

OneBrantford: Inclusive City Strategy





Message from the Mayor

On behalf of City Council, I am proud to reaffirm the City of Brantford's ongoing commitment to fostering a workplace and community where every individual and family, regardless of background, has equal opportunities to succeed, thrive, and belong. Brantford is a city that embraces and celebrates the diverse cultural, social, and ethnic fabric that makes us stronger together.

Our community's strength lies in its diversity, and it is through collaboration with our community partners that we can create a more inclusive and welcoming city. I want to extend my gratitude to our partners and staff, whose ongoing efforts are essential to ensuring that inclusion is not only a goal but a shared value throughout Brantford.

The Inclusive City Strategy embodies Brantford's determination to lead by example as a municipality committed to inclusivity. It emphasizes our dedication to developing and implementing best practices, that will not only create an inclusive, welcoming workplace, but also a community that recognizes and values the contributions of all its diverse members. Together, with our community partners, we are building a future where diversity is celebrated, and every individual has the opportunity to thrive.



Kevin Davis, Mayor of Brantford



Message from the CAO

It is with great pride, and a deep sense of responsibility, that I endorse the Inclusive City Strategy.

This comprehensive plan has been thoughtfully developed to ensure that all staff and residents, regardless of background, ability, or circumstance, is not only valued but empowered to thrive and succeed in Brantford.

The City of Brantford is a workplace that takes immense pride in its ethnically, socially, and culturally diverse team. Our diversity is our strength, and it is essential that municipal services, programs, and policies reflect and include the perspectives, needs, and talents within our workplace. We are committed to fostering an environment where racism and discrimination has no place. The City's focus is to create an inclusive space where everyone feels respected and valued, with equal opportunity to succeed.

We are dedicated to building a future where inclusion, respect, and opportunity is not only our core value but a reality for all. Together, we will continue to create a community that celebrates what makes us all unique.



Michael Bradley, Chief Administrative Officer



Introduction

In May 2022, the City of Brantford joined the UNESCO Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities (CIM), committing to collaborate with local experts and organizations to ensure everyone can fully participate in economic, political, social, and cultural life.

In June 2023, the City launched its [Inclusive Community Plan](#), designed to promote and celebrate diversity. Endorsed by over 30 community partners, the plan is based on three Guiding Principles:



Learn from Each Other



Stand Up for Each Other



Celebrate Each Other

These principles have shaped new initiatives and community partnerships, laying the groundwork for our efforts to foster inclusive programs, services, and workplace culture. They also complement several internal initiatives that support the goals of the Inclusive City Strategy.



Terminology

Inclusion is a broad concept that recognizes the diverse experiences within communities and the harm caused by hate, discrimination and inequity. While the terminology may differ, inclusion-related strategies generally focus on three key elements:

1. Communities consist of individuals with differing experiences and opportunities
2. Tangible actions can help ensure that all individuals feel welcome and included
3. Acknowledgment that strategies must continually evolve and adapt to meet the needs of the community



Equity - Everyone is treated according to their diverse needs in a way that enables all people to participate, perform, and engage to the same extent.



Diversity - Unique characteristics and qualities every individual possesses, including race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, economic status, physical abilities, and life experiences. While diversity is a fact, inclusion is a choice.



Inclusion - Creation of a culture that values and respects diversity, ensuring that individual needs are met so everyone feels valued, respected, and empowered to contribute fully.

A comprehensive glossary from the [Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion](#) further defines key terms related to equity, diversity and inclusion.



We will provide inclusive programs, services and facilities

Focusing on inclusion is a strategic business decision. It promotes innovation, increases revenue, and prepares the municipality for long-term success in a diverse and evolving landscape. As highlighted in the AMO's 2022 "We All Win" guide, embracing diversity in all its forms—gender, identity, ethnicity, race, age, and ability—helps build stronger, more inclusive communities.

How will we do this?

- Action 1.1 Seek community input to better understand the needs and preferences of diverse populations to enhance customer satisfaction and improve service delivery.
- Action 1.2 Reduce language barriers by making program and promotional materials more accessible.
- Action 1.3 Provide training to staff that supports a greater understanding of equity, diversity, and inclusion, such as Indigenous cultural competency training.
- Action 1.4 Continue to implement the [Brantford Accessibility Plan](#) to improve accessibility features across programs and facilities, in alignment with the City's Accessibility Policy.
- Action 1.5 Advance the inclusivity goals of the [Building Our Community from the Kids Up Plan](#) through integrating Indigenous culture into child and family programs, ensuring specialized supports are available in licensed child care, and expanding affordable child care in underserved areas.
- Action 1.6 Prioritize the inclusion of older adults and youth by supporting the initiatives of the [Healthy Aging Strategy](#) and the [Empowering Youth Strategy](#).
- Action 1.7 Support the goals of the Inclusion and Access Pathway for Early Learning and Child Care to develop an inclusive, equitable, and accessible system.
- Action 1.8 Advance the goals of the Customer Code of Conduct Policy to ensure a welcoming environment for patrons and staff.
- Action 1.9 Promote the preservation and celebration of cultural assets through the [Economic Development Strategy](#).
- Action 1.10 Support public art that reflects Brantford's diverse history and amplifies local artists as outlined in the [Municipal Cultural Plan](#) and the Public Art Policy.



We will create a welcoming and inclusive workplace

Corporations that prioritize inclusivity enjoy competitive advantages, including attracting and retaining a diverse workforce, enhanced employee engagement, and greater workplace efficiency. Studies by the Canadian Association for Supported Employment show that inclusive workplaces have over 90% job performance efficiency, better safety ratings, and reduced turnover. Diverse leadership also boosts creativity, problem-solving and adaptability to technological change. In the public sector, a workforce reflective of local demographics creates more equitable policies and services. Leadership is key in fostering an inclusive workplace; inclusive leaders are self-aware, promote collaboration and create a welcoming environment.

How will we do this?

- Action 2.1 Ensure hiring policies and practices support the recruitment of candidates from diverse backgrounds, including representation on committees, community advisory boards and other local boards where the City makes appointments.
- Action 2.2 Engage with Indigenous community leaders and local organizations to identify and recruit talent within Indigenous communities.
- Action 2.3 Continue integrating recruitment language and imagery that resonates with a broader and more diverse candidate pool.
- Action 2.4 Spotlight equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility information on the Human Resources landing page on the City's intranet.
- Action 2.5 Promote an inclusive workplace across departments by sharing toolkits that include definitions, FAQs, and tangible actions.
- Action 2.6 Establish internal project teams focused on supporting inclusion-based projects, events, and initiatives.
- Action 2.7 Ensure all employees are aware of the Respectful Workplace Standard, the reporting channels for workplace harassment or discrimination, and the City's Safe Reporting Process.
- Action 2.8 Review anti-harassment and discrimination policies regularly to ensure effective action on incidents.
- Action 2.9 Implement the People Master Plan and its actions to create a safe, healthy, and inclusive workplace.
- Action 2.10 Continue soliciting feedback on equity, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace through exit interviews, stay interviews, and employee engagement surveys.
- Action 2.11 Embrace inclusion as part of retention strategies through supporting career growth, employee resource groups, and training opportunities.
- Action 2.12 Review corporate policies and standard operating procedures across departments based on best practices outlined in the [Human Rights-Based Approach Framework](#).
- Action 2.13 Create an anti-racism charter that includes guiding principles for creating a safe and equitable workplace where diversity is valued and racism is actively challenged.



We will help build an inclusive community

When every member of a community is included, the entire community thrives. According to Ontario's Anti-Racism Strategic Plan and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, integrating equity, diversity and inclusion principles into municipal planning can:

- Strengthen social cohesion
- Improve public services
- Increase economic growth
- Enhance public safety
- Support resilience and adaptation
- Increase democratic participation
- Reduce legal risk

How will we do this?

- Action 3.1 Advance the principles of the [Inclusive Community Plan](#) by learning, standing up and celebrating each other.
- Action 3.2 Collaborate with Indigenous partners to advance the goals of Truth & Reconciliation.
- Action 3.3 Elevate the visibility and voices of inclusion-focused groups, committees, and planning tables.
- Action 3.4 Co-design community-based, inclusion-focused programs and initiatives.
- Action 3.5 Support community-led projects focused on inclusion, anti-racism, gender equity, and anti-hate initiatives.
- Action 3.6 Promote participation in flag-raising events to support diverse community groups.
- Action 3.7 Celebrate diversity by supporting events that highlight community differences and strengths.
- Action 3.8 Maintain and promote an events calendar recognizing significant days, weeks, and months.
- Action 3.9 Develop a dedicated webpage on the City's public facing website featuring resources, dates, and events for both internal and external partners.
- Action 3.10 Encourage community members to apply for local grant opportunities to promote diversity in Brantford.
- Action 3.11 Grow partnerships and support community organizations working with priority groups, including women, Indigenous, Black, 2SLGBTQIA+, people with disabilities and those experiencing poverty.
- Action 3.12 Support the success and prosperity of new immigrants through the [Brantford Immigration Partnership Action Plan](#).



References

[Association of Municipalities of Ontario \(2022, February, 9\). We All Win – Diversity on Council](#)

[Canadian Association for Supported Employment \(2021, January\). HR Inclusive Policy Toolkit](#)

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[Federation of Canadian Municipalities. \(n.d.\). Factsheet: Advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion in municipal service delivery. Green Municipal Fund](#)

[Ontario. \(2023\). Building a stronger and more inclusive Ontario: Ontario's anti-racism strategic plan. Government of Ontario](#)