

---

**Subject:** Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan 2024 Progress Report

**Report to:** Planning and Economic Development Committee

**Report date:** Wednesday, April 9, 2025

---

## **Recommendations**

1. That Report PDS 7-2025 **BE RECEIVED** for information; and
2. That Report PDS 7-2025 **BE CIRCULATED** to the Local Area Municipalities for information.

## **Key Facts**

- The purpose of this report is to provide the annual update on the progress of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan 2023-2027. This follows the commitment made in report CAO 12-2022 when the Plan was approved by Regional Council.
- This Plan is vital for achieving the Equitable Region Council's Strategic Priority by creating opportunities for a safe and inclusive Niagara, ensuring the Region is welcoming, inclusive, and free from discrimination.
- As of December 2024, the Plan has a 38 per cent completion rate. Of the 44 action items, 12 are completed, 11 are progressing, and 21 are upcoming. Five action items were completed in 2024.
- At the end of 2024, 80 per cent of all active staff completed Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Fundamentals e-modules, including 87 per cent of all People Leaders.
- The workforce of Niagara Region is meeting the goal of reflecting the region's diverse population.

## **Financial Considerations**

Expenses for the completed deliverables in 2024 were accommodated within the Council approved 2024 Growth Strategy and Economic Development Administration budget. The planned activities described in this report are within the Council approved 2025 Strategic Initiatives budget.

## Analysis

The Niagara Region Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion team, in collaboration with the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee, Regional staff, and community members, developed the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan 2023-2027. Its vision is a welcoming and inclusive Niagara region where diversity and equity are valued and reflected. The mission is to advance equity, foster welcoming and inclusive communities and workplaces, and eliminate barriers and discrimination. The plan identifies six focus areas with a primary focus on the Niagara Region as an organization.

To ensure Council and the community are updated on implementation of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan, staff have committed to provide annual update reports.

As of December 2024, the Plan is 38 per cent complete. Of the 44 action items identified in the Plan, 12 are completed, 11 are progressing, and 21 are upcoming. Appendix 1 includes a summary document with a selection of the action items completed or that made progress in 2024, as well as a summary of the demographic results from the 2024 Employee Engagement Survey.

The demographic data from the Employee Engagement Survey is used to track the diversity of Niagara Region's workforce in comparison to the demographics of the community. This is part of Focus Area C in the Plan. The data is used to identify potential barriers and implement best practices in recruitment and hiring to address those barriers, with the aim to increase the diversity of the workforce.

According to the 2021 Canadian Census, the population in Niagara is 13 per cent racialized, 18 per cent were not born in Canada, and five per cent were part of a religious minority. Based on the 2024 Employee Engagement Survey, the employees at the Region are 14 per cent racialized, 19 per cent were not born in Canada, and five per cent were part of a religious minority.

Additionally, progress updates can be tracked on a public dashboard, accessible through the [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan 2023 - 2027 Dashboard](https://performance.envisio.com/dashboard/niagararegion101) (<https://performance.envisio.com/dashboard/niagararegion101>).

Some of the accomplishments in 2024 include the following:

- Thirty-one employees were recognized through the Corporate Employee Recognition Program and Team (CERT) Awards for their contributions to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Three Community of Practice meetings were held. There are currently 123 members representing 87 organizations participating in the Community of Practice.
- At the end of 2024, 80 per cent of all active Region staff (3,274 out of 4,077) had completed the e-module training, including 87 per cent of People Leaders.
- Ninety-six per cent of People Leaders (383) participated in a one-hour in-person training on Inclusive Leadership.
- The workforce of Niagara Region is meeting the goal of reflecting the region's diverse population.
- The 2024 Calendar of Significant Events were used to provide monthly summaries of 247 significant dates and 45 individual spotlight dates. In 2024, the monthly summaries had 2,700 total views and the spotlight date posts had 4,195 total views.

Some of the key actions that will continue or begin in 2025 include the following:

- Develop and promote the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Handbook.
- Create and promote a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Charter.
- Deliver diversity, equity, and inclusion learning for all staff, Councillors, and volunteers.
- Implement best practices to eliminate barriers in recruitment and hiring processes.
- Report on periodic community diversity, equity, and inclusion surveys that include evaluating the impact of Niagara Region programs and services.
- Review Niagara Region policies and procedures using the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Handbook.
- Work with Region staff to recognize and showcase significant dates.

### **Alternatives Reviewed**

No alternatives were reviewed.

## Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan 2023-2027 aligns with Regional Council's Strategic Priorities by offering a framework to address diversity, equity, inclusion. This Plan contributes to creating an Equitable Region by fostering a safe and inclusive environment in Niagara. It is an action in the Priorities that emphasizes responding to community needs, planning for future growth, and ensuring the Region remains welcoming and free from discrimination. The Plan contributes to the strategic lens of diversity, equity, inclusion and Indigenous reconciliation by providing training and resources for staff to incorporate diversity, equity, inclusion and reconciliation in all Niagara Region projects, programs and services.

## Other Pertinent Reports

- [CAO 12-2022 - Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan 2023-2027](https://pub-niagararegion.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=28405)  
(<https://pub-niagararegion.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=28405>)
- [PDS 12-2024 – Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan 2023 Progress Report](https://pub-niagararegion.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=36719)  
(<https://pub-niagararegion.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=36719>)

---

### Prepared by:

Cassandra Oggunniyi, PhD, MSocSci  
Manager, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion,  
and Indigenous Relations  
Office of the Deputy CAO

---

### Recommended by:

Michelle Sergi, MCIP, RPP  
Deputy CAO  
Office of the Deputy CAO

---

**Submitted by:**

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.  
Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared in consultation with Yusuf Al-Harazi, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisor, and reviewed by Jimmy Huynh, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Intern; Suzanne Madder, Associate Director, Strategic Initiatives; Angela Stea, Director, Strategic Initiatives; Janine Tessmer, Communications Consultant; and Susan White, Program Financial Specialist.

**Appendices**

Appendix 1                      Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan 2024 Progress Report