

Dismantling Racism & Hate Act Annual Report 2023/24

The *Dismantling Racism and Hate Act* (the Act) was passed on April 1, 2022. The Act is the first of its kind in Canada—focusing on systemic hate, inequity and racism. The Act focuses on underrepresented and underserved communities in Nova Scotia, including, but not limited to: Mi'kmaq and Persons of Indigenous Descent, African Nova Scotians and Persons of African Descent, 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, faith-based communities, newcomer communities, persons with disabilities, persons who are neurodivergent, seniors and in some contexts women.

The Act commits government to identifying and addressing systemic hate, inequity and racism in its programs and services. Five key deliverables in the Act are:

Deliverable	Deadline	Progress
Equity and anti-racism strategy	July 31, 2023	Complete
Community network	July 31, 2023	Phase 1 complete
Annual report to Legislature	July 31 annually	Complete
Equity and race-based data standard	N/A	Under development
Equity and anti-racism plans by prescribed public sector bodies	April 1, 2025 (in regulations under Act)	Under development

This report provides an update on the implementation of the Act and serves as the annual report required to be tabled in the Legislature by July 31, 2024.

A. 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 targeted at identifying and addressing 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 happens in all areas of the province.

Below are highlights of progress made under the strategy, with a more detailed progress update on the strategy included as Appendix A of this report.

2SLGBTQIA+ Action Plan- Office of Equity and Anti-Racism (OEA)

Through the Strategy, OEA was assigned as the lead within government to work with the 2SLGBTQIA+ community to identify and address their needs. Engagement was initiated in Spring 2024 in partnership with community organizations. Feedback and input from engagement activities will help inform an all-of-government Action Plan, led by OEA.

Equity Impact Assessment Guide & Tool-OEA

OEA is supporting departments in incorporating an equity and anti-racism lens into the policy development process. OEA has developed an equity impact assessment (EIA) guide and tool that will help departments assess and mitigate or avoid negative impacts to underrepresented and underserved communities when developing new legislation, regulations, policies and programs. OEA developed the tool in partnership with community organizations and partners across government. OEA will begin to implement the EIA across government in 2024/25.

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Opening of Kiknu – Seniors and Long-Term Care
In April, Eskasoni opened a new 48-bed long-term care facility. “Kiknu”, the first Mi’kmaw owned and operated long-term care facility in the province, will provide more culturally responsive care to Mi’kmaw seniors from across Nova Scotia, offering them a home surrounded by and supported by the community.

Opening of Millbrook First Nation Resilience Centre for Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ people - Office of L’Nu Affairs and Advisory Council on Status of Women
The Millbrook First Nation Resilience Centre for Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ people and their families has opened. The Centre includes office space for the Nova Scotia Native Women's Association.

Public Engagement Guide & Planning Template - OEA
OEA has developed a public engagement guide and planning template to support departments in their engagement activities, and specifically with underrepresented and underserved communities. The guide and template support departments in applying an equity and anti-racism focus throughout planning and delivery of their engagements. These resources compliment the EIA Guide and OEA will begin to implement these tools in 2024/25.

Funding for ISANS - NS Apprenticeship Agency
Government committed $600,000 in additional annual funding to the Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS) starting in 2024-2025. This will support ISANS to expand its Workplace Trades Practical Assessment Program outside of HRM**.**

The Remedy – Department of Community Services
Work is underway to establish the human and technical resources, policies and organizational structures to implement the remedy recommended by the Human Rights Commission on June 29, 2023, to address findings of systemic discrimination in delivery of supports to persons with disabilities.

Sign Language Interpreter Services – Service Nova Scotia
The updated Government Sign Language Interpreter Services for D/deaf and hard-of-hearing persons Policy was approved on July 6, 2023, to help ensure government can effectively communicate with members of the Deaf, deaf and hard-of-hearing community.

Funding Community Partners to Help End Gender-Based Violence - Advisory Council on Status of Women
Funding has been provided to twenty community partners from the National Action Plan to End Gender-based Violence. These initiatives will focus on women-centred approaches to safety, prevention, and reaching underserved populations. This includes “Wele’g Program – Living Well” for Indigenous men and boys (Mi’kmaw Native Friendship Centre).

Affordable Housing Project - Municipal Affairs and Housing
The Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia decided not to proceed with their proposed affordable housing development for seniors and persons with disabilities in Windsor. It was determined that the flood risk at the proposed development site could not be mitigated without compromising the level of affordability proposed for the project.

B. Community Network

The community network was launched in July 2023 as an online space for communities to work with each other and with government to collaboratively address systemic hate, inequity and racism. In March 2024, OEA issued $289,200 in inaugural community grants. This funding was provided to 12 organizations, who are now members of the network, to help them reduce barriers, build stronger networks, empower people to make a difference and spread a message of acceptance. Funded projects include: a web-based tool to connect the 2SLGBTQIA+ community to culturally competent service providers in Colchester County; land preservation efforts in the historic African Nova Scotian communities of Weymouth Falls and Upper Hammonds Plains; and workshops on how to address Islamophobia and seek help following incidents of hate.

The network is part of OEA's engagement website. Registered users can make contributions to the Community Network space, including discussion forum posts and stories. To join, contact us at oeaengagement@novascotia.ca. Since the engagement website launch, OEA has recorded almost 9,000 visitors and membership is steadily increasing. In 2024/25, OEA will continue to make improvements to the Community Network, sharing information and resources that are beneficial to individuals and groups who work in the equity and anti-racism space.

C. Equity & 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 2023/24, OEA conducted research on the standard and analyzed community feedback on the use and collection of data from underrepresented and underserved communities. In 2024/25, OEA will continue to develop the standard, working with departments and offices throughout government. The standard will be implemented via regulations under the Act.

D. Equity and Anti-Racism Plans by Prescribed Public Sector Bodies

The *Dismantling Racism and Hate Act* includes a requirement for Prescribed Public Sector Bodies (PPSBs) to create a plan to address systemic hate, inequity and racism. Municipalities and villages will be the first cohort of PPSBs required to have plans in place by April 1, 2025. With the release of the strategy in 2023, government committed $1.185 million this fiscal year to help municipalities and villages develop their plans.

In February, a funding agreement was signed with the Association of Municipal Administrators of Nova Scotia (AMANS) who will provide dedicated supports to municipalities and villages in meeting their requirements under both the *Dismantling Racism and Hate Act* and the *Accessibility Act*. The agreement will see AMANS provide continued support over the next four years for equity, anti-racism and accessibility plans.

OEA has partnered with the Accessibility Directorate (AD) to develop resources that will help municipalities and villages meet their requirements. These resources were shared with municipalities and villages in May 2024 at the Spring AMANS conference.

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Appendix A: Progress Update on Section 2 of the Equity and Anti-Racism Strategy

Section 2 of the provincial Equity and Anti-Racism Strategy includes actions and initiatives from departments and offices across government aimed at addressing concerns raised by underrepresented and underserved communities. These actions are in addition to those being led by OEA and those highlighted in the annual report.

Actions For All Nova Scotians	
Department of Community Services (DCS)	- Facilitating changes to the *Victim's Rights and Services Act* to entitle victims of sexual violence to respect while testifying. - Designing a Child and Family Wellbeing (CFW) Practice Framework and a new policy manual that will be available publicly on the department's website in 2024. This framework provides guidelines around the practice of how child and family wellbeing programs are developed and delivered. The framework ensures a child, youth, and family-centred practice by providing staff and community partners with consistent direction while enabling flexibility, autonomy and accountability. The framework has inclusion, diversity and equity as its guiding principles and is a transition to a decolonized framework with a prevention focus. The Practice Framework was designed using multiple sources including leading practices from Mi'kmaw Family and Children's Services, *An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis Children, Youth and Families,* and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. - In relation to the new CFW Practice Framework, developing additional training for DCS staff delivering child and family services related to cultural humility.
Department of Education & Early Childhood Development (EECD)	- Three Braids Training developed by EECD is now a mandatory requirement for all school administrators and will now be an onboarding requirement for new administrators. The 4-module training focuses on the dynamics of racism and discrimination, how to respond in culturally responsive ways, and the implications of human rights legislation for policies and practices. - The "Culturally Responsive Practice in Nova Scotia's Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Settings" module continues to support ELCC professionals to reflect and integrate more inclusive practices in their work.
Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MAH)	- Collaborating with municipalities and villages to strengthen their capacity in equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives. This work is in collaboration with OEA and the Accessibility Directorate, who are supporting municipalities and villages to deliver on legislative requirements contained in the *Dismantling Racism and Hate Act* and the *Accessibility Act*. - Updating emergency notifications and information-sharing distribution list to include key representatives from underrepresented and underserved groups.
Office of Healthcare Professionals (OHPR)	- Collaborating with the Department of Advanced Education (LAE) and Schools of Nursing, through the Better Enrolment Management Initiative, to improve enrollment and graduation numbers for underrepresented and underserved groups. - Planning the OHPR Community Fund Conference with an equity and anti-racism lens to ensure that current and future healthcare professionals have the tools and knowledge they need to make Nova Scotia's healthcare systems culturally responsive.

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Actions For All Nova Scotians	
Status of Women (SOW)	- In December 2023, Government signed a bi-lateral agreement with Women and Gender Equity Canada to support the implementation of the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence (GBV). Status of Women will invest the funding in organizations supporting survivors, prevention, and reaching the underserved. - Year 1 funding of $3.1 million under this agreement has been provided to twenty community partners for initiatives focussed on women-centered approaches to safety, prevention and reaching underserved populations including Men and boys program "Options to Anger".

Actions For Specific Underrepresented & Underserved Communities	
Mi'kmaw and persons of Indigenous descent	
Department of Advanced Education (LAE)	- The Province entered into new Bilateral Agreements with each university with a requirement to create an inclusive and equitable learning environment for Mi'kmaq and Indigenous students, identify systemic barriers, develop and implement programs and policies to remove systemic barriers, etc. - Created a position dedicated to Mi'kmaq and Indigenous Post-Secondary Recruitment and Retention. - Developing a province-wide Self-Identification Form to advance a coordinated strategy to improve data collection and measure the impacts programs are having in the recruitment and retention of Mi'kmaq and Indigenous learners in post-secondary education. - Received Mi'kmaw and Indigenous recruitment and retention strategies from all ten universities.
Department of Community Services (DCS)	- Supporting Indigenous self-governance negotiations with Mi'kmaw communities around child and family services and investing in prevention and early intervention programming. The annual budget for prevention and early intervention programming is now $31.5 million. - Continuing to implement the federal Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis Children, Youth and Families. - Continuing to implement the calls to action regarding children in care and culturally appropriate supports for Mi'kmaw children, including preventative initiatives to avoid children being brought into care.

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Department of Education & Early Childhood Development (EECD)	- Delivered Treaty Education professional learning for Early Childhood Educators in childcare centres, Grades 5 and 6 for Regional Centre for Education (RCE) and Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP). - Equity in Action (EIA) Mi'kma'ki is currently underway in the Chignecto Central Regional Centre for Education (RCE) and Cape Breton-Victoria Regional Centre for Education to aid the identification of actions to support the success of Mi'kmaw and Indigenous students. - Guided by key Elders and knowledge keepers, EECD developed curriculum grounded in Netukulimk (NED-duh-go-limk) now being offered as a pilot in three provincial and one Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey (MK) school. The purpose of this curriculum is to establish a wskitkamu-guided learning experience. All classrooms with grades primary to 2 have received a set of seven illustrated children's books written by Mi'kmaw Elders and educators and puppets to help with oral language, they share Mi'kmaw teachings and culture through the stories. - EECD's Mi'kmaw Services Branch and regional Mi'kmaw Education Coordinators (MEC) co-developed three additional modules for the Three Braids framework which includes Smudging, Exploring White Privilege through the Indian Act, and Mi'kmaw Cultural Behaviours to be delivered throughout all RCEs and CSAP by the end of the 2024 school year.
Department of Health and Wellness (DHW)	- Hired five of six Tajikeimɨk Navigators, two began working at the Nova Scotia Health Authority QEII Halifax Infirmary facility in January 2024.
Department of Justice (DOJ)	- Renewed Indigenous Courtwork Program and Gladue Reporting agreement with a cost share commitment of $1.06million. This agreement enables Indigenous people involved in the criminal justice system to obtain fair, just, equitable and culturally relevant treatment. - Working with the Mi'kmaw Legal Support Network to respond to its needs and service delivery challenges. Collaborating with Indigenous organizations, including Mi'kmaw leaders and the Office of L'nu Affairs, to develop an Indigenous Justice Action Strategy. To support the development of the strategy, a community engagement agreement with Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn (KMKNO) has also been finalized with content due by the end of June 2024. - In partnership with Public Safety Canada, funded additional police resources in Eskasoni (5 police officers), Waycobah (2 police officers), and Potlotek (1 police officer) First Nations and $100 thousand for law enforcement anti-racist and ethics training. - Engaged two police training service providers to develop and facilitate hate crime training for law enforcement across Nova Scotia. This training will be delivered in fiscal year 2024-25, to front line police officers.
Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MAH)	- Nova Scotia Emergency Management Services has facilitated Incident Management training, mock exercises, and Public Alerting training which includes Mi'kmaq communities.

Department of Seniors and Long-Term Care (SLC)	- Worked with Tajikeimɨk, the Mi'kmaw health and wellness organization, to revise the home care policy to expand provincially funded home care nursing services in Mi'kmaw communities to address gaps in access to service and improve coordination between community health centres, Nova Scotia Health and provincial nursing service providers. - Provided a grant to the NS Walks Mi'kmaw Walking Program through the Age-Friendly Communities Grant. Guided by a Mi'kmaw coordinator, this program combines physical activity with teachings of traditional culture and language, fostering a walk and talk series on Mi'kmaw history.
African Nova Scotians and persons of African Descent in Nova Scotia	
Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage (CCTH) & African Nova Scotian Affairs (ANSA)	- Hired full complement of regional staff and will engage in community outreach. - Enhancing program officers' training and exposure to effectively promote the ANSA Grants program. - Expanded the Land Titles Initiative to eight law firms—with 46 lawyers representing clients. A referral process has been implemented to enable LTI Commissioners to begin work on resolution of competing claims.
Department of Justice (DOJ)	- Preparing to release a Justice Action Plan for African Nova Scotians.
Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MAH)	- Supporting community-based housing opportunities in four African Nova Scotian communities through an MOU with the Preston Area Housing Fund to divest 48 units and $3.5 million to support its sustainable operation.
Office of Equity and Anti-Racism (OEA)	- Provided Community Network Grants for projects including: o Land preservation efforts in the historic African Nova Scotian communities of Weymouth Falls, Digby County, and Upper Hammonds Plains; o The development and implementation of a strategic plan for the Health Association of African Canadians that will help foster a more inclusive and resilient healthcare system in Nova Scotia for individuals of African descent; o Education and awareness campaign lead by the United African Canadian Women's Association of Nova Scotia to address bullying, race-based harassment, and discrimination in schools and workplaces; o African Nova Scotia Music Association outreach to provide a low pressure, encouraging space for African Nova Scotian/Black creatives to gather, perform, collaborate, network, and support each other; and o Preservation of home videos from the African Nova Scotian Communities that will be preserved and contextualized through youth-led interviews with elders, which will also serve as means of cross-generational connection lead by the Delmore "Buddy" Daye Learning Institute.

Office of Healthcare Professionals (OHPR)	- Collaborating with Department of Advanced Education (LAE) to review policies and recommend strategies to improve Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Reconciliation and Accessibility impacts in the labour market.
Status of Women (SOW)	- Under the National Action Plan to End Gender-based Violence funding has been provided for social and employment programs for youth of African descent through Africadian Empowerment Academy.
Newcomers (Immigrants and Refugees)	
Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism & Heritage (CCTH)	- The Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie (OAAF) continued to work on the Francophone Immigration Action Plan - OAAF participated in the 'Atlantic Committee on Francophone Immigration' in PEI June 2024.
Office of Equity and Anti-Racism (OEA)	- Provided a Community Network Grant to Hope Blooms to lead a project that seeks to engage African Nova Scotians, newcomers and refugees, and people of colour in a range of programs including: biweekly community gathering and women's empowerment sessions, and personal and professional development opportunities for those interested in food production and agriculture.
Faith-Based Communities	
Department of Justice (DOJ)	- Public Safety and Security Division worked with the Canadian Council of Muslim Women to deliver digital anti-racism training on cyberhate and Islamophobia. -
Office of Equity and Anti-Racism (OEA)	- OEA provided a Community Network Grant to the Muslim Youth and Community Center Society (Sabeel Centre). Through workshops, their project aims to teach community and university students about Islamophobia. It also includes the development of a comprehensive guide for women detailing where to seek help and what steps to take in incidents of hate and inequity.
Status of Women (SOW)	- The Atlantic Muslim Resource Center has received funding under the National Action Plan to End Gender-based Violence to run programs for men and boys to challenge toxic masculinity and promote healthy relationships.
Persons with Disabilities	
Department of Community Services (DCS)	- Work is underway to implement the remedy recommended by the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission (NSHRC) on June 29, 2023, to address systemic discrimination findings in supports for persons with disabilities. The inaugural annual progress was submitted to the NSHRC on May 31, 2024. A copy of the report can be found at https://humanrights.novascotia.ca/remedy#progress. - The Africentric Community Engagement Project in 2023-24 held 15 engagement sessions involving 500+ community members. The findings will foster inclusive programs and policy for disabled persons.

Department of Justice (DOJ)	- Accessibility Directorate (AD) is leading work in all six standard areas identified in Access by Design 2030. - AD provided a grant to the Immigrant/Migrant Women's Association of Halifax alongside information and advice. Through arts and educational programming this support will aid their understanding of the needs of racialized women with disabilities who may be experiencing gender-based violence.
Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MAH)	- The Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia (AHANS) housing development proposal will not be fulfilled due to flood risk and wetland assessment recommendations significantly increasing construction budget.
Department of Service Nova Scotia (SNS)	- The updated Government Sign Language Interpreter Services for D/deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Persons Policy was approved on July 6, 2023, to help ensure government can effectively communicate with members of the Deaf, deaf, and hard-of-hearing community.
2SLGBTQIA+ Communities	
Department of Education & Early Childhood Development (EECD)	- One of the three training modules in the "Three Braids Framework" includes discussions on learning about the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. This is a requirement for all Regional Administrators in Regional Centres for Education and CSAP as of 2024.
Department of Health and Wellness (DHW)	- This past year's budget included $368,000 in new funding to expand prideHealth and $1.7 million in increased funding for Gender-Affirming Surgery.
Office of Equity and Anti-Racism (OEA)	- Provided Community Network Grants to: o The Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia to promote widespread gender inclusion at work and supporting 2SLGBTQ+-owned small business enterprises to scale and grow. o Truro Pride to deliver resources that will help 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals in Truro and surrounding areas find safe and equitable programs and services. o Adsum for Women and Children to expand understanding of how to support current and future trans and gender-diverse clients through an anti-oppressive and person-centered approach.
Status of Women (SOW)	- Under the National Action Plan to End Gender-based Violence, funding has been provided through Coverdale Justice Society for "Safe OUTside the System. This program offers essential services rooted in community such as education, resources and support to queer and trans folks experiencing intimate partner violence.

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Appendix B: Progress Update on Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace

In support of the all-of-government equity and anti-racism strategy, the Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration (LSI) is leading actions and initiatives to address psychological safety in the workplace which can involve bullying, harassment, and/or violence and which can be attributed to, and include systemic hate, inequity, and racism in workplaces within the province.

The *Preventing Harassment in the Workplace engagement* by the Safety Branch took place from November 14, 2023 – December 8, 2023. The objectives of these engagements were:

- Understand the current context around psychological health and safety in the workplace in Nova Scotia (e.g., issues, gaps, strengths, needs).
- Identify strategies that will better position Nova Scotia with best practices related to psychological health and safety in the workplace to benefit Nova Scotian workers and employers.
- Understand how government can support a culture shift in how psychological health and safety in the workplace is supported and addressed, including expanding understanding of injury to be beyond physical injuries.
- Begin a conversation with Nova Scotians that will contribute to building relationships and changing the culture around psychological health and safety, with leadership support in the workplace.

Ten in-person and 13 virtual sessions were held in addition to a survey and an opportunity for written submissions.

- There were 55 participants in the 10 in-person sessions.
- There were 157 participants in the 13 virtual sessions.
- There were 380 survey submissions.
- There were 6 written submissions.

LSI conducted an additional, targeted outreach, emailing underrepresented and underserved community groups encouraging members to participate in the engagements. An additional 26 responses from participants and organizations were received.

The engagement sessions have now concluded and build on the findings from OEA's engagements as well as research LSI conducted looking nationally and internationally. Input gathered was used to develop a *What We Heard* report that captures what participants shared. Information in this report will be used to help formulate policy options for workers and employers to better prevent and address harassment in the workplace.

Worker's Compensation Board (WCB) Engagement:
WCB's work on psychological injury is currently underway where legislative and policy updates concerning work-related psychological injuries, resulting from both work-related gradual onset stress or traumatic events, can be claimed. Results coming out of this work have helped inform LSI's efforts in developing our policy options to reduce psychological injuries in the workplace.

This is an important step to improve health, safety and overall wellness in workplaces across Nova Scotia.

Next steps
LSI will continue to build strong working relationships with jurisdictions across Canada to help direct the broader work of the Safety Branch and the Worker's Compensation Board (WCB). As well as continued collaborations with our partners such as OEA to contribute to inclusive and safe work environments to support healthy and safe workplaces across Nova Scotia.

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Appendix C: Progress Update on the Health Equity Framework

After close to one year of development, including significant research and multiple community engagement processes, Nova Scotia released its Health Equity Framework (the Framework) in July 2023.

The Framework summarizes the collective results and themes from all engagement efforts during its development, followed by 35 priority actions explicitly designed to address this feedback. These actions are spread across three overall themes: Patient Experience; Health Human Resources; and Health System Policies and Practices. These themes and actions are the foundation for all health system EDIRA (equity, diversity, inclusion, reconciliation, and accessibility) work going forward. Since the launch of the Framework, DHW has taken a range of steps towards its implementation. The initial steps involved working with all six health system partners (Department of Health and Wellness, Nova Scotia Health, IWK Health, Office of Health Professionals Recruitment, Office of Addictions and Mental Health, and Seniors and Long-Term Care) to:

1. Gather an inventory of as many current initiatives as possible that are aligned with the Framework; and,
2. Collectively prioritize what areas and/or specific actions would form the initial focus for system-level implementation efforts.

While point two above concerns the identification of priority actions that all health system partners will tackle together, it was completed with the understanding that individual partners can (and should) move forward any actions in the Framework that align with their own priorities, mandate, and capacity.

DHW has also been working with health system partners to develop options related to:

1. Improving patient reporting system, with a particular focus on incidents of racism and discrimination;
2. Improving tools, processes and policies related to health system workplace racism and discrimination;
3. Determining the equity-focused composition of the health system workforce in Nova Scotia, along with a more standardized approach to workforce surveys/census across health system partners.

Working groups under these three projects have each met bi-weekly since March 2024 and are targeting Fall 2024 for presentation of recommended solutions and submission of resource requests. In most cases, implementation of the recommended solution for each initiative will begin once resources are secured; internally-focused implementation would begin as soon as a recommended approach is approved.

DHW has also initiated the following projects focused on other areas of the Health Equity Framework:

- Embedding EDIRA-related project milestones and associated metrics within all priority initiatives under the Health Transformation Office (HTO)/Action for Health. Development is underway for HTO initiatives focused on Universal Mental Health, Health Human Resources, and Primary Care, with conversations set to begin with Emergency Health Services and Cancer Care.
- Developing a centrally-administered structure for the delivery of standardized training on the application of an EDIRA/ARAO (Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression) lens to health system service delivery and administration. This includes the identification of training priorities and assessing demand across health system partners.
- Implementing a Health Equity Lab, which will bring together health system partners, community members, and the academic sector to collectively inform work on complex, challenging Framework initiatives. Initial funding has been secured to support this work and the first round of research project investments is set to receive funding in July 2024.
- Ensuring that health system partners are committed to the implementation of the Framework through the implementation of a Health Equity Framework Charter. DHW is sharing the draft charter with partners outside of the core health system – e.g., health professional regulators, unions, training institutions, etc. – to gather further feedback and gauge interest in signing on.

The HTO-focused work in the first bullet above is ongoing, while the general timeline for the other three initiatives is to have implementation plans approved and in place by Q3 of the 2024/25 fiscal year.

In addition to the work already underway, the health system-level prioritization process resulted in the following priority areas that will be initiated in 2024-25:

- Developing and implementing EDIRA-focused HR practices and leadership development, including:
    - Fairer and more inclusive health system hiring practices; and,
    - The implementation of programs and supports the advancement of health system employees identifying with underserved and underrepresented communities;
- Building accountability within and across the health system, including new and better sources of equity-related information within the health system, while improving existing sources of such information.