

## ANTI-RACISM STRATEGY UPDATE

### Recommendation

That the June 10, 2025, Office of the City Manager report OCM02612, be received for information.

<b>Requested Action</b>	Information only		
<b>ConnectEdmonton's Guiding Principle</b>	<b>ConnectEdmonton Strategic Goals</b>		
<b>CONNECTED</b> This unifies our work to achieve our strategic goals.	<b>Healthy City</b>		
<b>City Plan Values</b>	BELONG. LIVE. THRIVE. ACCESS.		
<b>City Plan Big City Move(s)</b>	Inclusive and compassionate	<b>Relationship to Council's Strategic Priorities</b>	Community safety and well-being
<b>Corporate Business Plan</b>	Transforming for the future		
<b>Council Policy, Program or Project Relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anti-Racism Strategy</li> <li>• Community Safety and Well-being Strategy</li> <li>• Indigenous Framework</li> <li>• Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Municipal Response Plan</li> <li>• Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit Action Plan</li> <li>• City of Edmonton's Art of Inclusion Framework</li> </ul>		
<b>Related Council Discussions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• June 10/11, 2025, City Council, Office of the City Manager report OCM03051, Independent Anti-Racism Body Analysis and Options</li> <li>• November 7, 2023, City Council, Office of the City Manager report OCM02002, Anti-Racism Strategy Implementation Update</li> <li>• February 22, 2022, Community Services report CS00872, Anti-Racism Strategy</li> <li>• November 8, 2021 Community Services report CS00793, 2021 Anti-racism Grant Program Recommendations</li> <li>• October 28, 2022 Community Services report CS01365, 2022 Anti-racism Grants Program Recommendations</li> <li>• February 7, 2023 Community Services report CS01550, Anti-Racism Community Safety Fund Proposal Recommendation</li> </ul>		

### Executive Summary

- The City of Edmonton's Anti-Racism Strategy (2022) consisted of three priority actions: 1) the creation of an Independent Anti-Racism Body, 2) the establishment of an internal High Level Anti-Racism Office, and 3) operational and capacity building funding. Administration is reporting significant completion on two of these three actions.
- An update on the Independent Anti-Racism Body is provided in the June 10/11, 2025 Office of the City Manager Report OCM003051. In that report, City Council is being provided with three options to advance the desired outcomes of an Independent Anti-Racism Body: 1) A non-profit organization, 2) a collaborative model, and 3) a council advisory board or committee.
- The High Level Office for Reconciliation and Anti-Racism is advancing a two-year Corporate Anti-Racism Action Plan, enabling Administration to address 70 recommendations from Indigenous and racialized communities, including the Anti-Black Racism Action Plan.
  - a. The High Level Office manages the Civic Youth Fellowship, which is entering its third year with a cohort of 18 diverse interns joining the offices of City Councillors and Administration.
- From 2021 to 2024, over \$4.4 million was allocated to anti-racism initiatives led by the community. The Anti-Racism Grant Program is projected to distribute an additional \$1.5 million in each of 2025 and 2026.

### REPORT

On February 22, 2022, the Anti-Racism Strategy was approved by City Council, Community Services report CS00872. The Anti-Racism Strategy outlined three key priorities for Administration, with the wording as follows:

1. **Independent Anti-Racism Body:** A community-driven, equitably resourced body that is independent from other city bodies (such as City of Edmonton Administration, Edmonton Police Service, school boards and districts, etc.) will be established to oversee anti-racism in Edmonton and have the ability to stimulate reflection on and challenge systemic racism at all levels in Edmonton.
2. **High Level Office:** A new anti-racism organization within Administration will be created to challenge racism within the City of Edmonton corporation, including challenging systemic racism, developing a culture of anti-racism, embedding anti-racist action into all processes within Administration, and acting as a collaborative partner with the Independent Anti-Racism Body to co-create a long-term Anti-Racism Strategy and Plan for Edmonton.
3. **Core Operational and Capacity-Building Funding:** To strengthen grassroots, Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC)-led organizations and support them to be more effective with work that empowers BIPOC communities, influences the greater Edmonton culture, and is linked to long-term goals in an Anti-Racism Strategy and Plan for Edmonton; the City will establish funding for core operations, capacity-building and other needs identified

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through collaborative decision making. The Strategy also calls for sustained anti-racism funding to community organizations, on an equitable basis.

This report provides an update on the Strategy and other initiatives that are supporting the City of Edmonton's anti-racism efforts.

### Independent Anti-Racism Body

Two in-depth exploratory projects were undertaken to define options for an Independent Anti-Racism Body:

1. A community-led Advisory Panel that conducted research, analysis and engagement to create a recommendation for Administration.
2. The Mayor's Office, alongside Administration and representatives from community, participated in the Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative (Collaboration Track), which is an international program designed to help growing cities address complex challenges.

City Council is being provided with three options to advance the desired outcomes of an Anti-Racism Body: 1) establishing a non-profit organization, 2) implementing a collaborative model, and 3) forming a council advisory board or committee. Each option aims to advance the intended goals of the Anti-Racism Strategy.

A comprehensive update on the Independent Anti-Racism Body is provided in the June 10/11, 2025 Office of the City Manager Report OCM003051, Independent Anti-Racism Body Analysis and Options.

### High Level Office for Reconciliation and Anti-Racism

In November 2023, City Council approved ongoing funding for a new High Level Office for Reconciliation and Anti-Racism within the City Manager's Office. Funding from the Fall 2023 Supplemental Operating Budget Adjustment facilitated the expansion of the Anti-Racism Strategy initiative from a temporary two-person project team to a permanent corporate Office of seven professional staff. This transformation was completed by November 2024. The Office now possesses the capacity for project management, data collection and analysis, community engagement and wayfinding, staff support and corporate collaboration leadership.

The work of the High Level Office challenges and enables Administration to embed reconciliation and anti-racism into strategies, service planning and delivery, ensuring the City effectively serves a diverse future population of two million people. Building upon the City's Art of Inclusion Framework<sup>1</sup>, the High Level Office provides a range of reconciliation and anti-racism services to Administration:

1. Advising on integrating anti-racism and reconciliation into City priorities such as UNESCO Learning Cities, Climate Change, Indigenous Framework, Industrial Action and Violence Prevention.
2. Connecting Administration with diverse perspectives through town halls, Indigenous engagement, policy outreach and supporting communities to navigate City systems.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.edmonton.ca/sites/default/files/public-files/assets/DI\\_ArtofInclusion\\_Final.pdf](https://www.edmonton.ca/sites/default/files/public-files/assets/DI_ArtofInclusion_Final.pdf)

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3. Collaborating across the organization and with community partners on anti-racism and TRC-related projects (e.g., Urban Reserves, Lighthouse Murals, Duty to Consult Training, Ceremonial Firepit, Multicultural Celebrations, Government Centre Renaming, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives Gathering, Economic Reconciliation and Indigenous Procurement).
4. Enhancing capacity and sharing best practices through relationship building, process reviews, evaluation assistance and strategic planning.
5. Leading high-impact projects such as the Independent Anti-Racism Body, Anti-Black Racism Action Plan, Truth and Reconciliation Commission Municipal Response Plan, Civic Youth Fellowship, and National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

The High Level Office is responsible for guiding the corporation in meeting Administration's Seven Commitments to Anti-racist Systemic Change:

1. Joint planning and accountability with Indigenous and racialized communities.
2. Engaging Indigenous and racialized perspectives in service planning and delivery.
3. Equitably awarding City grants to Indigenous and racialized organizations.
4. Increasing diversity within the City to reflect Edmonton's population.
5. Improving access to City facilities for equity-deserving people.
6. Advancing education on truth, reconciliation, anti-racism and multiculturalism.
7. Fostering vibrant Indigenous and diverse cultural representation.

To develop these corporate commitments, the High Level Office undertook a rigorous and systematic review of the Anti-Black Racism Action Plan<sup>2</sup> and previous feedback from communities including the Truth and Reconciliation Commission 94 Calls to Action, the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls 231 Calls for Justice, advice from Indigenous Communities, the Safer for All Report<sup>3</sup>, testimony delivered by the Muslim Community to the Senate of Canada<sup>4</sup> and Anti-Racism Strategy Thought Leaders Comments (February 14, 2022 Community Services Report CS00872, Attachment 7).

The High Level Office worked in close collaboration with a wide array of City departments and branches, spanning various sectors and areas of expertise, throughout the entirety of 2023 and extending into 2024 to analyze over 300 recommendations put forth by diverse Indigenous and racialized communities over the past two decades. The review revealed a significant alignment of concerns across Black, Indigenous and other racialized communities, which underscored the need for a unified strategy to address anti-racism across the City.

This integrated process aimed to move beyond surface-level solutions, and helped to identify key structural drivers and systemic barriers that were at the root cause of inequality.

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<sup>2</sup>

<https://www.edmonton.ca/sites/default/files/public-files/EdmontonAnti-BlackRacismActionPlan.pdf?cb=1713540576>

<sup>3</sup>

[https://www.edmonton.ca/sites/default/files/public-files/SaferForAll-CSWBTaskForce-Report-March30\\_2021.pdf?cb=1725129166](https://www.edmonton.ca/sites/default/files/public-files/SaferForAll-CSWBTaskForce-Report-March30_2021.pdf?cb=1725129166)

<sup>4</sup> <https://sencanada.ca/en/info-page/parl-44-1/ridr-islamophobia/>

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### Corporate Anti-Racism Action Plan

The Seven Commitments to Anti-racist Systemic Change are supported by a two-year, department-led Corporate Anti-Racism Action Plan, which is shared in Attachment 1. The Action Plan includes 70 anti-racism workstreams directly originating from public input.

The Action Plan advances many long-standing public recommendations that require a coordinated corporate approach to implement. These include:

- Making City procurement more equitable;
- Improving employment equity within the City;
- Managing race-disaggregated data collection and use; and
- Ensuring fair access to City services, properties and resources.

Some of the actions lay the groundwork for future initiatives (e.g., disaggregated data helps to inform a plan for equity in granting), while others involve new actions within department business plans (e.g., equity in recreation programming and grants to combat anti-Black racism).

The Action Plan also recognizes that Administration has made substantive progress on many recommendations, and stresses the need for reporting back to the public on completed work. Departments will use a variety of communications tactics to provide community updates on activities such as affordable housing, economic action plans, and equitable transit planning and delivery. Progress reports on the Corporate Anti-Racism Action Plan are being integrated within Community Safety and Well-being Strategy regular reporting and public dashboards.

### Grants and Funding

The Anti-Racism Grant Program<sup>5</sup> remains active with the 2025 grant application period beginning this summer and closing in mid-September. Community volunteers will continue to participate in the application review and decision process. The \$1.5 million in grants for anti-racism initiatives will be distributed to community-based projects before the year concludes.

Year	# of grants awarded	Total funding awarded	Grant Programs (Budget)
2021	16 organizations	\$213,591	ARAC Grant Program (\$300K)
2022	12 organizations 5 organizations	\$1,384,054	ARAC Grant Program (\$300K) Anti-Racism Community Safety Fund (ARCSF) (\$1.174 million)
2023	54 organizations	\$1,500,000	Anti-Racism Grant Program (\$1.5 million)
2024	53 organizations	\$1,395,000	Anti-Racism Grant Program (\$1.5 million)

Established in 2021 with a \$300,000 allocation, the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee (ARAC) grant program was followed in 2022 by a one-time addition of \$1.174 million for the Anti-Racism Community Safety Fund (ARCSF). In 2023, City Council approved multi-year funding of \$1.2 million per year for the Anti-Racism Grant Program from 2023 to 2026 using Community Safety and Well-Being funding. This has been combined with the \$300,000 in previously approved ongoing

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.edmonton.ca/programs\\_services/funding\\_grants/anti-racism-grants-program](https://www.edmonton.ca/programs_services/funding_grants/anti-racism-grants-program)

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tax levy funding to support anti-racism, to provide total grant funding of \$1.5 million through to 2026. Instead of developing a new initiative, Administration expanded the original ARAC grant framework to distribute funds through these grant streams:

- Community Activation Grants (up to \$15,000 each, total of \$325,000 in funds available);
- Anti-Racism Capacity Building/Innovation Grants (up to \$30,000 each, total of \$400,000 in funds available);
- Community Participatory Action Research Grants (up to \$40,000 each, total of \$320,000 in funds available); and
- Shifting the Perspective Grants (up to \$50,000 each, total of \$350,000 in funds available).

### Civic Youth Fellowship (Internship)

The City of Edmonton was the second municipality to work with the Canadian Race Relations Foundation to implement the Civic Youth Fellowship, following a successful pilot in Toronto. Edmonton collaborated with local organizations to create its own approach to the internship. Initially piloted in Council Offices in 2023, the program expanded in 2024 and 2025 to offer internships within City Administration. The internship program encourages youth from diverse backgrounds to gain leadership, grow their professional network, learn new skills in the public sector and experience meaningful mentorship and career development opportunities.

The 2024 and 2025 Civic Youth Fellowship<sup>6</sup> applicants doubled from the pilot year, with most of the growth attributed to word of mouth.

Year	# of applicants	# of placements
2023	70	13
2024*	140	19
2025	147	18

\* 2024 was the first year the program expanded to Administration

Building on a successful initial two years, the City has secured sustainable funding from Canadian Race Relations Foundation for the next five years (2025-2029), as well as a long-term commitment from IslamicFamily to continue partnering on the program. This funding will support a minimum of ten Council positions annually. Additionally, as part of the Corporate Anti-Racism Action Plan, Administration is committed to placing several youth within City departments each year, based on operational feasibility.

To assess the program's impact and facilitate ongoing improvements, Administration has developed a comprehensive evaluation plan. The evaluation will seek feedback that can shift the program in real time, and continue to evolve the program over the upcoming years to best meet the needs of community. As a result of evaluation efforts in the past, Administration has made changes to the length of the program (eight weeks to ten weeks), adjusted the interns learning calendar, provided new or different information to the supervisors, and provided additional support for the youth during their tenure at the City. This will continue through interviewing current participants and past interns to track their progress. Through partner relationships and

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<sup>6</sup> [www.edmonton.ca/civicyouthinternship](http://www.edmonton.ca/civicyouthinternship)

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alumni connections, it is known that many former program participants are now employed part-time (often while completing their education), full-time, and/or volunteer with local government or community organizations.

### Anti-Black Racism Action Plan

The Anti-Black Racism Action Plan<sup>7</sup> shares over 130 recommendations to combat anti-Black racism in Edmonton.

- Forty three recommendations are directly relevant to other orders of government (e.g. policing, housing and education) or External Civic Agencies (e.g. arts, culture and sports), and will be advanced through advocacy plans jointly developed with community partners.
- While almost 50 recommendations are already part of City business plans (e.g. open space planning, zoning, transit safety), there is an opportunity to strengthen outcomes for Black communities through improved communications, GBA+ and engagement.
- Thirty eight recommendations involve new activities for City business areas (e.g. employment equity, race-based data and recreation).

During follow-up consultations, Black leaders directed the City to focus on four priorities: hiring equity, communications, supporting and enhancing the Black business community and City procurement.

The Corporate Anti-Racism Action Plan addresses all four priorities and includes many of the specific recommendations made by Black communities.

The High Level Office is advancing the Anti-Black Racism Action Plan's recommendations on Municipal Leadership, Commitment, Transparency and Accountability. At a Community Conversation on April 5, 2025, leaders clarified that Black communities need meaningful structures to hold government officials accountable for their actions, and that this requires the power and influence of a Council mandated Civic Agency such as a Council Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee could:

- Provide information, research or otherwise to City Council on relevant topics
- Advise City Council on anti-Black racism approaches and considerations, and
- Monitor progress of the Anti-Black Racism Action Plan.

The model could be similar to City Council's Anti-Racism Advisory Committee (ARAC), but be dedicated to combatting anti-Black racism. Creating a new Council Advisory Committee would involve public engagement on the role and composition of the Committee, a new Bylaw and adhering to the requirements of the *Municipal Government Act*. Committee appointments, remuneration, and administrative support would follow the same processes as other Civic Agencies.

The Advisory Committee would also need to navigate some of the same challenges as ARAC:

- Required livestreaming and traditional government processes;

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<https://www.edmonton.ca/sites/default/files/public-files/EdmontonAnti-BlackRacismActionPlan.pdf?cb=1713540576>

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- Ensuring emotional and psychological safety of the volunteers, and supporting City staff; and
- Advisory Committees cannot do advocacy (outside of directly to Council).

As a result of this request to create an Advisory Committee, this model is also presented for City Council's consideration on the Independent Anti-Racism Body as outlined in the June 10/11 Office of the City Manager Report OCM03051, Independent Anti-Racism Body Analysis and Options.

To ensure that the Corporate Anti-Racism Action Plan continues to meet the specific needs of Black communities, a public-facing dashboard will be launched this summer. A current progress report is provided in Attachment 2. This approach mirrors how the City tracks progress on addressing concerns identified by Indigenous communities.

### **Community Insight**

The Anti-Racism Strategy was developed through extensive consultation with diverse Edmontonians whose feedback resulted in the deliverables identified in the strategy. Edmonton's diverse ethnocultural and Indigenous people want to clearly understand the City's commitments and see positive actionable follow up. It was in response to this public request that Administration identified the Seven Commitments to Anti-racist Systemic Change and accompanying Corporate Anti-Racism Action Plan, which were drawn directly from historical community feedback, reports and recommendations.

Administration's anti-racist transformation is built upon continuous conversations with diverse ethnocultural and Indigenous communities, and implementing their solutions to respond to, and ultimately, eliminate racism in Edmonton. Community inputs and partnerships guide the Civic Youth Fellowship, City celebrations (for example, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, Indigenous History Month, Iftar, Diwali and Black History Month), and implementation of the Anti-Black Racism Action Plan.

Anti-racism work by its very definition is driven by the needs and will of the public, and Administration is committed to a continuous feedback process as implementation continues.

### **GBA+**

Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) is essential for progressing anti-racism initiatives in the city. Its comprehensive methodology improves the City's capacity to recognize and understand the varied needs of different community groups.

Administration is using intersectionality in the implementation of the Anti-Racism Strategy and the Corporate Anti-Racism Action Plan and will continue to assess how factors such as gender, race and socioeconomic standing influence experiences and service accessibility. To improve the implementation of the Action Plan, Administration will actively solicit input from a diverse group of interest holders, including community members, City employees and relevant committees.

### **Environment and Climate Review**

This report was reviewed for environment and climate risks. Based on the review completed, no significant interactions with the City's environmental and climate goals were identified within the scope of this report. Current anti-racism efforts focus on the intersectionality of marginalized

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communities, racism and climate change, though specific actions in this area are not yet defined. Administration will continue researching best practices to better understand and address this interconnection.

### **Attachments**

1. Corporate Anti-Racism Action Plan
2. Advancing Recommendations to Combat Anti-Black Racism