. Among white men, the pattern is similar: 42% report a positive impact, only 15% perceive a negative one and 38% report no impact. While women and men report similar levels of perceived benefit overall (47% and 46%, respectively), racialized respondents (55%) are substantially more likely than white respondents to report that EDI has improved their own opportunities (see Figure 5).

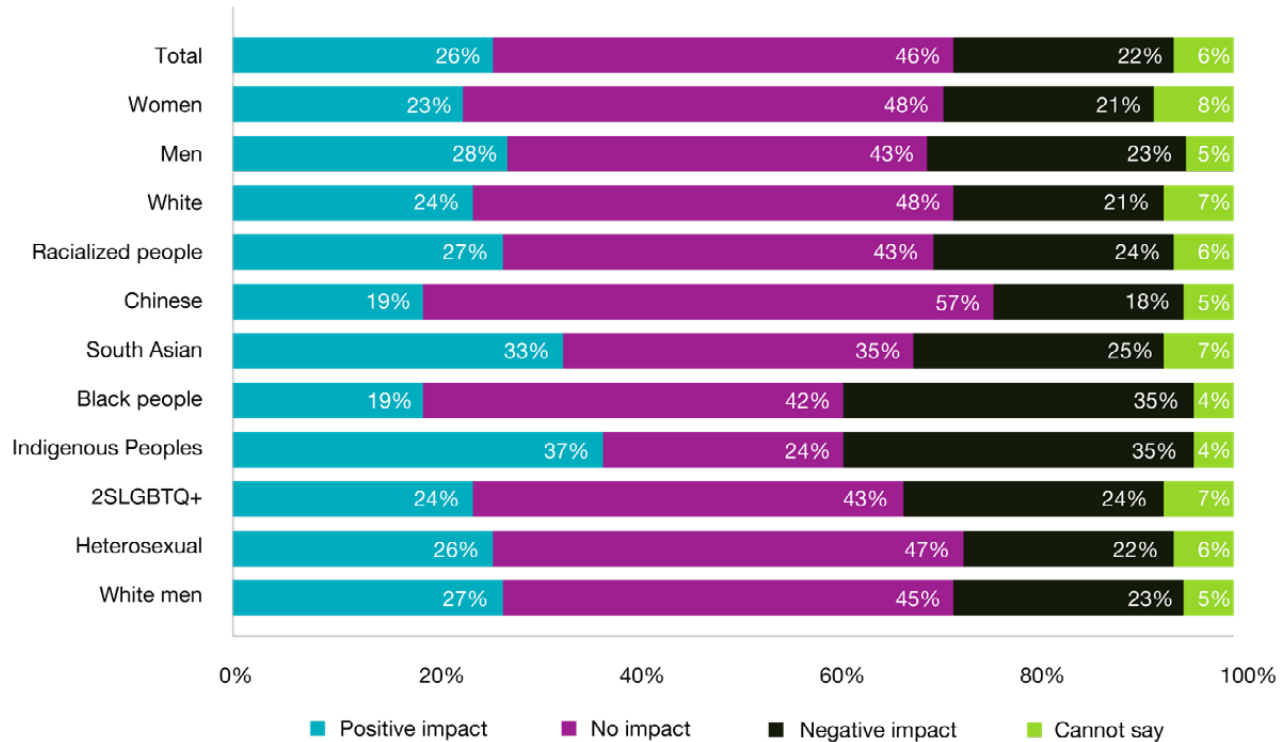
Figure 5.
Perceived impact of equity, diversity and inclusion on personal opportunities at work across different demographic groups



Note: Rows may not total 100% as a result of rounding.

Attitudes toward how much attention employers give to EDI also reflect important demographic differences. While nearly one-half of all respondents (46%) feel the level of attention is about right, some equity-deserving groups are more likely to say there is too little focus. South Asian (26%), Black (35%) and Indigenous (35%) respondents report the highest levels of dissatisfaction with how little focus their employers place on EDI. At the same time, Indigenous respondents also stand out as the group most likely to say there is too much attention to EDI (37%), suggesting potential tensions in how inclusion efforts are framed or implemented, particularly within public institutions. White men (27%) are also more likely than average to say there is too much attention, though a combined 68% say there is too little, or the current focus is about right. Meanwhile, Chinese respondents are the most likely to feel the current level of attention is appropriate (57%) and least likely—along with Black respondents—to say there is too much (19%). These differences indicate that experiences of EDI in the workplace are not uniform, and perceptions of balance vary based on both identity and lived experience (see Figure 6).

Figure 6.
Attitudes on amount of employer attention paid to equity, diversity and inclusion across different demographic groups

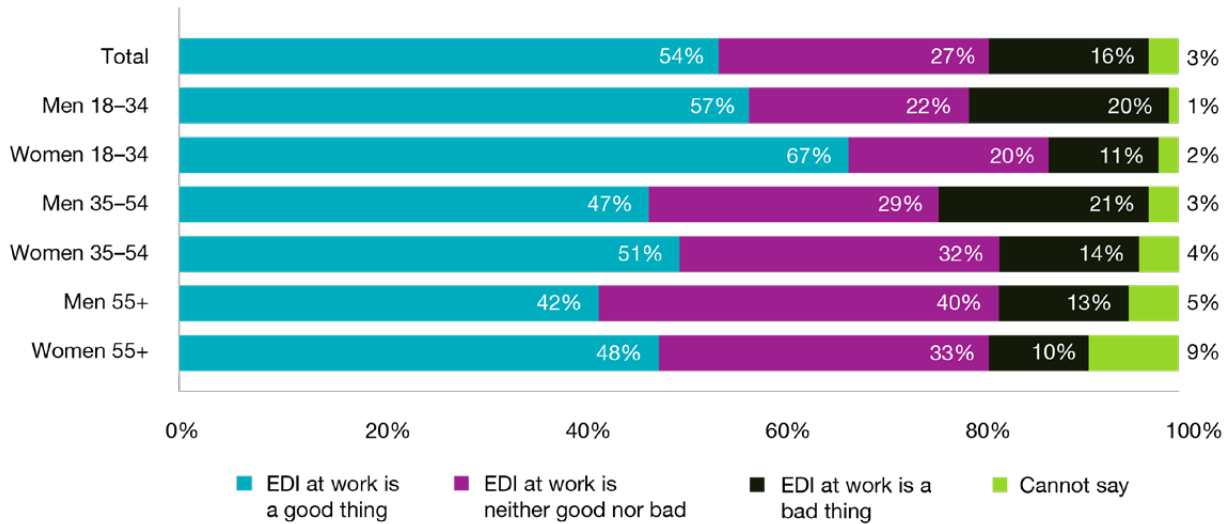


Note: Rows may not total 100% as a result of rounding.

Age and gender intersections

Support for EDI varies significantly across age and gender lines. Young women aged 18 to 34 are the most enthusiastic supporters, with 67% saying EDI is a good thing and only 11% opposing it. Young men in the same age group are also generally supportive, with 57% saying EDI is a good thing, 22% responding neither good nor bad and just 20% saying EDI is a bad thing. Among middle-aged workers aged 35 to 54, support is lower, with 51% of women and 47% of men expressing support, around 30% saying neither, and 21% of men and 14% of women saying EDI is bad. Support declines further among workers aged 55 and older, with 48% of women and 42% of men in this group endorsing EDI. However, opposition also declines to about 12% for both groups while neutrality toward EDI is most prevalent in this age group relative to others (see Figure 7).

Figure 7.
Support for equity, diversity and inclusion across age groups and gender



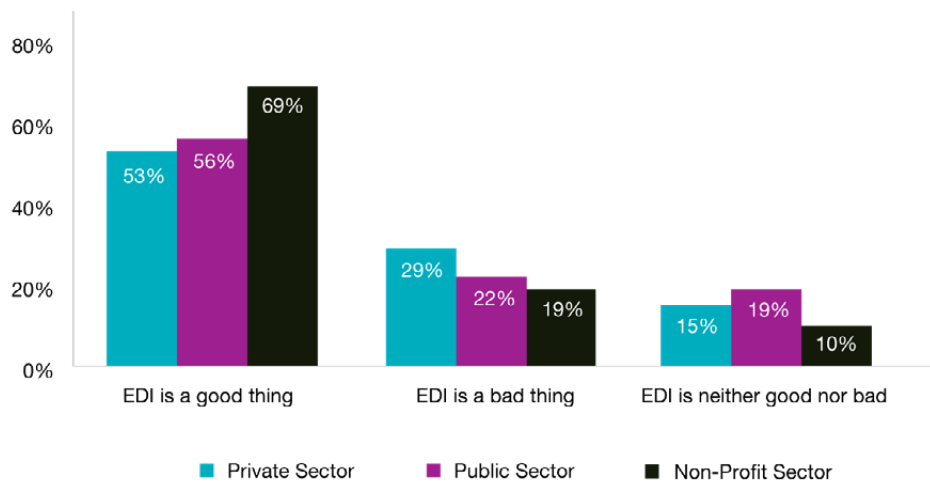
Note: Rows may not total 100% as a result of rounding.

Workplace factors and economic anxiety

Occupation and income

Support for EDI does vary across some metrics such as occupation, with notable differences between sectors, but support remains strong overall. A majority of respondents in all sectors view EDI positively, with support particularly high in the non-profit sector, where 69% say EDI is a good thing, compared to 56% in the public sector and 53% in the private sector. Conversely, only 10% of non-profit respondents say EDI is a bad thing, compared to 19% in the public sector and 15% in the private sector (see Figure 8). Similarly, concern that too much attention is being paid to EDI is lowest among non-profit workers (17%), followed by the private sector (25%), and highest in the public sector (30%). Only 3% of non-profit workers report that EDI has had a negative impact on their job opportunities, compared to about 13% in both the private and public sectors. Meanwhile, across all sectors, roughly 80% of respondents are equally as likely to report that EDI has either had a positive impact or no impact on their opportunities at work.

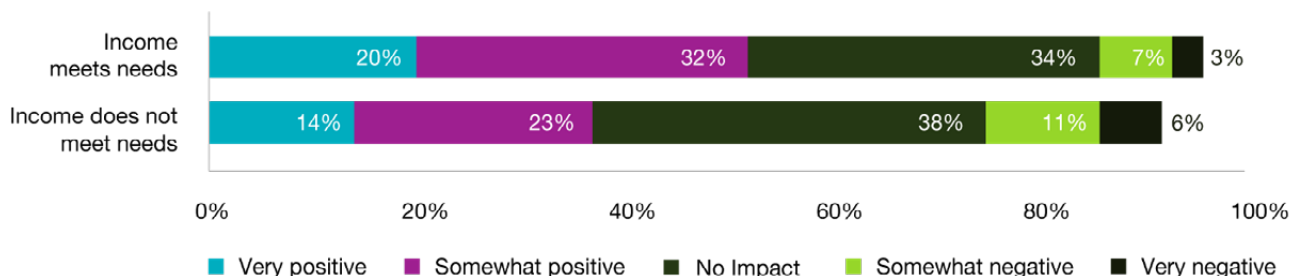
Figure 8.
Support for equity, diversity and inclusion across sectors



Workers in sales and services report consistently higher support for EDI than those in trades, transportation and labour, office, or professional and executive roles. For instance, 27% of sales and services employees believe there is too little attention paid to EDI, compared to just 18% among professional and executive respondents. Similarly, 52% of workers in sales and services say EDI has had a positive impact on them, compared to only 43% of those in trades, transportation and labour. These differences suggest that perceptions of EDI may be shaped by the nature of the work environment and the types of interactions employees have within their roles.

Perceptions of EDI also vary significantly based on income adequacy. Among those who say their income is sufficient to meet their needs, 59% view EDI as a good thing, compared to only 45% of those who say their income is not enough. Similarly, 52% of respondents who feel financially secure report that EDI has had a positive impact on their career opportunities, while just 37% of those who feel financially strained say the same (see Figure 9). These differences suggest that financial well-being is closely linked to how EDI is perceived and experienced in the workplace.

Figure 9.
Relationship between income satisfaction and perceived impact of equity, diversity and inclusion on personal opportunities at work

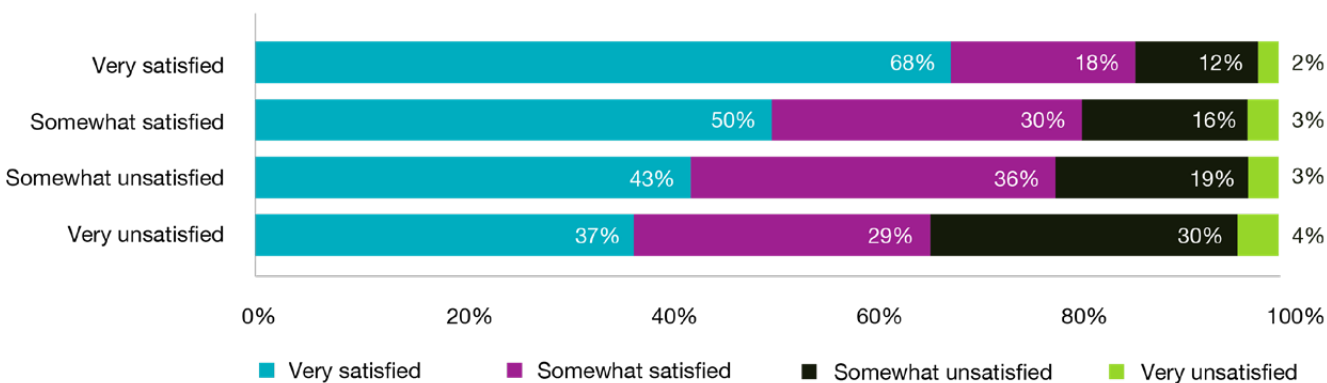


Note: Rows do not total 100% as not all survey response categories are included.

Job satisfaction

Employee attitudes toward EDI are strongly shaped by how satisfied and optimistic individuals feel about their work and job prospects. Job satisfaction is one of the clearest predictors of EDI sentiment. Among employees who are very satisfied with their jobs, about 62% say EDI has had a positive impact on their opportunities. In contrast, only 13% of very dissatisfied workers say EDI has had a positive impact on them. Similarly, about 68% of very satisfied employees say EDI is a good thing compared to about 37% of very dissatisfied workers (see Figure 10). Dissatisfied employees are also more likely to feel that their employer is not doing enough on EDI or to say that EDI has negatively impacted their own opportunities at work. These two perspectives may seem contradictory but likely reflect different subgroups. Some dissatisfied employees may feel excluded due to insufficient inclusion efforts, while others may view EDI as a source of unfair disadvantage. This suggests that EDI may not only reflect existing workplace conditions but also contribute to how employees experience their overall work environment.

Figure 10.
Impact of job satisfaction on attitudes toward equity, diversity and inclusion



Note: Rows may not total 100% as a result of rounding.

Similar patterns emerge when looking at perceptions of the job market. Those who believe it is a good time to find a job are much more supportive of EDI than those who are pessimistic. About 67% of job market optimists say EDI is a good thing, and 52% report personal benefit, compared to 58% and 42% of pessimists, respectively. Optimists are also more likely to feel their employer is striking the right balance in its EDI efforts. These findings suggest that people who feel secure in their work lives are more open to inclusion initiatives.

Tariffs and equity, diversity and inclusion

The survey asked respondents whether they were worried about the impact that U.S. tariffs imposed under President Donald Trump might have on the Canadian economy. Their answers were then cross-tabulated with three measures of attitudes toward EDI: whether EDI was seen as a good or bad thing, whether too much or too little attention was being paid to it, and whether EDI had a positive or negative impact on their workplace opportunities. Across all three measures, there were no statistically significant differences observed

in the distribution of responses between those who expressed worry about tariffs and those who did not. For instance, 46% of respondents who reported being worried about the economy due to tariffs said their employer gives the right amount of attention to EDI. Among those who were not worried about the economy because of tariffs, 49% said their employer pays the right amount of attention to EDI. Similarly, among respondents who were worried about the economy due to tariffs, 55% said EDI is a good thing. Among those who were not worried, 51% said EDI was a good thing.

In sum, broader macroeconomic concerns such as U.S. tariffs did not appear to shape how respondents viewed EDI, with little difference between those worried about tariffs and those who were not.

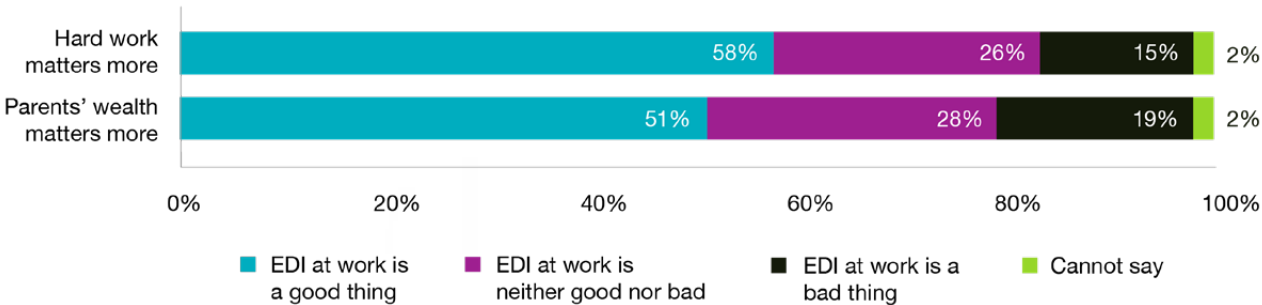
In contrast, personal economic circumstances have a clear impact: employees who feel it is a good time to find a job, who are satisfied with their income or who are happy in their current roles are significantly more likely to support EDI and report personal benefits. Conversely, those who experience dissatisfaction with their job, inadequate income or pessimism about job prospects tend to be less supportive of EDI.

Personal attitudes and value orientation

Meritocracy and technological change

The results suggest that beliefs about fairness and progress influence how employees perceive EDI in the workplace. Support for EDI is higher among those who believe success is based on hard work rather than inherited privilege. Among those who emphasize effort over parental wealth, 57.5% support EDI and about 50% say it has benefited them personally. In contrast, support drops to 51% among those who believe wealth matters more, with only 44.4% reporting personal benefits (see Figure 11). This suggests that people who feel that the system is unfair are also more likely to oppose EDI because they think that it gives some people an unfair advantage, similar to parental wealth.

Figure 11.
Impact of belief in meritocracy on attitudes toward equity, diversity and inclusion



Rows may not total 100% as a result of rounding.

Immigration sentiment

Finally, pro-immigration attitudes are also closely associated with stronger support for EDI, but even among those who strongly agree with the statement of there being too much immigration, just 23% say EDI is a bad thing. Opposition to EDI decreases steadily across the spectrum, falling to 8% among those who strongly disagree that there is too much immigration. The proportion of respondents reporting a negative impact of EDI on opportunities at work, also falls from 18% to 8% as openness to immigration increases. In parallel, as openness to immigration increases, more respondents say their employer is giving the right amount of attention to EDI. Among those who strongly believe there is too much immigration, only about one-third feel their employer's EDI efforts are appropriately balanced. This rises to well over one-half among those who strongly disagree there is too much immigration. At the same time, concern that employers are paying too much attention to EDI declines sharply across this spectrum, dropping from 37% among respondents who strongly feel there is too much immigration to just under 11% among respondents who are strongly in favour of immigration.

Conclusion

Key takeaways

1. Support for EDI is widespread across the Canadian workforce.

Most employed Canadians either support EDI initiatives or are neutral toward them, with only a small minority expressing opposition. Employees are more likely to say EDI has had a positive effect on their work opportunities than a negative one, and nearly one-half believe their employer is giving the right amount of attention to EDI. These findings challenge the argument that Canadians view their employers' EDI efforts as unfair or harmful.

2. Support for EDI is strongest among equity-deserving groups and younger workers.

Indigenous, 2SLGBTQ+, Black and other racialized Canadians are the most likely to view EDI as a good thing. Younger workers, especially young women, show the highest levels of support. However, even among older (55+) straight white men, opposition to EDI is strikingly low. Despite some differences across groups, the proportion of Canadians holding negative views toward EDI at work is consistently low across the board.

3. EDI support is tied to personal values, optimism and satisfaction.

Support for EDI increases among those who believe Canadians are rewarded mainly on merit and those who hold positive views about immigration. Workers who are satisfied with their jobs or optimistic about the job market are also more likely to support EDI and report personal benefits.

4. Economic anxieties such as income insecurity, job satisfaction and negative job market sentiment drive opposition to EDI, while economic concerns due to tariffs do not.

Economic anxieties rooted in personal experience, such as perceptions of inadequate income, dissatisfaction with one's job, or pessimism about the job market, are all associated with opposition to EDI. In contrast, broader economic concerns sparked by threats and imposition of tariffs from the United States appear to have little influence.

Our analysis of the national survey challenges the argument that Canadians widely perceive EDI efforts as unwanted or unfair. Despite the media rhetoric and high-profile attacks on EDI from various quarters, the findings show that only a minority of Canadians oppose EDI in the workplace. Survey data reveal that Canadian workers largely support EDI or are neutral to it with a majority viewing it as a good thing. Few report personal harm from such efforts, and support is particularly high among equity-deserving groups, younger workers, those with positive job experiences, pro-immigration attitudes and those who believe that hard work matters more than parental wealth. These findings suggest that loud voices in opposition to EDI do not reflect the broader workforce, which sees EDI not as a threat, but as a path to greater fairness, opportunity and shared success.



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