

Engagement Questions Resource for Municipalities and Villages

Office of Equity and Anti-Racism

This supplementary resource is intended to provide municipalities and villages with some guidelines and potential questions to ask as part of their efforts to develop a plan to address systemic hate, inequity and racism by April 1, 2025. They can be delivered in a variety of types of engagement from surveys to in-person sessions conducted with members of underrepresented and underserved communities. Additional guidance can be found on page five of the [Equity and Anti-Racism Plan Guidance for Municipalities and Villages](#).

Self-Identification and Demographic Questions

Self-identification is the process by which individuals voluntarily disclose information about their personal identity, such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or other characteristics. Self-identification is important because it allows individuals to define and express their own identity. This process helps municipalities understand the diverse makeup of their communities, including different racial, ethnic, cultural, and other identities. The information collated through this process can be used to help gather statistics about how underrepresented and underserved communities were meaningfully involved in this process. Self-identification helps municipalities understand the diversity within their communities and design policies and initiatives that address the specific needs and experiences of different groups.

Here are some proposed self-identification questions which may be used in the context of a survey.

1. Do you identify as being part of an underrepresented and underserved community (select all that apply)?
 - ☐ 2SLGBTQIA+
 - ☐ Black/Persons of African Decent
 - ☐ Historic African Nova Scotian
 - ☐ Mi'kmaw/Indigenous
 - ☐ Newcomer (Immigrant or Refugee)
 - ☐ Persons with a disability
 - ☐ Religious/Faith-based
 - ☐ Seniors

- ☐ Other: (write in response)
- ☐ I prefer not to answer

2. In Nova Scotia, people are often described by their race or racial identity. These identities are social and historical descriptors, and do not have a scientific basis. Which race categories do you self-identify with (select all that apply)?

- ☐ Black (e.g., African Nova Scotian, African Descent, African Canadian, Afro-Caribbean descent)
- ☐ East Asian (e.g., Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Taiwanese descent)
- ☐ Latin American (e.g., Hispanic, Latin American descent)
- ☐ Middle Eastern (e.g., Arab, Persian, West Asian descent (e.g., Afghan, Egyptian, Iranian, Kurdish, Lebanese, Turkish)))
- ☐ South Asian (e.g., Bangladeshi, Indian, Indo-Caribbean, Pakistani, Sri Lankan)
- ☐ Southeast Asian (e.g., Cambodian, Filipino, Indonesian, Thai, Vietnamese, Southeast Asian descent))
- ☐ White (e.g., European descent)
- ☐ I use a different identifier to self-identify: (write in response)
- ☐ I prefer not to answer
- ☐ I do not know

3. Which gender categories do you currently identify with (select all that apply)?

- ☐ Man
- ☐ Trans
- ☐ Two-spirit
- ☐ Woman
- ☐ Gender diverse
- ☐ I prefer not to answer (this option is checked)
- ☐ I use different language to self-identify (please specify):

4. Which age group do you belong?

- ☐ Under 20
- ☐ 20 - 29
- ☐ 40 - 49
- ☐ 50 - 59
- ☐ 60 - 69
- ☐ 70 and over

General Questions

The list of possible questions provided below are not exhaustive and they can be adapted to suit the unique contexts and needs of different municipalities and villages. By customizing questions to fit the unique needs and contexts of your municipality or village, you will be better equipped to gather meaningful insights and develop a robust plan to address systemic hate, inequity, and racism.

In tailoring questions for your specific engagement, it is recommended that municipalities and villages:

- Ensure that the questions reflect the diversity and specific experiences of your population, including local histories and current contexts.
- Ensure that the questions are written in plain language, inclusive and sensitive to the experiences of underrepresented and underserved communities. Avoid questions that may inadvertently reinforce harm, stereotypes or biases.
- Identify existing community organizations, leaders, and advocates who can provide insights and help with the engagement planning and delivery, and distributions of surveys and other materials.

Programs and Service Delivery

1. Can you share any positive experiences or examples of municipal government programs and services that have effectively supported you?
2. Please share any specific challenges or barriers you may have experienced stopping you from accessing municipal programs and services because of your identity (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, faith, first language).
 - Barriers or challenges can include eligibility requirements, lack of service providers in your area, or insufficient levels of support to meet needs.
3. In your opinion, what services or programs need improvement to be more equitable (fairer) and more accessible for all community members?

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging in the Community

4. What programs or activities could the municipality create to help everyone feel included and like they belong?
5. How can the municipality better support education, awareness and celebration of the diverse backgrounds of its residents?

6. What are the biggest challenges to achieving fairness and inclusion in our community, and how can we solve them?

Policies

7. To your knowledge, what policies or guidelines should the municipality create to promote equity (fairness), fight racism, and improve accessibility for everyone?
8. To your knowledge, are there any current policies or practices that make it harder for people to access services or feel included? If yes, please explain.

Engagement

9. In what ways can government make sure that the diversity of voices and views of underrepresented and underserved communities are actively included, valued, and considered in engagement and decision-making processes?
10. To your knowledge, which community groups, service providers or organizations can the government collaborate with to better understand and meet programming and service needs of underrepresented and underserved communities?
11. How can the municipality improve how it shares information and reaches out to make sure it includes and is accessible to everyone?

Employment and Workplace Environments

12. What should the municipality do to make sure its employees come from diverse backgrounds reflecting and representing the community they serve?
13. Please share any specific challenges or barriers you may have experienced accessing municipal employment information or opportunities because of your identity.
14. How can the municipality make the workplace more welcoming and supportive for all employees?
15. What actions can the municipality take to prevent workplace discrimination and promote fairness accessibility and belonging?