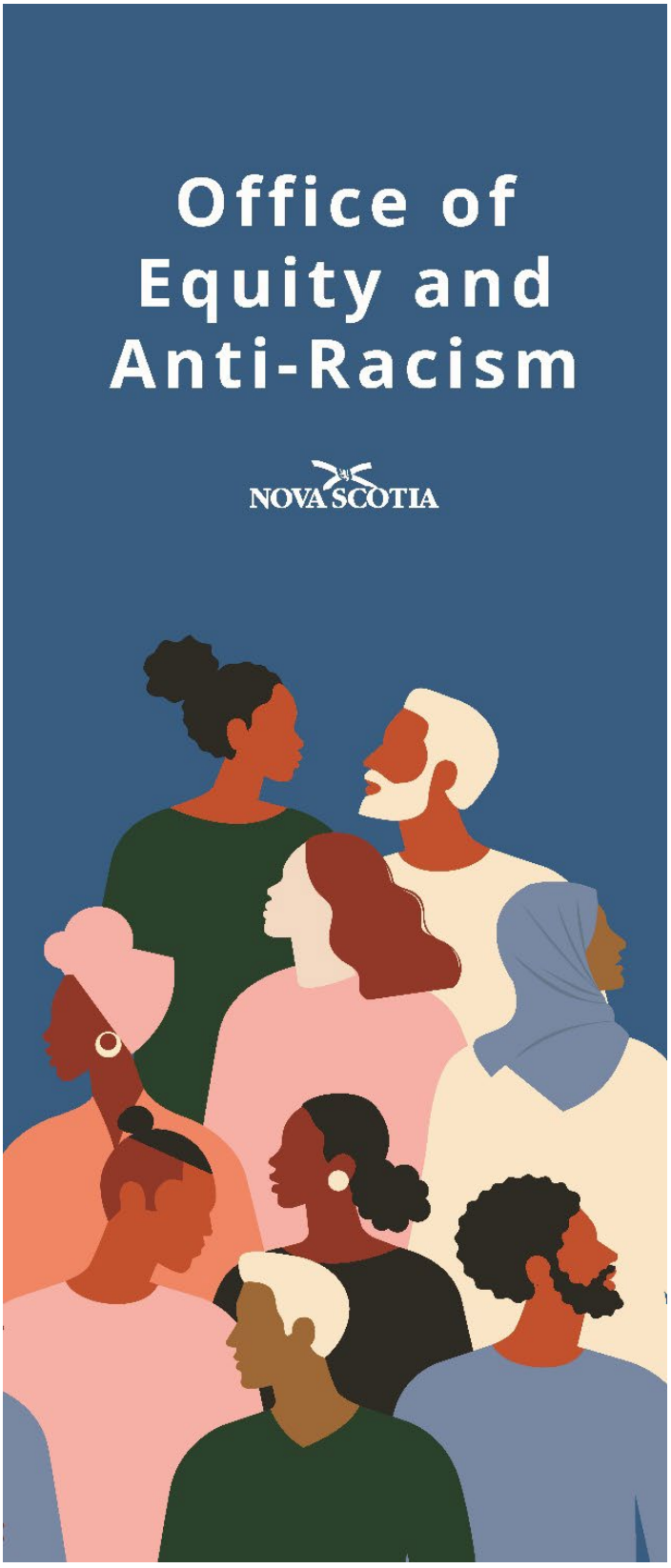


DISMANTLING RACISM AND HATE ACT REPORT 2024/25

Introduction

Under the *Dismantling Racism and Hate Act* (DRHA), the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism (OEA) is tasked with reporting annually, by July 31, on progress government is making toward the objective of achieving equity and anti-racism.

Two annual reports have been published since the passing of the Act in 2022. They have reported on government-wide progress with respect to key deliverables in the Act. This 2024/25 annual report reflects a change in OEA's organizational structure and mandate. In July 2024, OEA expanded with the addition of the Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility (EDIA) team, which moved from the Public Service Commission (PSC).

With these two teams coming together, OEA has a comprehensive mandate to identify and address systemic hate, inequity and racism and promote equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility provincially and within government.

As a result of this change, annual reporting to the Legislature on progress under the *Dismantling Racism and Hate Act* will now include reporting on promoting EDIA within the public service, which was formerly contained in the 'Moving Toward Equity' Report tabled in the Legislature annually.

This year's annual report is broken into four sections based on the focus areas in the Act:

A. Stronger Policies & Improved Conditions to Support Equity and Anti-Racism Efforts
B. Better and Sustained Engagement
C. Better Public Reporting
D. Leadership and Commitment within the Public Service

A. Stronger Policies & Improved Conditions to Support Equity and Anti-Racism Efforts

Government is committed to identifying and addressing systemic hate, inequity and racism in our policies and programs. Two key pieces of work that highlight how we are strengthening equity and anti-racism work across government are the **Equity and Anti-Racism Strategy** and OEA's work with **Prescribed Public Sector Bodies**, that include municipalities and villages.

Equity and Anti-Racism Strategy

Government released the provincial Equity and Anti-Racism Strategy (from hereon in referred to "the strategy") on July 6, 2023. The strategy highlights efforts across government to identify and address systemic hate, inequity and racism. It also speaks to how government will work with community organizations, public sector bodies and municipalities and villages to ensure this work is supported and reflected across all regions of the province.

The below table highlights progress made in 2024/25. A more detailed progress update on the strategy is available on our website at Office of Equity and Anti-Racism Engagement Page.

2SLGBTQIA+ Action Plan – OEA

Through the strategy, OEA was assigned to lead government's work with the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. This includes working with the community to identify and address their needs and develop a 2SLGBTQIA+ Action Plan. Office staff engaged with community-based organizations throughout the province in 2024 to inform the plan. A What We Heard report will be released in 2025. Staff are working with departments and offices across government to finalize the development of the action plan.

Equity Impact Assessment (EIA) Tool and Public Engagement Guidebook (PEG) – OEA

In 2024/25, OEA launched the EIA and PEG resources. More than a dozen departments have now received training on these resources and have begun applying them to ensure policies and engagement efforts meaningfully address systemic inequities.

Examples of their use:

- The Nova Scotia Provincial Housing Agency applied the EIA to revise its Overhousing Policy in consultation with affected communities, explicitly acknowledging historical harms such as Africville displacement and residential school trauma.
- The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) used the EIA to guide curriculum development.
- Opportunities and Social Development (OSD) incorporated PEG principles into public outreach events grounded in Africentric and anti-racism approaches.

Mi'kmaw Language Revitalization Strategy – Office of L'Nu Affairs (OLA)

The Mi'kmaw language Revitalization Strategy was approved by the provincial government and the Mi'kmaw community in March 2025. The strategy, jointly developed by the Province and Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey, will guide efforts to preserve, promote and protect the Mi'kmaw language for generations to come. The province has committed $1.3 million annually to advance initiatives under the Strategy.

Partner with Delmore Buddy Daye Learning Institute (DBDLI) to address and prevent further harm and trauma from systemic barriers in the education system – Early Education and Childhood Development (EECD)

Two major partnership initiatives between EECD and DBDLI were implemented this year:

1. The Afrocentric B.Ed. cohort started in partnership with DBDLI and Acadia University. This initiative will add 13 new African Nova Scotian teachers to the public education system. Participants will complete the program in 2027/28.
2. A new African Nova Scotian resource is currently being developed in partnership with DBDLI. The resources will be used to support the infusion of more African Nova Scotian content within the African Canadian Studies 11 course. The new course will be piloted in September 2025/26.

The Department of Environment and Climate Change, through the *Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act* and the Nova Scotia Climate Change Action Plan provides support to African Nova Scotian, and Mi'kmaq communities in their efforts to respond to their climate change priorities through programs like:

- **$1.8 million in the ENRICH Project** – the Environmental Noxiousness, Racial Inequities and Community Health Project (ENRICH) – to support 25 African Nova Scotian communities in developing climate resilience plans. This funding supports climate change action and community-based solutions in equity-seeking communities. ENRICH also received $250,000 in 2023 to prepare climate preparedness plans for 12 communities; and
- **Over $800,000 in funding to the Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources (UINR) to support Mi'kmaq-led climate action rooted in Indigenous knowledge and community priorities.** The funding will help develop a climate action plan for five Mi'kmaw communities in Cape Breton, hire dedicated staff, create bilingual educational materials, and establish a culturally relevant climate monitoring program. This investment strengthens climate resilience and supports solutions grounded in Mi'kmaw values and ways of knowing.

Green Choice Program – Energy

The Green Choice Energy Program is adding more clean energy to the grid, bringing more green jobs and investments to Nova Scotia, helping to stabilize power rates and decreasing greenhouse gas emissions. It includes six wind farms each of which are co-owned by a private developer and one or more Mi'kmaw communities. Social and economic benefits of these projects include training, skill development, capacity building grants and scholarships.

New Affordable Housing in Dartmouth – Growth and Development (G&D)

This year G&D provided a capital contribution of $2.9 million toward the construction of 32 new affordable homes for women and their children in Dartmouth. In addition, G&D is supporting the following:

- YWCA Halifax is working in partnership with the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre to secure ten units that have been set aside for urban Indigenous families in need of housing that are experiencing homelessness.
- Twelve units have been set aside for families currently living in hotels and being supported by Adsum for Women and Children.

The remaining units will be filled from existing YWCA Halifax housing programs. The YWCA Halifax began moving families with children into these townhomes, in the Dartmouth, Mount Hope neighbourhood in September 2024. Tenants have access to wraparound services tailored to meet their needs, such as support for maintaining their unit, referrals to mental health and healthcare services, and employment skills training.

Health Equity Framework - Department of Health and Wellness (DHW)

Since the May 2024 update, the Department of Health and Wellness (DHW), as the lead on the implementation of the Health Equity Framework (HEF), has continued to collaborate with partners to advance the framework's implementation. Some 2024/25 advancements on priority, system-impacting initiatives have included:

- Updating the NSH/IWK workplace safety reporting tool to include options for reporting racism and/or discrimination.
- Developing a strategic partnership with Saint Mary's University to provide capacity in evidence synthesis, grounding approaches to addressing workplace racism and discrimination in an evidence-based methodology.
- Initiating work with Nova Scotia's Regulated Health Professions Network to design and implement processes to collect equity-related demographic data from health professionals.
- Funding a first round of three applied health equity research projects in July 2024.

Internally to DHW, staff roles specifically focused on French language services and Mi'kmaw/Indigenous health have been established., The department has also more prominently incorporated health equity considerations into standard business practices (e.g., business case development). In 2024 the department launched the Engage4Health online public engagement platform to support DHW and other health system partners to enhance accessible, inclusive community participation on health-related projects.

Psychological Safety in the Workplace Related to Systemic Hate, Inequity and Racism – Labour, Skills and Immigration (LSI)

In 2023, the Safety Branch of the department of LSI led Preventing Harassment in the Workplace engagements across the province to learn from Nova Scotians experiences of harassment in the workplace and how government could make an impact. Key themes

included the impact of workplace harassment, the role of leadership, reporting and investigations and the need for supportive workplace cultures.

This work informed the *Stronger Workplaces for Nova Scotia Act* (passed in September 2024), which amends the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and recognises "health and safety" as both psychological and physical. The revised Act also mandates employers to develop preventing workplace harassment policies, and allowed for the development of harassment regulations. The new harassment regulations will launch on September 1, 2025.

Supporting efforts to this work include a public education and awareness campaign and a website dedicated to preventing harassment in the workplace. The Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) is updating policies to allow claims for psychological injuries from work-related events. A 2023/24 WCB system review stressed the need for stronger psychologically safe cultures within workplaces and increased awareness of workplace harassment. LSI and WCB will continue strengthening partnerships with jurisdictions across Canada and collaborating with OEA to support inclusive, healthy, and safe workplaces throughout Nova Scotia. For more resources and information: Preventing Harassment in the Workplace.

Prescribed Public Sector Bodies

Under the *Dismantling Racism and Hate Act* general regulations, all municipalities and villages in Nova Scotia were required to develop plans to address systemic hate, inequity and racism by April 1, 2025. This requirement recognizes the crucial role municipalities and villages play in creating an equitable and inclusive province for every Nova Scotian.

OEA has provided funding of $1.185 million to the Association of Municipal Administrators of Nova Scotia (AMANS) for a four-year period to support the development and implementation of municipal and village plans required under the *Dismantling Racism and Hate Act* and the *Accessibility Act*. This investment was made in the spring of 2024 and continues to support dedicated staff, training and funding opportunities to ensure municipal and village plans are successful in addressing systemic hate, inequity and racism.

OEA also developed educational resources and provided guidance for municipalities and villages and presented to staff and councils in various forums on the requirement. As of June, 2025 39 out of 70 municipalities and villages (56%) have approved and made their plans publicly available, and most other municipalities and villages are expecting to have plans in place in the coming months. Thematic priorities across the plans include reviewing internal policies through an equity lens, strengthening engagement with underrepresented and underserved communities, and enhancing staff training in diversity, equity, and inclusion. Submitted plans and an interactive map can be viewed on the OEA Engagement website.

B. Better and Sustained Engagement

Community has shared with government that we need to do better in our engagement efforts. OEA continues to support government departments in enhancing how we engage with community by rolling out training on our Public Engagement Guidebook and Planning Template. OAE is also

helping to support community capacity by continuing to invest in community organizations through our Community Network Grants.

Community Network Grants

Launched in July 2023, the Community Network webpage continues to serve as an online space where community-based organizations and government partners can collaborate to address systemic hate, inequity, and racism. In 2024/25, OEA launched the second offering of the Community Network Grant program, awarding over $400,000 to eleven community-based organizations. These grants supported projects and organizations that advance equity and inclusion across the province. This year's funding placed a stronger emphasis on reaching rural organizations. This resulted in funding being awarded to the Portapique Market to increase cultural awareness, and to a project led by Souls Harbour to connect underserved and underrepresented communities in the Eastern Shore to essential services and employment opportunities. A greater emphasis was also placed on supporting organizations who have not previously received government funding. Community organizations who have received funding for the first time include the Black Wellness Cooperative's culturally relevant oncology wellness project, and the Queer Health Coalition's project to support initiatives to enhance health services for newcomers. All funded organizations will share updates about their projects through the Community Network, housed on OEA's engagement website. The Community Network platform remains an evolving space for knowledge exchange, resource sharing, and community storytelling.

> **"I genuinely believe that this grant fills an important gap within the nonprofit sector by allowing a variety of projects to explore innovative solutions relevant to their circumstances."**
>
> **– Shekara Grant, President of the Weymouth Falls Community Land Trust**

C. Better Public Reporting

Collecting, using and storing EDIA data effectively and in culturally responsive ways is very important when referring to data about Nova Scotians we serve as well as data about civil servants within the public service. OEA is working to enhance EDIA data collection both internally and externally. Under the *Dismantling Racism and Hate Act*, OEA is required to create a public facing equity dashboard that will provide updates on key equity and anti-racism commitments and EDIA initiatives across government. Work on the dashboard will continue in the coming year.

Equity and Race-Based Data Standard

The Act requires the development of an equity and race-based data standard for use within government. The standard will govern how equity and race-based data is collected, interpreted and

used within government. In 2024/25, OEA continued to develop the standard, engaging with departments throughout government to ensure the standard is practical for departments. Work to finalize this important guidance will continue in 2025/26.

Equity Data within the Public Service

To measure the progress of diversity and equitable practices within the public service, EDIA data has been collected using the Global Diversity Equity and Inclusion Benchmark (GDEIB) Assessment tool, Self-ID tool and the Public Service Commission's How's Work Going survey.

In 2023/24, the Self-ID tool was launched to enable employees to disclose how they identify with respect to language, (dis)ability, community, race, gender, sexual orientation, education and more. The tool was designed to help us better understand the demographic make-up of our workforce. As of May 30th, 2025, 31% of civil servants have used the tool to provide this information. In 2025/26, OEA will enhance efforts to promote use of the tool.

D. Leadership and Commitment within the Public Service

One of the focus areas for action within the *Dismantling Racism and Hate Act* (DRHA) is demonstration of leadership and commitment to equity and anti-racism. We know that government cannot be effective in identifying and addressing systemic hate, inequity and racism in our policies and programs unless we're also looking internally at who our employees are and how they're supported to do this work.

To Nova Scotians broadly, government is demonstrating leadership and commitment in this area by passing the DRHA and implementing the provincial Equity and Anti-Racism Strategy. To employees of the public service, government is demonstrating its leadership and commitment to EDIA through the *All Together* Action Plan for Diversity and Inclusion in the Public Service.

6. All Together Action Plan

The Government of Nova Scotia remains firmly committed to building a public service that reflects the rich diversity of our province. For the past five years, the *All Together* Action Plan, along with the Employment Equity Policy, have been central to this commitment. These initiatives aim to ensure equitable representation of historically underrepresented and underserved communities in the Nova Scotia Government. The government values diversity in all its forms. There is a continued commitment to identify and remove systemic barriers to employment and career advancement for all underrepresented groups, with a clear understanding of the complex and intersecting nature of individual identities.

All Together is anchored in **four key pillars**, each driving meaningful progress through targeted actions:

> **Senior Leadership Accountability:** The success of All Together is rooted in the active support of senior leaders. Leaders exemplify their dedication to these values through

consistent, meaningful actions by measuring strategic objectives for their departments and being accountable for actioning EDIA initiatives.

Leadership Development: Leaders at all levels should reflect the diversity of both the workforce and the communities that departments serve. They should also demonstrate cultural openness by fostering mutual understanding, showing respect for diverse cultural perspectives, being aware of their own biases and actively working to mitigate harm through continuous learning, inclusive decision-making, and equitable leadership practices.

Barrier Identification and Solutions: Obstacles to employment can limit progress in hiring, advancement, and access to leadership roles. Addressing them does not mean compromising on performance standards; rather, it involves dismantling the obstacles that prevent individuals from achieving goals and finding success.

Measurement of Progress: We are committed to tracking our progress toward defined goals. Although measurement is a defined pillar, it also plays a crucial role in advancing the other three pillars by fostering accountability, ensuring transparency, and driving continuous improvement. Recognizing the effort behind progress is just as important.

A few **highlights of actions** taken by government as a whole and individual departments in 2024/25 include:

Senior Leadership Accountability

- Senior leaders incorporated EDIA goals into their HR Planning. A few departments identified Senior Leader participation in EDIA Committees.
- Senior leaders embedded EDIA discussions into management and staff meetings, offering progress updates, open dialogue on strategies, and ways to address challenges.
- Senior leadership actively supported inclusive leadership development by designating roles.

Leadership Development

- In 2024/25 FY, 66% of participants responded to the Leadership Development Program survey. Of the 66% that responded, 51% of participants identified as a member of an underrepresented community.
- 15 departments indicated that they utilized the Diversity Hiring Panel Program to support equitable hiring practices.
- 56.7% of leaders participated in the Diversity for Leaders course to develop their EDIA lens and better support employees within their departments.

Barrier Identification and Solutions

- Five departments have implemented recommendations from employment systems reviews, which involved the departments assessing their employment policies and practices to identify and address potential barriers faced by the designated Employment Equity groups.
- Eleven departments offered to be mentees as part of the Black Youth Development Mentorship Program, improving access, exposure, and experiences with the public service.
- Innovative strategies were used to address systemic barriers regarding job requirements, e.g., enabling consideration of the value of lived experience as a qualification for a position.

Measurement of Progress

- The introduction of the Self-Identification Tool in SuccessFactors provided a vital resource for tracking workforce representation and supporting data-informed decision-making.
- After all departments participated in the first GDEIB Assessment, six departments leveraged the Global Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Benchmarks (GDEIB) tool to create baseline data, laying the groundwork for ongoing monitoring and accountability. The GDEIB is an international assessment tool that assesses EDIA within organizations.
- Twelve departments implemented EDIA goals into their strategic, operational, and HR plans.

More detailed progress made in 2024/25 can be found on our website Office of Equity and Anti-Racism Engagement Page. A new equity and diversity plan for 2025/2030 is expected to be released later this year.

Conclusion

The 2024/25 annual report marks a new chapter for OEA, reflecting a broadened mandate and a renewed commitment to embedding equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility across government. This report highlights the tangible progress made across departments, growing collaboration with municipalities and community partners, and the foundational steps toward stronger data and public accountability.

Appendices

A: Fulsome Update on Equity and Anti-Racism Strategy

Office of Equity and Anti-Racism Engagement Page

B: Fulsome Update on All Together Plan

Office of Equity and Anti-Racism Engagement Page