



# DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

Phase 2: Current State Assessment



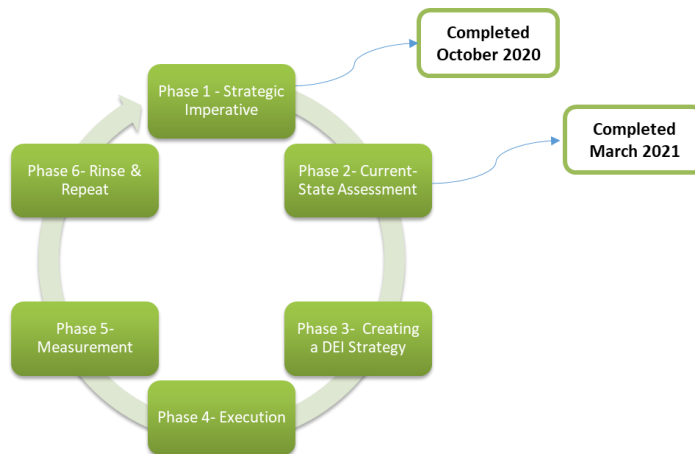
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In July 2020, Toronto Humane Society launched a formal **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Program**. After multiple conversations with the stakeholders and in-depth research, a **Six Phase Program**, inspired by *Michael Bach's book 'Birds of All Feathers: Doing Diversity and Inclusion Right'*, was initiated.

**Phase 1** of the process was completed in October 2020 which resulted in the creation of a **Strategic Imperative** to answer 'why is it important for our organization to focus on DEI'. The document was then shared with the internal stakeholders of Toronto Humane Society in October 2020 (Board Members, Staff, Volunteers, and Animal Foster Parents) and with the public in February 2021.

**Phase 2 of the program, the Current-State Assessment, is also now complete.** This step aimed to provide better clarity of where Toronto Humane Society stands today, what Toronto Humane Society's stakeholders' perspectives are regarding DEI and, what the possible benchmarks for the DEI program could be. The process led to the creation of this summary which includes all the details of Phase 2 (initiated in mid-October 2020).



An important point to note and understand is that DEI is a constantly evolving field of work and hence this summary is only a snapshot of the DEI status quo at the time of the assessment.

## THE FIVE SEGMENTS OF CURRENT-STATE ASSESSMENT (PHASE 2)

Segment	Segment Name	Description	Timelines
Part 1	Leadership Assessment	Learning our leaders' understanding and opinions of DEI, personally and for Toronto Humane Society. This assessment can be conducted through interviews, group discussions, surveys with leaders etc.	August 2020 to November 2020



Part 2	Grievances and Complaints Analysis	Analysing any formal grievances and official complaints received over the past several years and uncovering any patterns that may not have been noticed before from a DEI perspective.	December 2020
Part 3	DEI Pulse Survey	Understanding how our stakeholders (Staff, Volunteers, Foster Parents, and the Board of Directors) feel about DEI at workplaces in general and at Toronto Humane Society specifically.	October 2020 to January 2021
Part 4	Maturity Analysis	Reviewing the organization from a policy and procedure perspective using the benchmarking tool Global Diversity and Inclusion Benchmark (GDIB).	November 2020 to January 2021
Part 5	External Analysis	Researching and understanding what others are doing in the DEI space in the Animal Welfare sector.	November 2020 to January 2021

## PART 1: LEADERSHIP ASSESSMENT

This assessment for Toronto Humane Society began in Phase 1 of the DEI program and continued in Phase 2. The conversations from Phase 1 helped in developing the DEI Strategic Imperative as well as understanding the status quo for Phase 2. **For the purpose of this assessment, leaders are defined as key position holders from various departments (Executive Leadership [Chief Executive Officer, Chief Operations Officer, Chief Veterinary Officer, Director, Marketing Communications and Development, Director, People & Culture, and Controller], People & Culture, Shelter Advancement, Client Partnerships and Care, Foster Care, etc.).** These leaders were interviewed by the DEI Specialist. These individual conversations are confidential, however the high level common key themes emerged through this process. The following are conclusions drawn by the DEI team from these conversations:

### Representation at Toronto Humane Society

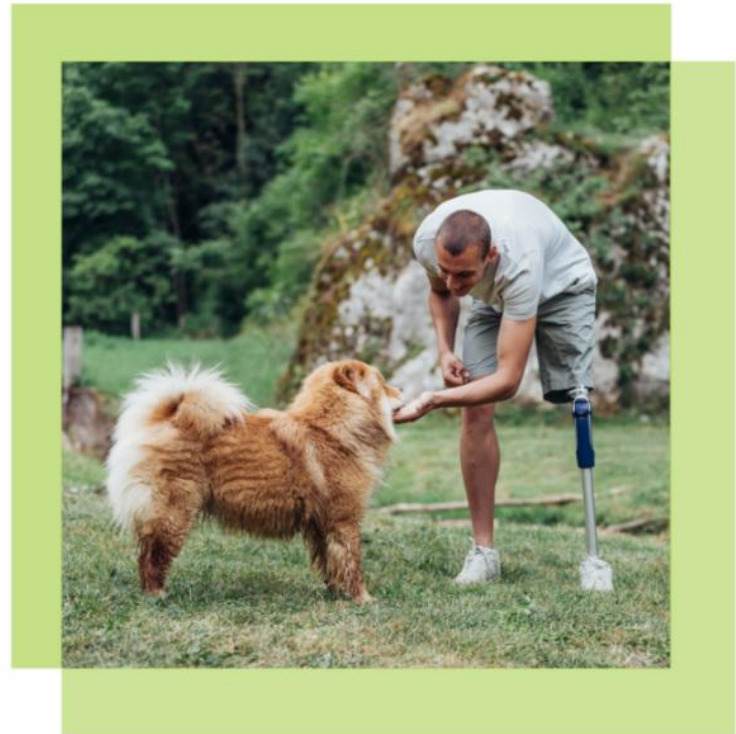
Concerns were voiced about Toronto Humane Society requiring diverse representation at all levels, especially at upper management levels (this includes Division Managers and key position holders in the organization). According to our leaders, a workplace needs be representative of the community and the society it serves.





## Communities at Toronto Humane Society

- According to our leaders, our known communities, the ones we serve, appear quite heterogeneous and diverse and Toronto Humane Society might not be prepared to deal with this level of diversity. The need to equip our employees and volunteers with the right knowledge and skills to deal with our diverse communities was hence voiced.
- Also, some leaders believe there is a necessity to move from a community-based organization to a community-led organization, from a space where we decide and define what communities need to a space where the communities themselves feel safe to communicate their needs to us openly.
- Along with the above, a great need to support and reach the racialized pet owners' population, new immigrants, and refugees in the communities was stated.



## Equitable Access to Pet Care

This is currently the most critical point of discussion in the Animal Welfare sector. This could be addressed in Toronto Humane Society's DEI long-term plan in order to bring about a long-term change for the less privileged sections of the society.

## DEI Education and Awareness

According to the leaders, different internal stakeholders are on different levels of understanding of inclusivity, diversity, and equity. This might create a need for education and awareness on variety of DEI topics.

## Applicant Pool Diversity

It is believed that the candidate pool for Animal Care Jobs is not diverse whereas for administrative/support positions, there is a diversity in the applicant pool. This could be an indication of systemic and socio-economic barriers in hiring practices.

## System Fatigue

It is believed that there are clients, especially foster parents, with language barriers who don't understand documentation and the system. As a result, the processes need to be much more inclusive, not only at Toronto Humane Society but at large (in the animal welfare sector) so everyone feels supported and included.

## Mental Health Programs

Mental health programs that benefit all the stakeholders need to be prioritized.

Many leaders believe there has been a shift in culture at Toronto Humane Society over the last few years where it is more open and transparency is valued more, but there is more to be done. Any **resistance to change** should be embraced and solved through open conversations, transparency, clear communications, and basic education around the topics in question.



## PART 2: GRIEVANCES AND COMPLAINTS ANALYSIS

Toronto Humane Society's DEI team conducted this analysis by re-visiting anonymous and official complaints received through emails, exit interviews, and other sources. The sources were kept anonymous and only the patterns in the complaints were observed. Two high level patterns were observed from a DEI perspective:

### Disability Management

The possible need for more organization-wide awareness and education when it comes to understanding and working with persons with disabilities (physical and mental) for all stakeholders including Staff, Foster Parents, and Volunteers, was identified.

### Mental Health Support

More awareness and support concerning mental health at the workplace might be needed as the understanding of mental health might not be same across the organization. Some situations and people might require more support than others.

## PART 3: DEI PULSE SURVEY

On November 6, 2020, Toronto Humane Society initiated its **first DEI Survey**. Two versions of the survey were launched, one for Staff, Animal Foster Parents, and Volunteers and the other for members of the Board of Directors. Feedback on survey questions was provided by the People & Culture Department, Executive Team, and the Board Chairperson, with the Executive Team providing approval. The survey covered a wide range of topics within DEI. There were **21 questions** covering **five dimensions** for Staff, Foster Parents and Volunteers and **12 questions** covering **three dimensions** for members of the Board of Directors. Below is a high-level snapshot for both surveys.

### STAFF, ANIMAL FOSTER PARENTS, VOLUNTEERS AND BOARD MEMBERS HIGH LEVEL THEMES

Category	Number of Stakeholders Who Were Sent the Survey	Number of Responses Received	Response Rate
Management (including Supervisors)	34	29	85%
Unionized Employees	70	30	43%
Non-Unionized Employees	77	47	61%
Animal Foster Parents	168*	76	45%*
Volunteers (including Placement Students, excluding Board Members)	100*	67	67%*
<b>Total Response Rate</b>	<b>449*</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>55%*</b>

*\*Please note that the 'number of stakeholders who were sent the survey link number' represents only the active stakeholders of Toronto Humane Society. In order to ensure anonymity, the exact response rate of Board Members hasn't been shared, since the total number of board members is small, however do note that the results are representative of the whole group.*



## Basic Interest in DEI

- Majority of the respondents from the Staff, Animal Foster Parents, and Volunteers survey (85%) and 100% of the respondents from the Board Members survey have interest in learning about DEI and Human Rights.
- 81% from the Staff, Animal Foster Parents, and Volunteers survey and 91% from the Board Members survey have been actively following and reading about the Anti-Racism Movement taking place all over the world.
- 90% from the Staff, Animal Foster Parents, and Volunteers survey believe that systemic racism exists in Canada. 91% from the Board Members survey believe systemic racism exists in Canada. The remaining 9% of board members are neutral.
- 91% of respondents from both the surveys believe that businesses and organizations need a DEI strategy.

## Toronto Humane Society as an Organization

- Respondents from both the surveys indicated that Racial/Ethnic Diversity is the DEI category Toronto Humane Society needs to focus on most, with Disability Diversity and Socio- Economic Diversity tied in the second spot.
- 77% from the Staff, Animal Foster Parents, and Volunteers survey feel that people of all different backgrounds and beliefs are welcome at Toronto Humane Society. 19% are neutral and 4 % disagree with the statement.
- 73% from the Board Members survey believe Toronto Humane Society values DEI.

## Toronto Humane Society – Executive Team, Board of Directors, Management, and Peers

- From the Staff, Animal Foster Parents, and Volunteers survey, 54% believe that the Executive Team is committed to having a diverse & inclusive workforce at THS, 39% are neutral, and 7% disagree.
- From the Staff, Animal Foster Parents, and Volunteers survey, only 17% of respondents agree that Toronto Humane Society's Board of Directors has the right mix of diverse backgrounds, perspectives, cultures, and beliefs to achieve its strategic plan, 18% disagree, and 45% chose the 'I don't know' option. From the Board Members survey, 36% believe that Toronto Humane Society's Board of Directors has the right mix of diverse backgrounds, perspectives, cultures, and beliefs to achieve its strategic plan, 46% are neutral, and 18% disagree.
- For Board Members survey, 64% of respondents believe DEI is one of the top priorities for the Board of Directors at Toronto Humane Society, 18% disagree.
- From the Staff, Animal Foster Parents, and Volunteers survey, 53% feel confident that the Management and/or People and Culture team would do what is required, if they raised a concern about discrimination, 37% are neutral to the statement, and 10% disagree.
- From the Staff, Animal Foster Parents, and Volunteers survey, 54% feel confident having conversations about DEI with their Manager/Supervisor, 36% are neutral to the statement, and 10% disagree.
- From the Staff, Animal Foster Parents, and Volunteers survey, 68% feel that regardless of the team members' background, culture, views etc., their Manager/Supervisor treats them like they belong at Toronto Humane Society, 27% are neutral to the statement, and 5 % disagree.
- From the Staff, Animal Foster Parents, and Volunteers survey, 63% feel that their colleagues value individuals with different backgrounds and beliefs, 33% are neutral to the statement, and 4% disagree.

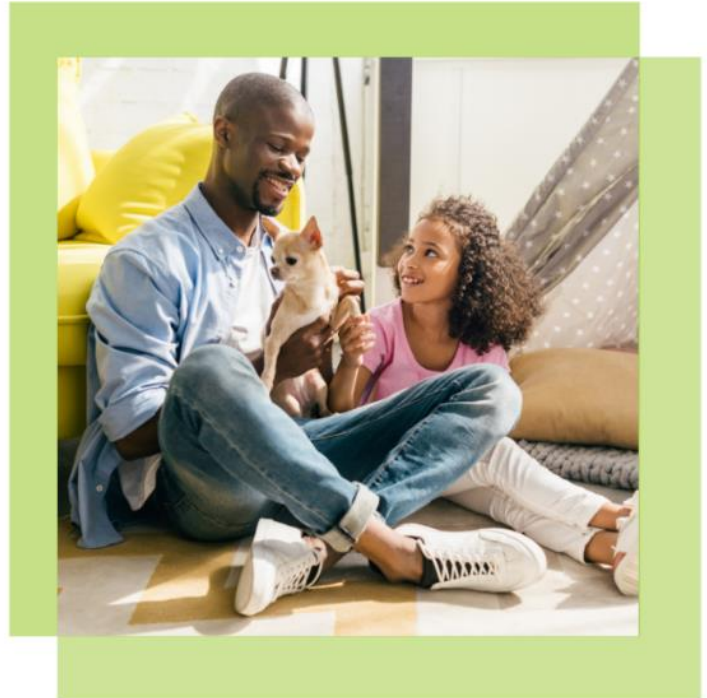


## DEI Training

- From the Staff, Animal Foster Parents, and Volunteers survey, 68% feel that everybody requires 'DEI at work' training to meaningfully engage in inclusive behaviours, discussions, and practices, 23% are neutral to the statement, and 9% disagree. From the Board Members survey, 82% feel that all Board of Directors including themselves require 'DEI at work' training to meaningfully engage in inclusive behaviours, discussions, and practices, 9% are neutral to the statement, and 9% disagree.

## Stakeholder's Role

- From the Staff, Animal Foster Parents, and Volunteers survey, 67% are excited about the opportunity to be involved with Toronto Humane Society's DEI initiative, 28% are neutral to the statement, and 5% disagree.
- An encouraging 82% of the Staff, Animal Foster Parents, and Volunteers and 91% of the board members are willing to participate in Toronto Humane Society's Workforce Census in the future. Only 2% of Staff, Foster Parents, and Volunteers are not willing to participate in the Census.



This survey was an attempt to gather where Toronto Humane Society stands at present and what the stakeholders think and believe when it comes to DEI. For a first of its kind survey at Toronto Humane Society, a high response rate for 4 out of 6 stakeholder categories is a great start. Extremely positive responses (above 80% agree) were received for some areas- **Basic Interest in DEI, DEI Training, Willingness to participate in Workforce Census.**

The preliminary analysis of the comments from the survey indicates an interest:

- For racialized representation at upper-level management
- To accommodate diversity based on disabilities (physical and mental), understand it, and educate ourselves more about it
- To include DEI on Toronto Humane Society social media, branding materials, website etc. in order to communicate with the stakeholders beyond the staff
- For DEI education through trainings and workshops at all levels for concepts like correct pronouns use, etc.



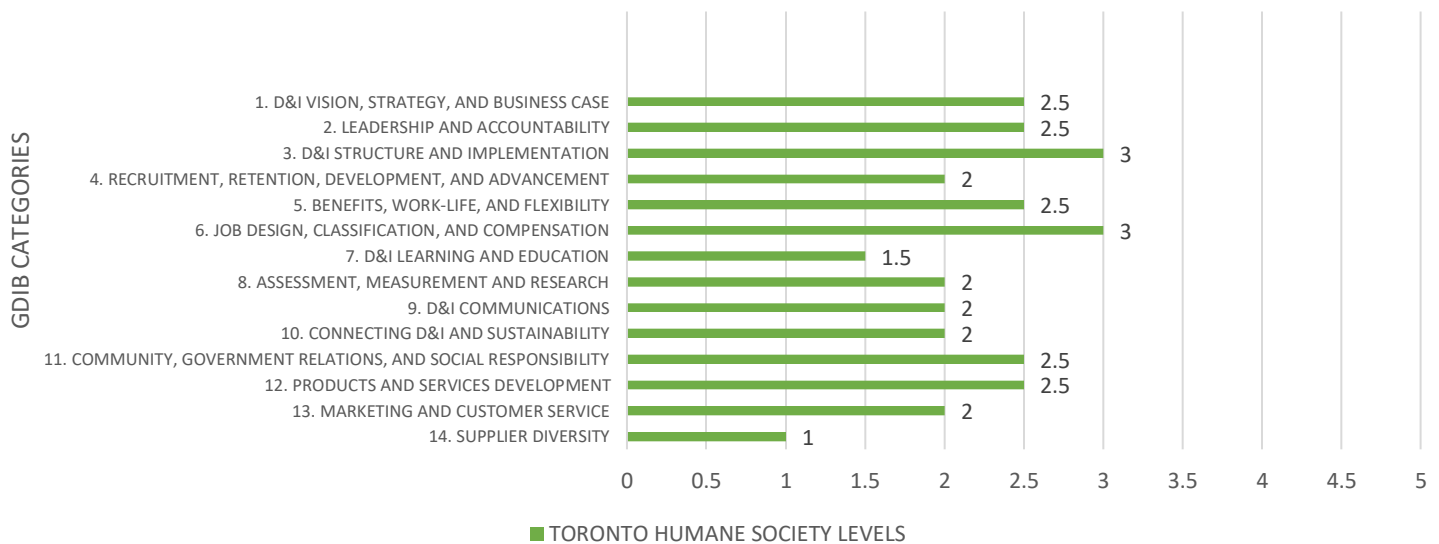


## PART 4: MATURITY ANALYSIS

Maturity Analysis in DEI means gauging how 'mature' your organization is as compared to other organizations and the DEI benchmarks. The process measures **organizational maturity** by establishing where an organization stands based on generally accepted standards of DEI. To conduct the DEI maturity analysis, Toronto Humane Society used The Centre for Global Inclusion's **Global Diversity & Inclusion Benchmarks: Standards for Organizations Around the World (GDIB)**. GDIB is a model that has **fourteen categories (shown in the graph below)** with 266 benchmarks. Each category is divided into five levels, with the benchmarks at **Level 5 considered Best Practice** and the others being as follows, **Level 4: Progressive, Level 3: Proactive, Level 2: Reactive, and Level 1: Inactive**.



**Toronto Humane Society scored itself on all fourteen categories (refer to the graph)** by engaging in a 1.5-month long benchmarking process and involving 26 stakeholders from multiple departments.



### **AVERAGE LEVEL- 2.2 (Reactive)**

Currently, Toronto Humane Society stands at an overall level of 2.2, which is **slightly above Reactive level**. This and the individual scores indicate that Toronto Humane Society has an understanding and awareness of DEI and is starting to implement DEI systematically in 50% of the areas, however for the other 50% of categories it is still operating from a compliance mindset.

According to The Centre for Global Inclusion, for most efficient DEI work, organizations need to be at least a Level 3 on most of the Category 1-3 and Category 8-10 benchmarks. **For those categories at present, we are between Level 2 and 3 and aim to move the needle to higher levels in the future.**

**This process created a scorecard of benchmarks for us and provided us with a snapshot of where we are, currently.** This Toronto Humane Society scorecard will have a dual purpose:





- ✓ It will drive Phase 3, Creating a DEI Strategy, as the GDIB gives a comprehensive idea of what the short term and long terms goals of a DEI Program could be
- ✓ It will act as a basis for re-measurement in Phase 5 (Measurement of Success of the DEI Program) and indicate if we are moving towards Global Best Practices

## PART 5: EXTERNAL ANALYSIS

This assessment for Toronto Humane Society was conducted through primary research, i.e. through conversations with animal welfare experts who are involved in DEI in the animal welfare sector beyond Toronto Humane Society and through secondary research (online) based on what organizations in the sector had published. Below is a high-level snapshot of what others in the sector are doing. *Please note, we have tried to cover as many animal shelters and veterinary organizations as possible in the scope of research and this information is based on what is publicly available; organizations might be working on DEI plan which we might not be aware of as they have not made it public.*

### Toronto/GTA

The nine animal shelters included in the research for Toronto and Greater Toronto Area do not have any publicly visible DEI action plan or statement. Three of the 23 animal shelters included in the research for Ontario have statements similar to an inclusive hiring statement on their websites, however none of these are action plans.

### Canada

One animal shelter in British Columbia is trying to do beyond the minimum. They have a land acknowledgement (which is an effort not seen in any other shelter examined across North America), Black Lives Matter Statement and, related resources. Also, another animal shelter in British Columbia came out with a statement in support of Black Lives Matter along with an action step to create a task force that will guide their DEI next steps.

### USA

Out of the 26 animal shelters examined, only nine made note of something related to Diversity, Equity, or Inclusion on their websites, most of which were a response related to the Black Lives Matter movement. Only one animal shelter examined had an action plan to combat issues in DEI.

### Vet Educational Institutions

There were strong efforts made by veterinary educational institutions in both Canada and the United States regarding tackling racism in the veterinary sector. There were statements and plans regarding how anti-racist practices will be included in the curriculum moving forward and creating working groups to further address issues. Such organizations are at the forefront of DEI work in this sector as compared to individual animal shelters.

### Blogs



An assessment of four animal welfare and charity blogs was also conducted. These blogs mention and discuss barriers racialized sections of society face in the animal welfare sector. All blogs provided resources for further learning or steps to ensure DEI was a part of an organization's strategy moving forward including reaching out to their broader communities for feedback.

## CARE

On a larger scale, Companions and Animals for Reform and Equity (CARE) was founded in 2020 to address the inequities in the animal rescue/shelter sector. CARE focuses on three divisions to address DEI issues: Research, Narrative, and Education.

## Equitable Access to Pet Care

Based on the primary research conducted, the main topic of discussion in the veterinary world has been Equitable Accessibility to Pet Care irrespective of socio- economic, ethnic, religious, and other diversities. People have started talking about how the animal welfare sector can focus on removing systemic barriers in this case and what needs to change.

## CURRENT-STATE ASSESSMENT CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS



The above assessments have given us a detailed idea of where Toronto Humane Society currently stands, how its stakeholders feel, what to aim for, and what might be some possible systemic barriers when it comes to DEI. The analysis and the process of Phase 1- Strategic Imperative and Phase 2- Current -State Assessment has clearly indicated with regards to DEI, **Toronto Humane Society's biggest strength** is the positive and engaging attitude of the majority of its stakeholders (the Staff, Volunteers, Animal Foster Parents, and Board Members). During the DEI program process, the stakeholders have shown tremendous support, positive attitude, and willingness to embrace change. **Encouraging results from the assessment** were received indicating that we are heading in the right direction and validating the fact that DEI needs to be a major focus for the organization. This exercise has also further validated that a large amount of work needs to be done in the years to

come, in order to ensure equitable access to opportunities for all, inclusive workplace environment, and true representation of the society's diversity. Below is a snapshot of the findings from all five segments of the assessment:

1. All the findings from **Part 1 (Leadership Assessment), Part 2 (Grievances and Complaints Analysis, and Part 3 (DEI Pulse Survey Results)** suggest that we have various **DEI areas to address** but the most commonly occurring are:
  - Representation at all levels and for all stakeholders
  - Focus on DEI Education, Learning, and Awareness for all stakeholders
  - Prioritising conversations around Mental Health
  - Focussing on education and support around diversity based on disabilities (physical and mental)
  - Working towards providing more equitable access to our services and understanding the needs of our communities from a DEI perspective



2. For **Part 4 (Maturity Analysis)**, according to The Centre for Global Inclusion, for most efficient DEI work, organizations need to be at least a Level 3 (Proactive) on most of the Categories 1-3 and Categories 8-10 benchmarks. This indicates that Toronto Humane Society should focus on the following areas - **DEI Vision and Mission, Leadership and Accountability, DEI Communications**, and **Assessment and Measurement**.
3. **Part 5 (External Analysis)** indicates that the DEI work in Animal Welfare has just begun and there is a long way to go. It also suggests that Toronto Humane Society is one of the few animal shelters in North America to have started the formal DEI work in the sector and hence in the future could possibly be a knowledge leader with regards to this work. The analysis further suggests that Toronto Humane Society has a lot of possible allies, especially in the veterinary educational institutions who Toronto Humane Society can learn from and work with in the future.



During this assessment, it was also noted that **assessing and analysing, in detail, what Toronto Humane Society's external stakeholders had to say about DEI** was something we had not explored yet. Toronto Humane Society is in the first few months of this work and to build a solid foundation, it is essential to focus and analyse the status quo internally first. During the process of doing that, we have also found multiple external partners and allies who we have begun to connect and brainstorm with and will continue doing so as we progress to other phases of the program. We will also, in the future create a plan to evaluate thoughts and views of the external stakeholders during the program.

### **NEXT STEPS**

In the next few months, we will collaborate with our stakeholders to work on the most exciting, challenging, and crucial stage, **Phase 3 - Creating a DEI Strategy**. The main steps in this new phase will be as follows:

- ✓ Creating a DEI Statement of Intent  
(Toronto Humane Society needs a **statement of intent which will drive its Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Program and Initiatives**. This statement will hold Toronto Humane Society accountable for years, it will help us in ensuring that the environment is moving towards being more inclusive, diverse and, welcoming. This statement will also simultaneously act as the backbone of our DEI Strategy)
- ✓ Identifying and determining Toronto Humane Society's DEI Priorities
- ✓ Creating a DEI Roadmap
- ✓ Developing a robust DEI Action Plan

More information about Phase 3 - Creating a DEI Strategy will follow as we move through that stage of the process. We are very excited to embark on this journey and are extremely hopeful that



you will keep supporting us in this endeavour! If you have further questions, comments, and ideas, you can reach out to us at [dei@torontohumanesociety.com](mailto:dei@torontohumanesociety.com).

