



What We Heard Report

FINDINGS FROM EXTERNAL CONSULTATIONS
ANTI-RACISM SECRETARIAT, CITY OF OTTAWA

SEPTEMBER 2021



Acknowledgment

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Acronyms

2SLGBTQIA+	Two-Spirited, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, and other
ACB	African, Caribbean, and Black
ARS	City of Ottawa's Anti-Racism Secretariat
BIA	Business Improvement Area
ODSP	Ontario Disability Support Program
OPH	Ottawa Public Health
PTSD	Post-traumatic stress disorder
RFP	Request for proposal

Note:

city / Ottawa refers to the municipal area and its residents

City of Ottawa / City / corporation refers to the municipal organization



Executive Summary





The City of Ottawa's Anti-Racism Secretariat (ARS) conducted extensive engagement with Ottawa residents and community stakeholders to guide the development of the first Anti-Racism Strategy for the City of Ottawa (see [ACS2021-CSS-GEN-006](#) for more details on ARS work). A broad and comprehensive multi-phase engagement plan was implemented to ensure residents and community partners/stakeholders could participate in identifying concrete actions towards removing systemic barriers in City programming, services and policies within the priority areas.

Engagement

A **total of 601 people participated** during the ARS engagement. Phase I of engagement took place between January and March 2021 and received input from 389 Ottawa residents. Phase II took place between July and August 2021 and aimed to engage groups with intersectional identities who did not participate as actively during Phase I; input was received from 212 Ottawa residents. Phases I and II involved a public online survey, discussions with community partners, and virtual sessions. People from the following communities participated in virtual sessions: Anglophone African, Caribbean and Black (ACB), Francophone ACB, Asian, Muslim, Jewish, racialized francophone residents, racialized people living with disabilities, racialized 2SLGBTQQA+, racialized youth, racialized seniors, racialized women and gender diverse persons, and community stakeholders (community leaders, community organizations, research experts).

To understand the barriers unique to Indigenous communities and ensure the voices of Indigenous residents in Ottawa were included in the creation of the Strategy, a separate process was used to engage Indigenous residents. An Indigenous-led consultant firm¹ was contracted to develop, lead, and facilitate action planning circles for Indigenous residents, with support from the City's Indigenous Relations Specialist, from April to May 2021. The initial engagements were held with Algonquin Anishinabe host nation citizens, Métis community members, two Inuit sessions (Inuktitut and English), as well as with Indigenous Elders. A **total of 46 participants** attended these sessions.

The findings and recommendations from Indigenous engagement presented in this report are based on limited community participation that was not as broad and comprehensive as initially planned. Considering the low participation rate and in recognition of the importance of broader consultations that engage the diversity of Indigenous communities, the City will conduct additional engagement that includes an

¹ Archipel Research & Consulting Inc.



urban Indigenous engagement framework, one that builds on the priorities determined by the Indigenous community.

Findings and Recommendations

Six cross-cutting themes emerged organically across all external engagement, strategic priorities and diverse intersectional identities: systemic racism, accountability, transparency, continuous engagement, accessibility, and race-disaggregated data.

Systemic racism

Participants spoke of the complex and interrelated impacts of systemic racism and the need for systemic racism to be acknowledged and addressed by the City on an ongoing basis.

Accountability

Engagement participants expressed needing to feel that the City is listening, as demonstrated by actions and regular reporting back to, and participatory engagement of, the community.

Transparency

Participants expressed a desire to see more transparency from the City regarding its anti-racism and equity work across all strategic priorities.

Continuous engagement

Community members stressed the need for the City to engage the communities more substantially and consistently at all stages of City work.

Accessibility

Participants emphasized the need for the City to consider accessibility when implementing initiatives, sharing information, engaging residents, and planning and implementing policies.



Race-disaggregated data

Accurate and timely race-based data was considered essential to advancing anti-racism work, as it helps to determine existing needs and gaps, establish targets, and monitor progress.

Engagement findings are also organized by the **six strategic priorities** of employment equity, economic development, governance, housing, health outcomes, and youth development. These priorities emerged during public consultations and meetings with community groups held in 2019 and were used to inform the proposal for an Anti-Racism Secretariat at the City of Ottawa (approved by City Council in late 2019; see [AC-S2019-FSD-FIN-0007](#)).

Due to the richness and diversity of input received, only a snapshot of findings and recommendations can be presented in this Executive Summary; see main text for a more comprehensive summary and for input specific to intersectional racialized groups.

Employment equity

Participants highlighted the low representation of racialized people in stable, high-paying jobs, leadership positions, and knowledge-based and technology sectors, mirrored by overrepresentation in low-paying, temporary, and precarious jobs, as well as among those who are unemployed. Inconsistency in accountability requirements for organizations to demonstrate their commitments to diversity, the prevalence of tokenistic initiatives towards employment equity, and the lack of consistency over the long-term contributed to a general sense of frustration with the slow pace of progress.

Recommended actions include increased hiring, promotion, and retention of racialized staff within the City of Ottawa; clear benchmarks and targets to track progress; removing applicant barriers; diversifying the way jobs are promoted; and access to support, mentorship, networks, and decision-makers.

Economic development

Economic development refers to the growth of Ottawa's businesses, job markets, and industries, and making sure this growth includes equitable opportunities that promote economic inclusion for all residents. Barriers to economic development highlighted by participants include systemic exclusion based on race; lack of diversity among Business Improvement Areas; and barriers experienced by immigrants and newcomers, including those who are highly educated, and seniors.



Recommended actions include business development and mentorship programs for racialized communities; applying an equity lens to City contract allocation; allocate more funding and grants to diverse businesses; and more active involvement of City Councillors in anti-racism efforts.

Governance

The lack of representation of racialized people from diverse intersectional identities in governance structures was noted as a persistent issue by participants across all groups. This includes the lack of role models for racialized youth and low to nonexistent representation in leadership roles in many sectors, at the City, and among elected officials and their staff.

Recommended actions include ensuring meaningful and substantive representation; promoting governance and representation opportunities directly to racialized communities; involving racialized communities in governance discussions and planning and facilitating their access to governance processes; and ensuring that engagement is diverse, accessible, and participatory.

Housing

Poor conditions and limited access to affordable housing were among the highest priorities identified by most participants. The combined pressures of low income, unemployment or underemployment, inadequate housing, and dealing with racism lead to poorer health outcomes. Other barriers identified included the lack of racialized staff within social housing offices, stigma against affordable housing in certain neighbourhoods, long waitlists, and the need for credit checks as a condition for rental.

Recommended actions include continued advocacy for additional funding for housing; increased access to affordable housing; using an intersectional equity lens for affordable housing; implementing a process for dealing with racism in the housing system; diversifying shelter options; and distributing subsidized housing across all neighbourhoods, not only in certain areas in the city.

Health outcomes

Participants identified a variety of health inequities and disparities, including daily experiences of racism and microaggressions, a lack of access to culturally responsive mental health services, and lack of information in a variety of languages. Lack of racial diversity among family doctors and specialists and of cultural



awareness among healthcare staff were identified as barriers affecting health outcomes.

Recommended actions include increased funding, accessibility, and support for culturally responsive and proactive approaches to mental health and wellness; increased availability of culturally responsive mental health services and information in a variety of languages; and public awareness campaigns to address microaggressions, mental health, stigma, and cultural competency.

Youth development

Many factors and disparities affect the well-being and mental health of youth, such as housing, over-policing in neighbourhoods, lack of feeling safe in schools, intergenerational trauma, lack of resources, digital inequities, distance from work or to services/resources and cost of transportation, financial barriers, and long waitlists for services. Youth do not have enough exposure to career opportunities, internships, apprenticeships, mentors, job shadowing, trades, or financial literacy, so that they can make informed choices. Many programs for youth are siloed, difficult to access, and short-term and/or short-lived because of funding limitations.

Recommended actions include increasing the availability and diversity of resources and programs for youth outside of school hours, in their communities; implement a diverse Youth Advisory Table or Youth Board to consider City programs and policies from a youth perspective; increasing professional networking and mentorship opportunities for racialized youth; stable, long-term funding for youth programming; and increased use of social media to engage youth.

As participants noted, addressing system racism is a complex and multifaceted endeavour, and it is important to keep in mind that all the themes and priorities above are interrelated rather than separate. Barriers in one area, e.g., housing, will have repercussions across all others and more, e.g., health outcomes, youth development, and employment equity. Similarly, actions in one area will have positive impacts on all the others as well.

Indigenous Engagement – Findings and Recommendations

The findings and recommendations from Indigenous engagement for the Anti-Racism Secretariat and the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan were presented in a separate report, extracts from which are summarized in this report. The following themes were identified:



Housing

Barriers to adequate housing include long wait times, high costs, language barriers, lack of space for large families, a narrow definition of homelessness, and not fully understanding how the housing process works. Land acknowledgments are perceived as meaningful only with substantial policy or deliverables to accompany them in relation to land use for housing and developments.

Recommendations include having more Inuktitut speakers and Inuit hired to be part of the housing process; prioritizing wider kinship networks (for example, parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles) for larger housing units; and provide more housing units and housing assistance for Inuit.

Financial security, poverty reduction, and employment equity

Three main barriers to getting a job and being financially secure are access to education, language barriers, and the trauma of the Inuit experience, both past and present. There is a lack of accessible and affordable community spaces and resources for Métis and other community members in Ottawa to gather.

Recommendations include designated positions and more employment opportunities for Indigenous people; a space for Inuit to present and sell their art without cost or with fair consignment rates; providing financial literacy and money management education; and including life experience equivalency to educational credentials in job postings.

Health outcomes including mental health and well-being

Lack of representation and awareness within various health resources often causes Indigenous people to feel unwelcome, unsafe, and discouraged to reach out to get the help they need. The health, mental health and well-being of young people are of the highest concern.

Recommendations include initiatives to ensure access to land and accessible physical spaces for the community to gather; hiring and facilitating access to Elders; creating a space for Indigenous teenagers or provide funding to those willing to make this initiative happen.

Governance and simpler systems

Indigenous individuals and communities need to be involved in the decision-making process related to land, in order to be able to preserve their cultural practices.



Participants expressed a lack of satisfaction with the City's approach of engaging with Indigenous communities, primarily through service provision organizations.

Recommendations include ensuring the host Algonquin nation has a voice before actions are taken by the City; having more Inuit involved in decisions concerning Inuit within the city; creating a governance body or advisory board at the City comprised of Indigenous people; and having a book of protocols and traditions written by Elders to be followed by City staff.

Racism and discrimination

Assumptions are commonly made by service providers in the city, stereotyping Indigenous people and preventing real healing from occurring. Many Algonquin Anishinabeg feel they are outcasts within their own territory. There is general frustration at the lack of positive change, and the need for true accountability and substantive change.

Recommendations include acknowledging the diversity and richness of Indigenous communities; avoid tokenism when Inuit are included in organizations; and continuing the process of community circles to engage with communities.

Additional recommendations for future City engagement with Indigenous communities include:

- Continuing the City's approach of making Indigenous voices central to the development of the City's Anti-Racism Strategy;
- Direct engagement with Algonquin, Inuit, and Métis communities and Indigenous Elders, as well as grassroots urban Indigenous community groups; and
- Embedding Algonquin Anishinabe worldviews at the core of work undertaken, ensuring that Algonquin Elders and facilitators continue to be central to future work, and engaging directly with Algonquin Anishinabe host nation citizens.

Limitations

Several limitations must be kept in mind with respect to this report. First, the focus during engagement and in this report was maintained on areas within the scope of the ARS, and did not include the school system, health service delivery, and policing. Second, the predominant use of online tools for both phases of the engagement and the use of only English and French likely limited the ability of certain groups to participate fully.



In addition, since all the engagement happened solely during the pandemic, and since COVID-19 disproportionately impacted Indigenous and racialized communities, members of these communities may not have been able to attend as fully.

The findings and recommendations from Indigenous engagement presented in this report are based on participation not as comprehensive as initially planned. Recognizing the importance of broad consultations, the City will conduct additional engagement that will include an urban Indigenous engagement framework and build on priorities as established by the Indigenous community, including First Nations, Inuit, Métis, and the urban Indigenous community.

Finally, a limitation inherent in this type of report stems from the challenge of condensing input while still speaking to the wide intersectional diversity among racialized residents and within communities. There is a recognition of diversity among and within communities that cannot fully capture the complexity of experiences among Indigenous, Black, and other racialized communities. Comments referring to specific racialized groups are not meant to imply that all members in that group would have the same experience or that other racialized groups do not share those experiences.

Next Steps

This *What We Heard Report* will be released publicly and shared with Ottawa residents, communities, and City staff. It will also be brought forth to City Council in November 2021. During the fall of 2021, a third phase of engagement will be conducted with Ottawa residents, community partners and stakeholders, and other key community partners, to provide the opportunity to speak to the *What We Heard Report*, discuss the findings with the ARS, and address any missing actions or opportunities.

The *What We Heard Report*, along with other documents, will inform the development of the Anti-Racism Strategy, including strategic actions, key performance indicators and expected outcomes. The development of the Strategy will take place in collaboration with the Anti-Racism Advisory Table. It is expected that the Anti-Racism Strategy will be presented to City Council in the spring of 2022.

1. Engagement Process





The City of Ottawa's Anti-Racism Secretariat (ARS) conducted extensive engagement with Ottawa residents to guide the development of the first Anti-Racism Strategy for the City of Ottawa (see [ACS2021-CSS-GEN-006](#) for more details on ARS work). A broad and comprehensive multi-phase engagement plan was developed to ensure residents and community partners and stakeholders could participate in identifying concrete actions towards removing systemic barriers in City programming, services, and policies. The engagements were framed as action planning sessions that would address systemic racism within City policies, services, and decision-making within the priority areas.

1.1. Engagement process

Engagement of Ottawa residents happened in two phases. Phase I took place between January and March 2021. Phase II took place between July and August 2021 and aimed to engage groups with intersectional identities who did not participate as actively during Phase I. Phases I and II both involved a public online survey and virtual sessions, as detailed below (see the attachments for questions asked in the survey and sessions). A **total of 601 people participated** during both phases of engagement.

The main objectives for the external engagement process were to:

- establish a forum where stakeholders and Ottawa residents could offer input into the ARS as the anti-racism work of the City evolves;
- gather, summarize, and analyze data which would inform the work of the ARS and the City's Anti-Racism Strategy;
- obtain recommendations from racialized residents and community stakeholders that will address the priority areas.

To address the barriers unique to Indigenous communities and ensure the voices of Indigenous residents of Ottawa were included in the creation of the Strategy, a separate process was utilized to engage Indigenous residents. An Indigenous-led consultant firm² was contracted to develop, lead and facilitate action planning circles for Indigenous residents, with support from the City's Indigenous Relations Specialist, during April-May 2021. The objectives of the engagement activities with Ottawa Indigenous communities and organizations were to:

- raise awareness of the ARS;
- ensure Ottawa Indigenous communities had the opportunity to shape the direction of the ARS;

² Archipel Research & Consulting Inc.



- identify and develop strategies and actions for key priority areas from First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives; and
- build relationships with stakeholders.

1.2. Phase I of engagement

Phase I of the engagement received input from **389 Ottawa residents** through the following engagement activities that took place between January and March 2021:

- ARS public online survey
 - Launched on the ARS Engage Ottawa project page, in English and French, open to all residents.
 - The survey had 417 responses, 188 of them complete (incomplete responses were not included in the total tally of 389 respondents in Phase I).
- Ottawa resident virtual sessions
 - Four sessions were held with communities most targeted by hate crimes in Ottawa, including Anglophone African, Caribbean, and Black (ACB), Francophone ACB, Asian, and Muslim residents.
 - A total of 130 participants attended these sessions.
- Jewish community virtual sessions
 - One session was held with Jewish residents.
 - Multiple discussions were held with community partners, including local Rabbis and leaders from Jewish organizations.
- Community partners and stakeholders' virtual sessions
 - Twelve action planning sessions were hosted for community partners and stakeholders to provide input from a service provider perspective. Participation was limited due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Many individual conversations with community partners were held.

1.3. Phase II of engagement

Phase II of ARS engagement took place between July and August 2021, and input was received from a total of **212 residents**. The following engagement activities took place:

- ARS public online survey
 - Launched on the ARS Engage Ottawa project page, in English and French, open to all residents.



- The survey had 176 responses, 90 of them complete (incomplete responses were not included in the total tally of 212 respondents in Phase II).
- Ottawa resident action planning sessions
 - Engaged groups with intersectional identities who did not participate as actively during the first phase of engagement.
 - 8 external sessions were conducted with
 - racialized residents
 - all residents
 - racialized francophone residents
 - racialized community with disabilities
 - racialized 2SLGBTQQIA+ residents
 - racialized youth
 - racialized women and gender diverse persons
 - the City of Ottawa Seniors' Roundtable
 - 63 residents attended these sessions.
- Community partners and stakeholders' virtual sessions
 - Two action planning sessions were hosted for community partners and stakeholders (community leaders, community organizations, research experts) to provide input from a service provider perspective.
 - A total of 32 community partners and stakeholders attended these sessions.
- The City's Accessibility Advisory Committee and French Language Services Advisory Committee were consulted and provided input
 - A total of 18 committee members attended these sessions.

1.4. Indigenous engagement

Initial engagement through the Indigenous-led consulting firm included consultations with Algonquin Anishinaabe host nation citizens, Métis community members, two sessions for Inuit community members (in Inuktitut and English), as well as engagement of Indigenous Elders. A total of **46 participants** attended these sessions.

Additional engagements planned were postponed by the City due to a desire to further engage with key Indigenous partners and stakeholders from the City's networks and



beyond. Recognizing the importance of broad consultations, the City aims to conduct additional engagement that will include an urban Indigenous engagement framework to build on priorities as established by the Indigenous community. Through a redefined engagement process, the City will work to further engage with various Indigenous communities, including, but not limited to:

- Leadership of Indigenous organizations in Ottawa,
- Indigenous community and frontline workers from both Indigenous-led and non-Indigenous-led organizations,
- Algonquin, Inuit, and Métis communities and Indigenous Elders, as well as grassroots urban Indigenous community groups, and
- Urban Indigenous communities in Ottawa.

In addition to the participants who attended the engagement sessions, a total of 36 self-identified Indigenous residents completed the online survey distributed by the City during both phases of engagement.

2. Demographics



Participation in the virtual sessions was generally – though not always or completely – demographically aligned with the call for each session (e.g., for racialized women, francophone ACB, racialized youth, etc.). The registration form included voluntary demographic questions. Because most participants chose not to self-identify, the resulting data on the demographics of virtual sessions participants was very limited and has not been included here.

Demographic data was collected through the online survey and consisted of three mandatory questions on racialized identity, intersecting identities, and the first three letters of the respondent’s postal code (see Attachment 1 for survey questions).

Question 1. Survey participants were asked to self-identify whether they had lived **experience as a racialized person** (see Appendix 1 for the definition of racialized included in the survey). Over both phases of the survey, 54% of respondents answered Yes and 46% answered No. This includes both completed and unfinished surveys.

Question 2. Survey participants were asked to self-identify their **intersecting identities**, as listed below (see the [City’s Equity and Inclusion Lens](#) for details on the list of intersecting identities). Respondents could select more than one identity. The table below presents respondent answers to Question 2 for both phases of the survey and includes both completed and unfinished surveys.

Intersecting identities	S1 / EN	S1 / FR	S2 / EN	S2 / FR	Total # of responses	% of total responses
Woman	251	4	99	5	359	61
Immigrant	110	2	54	4	170	29
Other, please specify	96	1	42	-	139	23
Older adult	89	-	38	2	129	22
Francophone	64	4	16	5	89	15
Person with a disability	55	-	33	-	88	15
2SLGBTQQIA+	49	-	32	-	81	14
Newcomer (< 10 years in Canada)	30	-	11	2	43	7
First Nations, Inuit or Métis	24	-	12	-	36	6

Intersecting identities	S1 / EN	S1 / FR	S2 / EN	S2 / FR	Total # of responses	% of total responses
Youth	22	1	7	-	30	5
Rural resident	15	-	4	-	19	3

S1 = Phase I of engagement; S2 = Phase II of engagement
 EN = English survey; FR = French survey
 2SLGBTQQIA+ = Two-Spirited, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, other

The table below combines respondent answers to Questions 1 and 2 for each phase of the survey to show the distribution of intersecting identities among racialized and non-racialized respondents. Numbers include both completed and unfinished surveys.

Intersecting identities	Phase I						Phase II						Total	
	EN			FR			EN			FR			#	%
	T	R	W	T	R	W	T	R	W	T	R	W		
Woman	251	137	114	4	3	1	99	49	50	5	3	2	359	61
Immigrant	110	91	19	2	2	0	54	46	8	4	4	0	170	29
Other, please specify	96	67	29	1	1	0	42	34	8	-	-	-	139	23
Older adult	89	29	60	-	-	-	38	15	23	2	2	0	129	22
Francophone	64	38	26	4	3	1	16	7	9	5	5	0	89	15
Person with a disability	55	32	23	-	-	-	33	20	13	-	-	-	88	15
2SLGBTQQIA+	49	24	25	-	-	-	32	17	15	-	-	-	81	14
Newcomer (< 10 years in Canada)	30	26	4	-	-	-	11	11	0	2	2	0	43	7
First Nations, Inuit or Métis	24	19	5	-	-	-	12	10	2	-	-	-	36	6
Youth	22	12	10	1	1	0	7	6	1	-	-	-	30	5
Rural resident	15	7	8	-	-	-	4	2	2	-	-	-	19	3



EN = English survey; FR = French survey

T = total; R = racialized; W = white (non-racialized)

= total number of responses in that category; % = percentage of total survey responses

2SLGBTQIA+ = Two-Spirited, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, other

As the table above shows, various intersectional identities are relatively balanced between the racialized and white survey respondents, with a few exceptions:

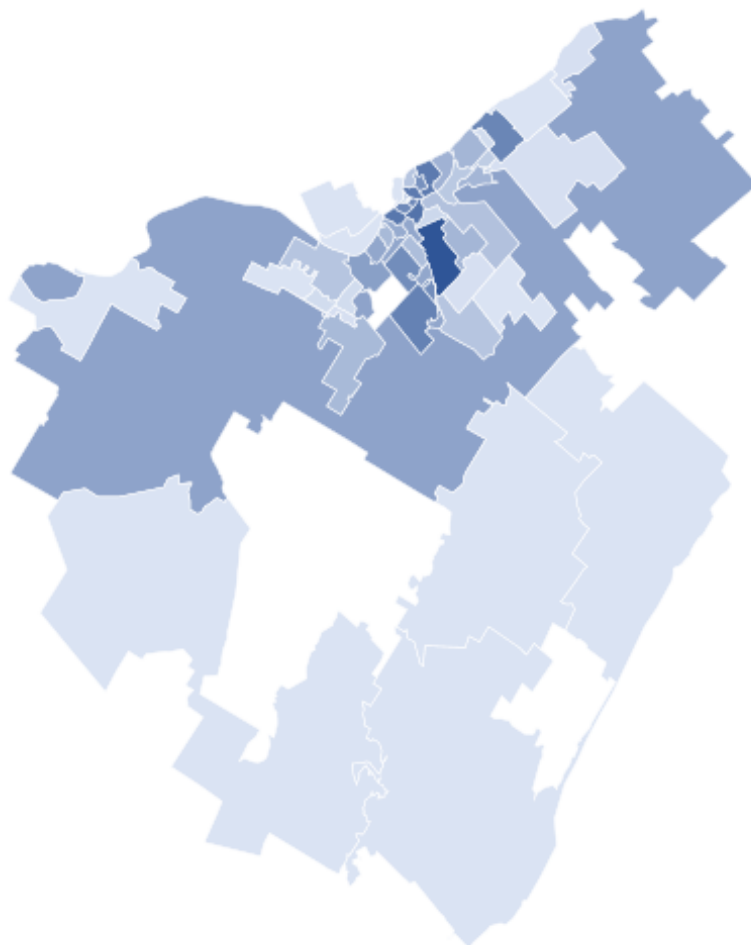
- Significantly higher representation of immigrants and newcomers among racialized respondents.
- Nearly twice as many older adults among white respondents compared to racialized respondents.
- Nearly one third higher representation of persons with a disability among racialized respondents compared with white respondents.

Additional observations on survey respondent demographics include:

- Low representation of youth, rural residents, and First Nations, Inuit or Métis.
- Twice as many racialized respondents selected 3+ intersectional identities each compared to non-racialized (the Other category was not included in this tally – see next two notes as to why).
- Nearly half of racialized respondents used the Other category to specify their racial identity, e.g., Black, Jewish, East Asian, Arab, mixed race.
- Nearly half of white respondents used the Other category to identify as male/man.
- In both phases of the survey, several respondents identified as Racialized in Question 1 and used the Other category in Question 2 to identify as white. Their survey responses were counted under the white (non-racialized) category in the table above (see the [*City's Equity & Inclusion Lens Snapshot: Racialized People*](#) as well as Attachment 1 for a review of the concept of racialization).

Question 3. The **geographic distribution of survey respondents** was relatively even across postal codes, with 11 postal codes having between 23 and 39 respondents each, and another 16 postal codes between 9 and 19 respondents each. The response frequency is shown in the map below:

Ottawa - Response Frequency Map



The neighbourhoods (mapped on the postal codes) with the highest participation were:

- Heron Gate / Heron Park / Riverside Park / Hunt Club / Riverside South / YOW
- The Glebe / Old Ottawa South / Old Ottawa East / Carleton University / Dow's Lake area
- Civic Hospital / Island Park / Hintonburg / Mechanicsville / Champlain Park
- Lower Town / Byward Market / Sandy Hill / University of Ottawa
- Overbrook / Forbes / Manor Park / Viscount Alexander Park / Finter Quarries

3. Methodology





3.1. Engagement

The questions in the virtual sessions and the online survey were kept the same for both phases of engagement (see the attachments for details on survey and session questions). Session discussions were organized around the six strategic priorities of employment equity, governance, housing, economic development, health outcomes, and youth development. These priorities emerged during public consultations and meetings with different community groups held by the office of Councillor Rawlson King in 2019. The six priorities were then used to inform the proposal for an Anti-Racism Secretariat at the City of Ottawa, which was approved by City Council in late 2019 (see [AC-S2019-FSD-FIN-0007](#)).

If the number of participants allowed, the virtual sessions used breakout rooms, with each breakout room focusing on one of the six strategic priorities. Each virtual session (and each breakout room, if applicable) had a facilitator and a notetaker, and they were also video recorded with the participants' permission. Recordings were used to verify the accuracy and completeness of the notes and were then destroyed. All the feedback from both complete and incomplete responses to the online survey was included in the analysis.

Virtual session notes and survey responses were analyzed for emerging themes, while also maintaining input specific to the varied intersectional identities of engagement participants. Section 4. *Findings and Recommendations* presents:

- six cross-cutting themes that emerged organically across all external engagement, all six strategic priorities and across diverse intersectional identities, namely systemic racism, accessibility, accountability, transparency, race-disaggregated data, and continuous engagement, and
- findings for each of the six strategic priorities, including summary participant input, input specific to diverse intersectional identities, and recommended actions.

3.2. Indigenous engagement

Findings and recommendations from the Indigenous engagement are summarized in section 5. *Findings and Recommendations – Indigenous Engagement*.

Findings and recommendations from the self-identified Indigenous residents who completed the online survey are included in section 4.2. *Strategic Priorities* together with all other input from the survey.



3.3. Limitations

Scope of work

As the purpose of the ARS engagement was to inform the development of the City of Ottawa's Anti-Racism Strategy, the focus of the engagement was on areas within the scope of the ARS, namely:

- Emergency services
- Human resources
- Communications
- Planning, infrastructure, and economic development
- Public works and environmental services
- Recreation, cultural and facility services
- Transportation services
- Community and social services

Areas outside the scope of the ARS, i.e., areas where ARS does not have direct jurisdiction but rather an advocacy role, include the school system, health service delivery, and policing. Input provided that related to these and other areas outside the scope of the ARS was not included in the findings and recommendations in this report, because of the need to focus on actions within the scope of the ARS mandate. ARS staff will reach out to partners regarding participant input that falls outside the scope of the ARS.

Online engagement

Another limitation stems from the predominant use of online tools for both phases of the engagement (survey and sessions) due to the pandemic, and the use of only English and French. As participants have also pointed out (see more on this in section 4. *Findings and Recommendations*), this likely limited the ability of certain groups to participate fully, e.g., people without access to technology or internet, people with limited computer skills, and people with limited English and French language skills. In addition, since all the engagement happened solely during the pandemic, and since COVID-19 disproportionately impacted Indigenous and racialized communities, members of these communities may not have been able to attend as fully.

The two *Findings and Recommendations* sections include recommendations from participants on how to address this limitation in future City engagement.



Indigenous engagement

The findings and recommendations from Indigenous engagement presented in this report are based on participation not as comprehensive as initially planned. Additional engagements planned were postponed by the City due to a desire to further engage with key Indigenous partners, stakeholders from the City's networks and beyond.

Recognizing the importance of broad consultations, the City will conduct additional engagement that will include an urban Indigenous engagement framework and build on priorities as established by the Indigenous community. Through a redefined engagement process, the City will work to further engage with a variety of groups, including but not limited to:

- Leadership of Indigenous organizations in Ottawa,
- Indigenous community and frontline workers from both Indigenous-led and non-Indigenous-led organizations,
- Algonquin, Inuit, and Métis communities and Indigenous Elders, as well as grassroots urban Indigenous community groups, and
- Urban Indigenous communities in Ottawa.

Diverse identities and experiences

Finally, a limitation inherent in this type of report stems from the challenge of speaking to the wide intersectional diversity among racialized residents and within communities. Participants spoke of the diversity within Muslim, Asian, or Jewish communities, for example, or among racialized women and youth, and the fact that diverse experiences could not be addressed through a one-size-fits-all approach. This needs to be kept in mind when reading the findings and recommendations below.

While input from participants in specific sessions were included as such (e.g., "Muslim residents deal with ..." or "Racialized women face barriers in..."), this should not be taken to imply that all the persons in that group share the same experience or that other racialized groups do not share those experiences.

4. Findings and Recommendations





This section is based on input from participants in the City-organized virtual sessions and respondents to the online survey during both phases of the engagement.

4.1. Cross-cutting themes

The following interrelated cross-cutting themes emerged organically across all external engagement, strategic priorities, and diverse intersectional identities:

Systemic racism

Participants spoke of the complex and interrelated impacts of systemic racism and the need for systemic racism to be acknowledged and addressed by the City on an ongoing basis. Safety fears and security concerns were expressed by participants across all groups. Experiences of racism are both pervasive and varied, e.g., antisemitism, Islamophobia, anti-Asian, anti-Black, anti-Indigenous, and anti-Arab racism. It is important to build a common understanding of systemic racism and have shared vocabulary and definitions for anti-racism work in each language used.

Addressing systemic racism was understood as a complex endeavour that:

- dismantles the structural barriers that limit access to equal opportunities for racialized people;
- addresses the intersectional impact of racism on racialized people;
- eliminates racist and discriminatory behaviours and beliefs;
- builds bridges between diverse communities;
- is participatory; and
- ensures accountability.

Accountability

Community members have vocalized being over-consulted, asserting that immediate actions are needed to advance anti-racism work. Members spoke of participating in many reports and consultations in the past and of their need to feel that the City is listening as demonstrated by actions and regular reporting back to the community.

Transparency

Participants felt that they did not know what the City was doing to address barriers and racism. Face-to-face access to elected officials and to City staff for conversations and consultations, e.g., through community visits or drop-in hours, was encouraged. Participants expressed a desire to see more transparency from the City, on:

- what the City is doing on equity,



- what the ARS is doing,
- what demographic data is collected and how it is used, and
- designing and planning initiatives across all strategic priorities.

Continuous engagement

While community members vocalized being over consulted through surveys and questionnaires, they also stressed the need for the City to engage the communities more substantially and consistently at all stages of City work, from beginning through to implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

Participants recommended that the City:

- develop a robust engagement strategy and include a performance measurement plan,
- have community representatives and leaders involved in engagement to advise on outreach and communications,
- go into the communities to develop personal connections,
- work collaboratively with other anti-racism initiatives around the city,
- take advantage of community associations and communication channels, and
- have regular reports back to the community on ARS progress, based on a clear workplan.

Accessibility

Participants emphasized the need for the City to consider accessibility when implementing initiatives, sharing information, engaging residents, and planning and implementing policies. Accessibility strives to eliminate barriers to access and engagement, and includes aspects such as:

- using multiple languages in communications and engagement, especially for racialized seniors and newcomers,
- using accessible language and terminology,
- enabling access to distant and/or disparate facilities that provide services and programming, especially for youth and single mothers (e.g., address transportation cost or time barriers),
- diversifying the means of engagement beyond online surveys, questionnaires, and evening consultation sessions; using community-specific means of



communication, e.g., radio, community newspapers, WeChat, Instagram, and community meetings,

- ensuring safe spaces for diverse groups and people during, but not limited to, consultations, and
- providing support with technology and online access.

Race-disaggregated data

The lack of race-based data and the perception that existing race-based data is not necessarily shared with the community were emphasized across all priority areas during the consultations. Accurate and timely race-based data was considered essential to advancing anti-racism work, both within the corporation and in the city, as it helps to determine existing needs and gaps, establish targets, and monitor progress. Participants stressed that demographic data collected needs to be shared, and the people collecting it need to be trained on data collection and analysis and in communicating with residents.

4.2. Strategic Priorities

This section presents input from participants across the six strategic priorities, organized by summary participant input, the input specific to diverse intersectional identities, and recommended actions for each priority.

As participants noted, addressing system racism is a complex and multifaceted endeavour, and it is important to keep in mind that all the issues and recommendations below are interrelated rather than separate. Barriers in one area will have repercussions across all others listed here and more, and actions in one area will have positive impacts on all the others as well.

Employment equity

“Access to support and mentorship is crucial and lacking. We’re too few and scattered to be able to do this meaningfully for each other.”

Participants highlighted the very low representation of racialized people in stable, high-paying jobs, leadership positions, knowledge-based and technology sectors, with even lower representation for women from these communities. This is mirrored by the overrepresentation of racialized people in low-paying, temporary, and precarious jobs, as well as among those who are unemployed. Among other impacts, this also has put racialized people at higher risk during the pandemic.



Inconsistency in accountability requirements for organizations to demonstrate their commitments to diversity, the prevalence of tokenistic initiatives towards employment equity, and the lack of consistency over the long-term contributed to a general sense of frustration with the slow pace of progress.

- *Racialized people*, including *ACB and Black Muslim youth*, are more likely to be criminalized and as such, criminal record checks create a significant barrier to employment.
- The requirement to speak French can be an employment barrier.
- *Muslim women* wearing a hijab experience discrimination and prejudice and difficulties in finding employment.
- Lack of support and guidance for *Black, women, francophone, and other racialized residents*, such as from mentors and unions, was highlighted as a huge barrier to advancing employment equity. Support was seen as essential for helping people prepare for jobs, offer support through the job application process, and also for ensuring retention and advancement once people were hired.

Recommended actions:

"I would like to see all employees in all fields of work be trained on what is racism and how to address these issues in the work force. Every job should have training sessions with managers so they can better treat their staff fairly."

- Increase hiring, promotion, and retention of racialized staff within the City of Ottawa. Conduct annual reviews of City performance on employment equity.
- Implement clear benchmarks and targets to track employment progress to increase accountability in the implementation of equity policies. Provide the community with detailed information on the composition of the City workforce.
- Remove existing applicant barriers, such as the requirement to apply for jobs online and the lack of equitable recognition of international experience.
- Change the way jobs are advertised in an effort to reach more people, e.g., through collaboration with the education system in order to reach people without computers or internet.
- Prioritize people who speak more than one language and people with lived experience of poverty, homelessness, racism, etc.
- Ensure hiring and retention of racialized women, Indigenous, and Black employees into senior positions.



- Provide support for businesses to hire, train, promote, and retain racialized employees and those with intersectional barriers to employment.
- Provide training to managers on unconscious bias, microaggressions, white privilege and fragility, white supremacy, and active allyship.
- Examine how current hiring practices exclude persons with disabilities.
- Provide French language training for immigrants and seniors to enhance their eligibility for jobs.
- Enable and increase access to support, mentorship, networks, and decision-makers, especially for youth and newcomers.
- Address barriers to youth employment opportunities at the City.
- Mentor Black youth for employment and fostering networks, have employment counsellors in job sites and educational settings to help with retention and negotiating barriers.
- Provide targeted hiring for Indigenous people, strong mentorship for new hires, an Indigenous-specific recruitment campaign which showcases the City of Ottawa as a choice employer to grow your career. Access to culture is a necessary element to retain Indigenous staff. Build relationships with Indigenous student centres at post secondary institutions to encourage student placements.
- Develop Indigenous-specific positions and programming in Recreation, Cultural & Facility Services Department to encourage young people to start employment at the City through this channel (reconciliation summer camp for kids, including non-Indigenous, and Indigenous language, cooking, or arts classes for adults).
- Reach out to the unions to work on streamlining support, training, and mentorship for ACB people.
- Support health and resource centres, which are good allies for employment equity and supporting candidates from different neighbourhoods in order to be successful.
- Create recognized pre-employment training certificates that can be used instead of Canadian experience, as the requirement to demonstrate Canadian experience is a barrier to employment for newcomers and immigrations.



Economic development

“Economic development needs to include economic inclusion.”

Economic development refers to the growth of Ottawa’s businesses, job markets, and industries, and making sure this growth includes equitable opportunities that promote economic inclusion for all residents.

- *ACB residents* cannot gain economic influence without fair access to well-paying jobs, and they cannot get well-paying jobs because of systemic exclusion based on race.
- The City relies on Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) to connect with small- and medium-sized businesses, but BIAs are geographically specific and *Black* businesses are a minority across the city. Existing BIA boards are not representative.
- *Racialized seniors* are overrepresented among seniors living on low income. More social, economic, and civic participation is online now, which may exclude many seniors.
- To support their participation in the economy, it is important to address the needs of *immigrant seniors* who come to Canada to join families and have language barriers, limited access to technology, and increased isolation during the pandemic.
- Examine the barriers leading highly educated *immigrants* whose qualifications are going unrecognized to work in low-level positions.

Recommended actions:

“I want consistent and long-lasting support for businesses led by [racialized] individuals -- while brief or finite moments of support for businesses can be helpful, it doesn't ensure that these businesses develop the cyclical economy needed to survive past a given period of time.”

- Implement business development and mentorship programs for racialized communities.
- Highlight the businesses and economic contributions of racialized community members and the full diversity of Ottawa’s small business community in City tourism and other promotional efforts.
- Apply an equity lens when allocating City contracts, hiring contractors and subcontractors. Review current City contract allocation with an equity lens.



Create a Social Procurement policy that would create employment opportunities and contribute to the local economy.

- Allocate more funding and grants to support diverse businesses. Lower the income requirement for grants for small businesses below \$150K and use other criteria such as years in business. Provide micro-loans and help small businesses get online. Get better at reaching small businesses and start-ups owned by racialized people to increase their access to opportunities like grants.
- City Councillors could get actively involved in anti-racism efforts and be allies to racialized communities.
- Offer free education programs in the community for people of all ages that teach how to start a local small business, where the resources are, how to create networks of support, communication skills for good customer and employee relations.
- Create green jobs by increasing public green places/spaces and social infrastructure (outdoor and indoor) that foster social connections in all neighbourhoods, esp. the priority neighbourhoods. Encourage developments that reconnect people to the earth, to green spaces, and to trees.
- Invest in Black, Indigenous and racialized-owned businesses and create opportunities for these businesses to compete within the local, provincial and national economies.
- Hire local artists that reflect the diverse population of each neighbourhood to beautify the neighbourhoods.
- Prioritize, encourage, and support Indigenous vendors through procurement, standing offer lists, or Request for Proposal (RFP) processes. Build capacity through training sessions on how to bid successfully, build a budget, etc. Build a network of Indigenous professionals through a newsletter, include as an element of funding to recruit, and encourage Indigenous employment partnerships. Develop/support an Indigenous marketplace or monthly pop-up Indigenous market at City Hall or in the Byward Market.
- Revitalize Vanier as a cultural hub with Indigenous art, streetlamp flags, and painted crosswalks to celebrate Indigenous culture, and host arts/crafts street fairs. Support social enterprise initiatives, particularly partnerships that develop skills and connect with Indigenous mentors. Use social media channels to share news of new locally owned Indigenous businesses.
- Require existing businesses to demonstrate inclusion and accessibility and meet defined criteria in order to receive any tax benefits and incentives from the City.



- Provide funding to support Black innovation in all City wards. Create a body, like the BIA, with a mandate focused on Black businesses.
- Participants from the Muslim community expressed a need for financial literacy courses and support for entrepreneurship, especially for newcomers.
- Improve accessibility of economic programs for seniors.
- ARS could help organizations who want to diversify their Boards by facilitating inclusion of a wider range of community groups.

Governance

“If people don’t see themselves represented in an elected official, they are less likely to be engaged.”

Equity in governance means that the City’s committees, commissions, agencies, and boards, which have a direct impact on the lives of residents, should reflect Ottawa’s diversity.

The lack of representation of racialized people from diverse intersectional identities in governance structures was noted as a persistent issue by participants across all groups. This includes low representation in leadership roles in many sectors, at the City, and among elected officials and their staff and the lack of role models for racialized youth.

- *Racialized women* identified their experiences with bias against women in governance, the persistence of “old boys’ networks” that impede women’s participation and advancement, and tokenistic representation.
- There are no *francophone racialized people* as spokespeople for the City or as community ambassadors.
- It is challenging for *Indigenous people* from the diverse communities in Ottawa to engage with the City and have a say at municipal level if the City is only engaging with particular Indigenous organizations.

Recommended actions:

“City needs to improve how we explain how City government and Council work, especially for those who do not speak English.”

- Address representation from racialized communities at decision-making tables, including at the City; within recreation, community, and active living centres; and among leaders and staff of community organizations and clubs. Ensure meaningful and substantive representation to avoid tokenism. Address succession planning to ensure meaningful representation and retention.



- Promote governance and representation opportunities directly to racialized communities in order to attract candidates from diverse backgrounds.
- Involve Algonquin, ACB, and other racialized communities in governance discussions and planning, e.g., through a diverse local citizens advisory group, and facilitate their access to governance processes. Support people's participation in governance structures, e.g., compensate their time, provide staff support and help with childcare.
- Create ways for people to self-identify and gather more data on ACB and other racialized communities and their participation in governance. Use the data to make real changes and ensure accountability.
- Invite racialized community representatives, including seniors, to come speak to Council on issues that are being discussed.
- Ensure that community organizations funded and supported by the City produce measurable outcomes in line with ARS work, e.g., through development of internal anti-racism policies.
- Bring together companies and organizations, e.g., in a forum, to discuss the importance of diversity, equity and inclusion and develop rules and policies.
- Collaborate with other levels of government to address racism in the priority areas identified. Work with other governmental structures on specific issues, e.g., parliamentary taskforce on online antisemitism, and learn from meaningful action in cities around the country.
- Participation in governance is connected to participation in engagement, and engagement needs to be diverse in means and locations, accessible, and participatory.
- Need sensitivity toward cultural calendars, e.g., Jewish and Muslim, and the specific practices and requirements that could exclude people from being able to participate. The City can create a City-wide calendar to ensure City events do not fall on or near important holidays.
- Use expertise in Indigenous governance systems to support changes in relationship framework.



Housing

“[Finding] affordable housing is the most painful experience that many have had.”

Poor conditions in, and limited access to, affordable housing were among the highest priorities identified by most participants. The combined pressures of low income, unemployment or underemployment, inadequate housing, and dealing with racism leads to poorer health outcomes. Discrimination within housing and precarious housing have negative physical and mental health effects.

Participants expressed appreciation for the City's efforts to providing overflow spaces for families without homes to prevent overcrowding during the pandemic.

New infrastructure development initiatives around the city make the property taxes go up, but the income of racialized residents has not gone up relative to the increase in taxes. Large families are overcrowded in shelters and affordable housing, which puts pressure on all family members and affects their well-being. Other barriers identified included the lack of racialized staff in social housing agencies and the existing stigma towards affordable housing in certain neighbourhoods.

- Being asked for a credit check as a condition for rental is a barrier for *newcomers*.
- *Newcomers* stay too long in temporary housing, and it can take up to 10 years for people to move off the Social Housing Registry waitlist. Prolonged temporary housing leads to frequent moves that disrupt schooling for kids, food access, rent levels, etc.
- The overrepresentation of racialized residents among *low-income* groups impacts their ability to afford adequate housing.
- Racialized *women* experience discrimination in housing, and the pandemic has created new barriers. In particular, *single mothers* have a hard time accessing information and sessions due to time and other constraints.
- Some participants from the *Muslim community* described limited access to ethnic-sensitive food and limited ability to follow cultural or religious traditions, e.g., prayers and Ramadan in the shelter system.
- Experiences of racism and discrimination from shelter staff without any recourse.
- Some participants from the *Asian community* noted, financial and language barriers, (particularly *seniors*) may face social isolation, have a hard time finding housing, and be unable to advocate for themselves, access services, or miss out on important information.



Recommended actions:

“Go into communities and talk to the people to get a good sense of what is happening around them.”

- Community partners and stakeholders appreciated the City’s advocacy efforts with the provincial and federal governments for additional funding for housing and would like to see this continue.
- Increased access to affordable housing is one of the highest priorities for all groups (women, youth, seniors, people with disabilities, 2SLGBTQQIA+, Indigenous, newcomers, racialized). Suggested ways to increase the supply of affordable housing include expanding non-profit rooming house developments, having private developers set aside affordable units, using an equity and inclusion lens when approving housing, and providing further help with first and last month rent and payment of utility bills.
- Create a waitlist with priority criteria for affordable housing to reflect the lived realities of racialized community members who may be facing intersecting forms of oppression and exclusion. Prioritize low-income racialized residents.
- Distribute subsidized housing financed by the City across all neighbourhoods and along major public transit corridors. Promote and facilitate mixed neighbourhood housing to reduce ghettoization of low income housing.
- Ensure adequate maintenance of community housing.
- Implement a process for dealing with racism in the housing system (shelters, landlords, tenants, etc.) so people know what to do if they experience racism and ensure there is accountability.
- Ensure access to affordable or free Wi-Fi for full or partially subsidized housing.
- Develop a housing plan for racialized newcomers to the city, e.g., francophone ACB.
- Develop dedicated shelter options for racialized 2SLGBTQQIA+ youth, with wrap-around services and support towards permanent housing. Use trusted community groups to reach people where they are at, as they have the trust of 2SLGBTQQIA+ youth.
- Invest in funding an Indigenous designated housing liaison to develop Indigenous housing workplan and coordinated access. Support an Indigenous housing forum to hear from tenants, and people with lived experience of homelessness, that also includes Indigenous housing researchers, planners and housing advocates.



- Affordable housing options need to consider the needs of persons with disabilities, e.g., accessibility of space, connectivity, and community connections.
- The specific experiences of racialized women from a diversity of identities and circumstances need to be understood and included when developing approaches to housing. Diversify shelter options for women experiencing violence beyond settings associated with faith organizations.
- Participants from Asian community recommended providing funding to community centres and programs for Asian people suffering from dementia so they can remain involved in the community.

Health outcomes

“Food is healthcare, food is medicine. Without healthy, culturally appropriate, locally sourced food, health outcomes are lessened.”

While the City does not directly provide health services (which are a provincial responsibility), the City contributes to and coordinates many health-related initiatives through Ottawa Public Health (OPH) and through funding for community and social services.

A variety of health inequities and disparities were identified by engagement participants, including daily experiences of racism and microaggressions, a lack of access to culturally responsive mental health services, and lack of information in a variety of languages. Lack of racial diversity among family doctors and specialists and of cultural awareness among healthcare staff were identified as barriers affecting health outcomes. The combined pressures of low income, unemployment or underemployment, and structural racism lead to poorer health outcomes for racialized residents.

- *Seniors* are not always aware of actions and initiatives the City is doing to address the barriers experienced by racialized seniors. At the same time, the City is slow to recognize the work done by cultural seniors’ communities and networks.
- COVID-19 is disproportionately affecting *racialized women*, particularly *Black and Muslim women* due to work in care settings, lack of sick days or ability to quarantine, and use of public transportation.
- Food insecurity and lack of access to recreation and green spaces affect the health of *ACB residents*.
- *Racialized francophone residents* do not have sufficient access to mental health services in their own language.



- *Racialized francophone youth* have limited access to recreational activities in French.
- *People with disabilities* have a harder time going to the doctor, filling out paperwork, navigating ODSP, and finding healthcare providers of choice. Healthcare providers tend to speak to the caregiver instead of the person directly.
- *Indigenous and racialized people* experience higher food insecurity and are overrepresented in the populations served by food services around the city.
- *Indigenous and racialized persons with disabilities* are doubly disadvantaged, marginalized, and have poorer health outcomes.
- *Learning disabilities* are severely underdiagnosed among racialized people.
- A great burden is placed on *children and grandchildren of newcomers, refugees, and racialized seniors* to assist with translation/communication in various settings, including healthcare. This affects their mental health and poses security, privacy, and legal risks.

Recommended actions:

“OPH hired racialized community members from the community during the pandemic, and this needs to continue and [be replicated] across City departments – goes a long way to build trust.”

- Increase funding, accessibility, and support for culturally responsive and proactive approaches to mental health and wellness. In particular, access for mental health supports after working hours was emphasized.
- Increase availability of culturally responsive mental health services and information in a variety of languages. Focus on the recruitment of mental health workers that are more reflective of racialized communities (e.g., more ACB mental health counsellors, ethnically and religiously diverse and 2SLGBTQQIA+ staff).
- Provide training on a wide variety of cultures to healthcare support staff who interact with racialized people.
- Public awareness campaigns across many types of media can address microaggressions, mental health, stigma, and cultural competency. The recent anti-Asian racism campaign was noted as a good example of what the City can do.
- Expand programs that send social workers and mental health nurses in the communities rather than police.



- Place higher prioritization on nutrition programming.
- Increase awareness of and funding to existing programs and services for racialized residents, including seniors and persons with disabilities.
- Better understand how systemic racism creates barriers in access to health and mental health care and the socio-cultural factors at play in racialized communities that contribute to avoiding health care. Take intersectionality into account. Collect race-based data and report publicly on successes and failures regarding access to public health.
- Reach out to community leaders who can help with distributing health information to racialized communities (including about vaccines) and with combatting misinformation.
- Need more social workers and social supports that are of Asian descent and can speak various languages such as Cantonese, Mandarin and Vietnamese.
- Provide accessible information on sexual health for Black Muslim youth and reproductive health for Muslim mothers and women.
- Designate floors in long-term care facilities for ethnocultural seniors, with languages, food, and information relevant to their culture.

Youth development

“We are concerned about the future for racialized youth.”

Many factors and disparities affect the well-being and mental health of youth, such as housing, over-policing in certain neighbourhoods, lack of feeling safe in schools, intergenerational trauma, lack of resources, digital inequities, distance from work or to services/resources and cost of transportation, financial barriers, and long waitlists for services. Many programs for youth are siloed, difficult to access, and short-term and/or short-lived because of funding limitations.

Engagement participants shared experiences of racialized youth being hired as tokens and having their competency underestimated. Youth do not have enough exposure to career opportunities, internships, apprenticeships, mentors, job shadowing, trades, or financial literacy, so that they can make informed choices. Youth do not know how to deal with microaggressions at work and how to navigate the workplace.

- *Muslim youth* are not always able to attend recreational activities because of racism and lack of cultural sensitivity among staff, lack of Muslim representation among staff and coaches, and facility design (e.g., shared locker rooms).



- *Muslim youth* feel isolated, are subject to Islamophobic attacks and stigma, and suffer magnified mental health impacts because of the pandemic.
- The myth that *Black youth* stigmatize mental health care is sometimes used to obscure the fact that the services available are limited and inadequate.
- *2SLGBTQQIA+ and gender diverse youth* face many barriers and huge risks and stigma both within and outside their communities. There is a lack of shelter available for them if they are kicked out of their homes.
- *Racialized and Indigenous youth with disabilities* have lower rates of employment and need to be prioritized.

Recommended actions:

“Youth should be a focus. We want all youth to be hopeful for a bright future, they have not always felt this. If the City is driving [change] and saying, “these are our kids, this is our future,” it will have more teeth – don’t want to see them disappointed and give up hope.”

- Increase the availability of resources and programs for youth outside of school hours, in their communities. Bring the resources closer to where the youth are. Expand programs like the Somali Youth Support Program and the United Sisters, which reach out to Black youth, and run them in more neighbourhoods. Youth Futures is a good initiative that could be expanded for Indigenous youth as well.
- Implement a diverse Youth Advisory Table or Youth Board to review grant proposals and consider City programs and policies from a youth perspective. Use the work already done and ideas compiled by the Youth Engagement Committee, which ended its work in 2020.
- Increase professional networking and mentorship opportunities for racialized youth, particularly from the ACB community.
- Invest in youth development, apprenticeships, and internships. Provide financial support, pay youth adequately, and provide benefits.
- Expose youth to various jobs while they are still in school, inform them about resources available to them, and help them prepare for job interviews and job search.
- Change housing strategy for ACB youth and do not criminalize them, e.g., increase access to emergency housing for youth affected by violence.
- Work with partners to have summer camps and other programs to build leadership skills for youth, e.g., Muslim girls and boys, Black and Indigenous youth.



- Have some of the programs for Muslim youth be based on active collaboration between the social service centres and the Muslim centres, including mosques.
- The City can develop a website for youth with resources, services directory, and other varied information. Have high school students as part of the City's media team.
- During the pandemic, social media has played a huge role in connecting youth with each other and should also be utilized by the City for outreach and engagement (Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, TikTok, etc.).
- Support dynamic, innovative and contemporary arts for Indigenous youth. Include Indigenous youth representation on advisory councils, seek input from Indigenous youth organizations and programs, and hire an Indigenous youth coordinator to support parallel or integrated youth employment programs.
- Encourage youth to be involved in the City by having networking opportunities built into the curriculum and create ways for youth to be involved in other programs that the City is funding, e.g., senior support.
- Bring youth programs together to showcase to the youth, including in schools.
- Require businesses and City-funded organizations to involve racialized youth.
- Do an internal review of how the City is treating racialized youth.
- Connect racialized seniors with racialized youth for mentoring.
- Ensure ongoing, stable, long-term funding for youth programming. Diversify programming so that it matches youth interests, not what funders think the youth want.

5. Findings and Recommendations – Indigenous Engagement





The findings and recommendations from Indigenous engagement for the Anti-Racism Secretariat and the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan were presented in a separate report, extracts from which are summarized in this report. They are organized by summary input, recommended actions for each strategic priority, and recommendations for future engagement.

Additional engagements planned were postponed by the City due to a desire to further engage with key Indigenous partners and stakeholders from the City's networks and beyond. Recognizing the importance of broad consultations, the City aims to conduct additional engagement that will include an urban Indigenous engagement framework to build on priorities as established by the Indigenous community. Through a redefined engagement process, the City will work to further engage with various Indigenous communities, including, but not limited to:

- Leadership of Indigenous organizations in Ottawa,
- Indigenous community and frontline workers from both Indigenous-led and non-Indigenous-led organizations,
- Algonquin, Inuit, and Métis communities and Indigenous Elders, as well as grassroots urban Indigenous community groups, and
- Urban Indigenous communities in Ottawa.

The City recognizes there are different perspectives on how to address Indigenous anti-racism that need to be explored and defined with the Indigenous community through this broader Indigenous engagement plan and through the Anti-Racism Advisory Table to determine an approach towards the development of an Indigenous anti-racism framework. Further to this strategy, the City of Ottawa is working on a parallel process with Indigenous communities in collaboration with the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition on priorities they have identified.

5.1. Summary

Housing

"It is necessary to show that resources like housing and wellness are being intentionally recognized as important, and that the people are in a safe place which allows communities to bring recognition to our culture."

It is difficult to obtain proper housing due to long wait times, high costs, language barriers, and not fully understanding how the housing process works. There are often



not enough rooms in a unit for large Inuit families. The City's definition of homelessness forces people to spend time in a shelter, creating a barrier for those who are couch surfing and creating a threat to safety. While land acknowledgments are noted as being good, their meaningfulness is eroded without substantial policy or deliverables to accompany them in relation to land use for housing and developments.

Recommendations include:

- Have more Inuktitut speakers and Inuit hired to be part of the housing process.
- Provide more housing units and housing assistance for Inuit to be able to move out of public and/or emergency housing.
- There needs to be a greater understanding of why Inuit are experiencing homelessness.
- Prioritize wider kinship networks (for example, parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles) for larger housing units.
- Develop policy to assist survivors of domestic abuse find new housing immediately.

Financial security, poverty reduction, and employment equity

"We need indoor spaces and community centres with Indigenous programming, at low or no-cost."

Three main barriers to getting a job and being financially secure are access to education, language barriers, and the trauma Inuit experience, both past and present (lack of understanding of who Inuit are and where they are coming from adds to this). Many community members rely on creating and selling traditional crafts and resources for the ability to survive financially each month, or until their next pay. There is a lack of accessible and affordable community spaces and resources for Métis community members in Ottawa.

Recommendations include:

- Need for designated positions and for more employment opportunities to empower Indigenous People, in order to see more Indigenous People in positions of power.
- Support intentional integration of Métis and Indigenous community members in the workplace and financial sectors.
- Create a space to allow Inuit to present and sell their art without cost or with fair consignment rates in Ottawa; create services that spotlight and help promote Inuit art within the city to help create economic growth within the community.



- Provide financial literacy and money management education to ensure people are equipped with opportunities to learn practical skills, and teach them things like how to price product, what to expect as payment, and how to manage funds.
- Include life experience equivalency to educational credentials in job postings to encourage Inuit applicants. Create programs led by Inuit that recognize and translate Inuit life skills to educational credits to improve employment opportunities.

Health outcomes including mental health and well-being

“Programs don’t have a good connection to community.”

There is little understanding in the health and mental health sectors of the impacts of colonization on the Inuit, and how it results in health and mental health issues and PTSD. Connection to the land and to Elders is connected to the health and well-being of Inuit. Lack of representation within various health resources often causes Indigenous people to feel unwelcome, unsafe, and discouraged to reach out to get the help they need. The health and mental health and well-being of young people are of the highest concern.

Recommendations include:

- Create initiatives to ensure access to land, i.e., berry picking, and accessible physical spaces to allow for the community to gather and heal and facilitate resilience, i.e., buildings (community centers) or green spaces and parks (healing garden).
- Hire Elders and create a space where people can go to speak to them to seek support and improve their well-being.
- Create a space for Indigenous teenagers with food, music, and access to counselling with Elders, or provide funding to those willing to make this initiative happen.

Governance and simpler systems

“I’m hoping to see real change, accountability, yearly review, we need things to actually change and not just words. We need it to be public and ways to make sure things are actually done and done right and supporting those most in need. And we will continue to advocate for this.”

If Indigenous individuals and communities are not involved in the decision-making process related to land, they will not be able to preserve their cultural practices.



Participants expressed a lack of satisfaction with the level of City engagement with Inuit and, more generally, with the approach of engaging with Indigenous communities primarily through service provision organizations.

Recommendations include:

- Need the Algonquin nation/presence, given that the city is located within the Algonquin territory, to have a voice before actions are taken by the City, or a new policy is developed.
- Need to have more Inuit involved in any decisions concerning Inuit within the city of Ottawa.
- Create a governance body or advisory board at the City only for Indigenous people.
- Have a book of protocols and traditions to be followed, written by Elders.

Racism and discrimination

“The City of Ottawa has a role to play in breaking down ignorance.”

Assumptions are commonly made by service providers in the city, stereotyping Indigenous people and preventing real healing from occurring. Self-identification as Métis is often a fraught process, met with skepticism, ignorance and discrimination. Many Algonquin Anishinabeg feel they are outcasts within their own territory. There is general frustration with the lack of positive change, and a desire to see true accountability and substantive change.

Recommendations include:

- It is important to the Elders that the diversity and richness of Indigenous communities be acknowledged.
- Involvement with their culture helps facilitate a sense of belonging for the Algonquin Anishinabeg, a sense of resilience, and strength to resist racism.
- Need to avoid tokenism when Inuit are included in organizations, as they should not be seen as the voice for the whole community.
- Continue the present process of community circles to engage with communities, given the urgency of anti-racist work in Ottawa.



5.2. Future engagement

Recommendations for future engagement with Indigenous communities in Ottawa include:

- Ensure that Algonquin Anishinabe worldviews and methodologies are embedded at the core of work undertaken, and that Algonquin Elders and facilitators continue to be central to future work.
- Ensure that Algonquin Anishinabe host nation citizens, especially those residing in Ottawa-Gatineau, continue to be engaged directly in any future work. This includes hiring Algonquin facilitators.
- The City's current approach to Indigenous key stakeholders is incomplete and does not capture the diversity of Indigenous communities in Ottawa. It is essential and urgent that the City expand its list of key stakeholders for work of this nature to include direct engagement with Algonquin, Inuit, and Métis communities and Indigenous Elders, as well as grassroots urban Indigenous community groups.
- Continue to make Indigenous voices central to the development of the City's anti-racism strategy, as anti-Indigenous racism continues to be a major barrier to the well-being of Indigenous communities in Ottawa.
- Allow for public engagements with urban Indigenous community members.
- Allow for circles with Indigenous frontline and community workers and the leadership of Indigenous organizations in any future work of this nature. Include Indigenous workers from both Indigenous-led and non-Indigenous led organizations.
- Ensure that the Ottawa Métis Council, representing Métis nation citizens from across Canada residing in Ottawa, continues to be engaged directly in any future work of this nature. This includes hiring Métis facilitators.
- Ensure that Inuit residing in Ottawa continue to be engaged directly in any future work of this nature, including hiring Inuit facilitators. This includes separate engagements conducted in Inuktitut.

6. Next Steps





This *What We Heard Report* will be released publicly and shared with Ottawa residents, communities, and City staff. It will also be brought forth to City Council in November 2021.

In the fall of 2021, a third phase of engagement will be conducted with Ottawa residents and community partners and stakeholders to provide the opportunity to speak to the *What We Heard Report*, discuss the findings with the ARS, and address any missing findings, actions, or opportunities.

The City recognizes there are different perspectives on how to address Indigenous anti-racism that need to be explored and defined with the Indigenous community through a broader Indigenous engagement plan and through the Anti-Racism Advisory Table to determine an approach towards the development of an Indigenous anti-racism framework. Further to this strategy, the City of Ottawa is working on a parallel process with Indigenous communities in collaboration with the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition on priorities they have identified.

The *What We Heard Report*, together with other documents and reports, will inform the development of the Anti-Racism Strategy, including strategic actions, key performance indicators and expected outcomes. The development of the Strategy will take place in collaboration with the Anti-Racism Advisory Table. It is expected that the Anti-Racism Strategy will be presented to City Council in the spring of 2022.



Attachments





Attachment 1: Online survey questions

Anti-Racism Secretariat: Action Planning Survey

Welcome

Thank you for participating in our survey. The survey will be open until _____.

This survey will actively engage in shaping the work of the Anti-Racism Secretariat (ARS) as it works towards building the City's Anti-Racism Strategy. The questions look to residents for insight into the actions the ARS can take to address systemic racism and to collaborate with communities. The survey is in addition to the ARS's online community action planning sessions. This survey will take 10-15 minutes to complete.

The focus of this survey and other ARS public engagements is less on identifying needs and consulting with residents, as that has been thoroughly undertaken through past City efforts. The focus instead is upon engaging with communities to identify actions to address and challenge systemic racism in the City.

The survey is open to all residents and will help determine the immediate needs within the six priority areas identified in past consultation – employment equity, housing, governance, economic development, health outcomes and youth development – all of which are within the City's jurisdiction.

This survey has three key objectives:

- How do community members prioritize the 6 key areas identified as priorities by racialized communities in Ottawa?
- What steps would community members want the ARS to take in order to address systemic racism?
- How would community members like to engage, collaborate, work together with the ARS in achieving these steps and addressing their needs?

The survey will also ask several questions related to race, gender, and other identities, in order to ensure we are hearing from the full diversity of Ottawa residents.

Accessibility and Data Collection

Accessible formats and communication supports are available upon request in order to fully participate. Please contact: antiracism@ottawa.ca

Personal information is collected for the City of Ottawa pursuant to the City Council approved City of Ottawa Public Engagement Strategy and is used for the purposes of receiving your feedback on the Anti-Racism Strategy. Survey data may be shared with partner organizations, but personal data will not be included. Questions regarding



collection of this information can be directed to the Anti-Racism Specialist at antiracism@ottawa.ca.

Section 1: Demographics

The information collected in this section will help us understand who is participating in the survey. Please note every question in this section is mandatory, with the option to select “Prefer not to answer.”

Your answers are confidential. Demographic data will ONLY be used during analysis to identify specific groups that have common lived experiences.

[Note: questions starting with * were mandatory]

* 1. Do you have lived experience as a racialized* person?

*According to Ontario’s Anti-Racism Directorate, racialized refers to: Racialized persons and/or groups can have racial meanings attributed to them in ways that negatively impact their social, political, and economic life. This includes but is not necessarily limited to people classified as “visible minorities” under the Canadian census and may include people impacted by antisemitism and Islamophobia.

- Yes
- No

* 2. Each of us could identify with more than one group. It is this intersection, or crossover of identities of who we are that affects how we experience the city. This is called intersectionality. People’s lives are multi-dimensional and complex. Lived realities are shaped by different factors and social dynamics operating together.

Please select any intersections in your identity that you would like to acknowledge.

- First Nations, Inuit or Métis
- 2SLGBTQQIA+
- Francophone
- Immigrant
- Newcomer (less than 10 years in Canada)
- Older Adult
- Rural Resident
- Woman
- Youth
- Person with a Disability



- Other, please specify

* 3. What are the first three characters of your postal code? (Format: XXX)

This information will help us to identify and address how racism is connected to the geography of our City and how our communities are experiencing systemic racism in neighbourhoods.

Section 2: Steps to address systemic racism

This section invites you to share any part of your lived experiences as a black and/or racialized person living in Ottawa that you wish to share, as well as your ideas on how to address systemic racism.

4. What changes in policy, programs and/or services would you like the City to prioritize in employment equity?

5. What changes in policy, programs and/or services would you like the City to prioritize governance equity?

(Equity in governance means that the City's committees, commissions, agencies and boards, which have a direct impact on the lives of residents, should reflect Ottawa's diversity).

6. What changes in policy, programs and/or services would you like the City to prioritize in housing?

7. What changes in policy, programs and/or services would you like the City to prioritize in economic development?

(Economic development refers to the growth of Ottawa's businesses, job markets, and industries, and making sure this growth includes equitable opportunities that promote economic inclusion for all its residents.)

8. What changes in policy, programs and/or services would you like the City to prioritize in the area of health?

(While the City does not directly provide health services [which are a provincial responsibility], the City contributes to and coordinates many health-related initiatives through Ottawa Public Health and through funding for community and social services.)

9. What changes in policy, programs and/or services would you like the City to prioritize in the area of youth development?



Section 3: Engaging Community

* 10. How would you like to see the Secretariat engage with you and your community?

(Examples: conduct research across communities; community planning sessions, community newsletter, meet with community representatives regularly)



Attachment 2: Questions for virtual sessions for city residents

Question 1

What are the unique needs and challenges that _____ [intersectional identity/ies, as applicable to the session] residents face in relation to _____ [priority area] in Ottawa?

- Health Outcomes
- Housing
- Employment Equity
- Economic Development
- Youth Development
- Governance

Question 2

What actions can we take at the City to address the _____ [priority area] barriers experienced by _____ [intersectional identity/ies, as applicable to the session]?

- Health Outcomes
- Housing
- Employment Equity
- Economic Development
- Youth Development
- Governance

Question 3

What actions or initiatives is the City currently undertaking that should be continued in relation to addressing the _____ [priority area] barriers experienced by _____ [intersectional identity/ies, as applicable to the session]?

- Health Outcomes
- Housing
- Employment Equity
- Economic Development
- Youth Development
- Governance



Question 4

How would you like to see the _____ [intersectional identity/ies, as applicable to the session] involved in the implementation of the actions we've discussed?

Prompting questions

1. What are some inequities currently faced by residents in relation to _____ [priority area]? What are some of the barriers in the area of _____ [priority area]?
2. What could the City be doing differently? Are there ways the cities approach to the priority areas could be improved, especially for _____ [intersectional identity/ies, as applicable to the session] residents? If you could have the City do any action in relation to this area, what would it be?
3. What are some impacts of the City's current initiatives? Are you aware of any initiatives or actions currently in place that have had an impact on _____ [intersectional identity/ies, as applicable to the session] specifically?
4. Are there any specific ways the _____ [intersectional identity/ies, as applicable to the session] community could be better engaged in the City's actions?

Additional prompting questions for Phase II that spoke more specifically to the respective intersectional groups participating:

1. Are any of these barriers and challenges complicated because of an overlapping social identity you identify with (such as your gender identity, age, living a rural area, etc.)?
2. Are there any specific actions that could address the needs of _____ (equity groups/social identities mentioned by participants in Question 1)?