



Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
Strategic Imperative

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION is not only the right thing to do, it is the SUSTAINABLE thing to do. It creates space for innovation, creativity, and excellence.

The success of Toronto Humane Society's Strategic Plan for 2020-2025 is dependent on multiple critical success factors such as putting our animals and people first, engaging hearts and minds of staff and volunteers, and building trusted relationships with all our stakeholders.

Now, who are our stakeholders?

They are:

- Our Employees
- Our Volunteers
(including Board of Directors)
- Our Customers and Clients
- Our Supporters and Donors
- Our Communities
- Our Partners



Our new **Strategic Plan for 2020-2025** is about shifting the focus from solely delivering animal welfare programs to contributing to both animal and human welfare programs. A strong commitment to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion and a working DEI strategy will help us deliver that and will also act as a means to address other areas:

Improving the Lives of the Animals and Enriching the Human-Animal Bond

Toronto Humane Society's vision is to be a leader in animal welfare, working for a compassionate society where all animals are respected and valued. What we often forget is that **humans are our fuel and they keep our cause running.** A DEI plan will ensure that these humans feel valued, supported, included, and heard which will preserve the integrity of the human-animal bond, improving the lives of both.

People Engagement

In any organization, how engaged the people are directly impacts their productivity, and productivity in turn drives strategic outcomes. The results from the first three employee engagement surveys show an incremental growth in employee satisfaction, however, there are still concerns and there is always scope to improve employee morale and satisfaction. Also, with the volunteer engagement surveys, we have seen an increase in engagement from 2019 to 2020 but there are still some volunteers who want more support, and want to feel more connected. A DEI plan will help **increase engagement of the employees, volunteers, and other stakeholders** by giving them inclusive spaces to function.

Fundraising, a Key External Business Driver

Almost 85% of our financial budget is supported by donations from individuals (in form of online giving, monthly giving, tele raising, gifts, events). The analysis undertaken as a part of the Toronto Humane Society's strategic planning process has shown decreasing donor support as a prominent threat. Showcasing commitment to DEI (externally and internally) and putting effective DEI practices in place can help us to **attract diverse donors with different backgrounds and views**, leading to an increase in funding.

Recognition as a Leading Center for Learning, Knowledge Creation, and Sharing

With our concentrated intervention and focus on DEI, we will eventually become an outstanding leader in our sector, an **institution that sets an example for the animal sector from a DEI perspective**, and a major resource for other organizations, giving them and us the opportunity to collaborate and grow together.



An Opportunity to Diversify Our Clients

According to a report released by *Canadian Pet Market Outlook 2014*, almost half (if not more in some cases) of the Canadian pet owners are racialized. However, at Toronto Humane Society, a surface level analysis shows that we have not been serving a diverse group of clients and pet owners. A DEI plan will give us the chance to **tap into this under serviced pool**, thereby addressing this missed opportunity.

A Community-Led Organization

Our society is quite heterogeneous in terms of backgrounds, culture, economic status etc. At the moment, we are not prepared to optimize this diversity. A well thought out DEI plan will help us in equipping our employees and volunteers with the right knowledge and skills to deal with our diverse communities. It will also help us truly move from a **community-based organization to a community-led organization**, *from a space where we define what our communities need to a space where our communities feel free to identify their own needs, communicate them to us without any hesitation, and ask for any support they require.*

Representation

According to Statistics Canada, 50% of Toronto's population is ethno-cultural. For us, this fact poses various questions:

- Are we, the Toronto Humane Society, representative of Toronto's population?
- How are we planning to attract and retain candidates who are increasingly reflective of Toronto's diverse population?
- How will we address issues within our diverse communities if we don't bring in individuals with varying views and distinct knowledge?
- Do diverse stakeholders perceive us as an inclusive and welcoming organization?

A DEI plan will play a huge role by providing us with a roadmap to tackle the above important concerns. **A workplace needs be representative of the community and the society it serves.** Studies have shown that a diverse and inclusive workforce can bring skills, talent and experiences that contribute to an organization's overall success. A more inclusive culture feeds into (and draws from) a wider talent pool. Also, if candidates perceive a workplace as alienating – whether through research or interviews – they are less likely to join or stay in that work environment.



The above points clearly demonstrate that actively committing to DEI and creating an inclusive environment will help us move multiple steps closer to fulfilling Toronto Humane Society's intent of being an exemplar of care and a contributor to the capacity of the sector, improving the lives of animals and people, and shaping a better world.

The process to create and execute a DEI program for Toronto Humane Society has been inspired by Michael Bach's (Founder and CEO, CCDI- Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion) newly published book, *Birds of All Feathers: Doing Diversity and Inclusion Right*. A huge thank you to him for authoring this book, it is an excellent guide for all organizations starting their DEI journey. If you are interested to know more about the process and the ideology, buy the book here: <https://www.amazon.ca/Birds-All-Feathers-Diversity-Inclusion/dp/1989603408>

You can also refer to CCDI's toolkit to create a strategic imperative (<https://ccdi.ca/toolkits/>) for more details on this part of the process.

