

**Economic Inclusion Roundtable Summary Report Content**

**Taking Action: Economic Inclusion Roundtable**

On January 26, 2021, the Government of Ontario’s Anti-Racism Directorate and CivicAction hosted a virtual roundtable on economic inclusion in the workplace. Bringing together over 100 established and rising leaders from across sectors, communities, and experiences, attendees worked to identify concrete actions employers can take to build **workplaces that work for everyone**.

Roundtable snapshot

<b>100+</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>2 in 3</b>	<b>50+</b>
Established and rising leaders representing all sectors, various backgrounds and multiple communities from across Ontario	Participants who felt actively involved in identifying concrete actions employers can take to address systemic racism in the workplace	Attendees who said they were exposed to new information about systemic racism and expanded their networks in the process	Ideas and opportunities identified by attendees to build workplaces for everyone

A blueprint to build inclusive workplaces

Systemic racism is a deeply rooted issue in the workplace today. Indigenous, Black and racialized talent face unique and longstanding challenges to getting hired, promoted and accessing professional development opportunities – often resulting in lower pay and less upward mobility.

As identified by roundtable attendees, here are some of the **actions employers can take** to support the hiring, promotion and professional development of Indigenous, Black and racialized talent in Ontario.

### Opportunities for action: **recruitment**

- Recruit based on current **organizational need** and **position competencies** (not just who held the position previously) and recognize that non-essential requirements, such as mandatory education or experience, may be barriers to potential applicants.
- Provide managers and human resources professionals with access to relevant training and tools (e.g. [CivicAction’s HireNext assessment](#); [LinkedIn Learning free online courses](#)).

*“The pipeline is an artificial problem. The talent exists. Organizations need to be more intentional in connecting to it.”*

### Opportunities for action: **expanding networks**

- Support and encourage the establishment of **employee resource groups** centred on cultural or racial backgrounds.
- Provide **training on how to network effectively** and intentionally provide access to networking opportunities for Indigenous, Black, and racialized talent (e.g. conferences, events).

*“Your network is built by what you have access to. I know I can be successful once I get to the table – help me get there.”*

### Opportunities for action: **finding diverse talent**

- **Expand your recruitment outreach** to non-traditional talent sources including seeking out community partnerships, building relationships with different academic institutions and offering internships.
- **Make your postings and roles more relevant** and accessible to racialized communities – consider transferable skills, the value of lived experience, and access to technology for those seeking opportunities.

*“It’s frustrating to hear a company commit to change, but see them go back to the same three universities every time they recruit. There are so many more options for talent.”*

### Opportunities for action: **supporting career advancement**

- **Promote inclusive advancement.** Provide mentorship, coaching and succession planning, and support managers in becoming trusted and effective internal champions of talent.
- Build **targeted advancement and retention strategies** focused on supporting the success of racialized talent.

### Opportunities for action: **sponsorship**

- Design and implement **sponsorship programs** where senior leaders are intentionally paired with diverse rising talent. Assign a senior leader to serve as an executive champion for this.
- **Partner with other organizations.** This could include cross-sectoral partnerships to open new pathways or partners with credible and valued ties to specific racialized communities.

## Opportunities for action: **workplace culture**

- **Inclusive workplace culture starts at the top.** Set the expectation that senior leaders actively promote and support inclusive practices, commit to ongoing education and track impact through performance management processes.
- Implement **inclusive orientation and onboarding practices** to support employees. Provide clear information, outline support mechanisms and provide an internal “onboarding buddy”.

*“If you invest in building an inclusive culture, it creates the foundation for all other equity, diversity and inclusion work. Change happens at the speed of trust.”*

## Opportunities for action: **measuring progress**

- Set **clear performance metrics** for your organization and leadership. Measure outcomes and outputs, tie results to performance/compensation and demonstrate accountability by reporting on progress/results. Don’t discount qualitative and verbatim feedback – numbers don’t always tell the whole story.
- Implement **regular employee engagement surveys** to gather employee feedback on inclusion in your organization (e.g. [the Ontario Public Service Employee Engagement Survey](#)).

*“Set goals and report on progress, but ensure that targets don’t become the ceiling. They are the floor from which to build.”*

## Opportunities for action: **executive leadership**

- Visibly and actively **champion inclusion and equity** and **bring others along with you**. Establish a dedicated senior role that sets the organization’s inclusion vision and direction, but also ensure that accountability for progress is shared across your leadership team.
- **Create space for honest and candid conversations about inclusion and anti-racism**. Engage external experts to facilitate where needed, allow equity efforts to be driven by employees (particularly those who identify as Indigenous, Black or racialized), and provide resources and senior level support.

*“Senior leaders need to consistently ask: how do we get comfortable with discomfort?”*

## Opportunities for action: **external-facing actions**

- **Integrate and align your organization’s corporate social responsibility efforts** to support the advancement of Indigenous, Black and racialized communities and seek out the advice and input of employees in defining your corporate social responsibility goals.
- Develop **diverse and inclusive supply chain best practices** – require potential vendors to outline their commitment to inclusion when bidding, and actively seek out vendors/service providers from Indigenous, Black and racialized communities (e.g. [Royal Bank of Canada’s Supplier Diversity Commitment](#)).

## Inclusive workplaces: a vision for tomorrow

In addition to actions employers can take, roundtable attendees also proposed “future headlines” showing what success and progress can look like. Here are some of their suggestions:

- “Canada has eliminated colonial norms in the workplace and has invited a new generation of accessibility and inclusion.”
- “Leaders across public, private and non-profit sectors work together to launch standardized and inclusive job applications.”
- “Canada's top 100 employers commit to real-time, employee data collection, as a first-step to creating long-term sponsorship/internship opportunities with the objective of creating pathways for Indigenous, Black and racialized talent.”
- “Leaders being held accountable for creating a psychologically safe workplace for Indigenous, Black and racialized employees.”