

# Equity Office

City of Brampton





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# Land Acknowledgement

The City of Brampton is located on the traditional territories of the Mississaugas of the Credit, Haudenosaunee and Wendat Nations who have called this land home since time immemorial.

We recognize the Mississaugas of the Credit as the original rights holders and the signatories of Treaty 19 – the Ajetance Purchase of 1818 – and that the agreements made therein are foundational to our nation-to-nation relationship.

As a City, we are committed to our ongoing role in reconciliation through meaningful action rooted in truth, justice and respect. We are grateful to the original caretakers of this land who have ensured we are able to work, play and live in Brampton now and in the future.



# Foreword from the Equity Office



The Equity Office was established in December 2020 with the mission of embedding equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in the City of Brampton's Corporate policies, programs and services. As we reflect on the progress made since THEN, we are proud of the tangible steps taken to address systemic barriers, amplify underrepresented voices and foster a culture of belonging across the city.

This report demonstrates our dedication to advancing equity throughout our workforce and the Brampton community. The accomplishments outlined herein highlight the collaborative efforts of City departments, community partners and the residents of Brampton in creating spaces where everyone feels valued and included.

Our work is guided by a commitment to truth and reconciliation, and we remain steadfast in our goal of addressing anti-Black racism, Indigenous reconciliation and broader systemic inequities. We look forward to expanding our initiatives in 2025 and beyond, building on the solid foundation established since our inception.

Thank you for your ongoing support in this important journey.

Sincerely,  
The City of Brampton, Equity Office Team

# Introduction and Executive Summary

In December 2020, the City of Brampton, by motion of City Council, established the Equity Office to lead the advancement of equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) throughout the Corporation and the community.

The creation of the Office was in response to findings from the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI) report, an assessment conducted by the Canadian Center for Diversity and Inclusion within City of Brampton departments. The CCDI report revealed that only 37 per cent of the City's workforce identified as racialized individuals, despite the City of Brampton having a population of 74 per cent visible minorities in 2019. It further outlined a similar pattern in the City's Corporate Leadership Team, where only 15 per cent were racialized staff.

The report was corroborated by recommendations from the Laura Williams Report, which detailed specific concerns regarding anti-Black Racism within Brampton's City Hall, including a lack of racial diversity in departments and a culture where racialized contract employees faced job insecurity.

City Council decided to formalize efforts to dismantle systemic barriers and promote an inclusive environment for all.

Since its inception in 2021, the Equity Office has taken significant steps toward addressing the diverse needs of Brampton's community, with a focus on Indigenous reconciliation, anti-Black racism and the support of other Equity Deserving Groups.

This status report summarizes the Office's key accomplishments to the end of 2024. It highlights the progress made to date in creating an equitable, inclusive and diverse community and workplace, while setting the stage for the strategic priorities of 2025 and beyond.



# Key Priority Areas

Progress in this status report will be grouped into three key priority areas or themes. The intent of laying out the information like this is to help demonstrate the work the Equity Office has done to progress EDI awareness, understanding and adoption within the Corporation and in the Brampton community.

# Priority Area #1: Creating a Culture Change at the City (Staff Learning)

Through intentional learning strategies and regular communications, the Equity Office nurtures a culture of awareness and personal reflection across the corporation.



## EDI Training and Departmental Analysis

- Over 400 staff members, including Brampton Fire & Emergency Services, received equity-focused training on anti-Black racism (since 2021), inclusive leadership and Indigenous reconciliation.
- Gender Base Analysis Training for People Leaders and City Council now available to all City Staff (since 2024).
- In response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Calls to Action, accessible Indigenous Awareness training is mandatory for all People Leaders and is now available to all City Staff (since 2024)

## Launched “EDI Minute” in Connections

- Leveraging the City’s monthly internal staff e-newsletter – Connections – to give the Equity Office a consistent space and voice to educate staff about equity-centered insights, resources and success stories.

## SharePoint Site Expansion

To support our event-based communications, we launched over 20 new pages on our internal SharePoint site for:

- Red Dress Day
- Asian, Sikh, Christian, Portuguese, Dutch, Filipino, Italian, Jewish and Islamic History Months
- Treaties Recognition Week
- Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)

These pages serve as learning hubs to build staff understanding on critical historical and current equity issues.

## Staff Communication in 2024

To help raise awareness and educate staff about cultural celebrations and dates of significance, we communicated with staff using a variety of mediums including all-staff emails, intranet stories and informational postcards. The dates we acknowledged were:

- Black History Month
- Black Mental Health Month
- International Women’s Day
- Red Dress Day
- Pride Month
- Indigenous History Month
- Emancipation Day
- National Day for Truth and Reconciliation
- Islamic History Month
- Treaties Recognition Week

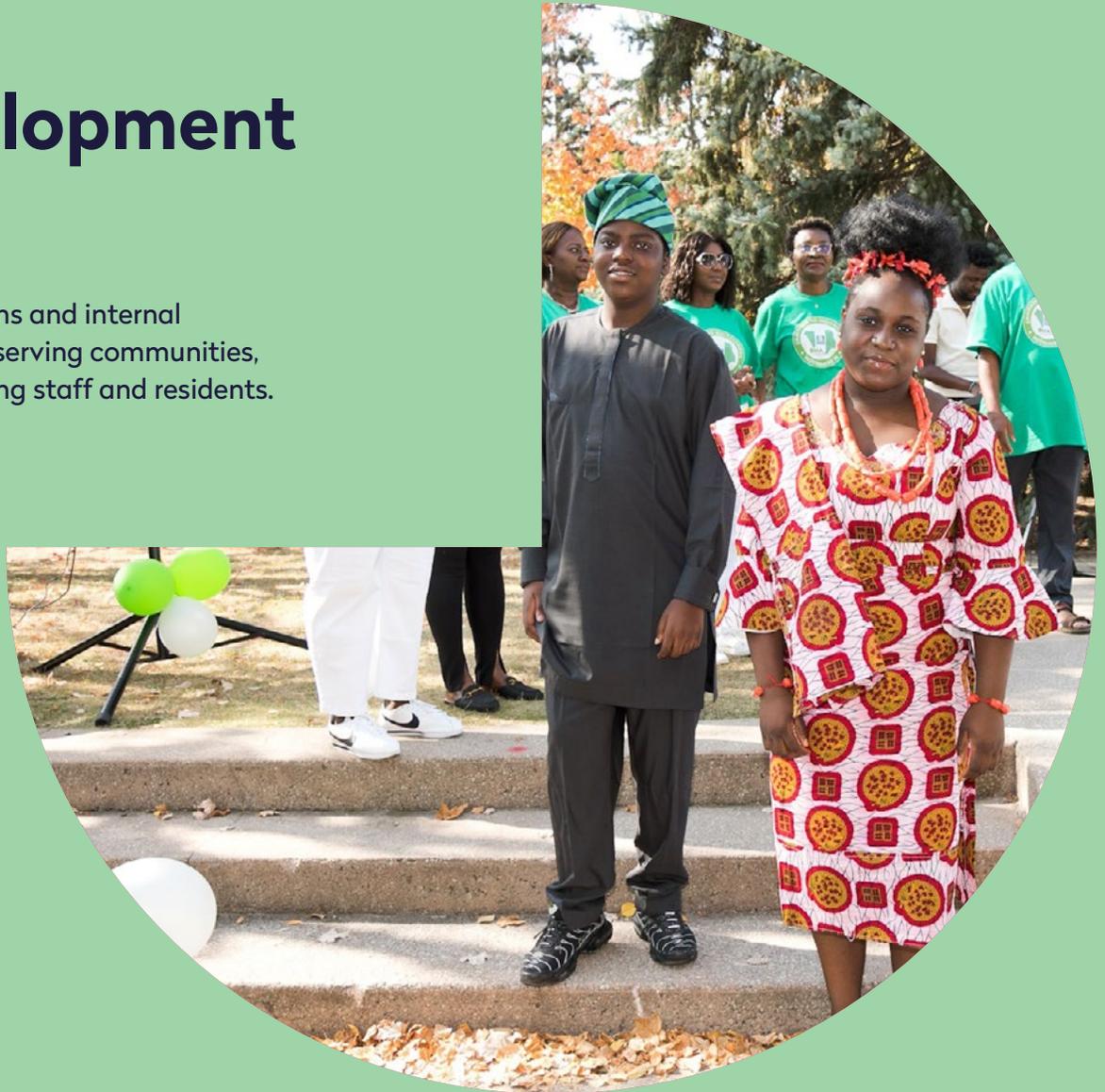
## Updated Land Acknowledgement Guidance

- Shared via all-staff email and Spotlight, this revised protocol provided clearer context and respectful practices for acknowledging Indigenous territories.



# Priority Area #2: Community Development and Events

Hosting impactful events, public commemorations and internal engagements to amplify the voices of equity-deserving communities, support reconciliation and foster belonging among staff and residents.



## Black Empowerment Initiatives

- Delivered programs and services to Black entrepreneurs and businesses through a range of strategic initiatives, including a Black Business Directory, robust small business support and access to grants and dedicated innovation and tech programs.
- Implemented youth development programs, with partners to improve early learning and childcare programs and understanding of the role of heritage and culture and increased access for diverse communities
- Supported the Black Film and Tourism industry by launching the Brampton International Film Festival (BINFF) during Black History Month, which embedded equity narratives into the city's creative economy.

## Black History Month – Kick-Off Event February

- Since the Equity Office was established, the City of Brampton has hosted an annual public event to celebrate and acknowledge the contributions of Black Canadians. This large-scale public event has been well attended, often to capacity of the venue, and has featured guest speakers, artists, awards, and a Black makers market.

## Black History Month - Conversations with Trailblazers February 2024

Several internal events were organized to honour and celebrate the many contributions that Black people have made—and continue to make—in all sectors of society.

- Kathy Grant, Black Canadian Veterans Historian
- Donovan Bailey, Olympic Gold Medalist & Author
- Erika Alexander, on the Honourable Lincoln Alexander's Legacy
- Kirk Mark, Hon. Zanana Akande, Quammie Williams, Community Leaders

## Black History Month – Fireside Chat February 2024

The City's Black Employee Engagement Network (BEEN) organized a Fireside Chat: *Even Stronger Together*, marking the beginning of community-led engagement for Black staff and allies.

## Black History Month – Internal Staff Events February 2023

The following events were available for staff to participate in:

- Socialize dance class
- A Conversation on Black Resistance with Peter Sloy
- Black Resistance



## Black Mental Health Month

The City recognizes March as Black Mental Health Month by amplifying the impact that anti-Black racism has on Black employees' mental health.

### Black Mental Health Month – Internal Staff Event March 2023

- Be You, Be Well Event

### Black Mental Health Month – Internal Staff Event March 2022

- Dismantling the Myths of Black Men: Mental Health Impacts of Racial Stereotypes



## Red Dress Day – May 2024

Drawing inspiration from The REDress Project by Métis artist Jaime Black, we partnered with The Indigenous Network and Peel Regional Police to create our own installation. By hanging red dresses around the city, we are drawing attention to the staggering number of women and girls who are no longer with us and who are victims of gender-based violence and intimate-partner violence. The installation was at Ken Whillans Square for the month of May, along with educational signs to help residents and visitors understand the epidemic of violence against Indigenous women and girls and the need for meaningful action to affect change.



## Indigenous-Focused Learning Series – June 2024

As part of Indigenous History Month in June 2024, we hosted three staff learning sessions:

- Picking Up the Pieces – Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls & Two-Spirit People: Over 20 staff members at the City attended this learning session.
- Indigenous Education with Shirley Horn and Paul Sayers: Over 30 City staff attended this session.
- Why the Duty to Consult with First Nations? 20 plus City staff attendants.

## Emancipation Day Lecture – August 2024

- With over 40 attendees, this event honored the legacy of freedom and resistance and included a Pan-African Flag Raising at City Hall and participation in the Jambana Festival at Gage Park.

## National Day for Truth and Reconciliation – September 2024

*“Equinomic” Reconciliation: Where Equity Meets Economic Development:*

- This internal staff event brought together approximately 380 participants, featuring a panel discussion on how reconciliation and economic opportunity intersect, positioning Brampton as a key player in Indigenous economic inclusion. The session underscored our commitment to economic reconciliation with Indigenous communities.

## National Day for Truth and Reconciliation – September 2023

*Speaking our Truth: Reconciling our Relationship with Indigenous Peoples*

- This internal staff event brought together approximately 410 participants, to remember, reflect, learn, and commit to truth and reconciliation. The session featured a keynote speech by Roberta Jamieson from Six Nations of the Grand First Nation, who was the first Indigenous woman to earn her law degree in Canada and the first woman appointed as Ontario’s Ombudsman.



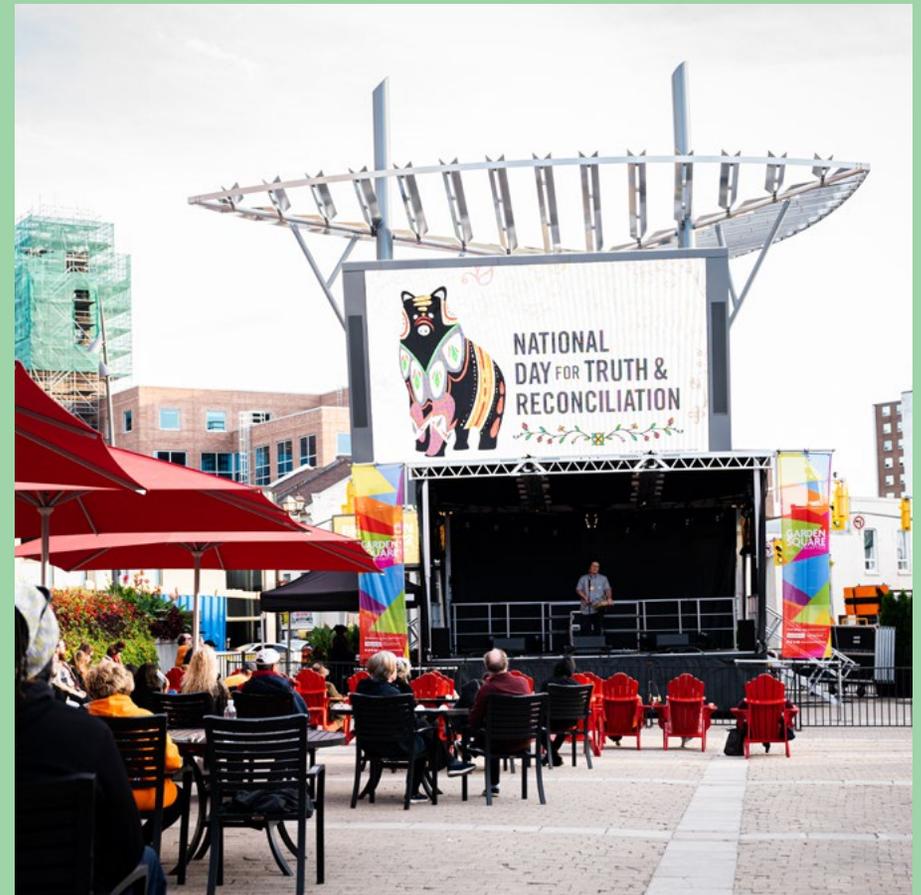
## National Day for Truth and Reconciliation – September 2022 Internal Staff Event

The City held a virtual learning and development event with guest speakers:

- Jeffrey Schiffer, Executive Director, Native Child and Family Services of Toronto
- Kelly Fran Davis, Director, Indigenous Education and Enlightenment

## National Day for Truth and Reconciliation – September 2022 External Community Event

- Candlelight Vigil and Indigenous Learning





## Islamic Heritage Month and Anti-Islamophobia Events

- In October 2023 and 2024, organized and hosted community Iftar and Eid gatherings to promote belonging and intercultural dialogue. These events were popular and attended by over 350 community members who flocked the City Hall Conservatory during Ramadhan and Chinguacousy Park for Eid.
- Community commemoration for the National Day of Remembrance for the Québec City Mosque Attack, to acknowledge the lives lost and remember the tragic event.



# Priority Area #3: Policy Work and Community Engagement

Equity was embedded into policy through reviews, reforms and the development of new guidance tools.



## Anti-Islamophobia Strategy

- The City adopted the National Council for Canadian Muslims (NCCM), Policy Recommendations for Municipalities. The City will be working with partners and school board to develop a multi-pronged strategy focused on community engagement, educational programming and policy in 2025.

## Anti-Islamophobia Community Engagement

- Engaged with over 25 Masjids to deepen relationships and support crisis response.
- Collaborated with the National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM) to implement policy and educational recommendations.

## Anti-Hate Campaign and QR Code Innovation

- In partnership with the Community Safety Office, an anti-hate training module and support campaign with QR code access to resources will be launched in 2025.

## Black Empowerment Initiatives

- Developed stronger Black economic partnerships and identified opportunities for mutual growth and investments in the black community in Brampton.
- Establish relationships with school boards to support Black students in Brampton schools.
- Engaged regional housing stakeholders from the region of Peel, in multiple to address housing challenges in the city.
- Worked with community partners to establish Black-led emergency shelter for new immigrants in Brampton
- Advocated and worked with the Region of Peel and THE Federal government on Asylum seekers crisis from 2023 to present

- Hosted ongoing events focused on supporting Brampton Newcomers on jobs, shelter, mental and physical health, community integration programs

## Diverse & Equitable Workforce:

- Collaborated with Human Resources to revise recruitment practices and launch the Black and Indigenous Youth Internship and Co-op Program, with hires placed in Arts and Culture and more departments.
- Supported Brampton Fire and Emergency Services in piloting a bias-free recruitment strategy to attract Black applicants, with plans for expansion in 2025.

## EDI Toolkit Development

- Following comprehensive research, we completed a draft EDI Toolkit designed to guide departments in applying an equity lens to planning and decision-making. It is scheduled for review and rollout in 2025.

## Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)

- The Equity Office created an Operating Framework for the establishment and operation of ERGs in the City, which was approved in 2024 by Corporate Leadership Team.
- BEEN and WEN (Black Engagement Employee Network and Women Empowerment Network) were successfully launched and structured with executive leadership, advancing staff advocacy and retention with 124 and 194 members respectively.
- MERG (Muslim Engagement Resource Group) was also introduced via Spotlight and internal calls for members, creating a space for Muslim staff to grow professionally and feel affirmed.
- The Equity Office also held meetings to discuss and plan for future ERGs such as the Brampton Pride Network set to be launched in 2025.

## Indigenous Relations and Consultation

- Established and maintained strong relations with the Mississaugas of the Credit, Haudenosaunee, and Wendat Nations.
- In partnership with local urban Indigenous peoples, the Equity Office led efforts to establish a permanent site and hosted the first Sacred Fire Ceremony in Brampton, since the ban in 1884.
- Ongoing collaboration with The Indigenous Network (TIN) and Algoma University has enhanced opportunities for meaningful engagement, as well as programming and planning. This collaboration has demonstrated the value of re-establishing an Indigenous presence in Brampton's evolving landscape, furthering these conversations into 2025, to create a sense of belonging for the network, by hosting it within Brampton.
- Through focus groups held with Indigenous community members for the purpose of renaming specific City parkettes to reflect Indigenous contributions, the office has been able to generate and put forward, a list of names by the urban Indigenous community —commemorations are set for 2025.
- Brampton has been collaborating with Host Nations and cross-departmental teams, to develop an Archeological Management Plan, a tool that maps all areas of known or potential archaeological significance within the boundaries of Brampton. Once launched, the toolkit will be available to all staff whose work requires consultation.

## Indigenous Relations – City Collaboration

- The City of Brampton has formally adopted the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action; the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which was enacted into law on June 21, 2021; the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ Peoples' Calls to Justice.

- Through an intentional and meaningful nation-to-nation approach with our Host Nations and urban Indigenous community, the Equity Office has championed the City utilizing the recommendations for municipalities within noted reports and frameworks to guide its work of increasing awareness, building capacity and seeking collaborative solutions with Indigenous host Nations.
- The City's relationships with the Indigenous community supported by the work on Indigenous communities that the Equity Office does, contributes to the continuing creation of processes for reconciliation. This in turn drives economic recovery, social development and cultural inclusion of the Indigenous community. The City collaboratively honours the uniqueness of Indigenous knowledge, histories and traditions, and recognizes their importance in building and supporting an inclusive, successful, innovative and brighter future for Brampton.

## Respectful Workplace Policy Reform

- Informed by the Laura Williams Report, we collaborated with Human Resources to integrate an equity lens into the Respectful Workplace and Violence Prevention policies.





# Financial Overview

City Council-approved budgets supported the following key initiatives:

- **Cultural Celebrations**
  - Significant portions of our budgets have over time been used to foster a culture of belonging at the City, in response to the Laura Willaims and CCDI reports. Events such as Black History Month Celebrations, Indigenous Peoples Day and Emancipation Days are some examples.
- **Training & Education**
  - Significant investments in anti-racism and Indigenous reconciliation sessions.
- **Youth Employment**
  - Hiring Black and Indigenous youth whose skills and experiences were nurtured through employment opportunities at the city.

# Council Motions & Foundational Commitments

The Equity Office's work continues to be guided by several key City Council motions, which laid the foundation for its creation and shaped its strategic direction:

## **Blackburn Family Documentary & Legacy Recognition**

- As per Council motion and resolution CW199-2022, the City was to install a metal bench and commission a documentary and a tree planting in honour of Estelle Blackburn and her family with signage near the bench to educate the public about her contributions to the community. The documentary about the Blackburn Family as requested during the Council meeting on April 27, 2022, is now complete.
- The tree planting ceremony and installation of the bench and historical plaque are being planned for summer 2025.

## **Council Commitment to Youth Employment:**

In 2021, the City Council endorsed initiatives to support employment opportunities for Black and Indigenous youth, leading to the successful launch of the Black and Indigenous Youth Internship and Co-op Program in 2023.

## **December 2020 Motion:**

In response to the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI) report, the City Council passed a motion to formalize the Equity Office, establishing a commitment to address systemic racism and inequities within the City.

## **Laura Williams Report:**

Recommendations from the Laura Williams Report have influenced revisions to workplace policies, including updates to the Respectful Workplace Policy and Workplace Violence Prevention Policy. These changes ensure that systemic barriers are identified and addressed in the City's practices.

# OUTLOOK FOR 2025

Looking ahead, the Equity Office will prioritize:

- Launch of EDI Toolkit
- Expansion of Black and Indigenous Youth Internship Program
- Establish permanent Indigenous Sacred Fire sites
- Purchasing and Procurement Equity Review
- Launch of Islamophobia Strategy
- Implementation of the Anti-Hate Public Education Campaign
- Launch of the Brampton Pride ERG
- Launch of the Indigenous Advisory Circle
- Develop a Reconciliation Action Plan
- Community Voice Consultation for the Black Community to develop a 5-year action plan
- Launch and implement of the City's first EDI Strategy
- Celebrate and acknowledge additional cultural and heritage months
- Expand EDI learning and training for City staff
- Fostering a culture of change in Brampton to embody the vision of Brampton is a Mosaic.

# Our Commitment

To work with other departments within the City and the broader community of Bramptonians to build practices and policies that reflect Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. A community where everyone can live, thrive and celebrate their differences in a positive way.





Learn more about the City of Brampton's Equity Office at  
[Brampton.ca/EDI](https://brampton.ca/EDI)