

# Alberta Anti-Racism Advisory Council

## Recommendations

---

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### Overview

The Alberta Anti-Racism Advisory Council (the Council) has developed 48 recommendations which embody the core values of human dignity, transformation, and transparency and present a suite of policy items and institutional practices needed for creating a racially just and inclusive Alberta.

#### Background

The Alberta Anti-Racism Advisory Council's mandate is to provide Government with insight and advice on how to support efforts to address racism, and promote more inclusive and accepting communities across Alberta. In July 2020, the Council separated into four subcommittees to research, work with community experts, and review technical briefings provided by different ministries throughout the government of Alberta. These subcommittees were focused on four priority areas. These include:

- A government that reflects Alberta.
- Preventing and responding to hate crimes and hate incidents.
- Teaching respect for each other.
- Valuing skills and experiences in the workplace.

Appointments of many of the council members expired in January 2021, and new members, including two new Co-Chairs were appointed on January 28, 2021. These recommendations were developed prior to the new appointments. On February 19, 2021, the Council reviewed the recommendations and passed a motion to formally submit all the recommendations to the Minister of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women.

#### Recommendation Highlights

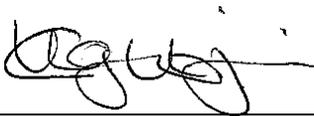
The recommendations in this report are organized according to themes of related action items intended to begin tackling systemic racism in our province. The 48 recommendations are also broad in scope and impact multiple sectors of government.

The themes include:

1. Accountability structures required for anti-racism actions (*4 recommendations*)
2. Justice system reforms (*11 recommendations*)
3. Broad inclusivity towards racial equality separated into four key sub-themes:
  - Skilled Newcomers (*6 recommendations*)
  - Racial equity and inclusion in the public sector (*4 recommendations*)
  - Building anti-racism capacity in the workforce (*7 recommendations*)
  - Access to anti-racism resources (*3 recommendations*)
  - Equity in the provincial granting process (*4 recommendations*)
4. Advancing human dignity in education (*5 recommendations*)
5. Statement from the Alberta Anti-Racism Advisory Council on the AHS lay-offs (*1 recommendation*)
6. Measuring progress and outcomes of anti-racism actions (*3 recommendations*)

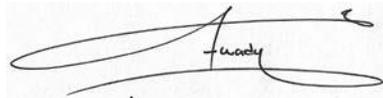
As members of the Council, we recognize that these recommendations are made at a point in time and that there will be continued engagement with government and communities on discussions of how to combat racism and promote social inclusion going forward.

Finally, as Co-Chairs of the Alberta Anti-Racism Advisory Council, we commend the hard work of Council members both past and present in the comprehensive research, community engagement, and passion displayed in developing these comprehensive recommendations.



---

China Sochi-Ogbonna  
Co-Chair  
Alberta Anti-Racism Advisory Council



---

Mohamad Awada  
Co-Chair  
Alberta Anti-Racism Advisory Council

# RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations in this report are organized according to themes of related action items intended to start tackling systemic racism in our province:

1. Accountability structures required for anti-racism actions
2. Justice system reforms
3. Broad inclusivity towards racial equality
4. Advancing human dignity in education
5. Statement from the Alberta Anti-Racism Advisory Council on the AHS lay-offs
6. Measuring progress and outcomes of anti-racism actions

These recommendations embody our core values of human dignity, transformation, and transparency and present a suite of policy items and institutional practices needed for creating a racially just and inclusive Alberta.

## Theme 1. Accountability structures required for anti-racism actions

Accountability for anti-racism means that we acknowledge that racism exists, in part, because of policy choices made by those in power to make decisions. This set of recommendations intends to ensure that the commitments made and actions undertaken in combating racism in Alberta are fulfilled and monitored.

1. Create an overarching autonomous body in the province that brings together public institutions and communities to provide a coordinated, consistent provincial strategy and approach to address inequity and systemic racism across all sectors.
2. Establish an Ombudsperson office with staff to investigate all complaints about policing in Alberta in an independent, transparent and timely manner. This body will have punitive powers and ensure compliance with recommended actions.
3. Revisit and address the overlap in responsibility and duplication of services between the Offices of Equity and Diversity in universities and colleges and the Human Rights Commission in the investigation and resolution of racism-related complaints to ensure a transparent and consistent approach
4. Create an Office for Racial Equity and Justice within the Public Service Commission to advance anti-racism and racial equity in the Alberta Public Service and investigate and address concerns around unfair treatment, discrimination and harassment experienced by Indigenous and racialized employees. This office will foster an anti-racism approach

across all ministries in developing policies and programs, providing training for staff, and engaging employees in the creation of an Action Plan for Racial Equity in the public service.

## Theme 2. Justice system reforms

Currently, hate crimes are defined and covered under the Criminal Code of Canada. Hate incidents may involve criminal behavior (i.e. assault or harassment) but do not fit the narrow definition of a hate crime under the Criminal Code. Hate incidents occur frequently but are under-reported due to victims' past experiences of charges not being laid against perpetrators of hate incidents, as well as police being ill-equipped to respond to and document hate incidents. This set of recommendations is designed to strengthen police response to hate incidents as well as to improve relationships and restore trust between police agencies and racialized Albertans.

1. Ensure adequate, sustainable funding for the Alberta Hate Crimes Committee to effectively fulfill its role in anti-racism public education, particularly in identifying and reporting hate crimes and hate incidents, supporting victims of hate incidents, and gathering data on hate incidents.
2. Establish and provide stable funding for a Provincial Hate Crime Unit that will coordinate services between jurisdictions and share information about potential perpetrators. This unit must include an open-source social media analyst whose responsibility is monitoring and identifying individuals and hate groups at risk of offending. In the event that an incident does not meet the Criminal Code's definition of a hate crime, police must be encouraged to look for other ways to respond to the incident.
3. Support internships to the Alberta Human Rights Commission, especially for the purpose of documenting hate incidents as soon as they happen.
4. Include a stipulation in the Police Act that all law enforcement officers working in Alberta must take ongoing anti-racism and implicit bias training that includes:
  - the history of systemic racism in policing and the necessity of taking a new, relationship-building approach and,
  - personal biases and stereotyping.
5. Define and clarify guidelines in the Police Act for police stops/street checks, which disproportionately impact Black, Indigenous, and people of colour, and ensure that these guidelines are universally applied across the province.

6. Mandate the collection of race-based statistics by all police forces in the province, including Sheriffs, RCMP, and municipal forces, using clear guidelines and protocols, and including data on police stops/street checks to determine rates of racial profiling. Such metrics should also be used to inform promotions, community placements, and progressive discipline within law enforcement agencies.
7. Develop policies to increase and support racial diversity in all police services through the recruitment, training and support of law enforcement officers who are Black, Indigenous, and people of colour.
8. Create diversity units in all police services whose function is to liaise with the community, particularly marginalized groups
9. Implement a policy in the Ministry of Justice requiring that all Ministry staff and employees in the ministry, including police officers, prosecutors, judges, and others, receive anti-racism training and in-depth education on the impact of hate incidents.
10. Work with the federal government to change the current hate crimes legislation, making it more effective.
11. Develop structures to extend grievance timelines from one to three years for racially-motivated hate incidents in employment, education, tenancy, and others.

### Theme 3. Broad inclusivity towards racial equality

Social inclusion means more than just having present a variety of human characteristics or identity markers that make us unique and different. More importantly, in unequal societies, it means that we value and nurture the full and meaningful participation of those individuals and groups who have been historically and structurally excluded. This set of recommendations focuses on the following key areas of inclusivity and racial equity:

- opening opportunities and removing barriers for foreign-trained newcomers to find long-term employment in their chosen field of work.
- increasing participation of Indigenous and racialized individuals in the Alberta Public Service to create a just and inclusive workplace in the provincial government
- increasing access to anti-racism resources and support, which includes ensuring equitable granting opportunities for racialized groups and communities

## **Skilled Newcomers**

The majority of newcomers to Canada are skilled workers who have been granted admission based on prior assessment of their education and work experience. This subset of recommendations aims to guarantee fair access for all skilled newcomers to employment opportunities, empowering them to leverage their prior learning and competencies to contribute to Alberta's prosperity.

1. Fund and implement accelerated licensure programs that reduce red tape for applicants and enable the governing bodies of regulated professions to permit foreign-trained professionals to work in Alberta. For example:
  - Enable The Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Alberta (APEGA) to ratify the Mutual Recognitions Agreements (MRAs) negotiated by Engineers Canada with Australia, France, Hong Kong, Ireland, Nevada, and Texas;
  - Work with Engineers Canada to broaden the number of negotiated MRAs beyond the existing six (6) agreements with particular focus on Asian, African, and South Asian countries; and
  - Report progress on accelerated program annually.
2. Reactivate bridging programs for internationally-trained newcomers, provide adequate funding for increased annual intake, expand initiative to cover more professions, and measure outcomes.
3. Create jobs for international medical graduates (IMGs), such as interpreter-translators, in health care organizations, to ease their transition to health care professions.
4. Enable the Fairness to Newcomers Office (FNO) to play a greater role in evaluating market needs for skilled workers and streamlining the process for hiring skilled newcomers, with a focus on unregulated professions. FNO can also take a leadership role in addressing and mitigating racial barriers by supporting employers to recognize and value diverse experiences.
5. Assign an independent agency to collect and analyze disaggregated qualitative and quantitative data to assess the effectiveness of the supports provided to international graduates in finding employment in their field. The data should include graduates' field of work, gender, race and ethnicity, and any other relevant identity factors.

6. Enable community engagement programs in post-secondary institutions help newly-recruited physicians in their early practice following their assessment, and use any data collected during this process to better support diverse groups living in rural and remote communities, including both patients and rural physicians.

### **Racial equity and inclusion in the public sector**

Increasing racial diversity and equity starts by identifying and mitigating potential biases in recruiting and hiring processes—including the initial job posting, the application process, resume screening and shortlisting, and finally the job interview.

7. Set clear goals for racial equity in the recruitment and hiring system. This could include setting diversity benchmarks for hiring teams to analyze the effectiveness of racial equity measures, as well as establishing an overall accountability system for the recruitment, hiring, promotion, and retention of diverse employees.
8. Remove barriers to underrepresented groups during the application process for all government positions, including boards and all government-funded agencies, through the following measures:
  - Create multiple portals for the submission of applications in addition to the online platform. This could include hard-copy applications, applications submitted with the assistance of immigrant-serving agencies, and applications collected through community networks.
  - Make the online application process easier to navigate.
  - Develop a community outreach and communication strategy designed to increase access to information about public service employment opportunities for racialized communities.
9. Implement inclusive screening practices such as removing candidates' names and names of educational institutions from resumes.
10. Create an inclusive interview process that includes a diverse interview panel and mandatory training of hiring personnel on unconscious bias and intercultural communication.

## **Building anti-racism capacity in the workforce**

Action 57 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action provides the compelling rationale for this subset of recommendations:

*We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.*

11. Develop a long-term, comprehensive capacity-building program for public service employees on racial equity, which includes the core capacities of intercultural competence, anti-racism, and trauma-informed practice.
12. Implement a three-stream training and learning program to build the capacities of senior leadership, managers, and employees to use a racial equity lens in performing their duties and responsibilities.
13. Design a suite of evaluation tools to measure short-term outcomes and long-term impacts of the training and learning program.
14. Recruit and train mental health professionals with lived experience of anti-Indigenous, anti-Black, anti-Asian racism and establish mobile mental health response teams that can be deployed to areas that have experienced heightened racial conflict.
15. Provide training for educators, social workers, and others working with youth to aid in the detection of early radicalization, including involvement in white nationalist groups.
16. Establish guidelines and practices promoting human dignity in workplaces, learning environments, and tenancy grant programs. This should include mandatory professional development options with standardized training credentials incorporated within code of conduct training.
17. Be vigilant in opposing secularization bills and laws that place additional restrictions on citizens' personal freedoms instead of addressing the barriers faced by racialized individuals in obtaining employment and receiving acknowledgement of their skills and experiences. One example of this is Quebec's Chapter L-0.3 Act: Respecting the Laicity of the State, which prohibits public workers from wearing religious symbols and refuses to provide public services to individuals who wear face coverings.

### **Access to Anti-Racism Resources**

There is a need for a provincial anti-racism hub where people who have experienced or witnessed acts of racism can find resources and support. This subset of recommendations focuses on creating these resources and making them widely available among diverse communities.

18. Set up multiple platforms that people experiencing racism can use to access resources and support, such as toll-free phone numbers, online portals, and agency-based connections. These platforms should provide information on contacting the Alberta Human Rights Commission, the Alberta Anti-Racism Advisory Council, the Alberta Hate Crimes Committee and other relevant agencies.
19. Develop an inclusive communications strategy (i.e. plain language, multilingual, and sign language accessible) to ensure that those facing the most barriers to information have access to anti-racism resources and support.
20. Connect and collaborate with a wide range of community organizations and networks with a deeper reach among communities that are at highest risk of or that are most impacted by racism to assist in raising awareness about harassment, racial discrimination, and racially-motivated hate. This includes the following:
  - Ethnic community media
  - Newcomer centres
  - Community cultural societies
  - Religious and faith-based organizations
  - Community education centres
  - MLA constituency offices
  - Public transit
  - Business sector

### **Equity in the Provincial Granting Process**

Racial equity means that the distribution of resources, opportunities, and barriers are not determined or predicted by race. This includes the distribution of grants and awards managed and delivered by public institutions.

21. Provide racial equity training for staff involved in the review, approval, support, and evaluation of all government grant programs.
22. Provide support to Indigenous and racialized groups and communities who may have less experience obtaining or managing provincial grants.
23. Monitor and track successful and unsuccessful grant applications to determine the representation of Black, Indigenous, and other racialized applicants.
24. Develop and use a racial equity lens in designing the grant application and selection processes.

#### Theme 4. Advancing human dignity in education

Teaching respect for each other is about recognizing that human dignity is inviolable. It is more than having the teaching curriculum translated into other languages. Within the education sector, there needs to be a common definition and understanding of both systemic racism itself and the manner in which it connects to the systemic disrespecting of the human rights of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Colour) Canadians. This requires a shared understanding of the historical roots of racism and how the history of discrimination within institutions such as public education has contributed to the erosion of human dignity. This set of recommendations focuses on creating antiracist curriculum and teaching practices, developing antiracist Canadian values, and creating antiracist environments.

1. Decolonize education by developing and providing access to curriculum with a specific focus on anti-Indigenous racism, systemic racism, and other forms of discrimination, and by supporting teachers in understanding and teaching about racism as well as the history and impact of racism embedded in teaching. This includes:
  - Making education accessible in Indigenous languages and other languages, recognizing that incorporating home languages in K-12 education is a key component of antiracist, culturally-responsive teaching.
  - Updating education policies to include anti-racism education and antiracist teaching practices.
  - Establishing an anti-racism and inclusion curriculum working group to hold schools and school boards accountable for adhering to anti-racism and inclusion policies.

2. Reframe Canadian values to include Indigenous and non-Eurocentric ways of knowing, living, and relating—values that uphold human dignity in alignment with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This is accomplished by:
  - Updating content in the K-12 curriculum to include the history of racialized peoples. This includes, but is not limited to: information on the Underground Railroad, the Afrophobic law passed by the City of Edmonton in 1911 to oppose the migration and settlement of Blacks in Canada, and the Black settlement in Amber Valley, as well as information on Chinese railway workers and the Chinese Head Tax. Alberta students should also continue to receive Holocaust education.
  - Embedding an anti-racism lens in the curriculum to promote understanding of the impact of historical racism on present-day experience and the necessary resilience of racialized communities in facing barriers and systemic structures (i.e. residential school survivors).
3. Establish and maintain accountability measures for employers, schools, post-secondary institutions, the health care system, and tenancy boards.
4. Establish guidelines, based in current scholarship and Indigenous research-based practice, for antiracist de-escalation techniques.
5. Create antiracist safe spaces for people of all backgrounds to hold complicated conversations on racism and inclusion.

### Theme 5: Statement from the Alberta Anti-Racism Advisory Council on the Alberta Health Services (AHS) Lay-offs

The members of the Alberta Anti-Racism Advisory Council have expressed concerns about the provincial government's current plan to lay off Alberta Health Services' non-clinical personnel. Data from Statistics Canada in 2019 shows that women form an overwhelming majority in health care occupations:

- Nursing – 94.1%
- Professional occupations in health (except nursing) – 59.1 %
- Technical occupations in health – 79.6%
- Assisting occupations in support of health services – 89.0%

These figures reveal that a disproportionate number of women in non-clinical / assisting occupations in health services will be targeted by these lay-offs. Using an intersectional lens, it should be noted that many of these workers are racialized and newcomer women who provide essential support in laboratories, linen and cleaning, and in-patient food services. These services are planned to be outsourced to private companies, which will put these workers in precarious employment conditions with little job security, lower wages, and no benefits or pension. Thus:

*The Alberta Anti-Racism Advisory Council strongly recommends that Minister of Health and Alberta Health Services stop these lay-offs and protect the racialized workers who will be adversely impacted, economically and socially, by these lay-offs.*

## Theme 6: Measuring progress and outcomes of anti-racism actions

Anti-racism work is complex, systemic, and multifaceted and requires access to data that speaks to the progress being made and outcomes achieved. Systematic data collection and analysis strengthen and affirm lived experiences of racism to better inform decisions made and actions made to tackle racism.

With this in mind, we recommend that the Government of Alberta undertake a coordinated effort to measure the progress and outcomes of the recommendations proposed in this report through the following:

1. Develop a racial equity index or score for all applicable programs and initiatives to gauge which are equitably serving Indigenous and racialized peoples, and which are falling short.
2. Improve data disaggregation by mandating the collection of race-based data in all departments, as well as the analysis of this data to track and evaluate the progress being made and identify existing gaps between racialized and non-racialized communities, such as:
  - Disparities in hiring, wages, occupation, and position (i.e. senior leadership, management, department staff) in the Alberta Public Service.
  - Disparities in education and health outcomes between racialized and non-racialized Albertans.
  - Disparities in socioeconomic indicators such as income levels, housing, access to public services, and exposure to crime.

- Disparities in interaction with the criminal justice system, including police stops / street checks, arrests, and sentencing and incarceration.

3. Report progress and outcomes of anti-racism actions to Albertans.