



Canadian
human rights
commission

Commission
canadienne des
droits de la personne

Canadian Human Rights Commission's Anti-Racism Progress Update

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Introduction

The Canadian Human Rights Commission has long recognized that systemic racism exists in Canada. All organizations hold responsibility for identifying and addressing racism and discrimination whenever they arise in behaviours, but also in processes, procedures and practices. The Commission continues to work on acknowledging and actively dismantling systemic racism within our organization and Canadian society.

As Canada's National Human Rights Institution (NHRI), Parliament has entrusted us with a set of responsibilities under key federal human rights laws. For decades, our work has been grounded in the Canadian Human Rights Act (CHRA) and the Employment Equity Act (EEA). In recent years, Parliament expanded and strengthened this framework through the Pay Equity Act (PEA), the Accessible Canada Act (ACA), and the National Housing Strategy Act (NSHA). These distinct responsibilities share one purpose: to advocate for human rights and provide oversight and dispute resolution processes that are fair, equitable, and respect the inherent dignity of all. Delivering on that purpose requires an integrated system where our mandates come together in service of the public interest.

That is why, in 2025, we took deliberate steps to better leverage our mandates through stronger collaboration and integration across the Commission. By aligning our work in human rights resolution, oversight, and advocacy, we are making our systems easier to navigate, more consistent in outcomes, and better positioned to deliver timely, meaningful results. In 2026, we will begin the first full year of this integrated "One Commission" approach, bringing together the CHRA, EEA, PEA, ACA, NSHA mandates for a more cohesive and consistent approach to implementation of these significant mandates.

In 2025, the Commission met over 90% of its commitments outlined in the 2021 [Anti-Racism Action Plan](#). While the planned commitments have been achieved, much of the work remains ongoing as we continue to embed inclusion, diversity, equity, accessibility, and anti-racism (IDEA-AR) into our work including governance structures and the ways in which we measure and report on results.

This progress update focuses on the Commission's efforts to foster a culture of belonging and inclusion, providing our employees with a healthy, respectful and inclusive environment. We recognize that people have complex and multilayered identities that are intersectional in nature. This means that true belonging and inclusion requires our people and systems to adapt to this reality. This progress update captures our efforts to strengthen our processes, procedures and practices to strengthen accountability, transform our workplace culture, and advocate for anti-racist change in Canada. This is what we mean when we say we are focussed on embedding IDEA-AR in all aspects of our work.

Strengthening how we make decisions, set priorities and meet them

A key focus in the past year was strengthening our governance: the way we make decisions, set priorities, and ensure that we are meeting those priorities across the Commission. We have set up new governance systems, models and teams to support informed decision-making, accountability and collaboration. Good governance helps our organization to meet our commitments on anti-racism as it helps ensure that we can manage risks and respond to emerging issues with a clear and consistent approach.

We created a Corporate Secretariat to enhance oversight mechanisms and support executive committees. By strengthening governance, decision-making, performance measurement, and accountability, the Secretariat will help ensure that inclusion, diversity, equity, accessibility, and anti-racism (IDEA-AR) principles are integrated into our processes, policies, and practices.

We continue to benefit from dedicated IDEA-AR expertise to help advise our organization on the most effective ways to improve our work on anti-racism. We also continue to support the work of the Decolonization and Anti-racism Consultation Committee, which is group of racialized employees of various levels and professional backgrounds that act as a consultative committee to inform the Commission's work, policies, and practices by providing perspectives informed by the members lived experience. This helps us ensure that we are considering the impact of our work on people and the diverse communities that we serve.

We have approached our planning with an IDEA-AR lens that welcomes diverse perspectives and takes an inclusive approach to new governance models, right from the beginning.

- **Our operational and strategic priorities:** We have ensured that we intentionally apply an IDEA-AR lens as we work towards meeting all of our organizational goals. Doing so helps to strengthen the workforce, culture, and corporate foundations, making sure they are grounded in IDEA-AR principles, enabling excellence across all programs and fostering an inclusive environment for employees.
- **Our leadership expectations:** For several years, we have included IDEA-AR commitments in the performance appraisals of executives, which makes them accountable for demonstrating inclusive leadership, and fostering respectful, equitable teams. These commitments are reviewed and updated annually to continue to push progress in tangible ways.

- **Our staff accountability:** This year marked the first year that all Commission staff had IDEA-AR commitments as part of their performance objectives. By integrating IDEA-AR into performance measurements, the Commission is reinforcing that anti-racism efforts are a shared responsibility. Every person is now formally encouraged to self-reflect on their gaps in knowledge of IDEA-AR, what they are doing to respond to their knowledge gap, and demonstrate how they contribute to a more inclusive and equitable workplace through their day-to-day work and decision-making. This shift has helped to align individual actions with institutional priorities, ensuring that we are all doing our part to sustain progress over time.

Transforming our workplace culture

As an employer, the Commission is committed to developing a culture of inclusion where everyone feels valued and can thrive in a workplace they know and trust.

This past year, Commission staff were able to engage with the Shared Ombuds Services (Ombuds) as an independent, confidential, informal, and impartial third party, providing a safe space to discuss workplace concerns and explore resolution options. The Ombuds provides insight and recommendations to senior management to help guide action when addressing conflict related to identity and discrimination.

We also held regular staff events this year, often interactive, to support awareness building on issues related to racism. For example, during Black History Month, we invited speakers who highlighted the impact of racism on people and institutions, and who explored ways to disrupt racial oppression. We continue to focus on training to improve our capacity, including training on the [ISO 301415:2021](#), which is an internationally recognized standard on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). This gives us tools to help us measure our anti-racism progress. All employees are required to complete gender-based analysis plus (GBA+) training to help build collective understanding of how to build IDEA-AR into all that we do.

Creating a more inclusive workplace

Over the past year, the Commission has undertaken several steps to build a more inclusive workplace. For example, we created an Inclusion and Belonging Network that consists of networks for employees, led by employees, with senior leadership members serving as champions and co-champions. These groups provide a space for all employees, recognizing that each person holds multiple and intersecting identities. It is a common ground for Commission staff to connect, share experiences, and contribute to a more inclusive workplace. The networks help build meaningful relationships across the organization, develop valuable professional and leadership skills, and support diversity, equity, and belonging in ways that make a tangible difference.

This is only the beginning, but so far, we have five networks available for:

- Our Pride Network for people who identify as 2SLGBTQI+
- People with disabilities
- Racialized employees
- Those experiencing menopause / perimenopause
- Indigenous employees

This work is under-pinned by broader inclusion and belonging efforts. For example, we launched Quarterly Commission Days for collaboration, relationship building and training; regular all staff meetings to keep Commission staff informed and engaged during a period of organizational change; and we brought back our annual Awards and Recognition Day to celebrate employee contributions and reinforce a culture where people feel valued and included. In addition, a Workplace Culture Award was introduced to recognize outstanding commitment to integrating diversity, inclusion and equity, fostering a supportive and respectful work environment, and promoting well-being, engagement, collaboration and knowledge sharing.

Together, these initiatives aim at supporting IDEA-AR by strengthening belonging, encouraging participation, and creating opportunities for all employees to contribute to the Commission's work. The success of these initiatives will continue to be evaluated through employee feedback and measurable improvements in workplace inclusion.

Increasing and sustaining diversity in our workforce

The Commission continues to make strong progress in building a workforce that reflects the diversity of the communities it serves. Our efforts have focused not only on representation, but on creating conditions where employees feel supported, valued, and able to thrive.

Verified Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS) data up to 2024 shows our high representation of women, Black and other racialized persons, and people with disabilities, with a slight gap for Indigenous employees. The **percentage of people who self-identify as racialized has been trending upward and has nearly doubled since 2018 — from 16.1% in 2018 to 28.8% in 2024**. This data demonstrates the impact of sustained recruitment and retention efforts at all levels.

This data is based on voluntary reporting from Commission employees. In each category, the Commission's representation is compared against departmental workforce availability (WFA). For Black employees and executives, the Commission's representation is compared against the overall representation within the Government of Canada's core public administration ([public service \(PS\) benchmarks](#)).

These outcomes reflect the Commission's deliberate and ongoing commitment to equity in hiring, talent development, and workplace culture.

Employees

The figures for employee representation and benchmarks come from published TBS 2024 data.

Within the Commission's workforce:

- 28.8% self-identify as racialized (6.3 pts above WFA of 22.5%)
- 9.1% self-identify as Black (4 pts above PS benchmark of 5.1%)
- 2.7% self-identify as Indigenous (0.6 pts below WFA of 3.3%)
- 73.5% are women (14.1 pts above WFA of 59.4%)
- 18.9% self-identify as a person with a disability (7.2 pts above WFA of 11.7%)

Leadership

We make intentional efforts to ensure the Commission's executive leadership reflects the diversity of the people we serve. Executive figures rely on internal HR data from May 2026. The public service benchmarks come from published TBS data.

Within the Commission's executive team:

- 28% of executives identify as racialized (12.8 pts above WFA of 15.2%)
- 20% of executives identify as Black (16.8 pts above PS benchmark of 3.2%)
- 56% of executives are women (18.9 pts above to the WFA of 37.1%)
- Data suppressed* for executives who identify as a person with a disability and executives who identify as Indigenous to protect privacy.

***Note:** Information for small numbers has been suppressed. Additionally, to avoid residual disclosure, other data points may also be suppressed.

While the Commission's representation figures are an indicator of progress, there are still gaps in Indigenous recruitment and retention that need addressing. The Commission will continue to make efforts to exceed representation targets established by the Employment Equity Act.

We recognize that taken together, the Commission's data does not give the full picture since it relies on Commission staff to self-identify. Although staff self-identification rate has been above 70% over the last two years, we are working hard at fostering a culture in which employees feel comfortable self-identifying. As a first step, we have launched a survey to better understand why some staff do not self-identify. This will help us better design initiatives to foster trust. We want our all our employees to feel confident that self-identification will help the Commission to better understand whether different groups of people are experiencing the workplace differently and whether the opportunities and outcomes for employees are equitable.

Another tool we use to better understand the outcomes for employees is the Employment Systems Review. It is an in-depth analysis of the Commission's employment systems, policies and practices, and the manner in which these are implemented for staff who identify as women, Indigenous, persons with disabilities, Black or otherwise racialized. This report will allow us to continue to improve.

Hearing directly from Commission employees

This year, the Commission received the results of the 2024 Public Service Employee Survey (PSES). Sixty-nine percent of Commission employees participated in the survey, which is 19 percentage points higher than the public service average.

The 2024 PSES results indicate that Black and other racialized employees at the Commission experience a more positive workplace environment than their counterparts across the federal public service. They reported higher levels of satisfaction, inclusion, and confidence in anti-racism efforts, as well as lower levels of stress and harassment. However, they did report lower results for feeling accepted as an equal member or encouraged to be innovative. With this in mind, the Commission will continue to use the PSES results as an indicator of areas to continue to make improvements.

Here are some key highlights:

Black employees

Commission 2024 PSES results

What we are measuring	Commission	Public service	Difference
Got satisfaction from their work	95%	76%	+19 pts
Felt valued at work	83%	69%	+14 pts
Supported to propose new ideas	83%	58%	+25 pts
High/very high work stress	11%	19%	-8 pts
Org implements anti-racism initiatives	66%	54%	+12 pts
Comfortable sharing racism concerns	73%	59%	+14 pts
Experienced harassment	0%	12%	0% at the Commission

Racialized employees

Commission 2024 PSES results

What we are measuring	Commission	Public service	Difference
Got satisfaction from their work	87%	75%	+12 pts
Felt valued at work	85%	70%	+15 pts
Supported to propose new ideas	81%	60%	+21 pts
High/very high work stress	14%	21%	-7 pts
Org implements anti-racism initiatives	77%	61%	+16 pts
Comfortable sharing racism concerns	73%	67%	+6 pts
Experienced harassment	5%	12%	-7 pts

More support for racialized employees

This year marks the end of the first 18-month cycle of the Commission's Sponsorship and Mentorship program for equity deserving employees. This initiative matched 10 Indigenous, Black and other racialized employees with 10 other employees or senior leaders to help them with their career goals and professional development. Sponsorship and mentorship are concrete ways to remove barriers to advancement. Access to official language training is a barrier for many equity deserving employees, which is why we prioritized providing language training for Indigenous, Black and other racialized employees participating in the program.

We also encouraged Black employees, as well as allies, to participate in the Building the Pipeline Initiative Learning Program (BPILP). This was an initiative launched by Ombuds that served the larger Government of Canada network. Twelve of our employees participated in this program over a few months. Among other learning modalities, the program offered trauma-informed learning and restorative learning. Participating staff were involved in training that focused on inclusive leadership, systemic equity, and conflict management. The program has yielded positive results in a short period of time, with Commission staff saying they felt it helped them build concrete skills and competencies to thrive in the workplace.

Conclusion: Maintaining momentum

The Commission has made meaningful progress in strengthening an inclusive and equitable workplace culture and rethinking the way we make decisions, set goals and meet them.

The progress reflected in this update is more than a series of initiatives or results. It signals a meaningful shift in how our organization works, leads, and supports its staff as they carry out the important work of serving people in Canada. Through a “One Commission” approach, reinforced accountability, and strong employment equity outcomes, IDEA-AR is increasingly integrated in our culture, our processes, procedures and practices, and our expectations of ourselves as a public institution.

This momentum is being felt across the organization. It has been built through sustained effort, shared accountability, and the commitment of employees and leaders. But this work is not complete. The task ahead is to build on this foundation with the same focus and determination — deepening impact, closing gaps, and ensuring that IDEA-AR remains central to how we serve, lead, and measure results.