

# INCLUSION CHARTER

2020

## PROGRESS REPORT

### Working Together for a Welcoming and Inclusive Community

York Region is home to 1.2 million people who speak over 120 different languages and come from 230 distinct ethnic origins. In 2016, about 49% of residents identified themselves as a visible minority and 46% were born outside of Canada. As York Region's population grows, so will its diversity.

The [Inclusion Charter for York Region](#) is a community initiative that brings together organizations with a common commitment to creating an inclusive and welcoming environment for all who live, work and play in York Region. Since its launch in 2018, more than 30 organizations have endorsed the Inclusion Charter and that number continues to grow.

The Inclusion Charter was developed by the Municipal Diversity and Inclusion Group (MDIG), comprised of 20 member

organizations, including all nine local municipalities, police services, hospitals, school boards, conservation authorities and agencies. The Regional Municipality of York co-chairs MDIG, along with York Regional Police, and acts as the driver and secretariat of the initiative.

By endorsing the Inclusion Charter, organizations affirm their commitment to inclusion, whereby all people feel they belong and have access to the same opportunities. Each organization who endorses the Inclusion Charter will have their own unique actions resulting from their customized Charter.

Learn more about the Inclusion Charter by reading previous progress reports ([2018](#), [2019](#))

#### 2020 IS A YEAR OF CHANGE AND HOPE

2020 brought many injustices to the forefront, underscoring the importance of the Inclusion Charter initiative. From the global COVID-19 pandemic that continues to impact residents and communities to current world events, including the global rise against anti-Black racism, the urgent need for actions that embrace diversity and champion inclusion has never been clearer. The pandemic is changing our economy and society, impacting the health, well-being and livelihoods of Canadians, including marginalized and racialized Canadians.

While organizations, including endorsees of the Inclusion Charter for York Region, are not immune to the impacts of COVID-19, there is hope. As the pandemic continues to evolve, communities and organizations are increasingly focusing on meeting the needs of all people and strategizing next steps, including collective actions that foster inclusion and belonging.

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## SPOTLIGHT ON COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP ACTIONS

This year sparked an awakening among individuals, communities and organizations around the world to pause, reflect and act. Addressing inequalities brought forth by the ongoing pandemic and promoting social justice are helping to pave the way for inclusive environments locally and globally. MDIG organizations are inclusion champions, taking purposeful action to move the needle on inclusion.

In addition to working together and sharing resources, two MDIG working groups were created in 2020:

- An **Inclusive Language Guide** working group to create a common Inclusive Language Guide for all MDIG organizations to use
- A **Diversity Calendar** working group to share resources to help MDIG organizations develop a consistent annual diversity calendar

The following is a snapshot of the inclusion activities developed and implemented by MDIG organizations in 2020. These activities provide an opportunity to build momentum and move forward in the years ahead, including ongoing development, communication and implementation of action plans.



As driver of the Inclusion Charter for York Region initiative, [The Regional Municipality of York](#) continues to advance its commitment to creating a welcoming and inclusive community.

In 2020, York Region took concrete and collaborative action to specifically address anti-Black racism by holding Anti-Black Racism Staff Dialogues and developing four pillars of actions to address anti-Black racism in the organization and community, with clear milestones and supported by measurements to gauge effectiveness and success. These actions make up the Region's corporate framework for action and guide activities in 2021 and beyond, including corporate Black History Month celebrations, review of policies, and engagement with Black community organizations. This follows and builds on York Regional Council's recognition of the International Decade for People of African Descent in 2020 and is one of a number of initiatives implemented under the Inclusion Charter.



In the spirit of taking action to achieve the vision of the Inclusion Charter, [York Regional Police](#) unveiled its Human Rights Education classroom in 2020. Daessinigaewin, which means "accepting into one's heart", was officially named by an Elder from Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation. The space aims to educate students about inclusivity and the power of community, opening the door to peacebuilding and global citizenship for York Region's future leaders.



The [Town of Aurora](#) is dedicated to the continuous improvement of diversity and inclusion. It has undertaken multiple initiatives to ensure the municipality remains as inclusive and barrier-free as possible.

To further enhance diversity and inclusion in 2020, the Town focused on building a solid foundation through activities such as the Engaged, Inclusive Communities Project, the Anti-Black Racism and Anti-Racism Task Force and a report to Council on further recommendations. All of these will allow the municipality to advance and strengthen its commitment to inclusion.



The [Town of East Gwillimbury](#) is committed to creating and building an accessible and inclusive community. Over the past year, the Town has accomplished a number of community and organization-wide initiatives, including the establishment of a Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee, the development of a multi-faith calendar, as well as community outreach and awareness.



The [Town of Georgina](#), through the Georgina Equity and Diversity Advisory Committee (GEDAC), continues to work diligently to promote mutual trust and respect among Georgina's diverse community groups and the institutions and agencies it serves.



The [Township of King](#) is committed to embracing and celebrating all dimensions of diversity and bringing people together to build a welcoming community that values everyone's differences and contributions. King Council supported the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition on Anti-Semitism at its September 21, 2020 Council meeting, which recognizes that international coordination is needed to combat Anti-Semitism.



The [City of Markham](#) is proud of its rich diversity and strives to ensure everyone feels welcome and has a sense of belonging.

In 2020, the City approved its strategic plan "Building Markham's Future Together" which includes an update of its Diversity Action Plan. A multi-faceted strategy to combat anti-Black racism was launched, including the appointment of a Special Advisor on measures to address anti-Black racism, the establishment of the Mayor's Anti-Black Racism Youth Liaison Committee and the commitment to train all staff and Council members on anti-Black racism.



In 2020, the [Town of Newmarket](#) Council engaged in an Inclusive Communities Project with local partners, participated in a workshop to understand Anti-Black Racism in Canada, established an Anti-Black Racism Task Force and installed an Indigenous Land Acknowledgement plaque. Internally, staff launched a cultural celebrations calendar and initiated a review of the information collected through Town forms. A Diversity and Inclusion page on the Town website will be launched soon!



The [City of Richmond Hill](#) has taken action to foster diversity and inclusion through its Employee Strategy, public programs and services. The City held an all-staff guest speaker session to explore how to recognize and challenge biases at work and in everyday life. The City has also launched Indigenous Awareness training. Diversity, equity and inclusion was identified as a Council priority in November 2020 and preliminary work is underway to establish a plan of action.



The [City of Vaughan](#) Vaughan has developed inclusive design standards, received Gold accessibility certification for several City buildings from the Rick Hansen Foundation's nation-wide accessibility certification program and awarded Vaughan Accessibility Champion Awards to selected nominees on December 3, 2020, at a virtual event.

The first meeting of the City's Diversity and Inclusion Task Force took place virtually on November 19, 2020, and the new Diversity and Inclusion Officer, Zincia Francis, joined the City on January 11, 2021. The City places a great deal of importance on the condemnation of racism in all its forms. Council continues to approve proclamations that recognize the importance of fostering a diverse, inclusive and equitable City. Mayor Maurizio Bevilacqua called a special electronic-participation Committee of the Whole meeting for November 25, 2020, regarding the City's diversity, inclusion and anti-racism efforts.



The [Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville](#) is committed to supporting a welcoming and inclusive community. This year, the Mayor's Committee on Diversity and Inclusion was established with a membership of 50 people. It will transition into a staff working group in 2021, as the official Inclusion Plan is developed.



As part of [Mackenzie Health's](#) Inclusion & Diversity strategy, a new learning series launched last year. Mackenzie Health designed, developed and delivered a three-part Inclusion and Diversity Series to support staff, physicians and volunteers in recognizing unconscious bias, delivering culturally responsive health care and understanding their roles as allies in health care.



[Markham Stouffville Hospital](#) is launching a plan that will serve as a roadmap for incorporating Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) into health care planning and service delivery with the single goal of improving equity for our people and our communities. Focus areas include human resources processes and practices, enhancing language services, training and development on EDI fundamentals for leaders and staff, establishing a Community of Inclusion for our Black staff, physicians and volunteers, and inclusive washroom signage at the hospital.



In 2020, [Southlake Regional Health Centre](#) will re-establish their Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI) and Accessibility committee. The committee will focus on goals outlined in their new DEI Framework to ensure Southlake is an accessible, safe and welcoming environment for everyone.



In 2020, the [York Catholic District School Board \(YCDSB\)](#) created the Human Rights and Equity Advisory Committee (HEDI), which comprises internal and external stakeholders. YCDSB also launched the Human Rights and Equity Knowledge Series, which engages staff to unlearn, and learn, to better support a diverse student population and a Human Rights, Equity and Inclusion Survey for all staff, students and parents.



[York Region District School Board \(YRDSB\)](#) implemented face-to-face and online learning and working environments that are inclusive, safe, caring and accessible. Inclusion at YRDSB is supported through actions including distribution of technology, supporting vulnerable students and families and promoting mental health and well-being, all while keeping students at the centre.



[United Way of Greater Toronto \(UWGT\)](#) is deeply committed to our values of diversity, inclusion and equity – welcoming, celebrating and valuing the contributions of all. With other United Ways across Canada, we are currently adopting an Equity Framework that will impact all areas of our work from fundraising to data collection to our investments in community and ongoing commitment to collaboration with Indigenous communities. Equally important is how our governance and culture will transform as we deepen our understanding of equity as employees, with our volunteers and all of our stakeholders. We have dedicated resources to doing this work effectively with an expert consultant to support organization-wide learning that includes our Board of Trustees, and by hiring a Senior Manager, Equity and Anti-Racism for 6 months to focus on how we can ensure greater equity in our community investments.



York Region  
Children's Aid Society  
Société d'aide à l'enfance  
de la région de York

[York Region Children's Aid Society \(YRCAS\)](#) strives to have an equitable and inclusive workplace that values diversity. A Director and Manager have been designated to develop and lead the implementation of a detailed plan of action that will integrate equitable practices, the Truth and Reconciliation recommendations, and the One Vision, One Voice Race Equity practices across the organization.

YRCAS continues to work with staff and community partners to ensure a more equitable and accessible future for all staff, children, youth and their families.



Lake Simcoe Region  
conservation authority

[Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority \(LSRCA\)](#) continues to support a diverse and inclusive environment by transitioning all website content and internal document templates to accessible formats. LSRCA's education programming now incorporates Ojibwe language and plans are underway to expand partnered programming for early learners with special needs. Additionally, work has been completed at one of LSRCA's popular conservation areas to accommodate individuals of all levels of physical ability. An employee survey will also be circulated shortly which will formulate the basis for LSRCA's diversity and inclusion framework in 2021.



Toronto and Region  
Conservation  
Authority

The [Toronto and Region Conservation Authority \(TRCA\)](#) is committed to actively fostering an environment that embraces inclusion and diversity in all areas of the organization, from the services that are provided, to recruitment and procurement of goods and services. An example of this is TRCA's continued engagement approach to its program and projects, which includes building and maintaining positive, mutually respectful relationships with Indigenous communities.

In June 2020, TRCA and its Board of Directors reaffirmed its commitment to proactive diversity and inclusion practices and conducted a diversity and inclusion assessment, environmental scan and established a plan for the development of a scaled, purposeful and actionable People-First Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.

## Forging Ahead

### COLLECTIVE ACTION CAMPAIGN

MDIG organizations are developing a collective action plan to foster inclusion by addressing two priority areas: increasing the sense of community belonging amongst York Region residents and decreasing the incidence of hate crimes. MDIG members are:

- Developing and launching an **internal** campaign to educate staff and raise awareness about the Inclusion Charter and what it means to each organization
- Undertaking community engagement to shed light on barriers to inclusion and determine community needs or "hot spots" for long-term **external** education and awareness

## ENDORSEMENTS

Other organizations in Region-led councils and boards have also endorsed the Inclusion Charter. This includes the Community Partnership Council, which supports the integration of newcomers in York Region and the Human Services Planning Board of York Region, which provides strategic advice to Regional Council on human services matters and initiatives in York Region.



## FOLLOW OUR JOURNEY

For updates about the Inclusion Charter and to view previous Inclusion Charter Progress Reports, visit [york.ca/inclusiveyr](http://york.ca/inclusiveyr). You can also join the conversation on social media using the hashtag #InclusiveYR. For more information about the Inclusion Charter, please contact [inclusion@york.ca](mailto:inclusion@york.ca)