



**TORONTO
HUMANE
SOCIETY**

like no
other.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

Phase 3: Creating a DEI Strategy

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Land Acknowledgement

Territorial Acknowledgment¹

We would like to honour the land that we are on, which has been the site of Indigenous residence since time immemorial. Toronto Humane Society is situated upon the traditional territories of the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishinaabe, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples. Toronto is still home to many First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples from across Turtle Island. This territory is governed by The Dish with One Spoon Wampum treaty, an agreement to peaceably share and care for the land and its resources. We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit. Living and working on this territory makes all people in Toronto treaty people, including those who have come as settlers, or immigrants of this generation or generations past, as well as those who were brought forcibly as a result of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade.

Legacy of Colonialism and Reconciliation

We are mindful of broken covenants and acknowledge the cultural, economic, and psychological harm done to Indigenous communities by colonial practices, discriminatory policies, and white-supremacist institutions. We understand that land acknowledgment is an important, but only an initial step in the ongoing reconciliation process; advancing meaningful reconciliation must move beyond good intentions, superficial reforms, and symbolic gestures. Hence, we recognize our responsibility as an organization, and as individuals, in pushing for real accountability and transformative change, including implementing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Indigenous Environmental Stewardship and Human-Animal Relationship

We are committed to learning, celebrating, and paying tribute to Indigenous histories, cultures, and worldviews. As an animal welfare organization, we are particularly inspired by Indigenous environmental stewardship and the spiritual significance of human-animal relationships in Indigenous cultures. We look forward to strengthening our relationships with Indigenous communities and learning and engaging with Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers, as we strive to eradicate the root causes of animal vulnerability and build a more compassionate world.

¹Territorial Land Acknowledgements serve to recognize the original occupants of Turtle Island and honour the unique relationship that exists between Indigenous peoples and their land. Land acknowledgments are an important first step in the ongoing process of reconciliation. The DEI Team developed this statement in consultation with an Elder and other members of the Indigenous community.



DEI Definitions

Diversity

Diversity is about recognizing the unique dimensions, qualities, and characteristics we all possess. The protected grounds under the Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC) serve as essential reference points²; however, we believe that to promote diversity genuinely, we must strive to take into account the entire range of human differences based on everyone's distinctive background, identity, and lived experiences.

Equity

Equity is about promoting fair, just, and impartial treatment and access to opportunities and resources. Rather than treating everyone the same, equity is about levelling the playing field by identifying and addressing systemic barriers and discrimination at the individual, interpersonal, and organizational levels.

Inclusion

Inclusion is about building and sustaining a nurturing and safe environment where all people can bring their full self to work and reach their full potential. Authentic inclusion requires real accountability and meaningful change.



“Inclusion is not bringing people into what already exists; it is making a new space, a better space for everyone.”

Dr. George Dei (2006)³

² The OHRC prohibits discrimination based on the following protected grounds: Age; Ancestry, colour, race; Citizenship; Ethnic origin; Place of Origin; Creed; Disability; Family status; Marital status (including single status); Gender identity, gender expression; Record of offences (in employment only); Sex (including pregnancy and breastfeeding); and Sexual orientation.

³ “Dei, G.S.N. (2006). Meeting equity fair and square. Keynote address to the Leadership Conference of the Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario, held on September 28, 2006, in Mississauga, Ontario”



Background

In July 2020, Toronto Humane Society launched a formal Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Program. The Director, People & Culture, a member of the Executive Leadership Team, was assigned to lead DEI at Toronto Humane Society. Additionally, a dedicated DEI member of staff was hired to oversee the implementation of the DEI program. In addition, the organization has committed to allocating the necessary funds, resources, and time required to allow all members of our workforce to engage and participate in DEI-based activities and initiatives.

Inspired by Michael Bach's *Birds of All Feathers: Doing Diversity and Inclusion Right*, a Six-Phase Program was envisioned and implemented.

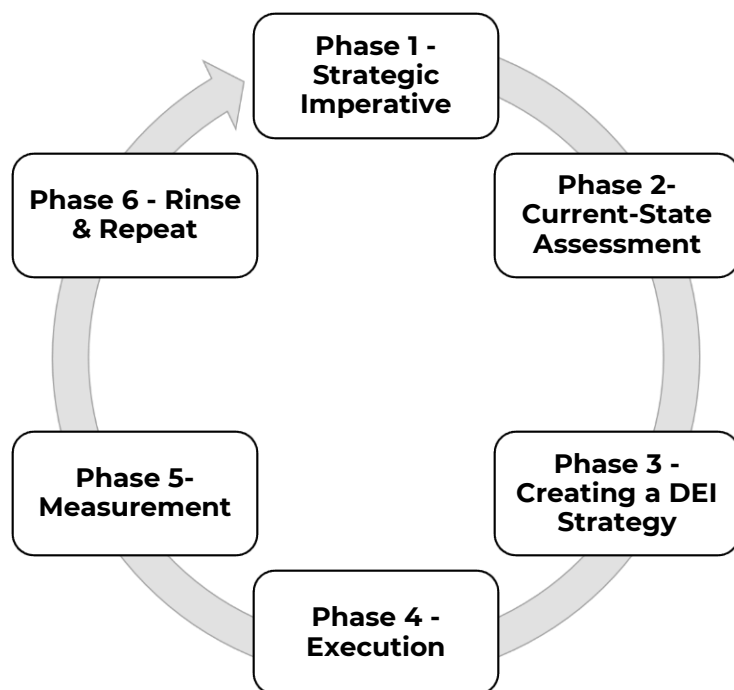


Figure 1: The Six Phases of Toronto Humane Society's DEI Program

In the first phase, the DEI Team created a **Strategic Imperative** to answer, 'Why is it important for our organization to focus on DEI?'

In the second phase of the program, **Current State Assessment**, the DEI team examined where Toronto Humane Society stands in terms of DEI, what our stakeholders' views on DEI are, and what the possible benchmarks for our DEI program could be.

The third phase, **Creating a DEI Strategy**, was initiated in October 2021. Building on the work done in the previous two phases, the DEI team has now developed Toronto Humane Society's first DEI Strategy.



DEI Strategic Plan

Our DEI Strategic Plan serves to:

- Demonstrate our commitment to building an inclusive, equitable, and diverse organization
- Describe Toronto Humane Society's DEI intent, approach, and goals
- Analyze how DEI fits within our organization's mission, vision, values, and strategic goals.

In addition to serving as a blueprint for our DEI program and initiatives, the strategic plan will hold us accountable for achieving our DEI mission and goals in years to come.

The core elements of the strategic plan are:

- DEI Statement of Intent
- DEI Approach
- Aligning DEI work with Toronto Humane Society Values
- Framework: the GDEIB Model
- DEI Action Plan

DEI Statement of Intent⁴

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is Essential for a Just and Humane Society

Moving Beyond Doing Nothing

At Toronto Humane Society, we believe change is long overdue. As a humane society that wants to build a more compassionate world, silence and indifference over racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, classism, and other forms of oppression are against the very foundation of our organization. We admit that in the past we did not value all people the way we should have, and we must do better. We are committed to lead by example and push for real change in our organization.

Why We Care About Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Toronto Humane Society

We understand that creating a culture of inclusion and belonging--where people's unique backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives are valued, respected, and seen as an asset--helps us serve our community and animals better. Improving the lives of animals is tied to the well-being of people and the protection of our shared environment. A focus on DEI will help us address access to care challenges, strengthen the human-animal bond, and build a more caring society.

Understanding and Overcoming Challenges

Organizational and individual change is challenging and messy work. Despite this, we are committed to following through. We will not settle for quick fixes that do not make a real difference. Instead, we will strive to push for long-term, meaningful change.

⁴ To develop this statement, the DEI team created its first DEI Task Force in October 2021. The Task Force was comprised of 8 members (7 staff members from various departments and 1 volunteer) belonging to diverse backgrounds and identities. The 5 bi-weekly meetings served as a collaborative space where we conducted discussions, brainstorming sessions, and other activities that helped us draft and refine multiple versions of our statement. This final statement was approved by the Task Force as well as the Executive Leadership Team.



DEI Approach

- **Build a diverse workforce** that is representative of the community we serve
- **Foster a culture of inclusion and belonging** for all members of our Toronto Humane Society community, namely, staff, volunteers, foster parents, board members, clients, and donors.
- **Embed DEI framework** within all policies, programs, practices, and services.

Aligning DEI work with Toronto Humane Society Values

Toronto Humane Society Values	Alignment with DEI Strategy
Care	As a humane society, care is one of our core values. We will uphold this principle by valuing the dignity of each individual and standing up against systemic injustices.
Integrity	We are committed to sharing regular updates about our progress and welcoming feedback from all members of our Toronto Humane Society community. We will strive to take ownership of our mistakes and turn setbacks into valuable opportunities for self-reflection.
Partnership	DEI work is fundamentally collaborative, and we aim to build and sustain relationships with a diverse group of community-based organizations that advocate for social justice, equity, and inclusion.
Hope	On our DEI journey, we are bound to face challenges and failures. Yet, we are optimistic that our passion, determination, and hard work will bring systemic change, helping us advance our DEI strategy.
Leadership	With our concentrated intervention and focus on DEI, we intend to emerge as a leading centre for DEI-based learning and sharing, an organization that inspires other animal welfare shelters to recognize the importance of DEI, giving them and us the opportunity to collaborate, grow, and evolve together.



Framework: the GDEIB model

In phase 2, Toronto Humane Society used **The Centre for Global Inclusion's Global Diversity Equity & Inclusion Benchmarks (GDEIB)** to conduct a DEI maturity analysis. GDEIB provides a globally recognized set of standards which help organizations to realize the integrated scope of their DEI practices, assess the current state of DEI, formulate a strategy, and most importantly, measure progress in promoting diversity and fostering inclusion. This benchmarking tool is available for organizations to use, free of cost, with written permission from The Centre for Global Inclusion, which Toronto Humane Society obtained on December 2, 2020.



Figure 2: The Centre for Global Inclusion's Global Diversity Equity & Inclusion Benchmarks (GDEIB) model.

The GDEIB model categorizes DEI work into four main groups:

- 1. Foundation: Drive the Strategy**
- 2. Internal: Attract and Retain People**
- 3. Bridging: Align and Connect**
- 4. External: Listen and Serve Society**

These four groups consist of fifteen distinct categories with 275 benchmarks at five different maturity levels. We will use the GDEIB benchmarking tool to identify our DEI priorities and develop our time-bound action plans. All action items in each subsequent plan will be within the purview of the four main groups of the GDEIB model.

Aligning the GDEIB framework with the specific goals, scope, and layout of our DEI program will also streamline the process of measuring our growth, as per GDEIB's global standards. While executing our strategy, we will continue to evaluate the effectiveness of our initiatives and gauge our overall DEI progress.



DEI Action Plan

An integral part of Toronto Humane Society’s DEI program is a DEI Action Plan. This action plan will be constantly changing and evolving as items are completed and new action items are created. Below is a broad overview of our first Action Plan.

DEI Action Plan Highlights (2022-2025)

To determine the priorities for our first action plan, we examined the conclusions drawn from our DEI Current State Assessment (CSA). The CSA comprised of one-on-one interviews with members of the executive leadership team, an organization-wide DEI pulse survey, literature reviews, maturity analysis, and grievances and complaints analysis. Review of recurring themes, ideas, and topics in the CSA findings helped us identify our main areas of focus within the realm of the 15 GDEIB categories.



GDEIB Elements*	Toronto Humane Society Current Priorities
<p>Group 1: Foundational: Drive the Strategy</p> <p>Category I: Vision Category II: Leadership Category III: Structure</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish an organization-wide DEI Council 2. Embed DEI competencies in leadership job descriptions, performance evaluations and promotion tools. 3. Conduct DEI-based coaching specifically for senior leadership and the Board of Directors. 4. Ensure that DEI lens is applied to all Toronto Humane Society initiatives, programs, and policies. 5. Incorporate DEI into planning in every department
<p>Group 2: Internal: Attract and Retain People</p> <p>Category IV: Recruitment Category V: Advancement Category VI: Benefits and Flexibility Category VII: Compensation</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a DEI policy 2. Develop a recruitment policy 3. Complete an employment systems review (ESR) of policies, practices, and employee experiences 4. Review total compensation policies and practices to ensure pay equity compliance and fairness. 5. Plan and implement the next steps based on the recommendations and findings from ESR 6. Develop an outreach strategy to expand hiring and talent pool 7. Develop initiatives centered on supporting professional development and career advancement for all employees 8. Develop initiatives focused on promoting mental health in the workplace



<p>Group 3: Bridging: Align and Connect</p> <p>Category VIII: Assessment Category IX: Communications Category X: Learning Category XI: Sustainability</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct workforce census 2. Promote DEI in external and internal communication 3. Ensure internal and external communications are accessible 4. Revitalize DEI webpage for improved access, content, and visibility 5. Create a DEI learning library 6. Organize facilitated learning programs that balance foundational learning and personal exploration of DEI principles 7. Complete GDEIB benchmark assessment to measure the advancement of DEI Strategy
<p>Group 4: External: Listen to and Serve Society</p> <p>Category XII: Community Category XIII: Services and Products Category XIV: Marketing and Customer Service Category XV: Responsible Sourcing</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a community outreach strategy to engage with underrepresented communities 2. Advance meaningful reconciliation by strengthening our relationship with Indigenous communities and engaging with Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers

*Our initial areas of focus are in red text.

Conclusion

The steps taken to date have been to create a foundation for the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Program at Toronto Humane Society. With this foundation now in place, the next steps are to create and implement our first action plan (Phase 4), track and measure our progress (Phase 5), and implement Phase 6 - “Rinse and Repeat”. This phase requires a regular review of the Strategic Imperative, Current State Assessment, DEI Strategy, Action Plan, and Measurement until true diversity, equity, and inclusion are achieved.

Next Steps

- ✓ Establish an organization-wide DEI Council
- ✓ Devise detailed SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-Bound) goals for each action item above
- ✓ Implement the Action Plan and monitor progress

If you have further questions, comments, and ideas, you can reach out to us at dei@torontohumanesociety.com.

