



2025-2028

Regional Equity and Anti-Racism Strategy



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This document is the Regional Equity and Anti-Racism Strategy for the Municipality of Colchester, Town of Truro, Village of Bible Hill, and Town of Stewiacke. This strategy is the collective effort of a working group from these communities, collaborating with community leaders and diverse groups in our region. Our group has authored this strategy with the goal of making our region more equitable, inclusive, safe and supportive for all.

This strategy was first developed in partnership with Waking the unConscious (WtC), who supported the early stages of community engagement and research. Their work helped gather community voices and identify key themes that shaped the foundation of this strategy. The regional team then refined the document to make sure it reflects local priorities, accessibility, and the shared goals of all four municipalities.

We know racism and discrimination still happen in our region. This strategy is one step toward dismantling those harms and it also supports the work of Truth and Reconciliation with Mi'kmaq and other Indigenous communities

This strategy will guide elected councils and municipal employees to work together with local people, businesses, and community groups to work together to:

- Strive to dismantle racism, hate, and discrimination.
- Increase equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility.
- Work towards the goals of Truth and Reconciliation
- Create and foster a truly supportive community where everyone belongs.

When reading this document, please keep in mind:

- Many people from our region collaborated and shared their ideas and insight in the creation of this strategy.
- This strategy builds on our past efforts, programs and initiatives across our region.
- This strategy aligns with the requirements and commitments laid out in regulations under the *Dismantling Racism and Hate Act, Bill No. 96*
- This strategy will grow and change along with our region as we learn together.

We are grateful to all the partners and community members who helped shape and bring this Regional Equity and Anti-Racism Strategy to life, building a more inclusive, safe, and supportive community. We also acknowledge Nick Gaines Photography for providing several of the photographs featured throughout this document.

Land Acknowledgement

We begin by acknowledging and understanding the longstanding history that has brought us to reside on this land today. A history of colonialism and broken treaties. A history of genocide, ethnic cleansing, and stolen land. A history where children were stripped of their native languages and cultural traditions while being forced from their families, often never to be seen again. A history of sovereignty that was never ceded.

A history that is not so distant but rather continues today. We acknowledge the pervasive reality and lasting impact of colonialism as it manifests in today's society. We pay our respects to the elders of past, present, and future as well as all Indigenous Peoples coast to coast for the harm and loss endured, and the resilience and strength embodied. We stand with you as you mourn the loss of all the children that never made it home and we stand with you as you mourn the loss of your sisters, your daughters, your mothers, your nieces, your cousins, and all the women in your lives that are missing and murdered.

In peace and friendship, and in the spirit of truth and reconciliation, we acknowledge that the Municipality of Colchester, Town of Truro, Village of Bible Hill, and Town of Stewiacke are located in Mi'kma'ki, the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people. This territory is covered by the Treaties of Peace and Friendship, which the Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) Peoples first signed with the British Crown in 1725. These treaties recognized Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) title and established the rules for what was to be an ongoing relationship between nations; they did not deal with surrender of lands and resources. The Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik Peoples hold inherent rights as the original peoples of these lands, with governance systems and traditions that predate the formation of Canada. These treaties are grounded in mutual respect and co-governance. Like the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, they place collective obligations on all of us within Mi'kma'ki.

We are grateful to Millbrook First Nation for their leadership and wisdom. On this journey towards reconciliation, we take responsibility for our role and look to Indigenous leaders for guidance on the teachings that will allow us to become stewards of this land and live in harmony with nature and with each other. We affirm our commitment to dismantling the systems that continue to oppress Indigenous people. We are all Treaty people.



African Nova Scotian Acknowledgement

We recognize that African Nova Scotians are a distinct people whose histories, legacies and contributions have enriched that part of Mi'kma'ki known as Nova Scotia for over 400 years. African Nova Scotian contributions to Nova Scotia and Canada began over 150 years before Canada became a country.

The first known African Nova Scotian was Mathieu Da Costa, a Free African person from Portugal, who worked as a translator and spoke several languages, including Mi'kmaw. We recognize the sacrifices and mistreatment of the Black Loyalists. We recognize those that came to the province through enslavement or through fleeing enslavement elsewhere, and those that continue to experience structural, systemic, and individual discrimination.

We recognize and acknowledge the systematic mistreatment that African Nova Scotians have faced and continue to face. The suffering and sacrifice borne by this community has resulted in multi-generational trauma and harm. We commit to dismantling the systems of discrimination and working with the community to rebuild trust. We recognize and honour the knowledge and experience of these communities, and we are grateful for their leadership and guidance.

As a region, we will strive to recognize and eradicate systemic racism. We value and celebrate the history and richness of the African Nova Scotian people. Their resistance, resilience, creativity, spirituality, and leadership have profoundly shaped our families and communities within Nova Scotia and across Canada.



Words of Appreciation

We also recognize the Acadian community's roots in this land, their resilience, and contributions to our heritage. We are truly grateful to everyone in our community for their fellowship and contributions to making our region a better place.

While equity and anti-racism is the focus of this document, we acknowledge that there are additional forms of discrimination that impact our communities. We also acknowledge that many people living in Nova Scotia have intersecting identities which may expose them to more than one form of discrimination.

Commitment to Equity and Anti-Racism

This document contains our Regional Equity and Anti-Racism Strategy that will address systemic hate, inequity, and racism in our region. This Strategy takes guidance from the commitments made in the *Dismantling Racism and Hate Act* and identifies actions our region can take to build a society that is more inclusive and embeds equity and anti-racism in what we do as a government.

As a region, we are fully committed to eliminating the systemic barriers that exist within public sector policy and programs. More so, we aim to heal and rebuild relationships with underrepresented and underserved communities, and to engage in the spirit of respect, trust, and collaboration.





The Words We Use

Nova Scotia's Office of Equity and Anti-Racism (OEA) defines underrepresented and underserved communities as those groups who experience discrimination and exclusion because of unequal power relationships across economic, political, social, and cultural dimensions. This includes systemic hate, inequity and/or racism towards people based on one or more protected characteristics as identified in the [Human Rights Act](#), which includes: age, race, colour, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, physical or mental disability, ethnicity, national or Indigenous origin, family status, marital status, source of income, and political belief, affiliation or activity.

Below are examples of underrepresented and underserved groups in Nova Scotia. Each of these groups has their own unique story, historical setting and history of discrimination and marginalization (this list is not exhaustive and may not include all groups who would identify as underrepresented and/or underserved):

- Mi'kmaq and Persons of Indigenous descent
- African Nova Scotians and Persons of African descent
- Persons of Colour/Racialized Persons
- Newcomers (immigrants and refugees)
- 2SLGBTQIA+
- Persons with disabilities
- Minority faith-based groups
- Persons who are neurodivergent
- In some contexts, women

For more definitions and explanation of the terms used in this document, please see the end of the Strategy in the section: [Appendix B: Glossary of Terms](#).

Background Context

Purpose of This Strategy

In 2022, the Province of Nova Scotia passed the *Dismantling Racism and Hate Act*, demonstrating the province's commitment to addressing systemic hate, inequity, and racism. It was drafted by an All-Party Committee and informed by engagement with Nova Scotians, especially underrepresented and underserved communities, who shared their concerns, fears, hopes, and needs.

In July 2023, the Province of Nova Scotia launched their Equity and Anti-Racism Strategy and in July 2024, the Province prescribed Municipalities and Villages to follow suit and implement their own Equity and Anti- Racism Strategy tailored to the needs of underrepresented and underserved members of communities within each region and have it publicly available by April 1, 2025, and updated every three (3) years.

Collectively, our municipal units play an essential role in charting the path for our communities to dismantle hate, racism, and discrimination in the practical ways that we operate through policy, land use, hiring, services, program delivery, etc. This Regional Equity and Anti-Racism Strategy has been developed to meet all the requirements under the *Dismantling Racism and Hate Act*, and is intended to be readily shared with partners, businesses, community members, and organizations.



How This Document Was Created

This document was created by a working group comprised of municipal leaders from the region, and work was conducted in three phases. Here is a brief overview of the process behind how this strategy was created.



Phase 1: Current State Assessment

- Conduct thorough review and assess existing documents and resources.
- Conduct demographic assessment of municipalities to better understand representation.



Phase 2: Community Engagements

- Public open houses
- Focus Groups
- One-on-one interviews



Phase 3: Strategy Development

- Using previous activities, develop Equity and Anti-Racism Strategy
- Present Equity and Anti-Racism Strategy to community

Who We Heard From

In developing this strategy, the goal is for people to have reasonable access to a variety of options to participate and engage. The foundation of this strategy is community engagement, with real input and insight from our community. Here is a brief overview of the people and groups that were consulted with:

- Members of the public from across our region, through various options including:
 - Open houses
 - Public consultation sessions
 - Group discussions
 - One-on-one interviews
- Elected officials and leaders representing:
 - The Municipality of Colchester
 - Town of Truro
 - Village of Bible Hill
 - Town of Stewiacke



- Community members and groups representing persons with disabilities and neurodivergence, including:
 - School Accessibility Support
 - Lemonaid Stand Society
 - Autism Nova Scotia
 - Individual members of the community
- Community leaders from the Indigenous community in the region, including:
 - Mi'kmaq community leaders from Millbrook First Nations
 - Individual members of the community
- Community members and groups representing the Black Nova Scotian community in the region, including:
 - African Nova Scotian Affairs
 - African Nova Scotian Community Strategy Committee
 - Individual members of the community
- Community members and groups representing underrepresented and underserved communities in the region, including:
 - Community members who are part of racialized groups (including Mi'kmaq, African Nova Scotians, South Asians, Filipino, and many others).
 - Women
 - Community members from the 2SLGBTQIA+ community
 - Truro Pride
 - Members of the Acadian community (Francophone Community Centre)
 - Individual members of the community



- Community groups from the immigrant community in the region, including:
 - North Shore Local Immigration Partnership (YMCA Centre for Immigrant Programs)
 - Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS)
 - Individual members of the community

- Diversity, equity and inclusion groups and individuals in the region, including:
 - The Municipality of Colchester EDIA Committee
 - The Town of Truro Diversity Advisory Committee
 - Local community groups and representatives

- Community members and groups representing the education community including but not limited to:
 - Chignecto Central Regional Centre for Education (CCRCE)
 - Dalhousie Agricultural Campus representatives
 - Local education-focused community groups and individuals

- Community members and groups representing the business community including:
 - Members of the Town of Stewiacke Business & Tourism Committee
 - Individual business leaders in the region

Our Commitments

In our consultations and the learnings that emerged, we recognized that there are issues to address. We have tried to prioritize the most important work that needs to happen. In this strategy, we in government commit to:

1. Serving and supporting everyone in our community with dignity and respect and seeking to improve the lives of every person in our community.
2. Striving to dismantle racism, discrimination and hate. We value our diversity and learn from each other. This includes:
 - Improving the way our municipalities serve and support our community.
 - Improving our internal culture with regards to diversity, equity, and inclusion
 - Developing a pipeline for underrepresented community members to gain opportunity for employment within our community
3. On-going meaningful community engagement and a relationship built on respect, trust, and collaboration. We will be transparent and accountable to the public in our continuing efforts to advance equity and inclusion and to combat racism.
4. Healing and rebuilding relationships with underrepresented and underserved communities and improving our region's inclusivity, and support for those groups.
5. Supporting the work towards Truth and Reconciliation alongside leaders in the Indigenous community.

These commitments will be reflected in the strategic actions we outline in this strategy. Based on the learnings from our current state assessment and the consultations we did; we identified three thematic equity and anti-racism priority areas. We identify the three priority areas to be (1) community relationships, (2) education, and (3) organizational change.



Key Objectives

This Regional Equity and Anti-Racism Strategy was developed with the following goals:



1. To guide us.

This strategy is meant to guide the regional municipalities and their staff and council in the ongoing work to foster an inclusive community, working toward the elimination of racism and discrimination.



2. To take action.

This strategy identifies specific actions and initiatives that the municipalities and communities will take to address systemic hate, inequity and racism of underrepresented and underserved groups within our region.



3. To collaborate.

This strategy outlines actions to inspire community members, businesses, and organizations to engage in equity, diversity, inclusion and justice initiatives and identify ways they can support the strategy to dismantle hate and racism and strive for equity and inclusion within our communities.



Diversity in Our Region

Our region includes the communities in the Municipality of Colchester, Town of Truro, Town of Stewiacke, and Village of Bible Hill. Millbrook First Nation is located within the boundaries of the Town of Truro and our figures include Millbrook's census data. In 2021, the most recent census counts the combined population of the region at 51,476. The region saw population growth of about 1.8% from 2016 to 2021.

51,476

Total Population
(2021 Census)

↑1.8%

Population Growth (%)
from 2016 to 2021

3,627.50

Total Land Area
(sq km)

People with Disabilities in our Region

Nova Scotia has the highest rate of disability, per capita, of any province in Canada. To compare, we looked at data from Statistics Canada's Canadian Survey on Disability, 2017 to 2022. Canada, as a whole, has a rate of disability of 27%, but Nova Scotia reports the highest proportion of people with disabilities in Canada at 37.9%, a rate that has been consistently increasing, rising from 30.4% in 2016.

37.9%

Percentage of Nova
Scotians with a disability,

↑7.5%

Increase in the Rate of Disability in Nova
Scotians, from 2016 to 2022



Learnings from the Assessment and Engagement Process

Through conversations with staff, elected officials, partners, and community members, we heard many of the same reflections that helped shape this strategy. These insights highlight where our strengths are and where we need to focus more attention to create lasting change.

Relationships and Trust

Strong relationships are at the heart of equity work. People emphasized the need for more collaboration between municipalities, community groups, and residents, including stronger ties with Mi'kmaq communities and other local partners. We also heard that relationships take time and consistency, and that follow-through matters. When actions like flag-raising or heritage recognitions are not paired with ongoing engagement or meaningful change, it can leave people questioning the long-term impact. Communities also spoke about accountability. They asked for visible updates and signs of reciprocity, such as municipalities showing up for community-led events as well as inviting others to municipal initiatives.

Access and Inclusion

There is a clear need for information to be accessible and available in ways that meet different needs. This includes plain language, translations into languages such as French and Mi'kmaw when appropriate, and formats that work for people with different abilities. We also heard that not all voices are consistently included, particularly those of 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, newcomers, and racialized individuals such as Mi'kmaq, African Nova Scotians, South Asians, Filipino, among many others.

Capacity and Resources

Limited staff and budgets make it difficult to move ideas forward quickly, particularly in smaller municipalities where there is no dedicated Human Resources (HR) or Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (EDIA) support. Even when there is strong interest, the capacity to act can be stretched. Participants suggested creative approaches, sharing resources, and working together to make the best use of what we have.



Consistency and Communication

Policies and practices are not always applied in the same way across municipalities, which can create gaps in access and service. Participants supported finding greater consistency while still allowing room for local needs. They also emphasized the importance of clear and regular communication about progress, updates on changes, and opportunities for feedback.

These insights guided the actions in this strategy and highlight the importance of relationship-building, accessibility, resource sharing, and open communication in creating meaningful, lasting change. They will continue to guide our commitments moving forward and ensure that progress remains visible, measurable, and sustained.

The next section outlines how these ideas will be put into action through clear goals and practical steps.



Our Commitments Moving Forward

The following commitments outline the priorities and actions we will take to advance equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism in our region. These commitments are based on what we heard from community members, municipal staff, and partner organizations during consultations.

Each commitment is designed to:

- Address recurring themes and gaps identified in community engagement.
- Build on strengths while responding to areas where improvement is needed.
- Support tangible, sustained change that goes beyond symbolic actions.

Our approach recognizes that building trust, addressing inequities, and fostering meaningful relationships is ongoing work. The commitments outlined in this section will guide how we collaborate, make decisions, and measure progress in the years ahead.

1. Community Relationships

Key Priority: Continuing municipal engagement and consultation with our community, building deeper trust and meaningful dialogue.

Strategic Action 1.1

Ongoing community engagement to build trust and open conversation.

Sub-actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a flowchart that helps organize the different community groups that can be utilized throughout the implementation of this strategy.• Launch bi-annual “Community Equity Forums” with rotating hosts. These will be public open houses for anyone from our region to have their voice heard.• Offer ASL/Mi’kmaw interpretation, as needed.• Offering a variety of options for engagement, joining via Zoom, Teams, etc., for those who cannot attend in person, as needed.
Timeline	2025-2028 - first full cycle completed Q4 2026
Public Education and Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dedicated page on municipal websites & posted engagement schedule.• Co-branded posters in community hubs• Social media• Via coalition of community resource list (mailing list, network, etc.)
KPIs / Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• # of forums held (target 2/yr)





Potential list of groups to include in the community group flowchart:

- Millbrook First Nation
- African Nova Scotian Community Strategy Committee
- Lemonaid Stand Society
- Autism Nova Scotia
- North Shore Local Immigration Partnership (YMCA Centre for Immigrant Programs)
- Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS)
- Truro Pride
- The Regional Accessibility Advisory Committee (RAAC)
- The Truro Diversity Advisory Committee
- Dalhousie University Truro Campus
- The Francophone Community Centre
- The African Nova Scotia Decade for People of African Descent community group
- Nova Scotia League of Equal Opportunities
- The Rotary Club of Truro
- Truro and District Lions Club
- United Way of Colchester
- Colchester Transportation Cooperative Ltd.
- Northern Connector Program
- The Truro Colchester Welcome Network
- The Colchester Community Support Society
- The Stewiacke Business & Tourism Committee
- The Truro & Colchester Chambers of Commerce
- Other local impact organizations, which may be registered with the Impact Organizations of Nova Scotia (<https://ions.ca/sector-map/>)

Strategic Action 1.2

Work to heal and build relationships between those in the municipal government and underrepresented and underserved communities across the region.

Sub-actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene Truth-Telling & Healing Circle series facilitated by those with lived first-hand experience, including African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaw Elders and leaders. • Municipal staff attend significant African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaw community events to build reciprocal relationships.
Timeline	2025-2028 – First event by Q1 2026
Public Education and Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated page on municipal websites & posted engagement schedule. • Co-branded posters in community hubs • Social media posts
KPIs / Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of events held (target 2/yr), in addition to two open houses • Annual feedback from African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaw partners shows increased confidence in municipal follow-through

Strategic Action 1.3

Identify gaps and develop process for equity, discrimination and anti-racism issue reporting and support.

Sub-actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine existing external, community complaint channels. • Assess current processes and identify gaps and opportunities for improvement. • When improving the complaint channels, consider using resources already published as a starting point. • Work with experts in the field for training and developing processes.
Timeline	2027-2028
Public Education and Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incident Reporting Process should be given a page on each individual municipal website
KPIs / Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual survey on satisfaction with the reporting process; adjust as needed. • % of reports resolved within 30 days • % of interactions on social media improved

- Number of improvements made to reporting procedures annually

2. Education

Key Priority: On-going training, education, and development for municipal representatives, staff, and committee members on the topics of anti-racism, equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility.

Strategic Action 2.1

Foundational mandated training for all employees in governance.

Sub-actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize that all permanent and full-time staff receive training in anti-racism, diversity, equity, accessibility and inclusion. • Procure in-person training consultants and e-modules covering anti-racism, diversity, equity, accessibility and inclusion. Utilize online trainings when in person is not feasible. • Have supplementary training available for staff onboarding
Timeline	2025-2028 – Development Q3 2025; Roll-out Q4 2026
Public Education and Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal communication channels
KPIs / Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion rate 75 % within 1 year of rollout

Strategic Action 2.2

Organize support materials that are available for everyone in governance.

Sub-actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop “Equity Tool-Kit” (plain-language checklists, glossary, inclusive- meeting tips). Curate existing resources. • Ensure it is accessible in a shared location. • Update as needed.
Timeline	2026-2028 – Toolkit live Q2 2026
Public Education and Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal promotion to municipal employees
KPIs / Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of municipal employees receive access to the toolkit and know where to find it. • Toolkit is embedded in staff onboarding or training materials by 2027. • Toolkit is reviewed and updated at least once per year based on staff feedback or legislative changes.

Strategic Action 2.3

Promote free training, education, and development on the topics of equity, diversity, and inclusion for members of the public in our community.

Sub-actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offer EDIA training for the community who are interested throughout the year.• Host quarterly open webinars with local experts.• Connect with community partners to create an “Equity and Anti-Racism Learning Hub”
Timeline	2027-2028 – Launch Q2 2027
Public Education and Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion and promotion through our community group resource list.• Social media posts
KPIs / Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase repeat participation in webinars by 20% year-over-year.• At least 70% of attendees rate the webinar content as ‘very relevant’ or ‘extremely relevant’ to their work.• Representation from all four municipalities in at least 75% of webinars

3. Organizational Change

Key Priority: Apply an anti-racism and anti-discrimination lens throughout our region.

EDIA and HR capacity varies across the region. Some municipalities have staff doing this work. Others do not. HR teams are small or may not exist in some areas.

These actions are designed to be flexible. Staff, clerks, advisory committees, and community partners can support this work. The goal is to build equitable systems that reflect each municipality’s structure and capacity.

Strategic Action 3.1

Data collection across all municipalities.

Sub-actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Add voluntary self-identification questions to staff surveys and forms (race, gender, disability, etc.).• Use an equity lens to guide data collection and decision-making.• Develop a basic data policy to support consistent and respectful use of demographic information.
Timeline	2025-2028 – Policy Q2 2026
Public Education and Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Why We Ask” staff campaign using posters, internal emails, and onboarding sessions.
KPIs / Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Track participation rate in self-ID surveys.• Monitor trends in voluntary responses over time.• Review feedback on comfort and clarity of self-ID process

Strategic Action 3.2

Review equity progress and identify areas for improvement.

Sub-actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hold regular internal reviews or reflections to assess equity-related progress.• Involve advisory committees or community partners in identifying areas for growth.• Use findings to adjust policies, practices, and future planning.
Timeline	2025–2028 – First review or reflection held by end of 2026

Public Education and Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share outcomes of equity reviews through staff updates and public summaries
KPIs / Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each municipality completes at least one equity review during the strategy period. • Clear examples of improvements made in response to review findings, made public through municipal websites.

Strategic Action 3.3

Increase collaboration between equity-focused committees.

Sub-actions #	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage advisory committees to meet at least once a year. • Share tools, calendars, and updates across municipalities. • Support collaboration on shared goals, projects, and events. • Continue to support representation from African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaw partners on equity-related advisory committees where community membership is part of the structure
Timeline	2026–2028 - First joint meeting held by end of 2026
Public Education and Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post meeting minutes or committee updates on municipal websites when available
KPIs / Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint meetings held at least once per year, with clear objectives and outcomes. • At least one collaborative initiative or recommendation developed each year starting in 2026. • Representation from African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaw partners is maintained on equity-related advisory committees that include community members

Strategic Action 3.4

Improve internal reporting options for equity and discrimination concerns.

Sub-actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review internal reporting processes for staff, volunteers, and committee members.• Identify barriers that prevent people from raising concerns safely or anonymously.• Where not already in place, explore clear and accessible options for internal reporting.• Share templates and processes between municipalities to support consistency.
Timeline	2027–2028 - Internal process reviewed and improved where needed
Public Education and Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share internal reporting process with municipal staff and committees.• Offer “How to Speak Up Safely” sessions internally
KPIs / Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Internal reporting process is available and accessible in each municipality.• 80 % of reports responded to within 30 days (where process exists)• Resources or templates shared across municipalities

Strategic Action 3.5

Improve outreach so opportunities reach diverse communities.

Sub-actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create an outreach plan that supports inclusive hiring, training, committee recruitment, and public engagement.• Use a rotating system where staff from different departments and backgrounds take part in hiring committees.• Share opportunities through community partners, schools, and local organizations.• Use different formats and platforms, including printed materials, and social media.• Translate key materials into French and Mi'kmaw when needed; consider additional languages (e.g., Tagalog, Arabic) based on community needs.
Timeline	2027–2028 – Outreach plan created and tested in 2027

Public Education and Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Opportunities For All” campaign with local influencers • Reach out to the community partners previously listed to share opportunities. • Reach out to local schools and chambers of commerce
KPIs / Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach plan used for all external opportunities (e.g., hiring, training, committee roles) • When hiring occurs, increase in applicants from underrepresented groups by at least 20 % by 2028 • At least 75% of hiring processes include cross-departmental committee participation.

Strategic Action 3.6

Support fair and inclusive internal policies and processes.

Sub-actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review HR policies and procedures through an equity lens. • Align internal policies with relevant laws and equity commitments. • Create tools to support consistent, fair decision-making across departments. • Share promising practices among municipalities.
Timeline	2026–2028 - Ongoing reviews and improvements across municipalities
Public Education and Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates shared on municipal websites or through committee reports, as appropriate
KPIs / Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one internal policy reviewed and updated by each municipality by 2028. • Shared checklist or resource developed regionally to support consistent practice

Next Steps



We affirm our commitment to equity, anti-racism and accessibility, including ongoing engagement with underserved and underrepresented communities. We will not be able to make transformative change easily, but we are committed to doing the work necessary.

This document is a reflection of the community and the region, and we encourage our community to continue to engage with us at our forums and join us in building trust, respect, and collaboration. This Strategy is a snapshot of where we are now, what we are prioritizing, and what we need to do in the future. This document should be continually updated and added to, revised and improved as we grow as a region. We commit to continuous improvement, including revisiting this strategy in the future.

Do You Have Feedback?

We want to hear from you. If you have comments or questions about this Strategy, please contact us via your Municipal Council members.

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Statistics Canada. (2023, Nov 15). *Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population.*

<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>

Appendix A: Health Resources

Please take care of yourself while reading and engaging with this material. If you would like to access support, there is a list of resources available for all Nova Scotians who are in crisis and/or need immediate assistance.

24/7 Support Hotlines

Emergency	Telephone: 9-1-1
If you feel you are at risk of harming yourself or others, please call 9-1-1 or go to your closest emergency department. This hotline is toll-free and available to help 24/7.	
Suicide Crisis line	Telephone: 9-8-8
If you are feeling like you are struggling to cope, if you are dealing with thoughts of suicide, this is a safe space to talk, 24 hours a day, every day of the year. Website: https://988.ca/	
Provincial Mental Health and Addictions Crisis Line	Telephone: 1-888-429-8167
If you feel that you are in crisis, please call the Provincial Mental Health and Addictions Crisis Line. This hotline is toll-free and available to help 24/7.	
Kids Help Phone	Telephone: 1-800-668-6868 or text CONNECT to 686868
This hotline is toll-free and available to help 24/7.	
Eskasoni First Nation's Crisis Line	Telephone: 1-855-379-2099
Toll free telephone and online crisis support and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It is accessible to all Nova Scotia First Nations and other First Nations in the Atlantic region. It services are provided in both Mi'kmaq and English. Website: www.facebook.com/eskasoni.worker/	
Hope for Wellness Help Line	Toll Free: 1-855-242-3310
Available to Indigenous Peoples of Canada to access immediate, culturally safe telephone and chat crisis intervention support. The line is toll free and available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, in English, French, and upon request, Cree, Ojibway, and Inuktitut. Website: www.hopeforwellness.ca (for online chat option)	

Related Health Services

211 Helpline	Telephone: 2-1-1
A free, confidential information and referral service that connects people to community, government, and non-profit programs and services, not limited to mental health.	
Access Wellness Nova Scotia	Telephone: 1-833-691-2282
Offers free, single-session supportive counselling service for individuals, couples, and families. Open to all Nova Scotians over the age of 18. Sessions can be conducted over the phone, online, or in person. Website: https://accesswellness.lifeworks.com/nova-scotia-en	
Mental Health and Addictions Intake	Telephone: 1-855-922-1122
If you need help with mental health or addiction concern, call to connect with services now or to book an intake appointment.	
Canadian Mental Health Association	Telephone: 1-877-466-6606
Advocacy, programs and resources that help to prevent mental health problems and support recovery and resilience. Website: novascotia.cmha.ca	
Mental Health Services Helpline	Telephone: 1-866-531-2600
E-Mental Health Programs & Resources	Website: mha.nshealth.ca/en/tools

Appendix B: Glossary of Terms

The following definitions and concepts are reproduced from the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism of Nova Scotia's *Equity and Anti-Racism Primer for Municipalities and Villages*.

Accessibility

- Accessibility means identifying, removing, and preventing barriers that make it difficult for people with disabilities to participate fully in community life, services, and employment. It ensures that everyone has equitable access to spaces, information, programs, and opportunities.

Anti-Racism

- Active work to oppose racism by identifying and changing systems, policies, and practices that cause harm. This includes taking action at personal and institutional levels, sharing power, and being accountable to racialized communities.

Anti-Racist Organization

- An organization that fully includes racialized people and allies in decision-making, restructures policies and practices to eliminate racism, builds trust, shares power, and commits to dismantling racism in the wider community.

Diversity

- The presence of differences among people, including identity, background, skills, and perspectives.
 - **Demographic diversity:** Differences we are born with, such as race, gender, or sexual orientation.
 - **Experiential diversity:** Differences shaped by our life experiences, interests, and abilities.
 - **Cognitive diversity:** Differences in how people think, solve problems, and approach ideas.

Equality

- Treating everyone the same regardless of differences. This can appear fair but may benefit people who already have advantages.

Equity

- Recognizing that people start from different places because of systemic barriers. Equity provides resources and opportunities according to need, aiming to remove disparities so everyone can thrive.

Hate

- Actions or words that threaten, harass, abuse, or incite harm toward someone because of their race, religion, origin, ethnicity, gender, gender identity or expression, disability, or sexual orientation.

Inclusion

- Creating environments where everyone, especially underrepresented groups, feels respected, valued, and able to participate fully. Diversity is about representation; inclusion is about belonging.

Inequity

- Unfairness caused by biased systems, policies, or practices that result in unequal opportunities, resources, rights, or outcomes.

Intersectionality

- How different forms of discrimination or privilege (such as racism, sexism, and classism) overlap and affect people's experiences. Recognizing intersectionality helps address barriers and create more inclusive policies.

Mentorship Program

- A relationship between two or more people aimed at transferring knowledge, skills, and experience over time. Mentorship is built on trust and focuses on personal or professional growth.

Racism

- Discrimination or prejudice based on race or ethnicity, backed by the power to enforce it through policies, practices, or cultural norms. Race is a social construct, but racism has real impacts. It can be individual or systemic, and may appear in attitudes, jokes, slurs, profiling, or "neutral" policies with harmful effects.

Social Identity

- Parts of a person's identity shaped by factors such as race, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, disability, class, and culture.

Sponsorship Program

- A professional relationship in which senior leaders use their influence to help junior colleagues access career opportunities. Effective sponsorship combines public advocacy (using influence to secure opportunities) and relational authenticity (mutual learning and openness).

Systemic Barrier

- An unintentional obstacle that prevents fair treatment or participation because policies, procedures, or practices were not designed with diversity in mind. Example: a job application process that is only online may exclude people without internet access.

Truth and Reconciliation

- Truth and Reconciliation refers to the ongoing process of understanding and addressing the harm caused by residential schools and other colonial policies. It involves acknowledging truth, repairing relationships with Indigenous peoples, and taking concrete actions guided by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.

Underrepresented Community

- A group with limited visibility or presence in certain areas of society, such as politics, education, or leadership, often due to marginalization or discrimination.

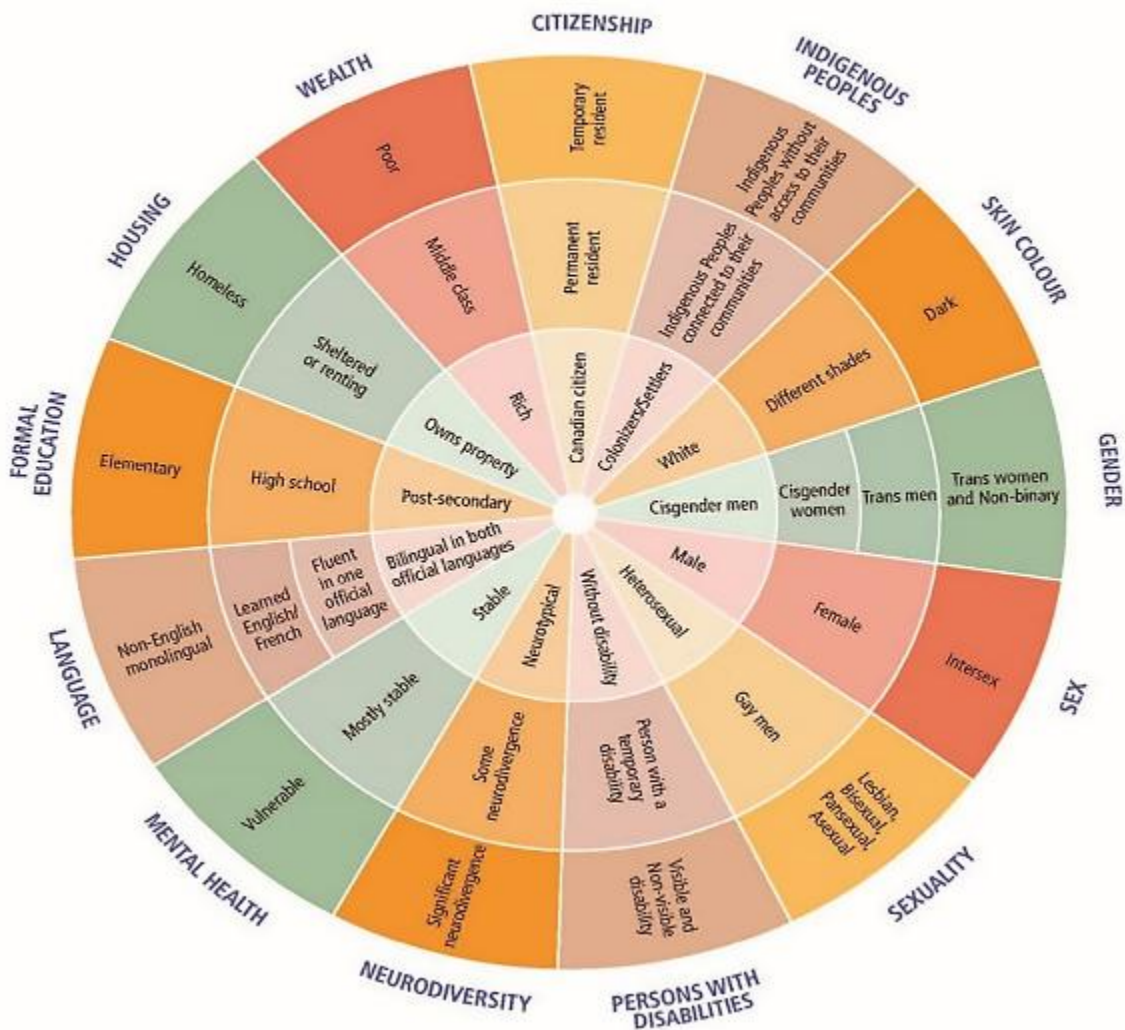
Underrepresented and Underserved Communities

- Groups that have been excluded or marginalized due to systemic inequities. In Nova Scotia, this includes (but is not limited to) Mi'kmaw and other Indigenous peoples, African Nova Scotians, racialized communities, newcomers, 2SLGBTQIA+ people, people with disabilities, neurodivergent people, and in some contexts, women.

The Wheel of Privilege and Power

- The examples in this wheel are only examples in the Canadian context, and we should not limit ourselves to them.
- The closer you are to the center, the more privilege you have.

WHEEL OF PRIVILEGE AND POWER
(the closer you are to the centre, the more privilege you have)



Appendix C: Additional Demographic Data

Current State Assessment

As part of this planning process, we performed an overview assessment of previous relevant plans, programs, engagement efforts, operations, decision-making, practices, policies, programming, service deliveries, etc.

This included reviewing a number of items and documents compiled by the region, some of which we report here in the interest of transparency and accountability. These documents were assessed in order to understand the previous work done in the region, get a sense of the gaps, and to inform the creation of this Regional Equity and Anti-Racism Strategy.

The learnings from this overview assessment were combined with the results of our public engagement and consultation, which will be discussed later in this document, in the “Learnings” section.

Age Statistics

Here are some additional figures examining the aspects of age:

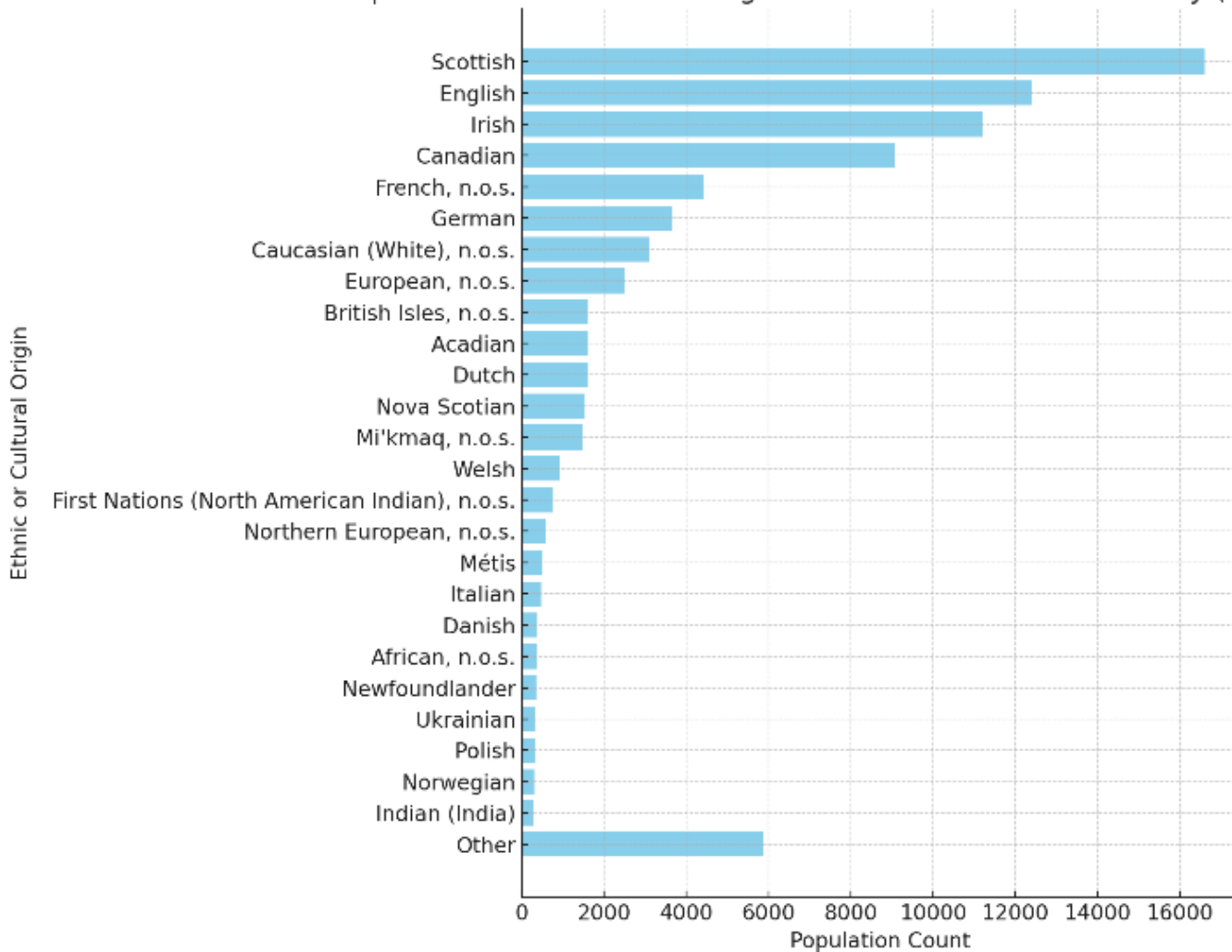
Population Breakdown by Sex	Total	Men	Women
The County of Colchester			
Average age of the population	45.3	44.4	46.2
Median age of the population	48.0	47.2	48.8
The Town of Truro			
Average age of the population	46.2	44.1	48.0
Median age of the population	47.6	44.8	49.6
Millbrook First Nation			
Average age of the population	37.0	36.1	37.8
Median age of the population	34.8	32.4	38.0
The Village of Bible Hill			
Average age of the population	45.7	44.4	47.0
Median age of the population	48.4	47.2	49.6
The Town of Stewiacke			
Average age of the population	44.6	43.4	45.7
Median age of the population	47.6	45.6	48.8

Ethnic or Cultural Origin

According to the 2021 Statistics Canada Census, “ethnic or cultural origin” refers to the background of a person’s ancestors. This can include Indigenous heritage, origins linked to specific countries, or other cultural roots that are not necessarily tied to a single country. A person may report more than one ethnic or cultural origin in the census.

The chart below shows the **top 25** ethnic or cultural origins reported in our region, highlighting the rich cultural and ethnic diversity of our community.

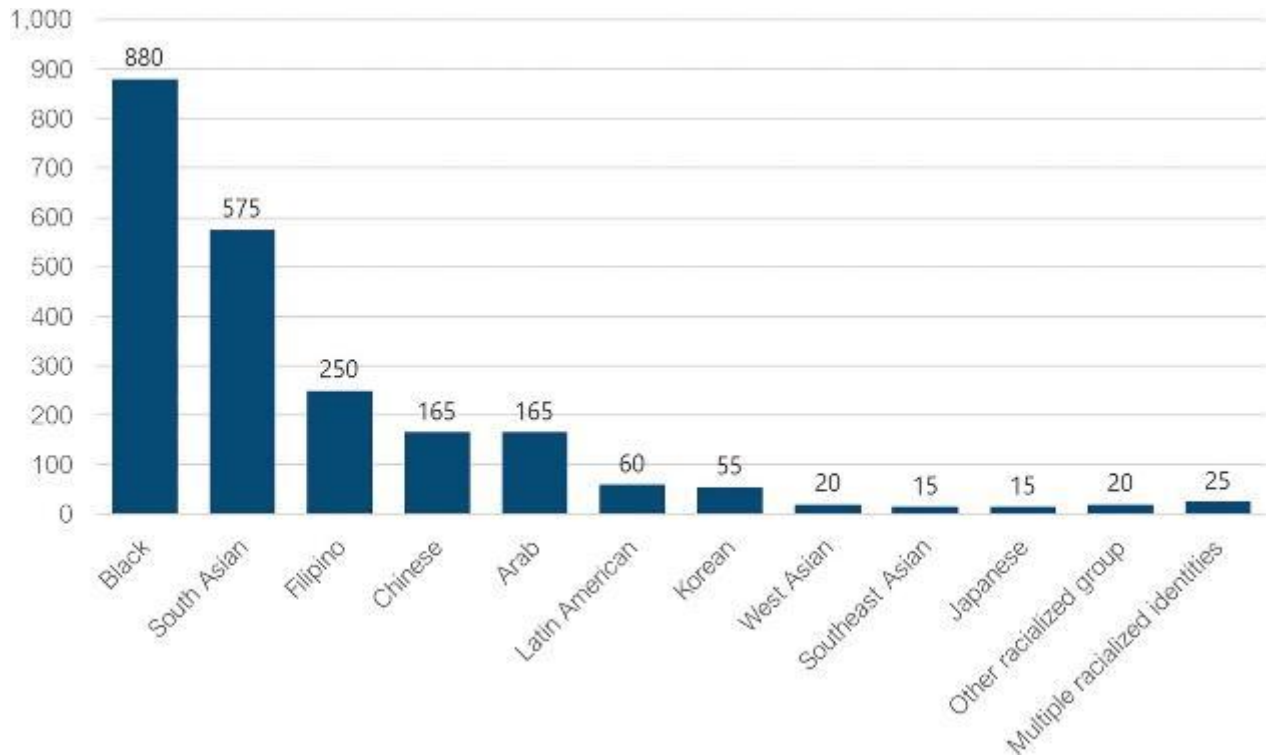
Top 25 Ethnic or Cultural Origins + Other - Colchester County (2021 Census)





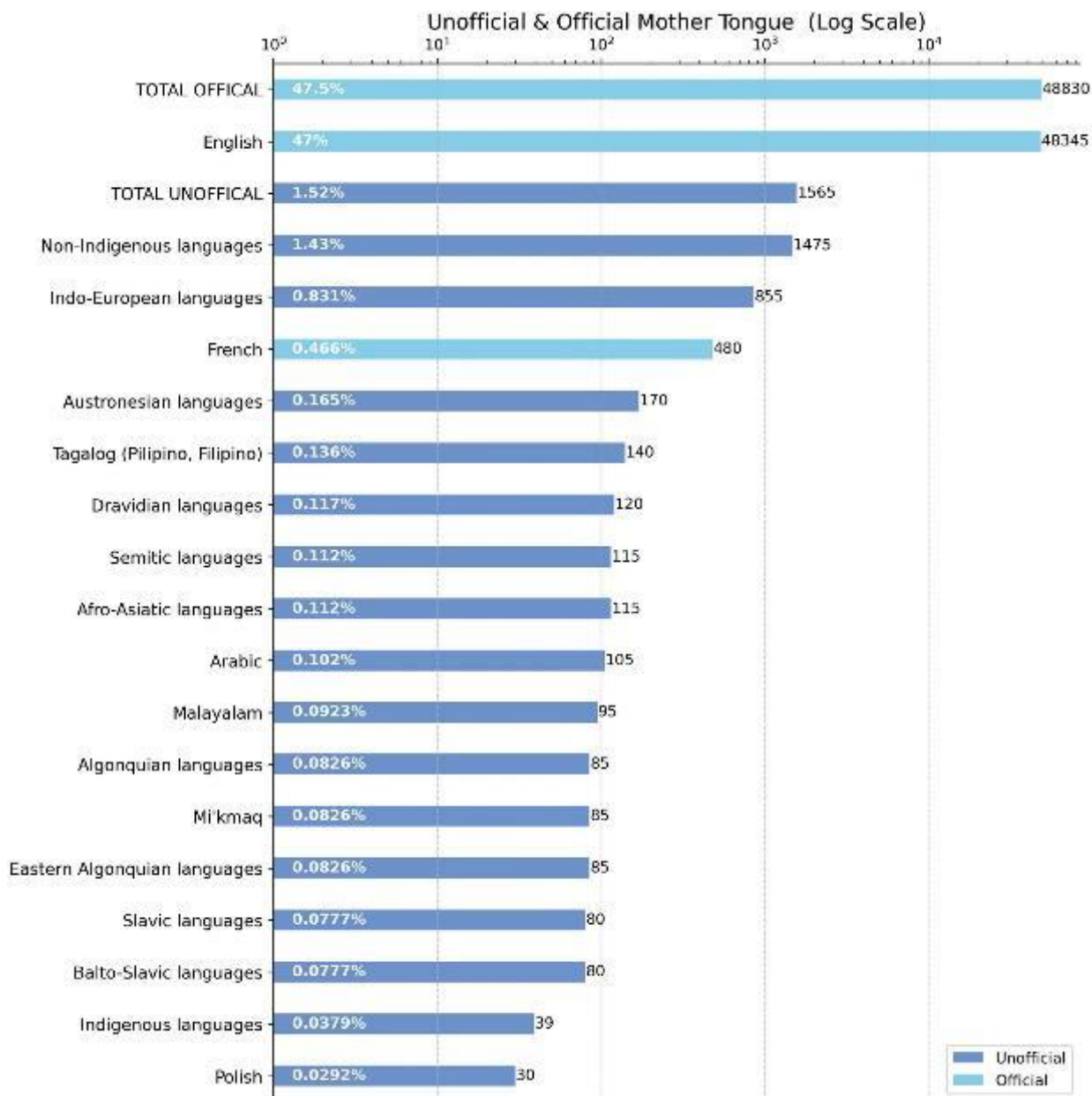
Racialized Communities in Our Region

Of the total population of our region, approximately 4% are people who self-identify as “racialized population” or “racialized groups” according to the Statistics Canada 2021 Census.



Languages Spoken: First Language Learned

First language learned refers to the language a person grew up with at home in childhood and still understands. According to the 2021 Census, about 95% of respondents in the region reported English or French as their first language learned. The remaining 5% identified a wide range of other languages, reflecting the linguistic diversity of our community.



Appendix D: Equity and Anti-Racism Resources

Government of Canada

Changing System, Transforming Lives: Canada's Anti-Racism Strategy 2024-2028 <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/combating-racism-discrimination/canada-anti-racism-strategy.html>

Guide on equity, diversity and inclusion terminology
<https://www.noslangues-ourlanguages.gc.ca/en/publications/equite-diversite-inclusion-equity-diversity-inclusion-eng>

The Canadian Human Rights Commission <https://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca>

Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada. The Wheel of Privilege and Power. Adapted from Sylvia Duckworth (2020)
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/mandate/anti-racism-strategy/change.html>

Women and Gender Equality Canada. Gender-Based Analysis Plus Course
<https://www.canada.ca/en/women-gender-equality/gender-based-analysis-plus/take-course.html>

Government of Nova Scotia

Dismantling Racism and Hate Act
https://nslegislature.ca/legc/bills/64th_1st/1st_read/b096.htm

Equity and Anti-Racism Strategy
<https://novascotia.ca/just/publications/docs/equity-and-anti-racism-strategy.pdf>

Office of Equity and Anti-Racism Public Engagement Site
<https://www.oeaengagement.ca/>

Province of Nova Scotia. Access Includes Everyone
<https://accessible.novascotia.ca/accessibility-stories>

Recreation Nova Scotia's Anti-Racism Charter in Recreation
<https://recreationns.ns.ca/documents/initiatives/609-anti-racism-charter-in-recreation-en/file.html>

Municipal Ideas, Association of Municipal Administrators Nova Scotia

Equity and Anti-Racism: Education, Training, Tools and Resources
<https://www.municipal-ideas.ca/equity-and-anti-racism-education-training-tools-and-resources>

The Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination

The Canadian Commission for UNESCO is calling municipalities to join the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination and to be part of UNESCO's international coalition launched in 2004.

The Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination
https://www3.ohrc.on.ca/sites/default/files/attachments/CMARD_Booklet%3A_Call_for_coalition_of_municipalities_against_racism_and_racial_discrimination.pdf

Other Resources

Millbrook First Nation <https://www.millbrookband.com/links-resources>

African Nova Scotian Affairs <https://ansa.novascotia.ca/>

The Truro Colchester Welcome Network <https://truocolchesterwelcomenetwork.ca/newcomers/community-and-support-services/service-clubs-and-charities/>

Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion <https://ccdi.ca/resources/>

Dalhousie University <https://www.dal.ca/about/mission-vision-values/equity-diversity-inclusion-and-accessibility/about-office-equity-inclusion/equity-diversity-inclusivity-accessibility/educational-resources.html>

Nova Scotia Community College <https://subjectguides.nsc.ca/anti-racism>
<https://www.nsc.ca/about/vision-and-values/human-rights-equity-services/anti-racism-resources.asp>

Saint Mary's University <https://libguides.smu.ca/sjcs/websites>

Example of Training Framework

A training plan should cover the topics and materials covered in the *Equity and Anti-Racism Primer for Municipalities and Villages*, from the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism of Nova Scotia

<https://www.oeaengagement.ca/43402/widgets/181683/documents/130119>

This resource is intended to provide prescribed municipalities and villages with definitions and concepts that are essential to meaningfully engage with our Strategy. We need to establish this minimum standard of education with respect to equity and anti-racism for those in public service.

This no-cost resource can be used for self-directed or group learning by municipalities and villages in tandem with other supports offered through the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism (OEA) and the Association of Municipal Administrators of Nova Scotia.

If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism OEAengagement@novascotia.ca.

Here is a short overview of the curriculum:

1. Introduction to Foundational Concepts

This section covers the concepts of:

- Defining hate and racism
- Anti-racism
- Equality, Equity, and Inequity
- Diversity
- Inclusion

2. Social Identities, Underserved and Underrepresented Groups & Intersectionality

This section covers the concepts of:

- Social identity
- Underrepresented and underserved communities in Nova Scotia
- Intersectionality
- The wheel of privilege and power

3. Understanding Power and Privilege

This section covers the concepts of:

- Power
- Institutional Power
- Privilege

4. Discrimination and Systems of Oppression

This section covers the concepts of:

- Discrimination
- Oppression
- Systems of oppression

5. Implicit Biases, Stereotypes and Microaggressions

- Implicit bias
- Stereotypes
- Microaggressions

6. Inclusive Language and Communication

- Inclusive language
- “Person-first” approach

Suggested Areas for On-Going Mandated Training

We believe foundational training should include learning about:

- The systemic history of racism in Canada (for example, here is a short CBC video on the topic <https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/video/1.5655668>)
- Unpacking to unlearn anti-Black racism (leveraging a Black-led consulting firm that specializes in anti-Black racism training)
- Unpacking to unlearn anti-Indigenous racism (leveraging an Indigenous-led consulting firm that specializes in anti-Black racism training)
- Accessibility (for example, https://carleton.ca/accessibility-institute/peac/?gad_campaignid=22434830295)
- Neurodiversity (for example, <https://ca.specialisterne.com/elearning-series/>)
- The model-minority myth
- Cultural appropriation
- Sexual orientation and the 2SLGBTQIA+ community

- Mi'kmawe'l Tan Teli-kina'muemk (Teaching About the Mi'kmaq) <https://www.mikmaweydebert.ca/sharing-our-stories/education-and-outreach/school-curriculum/>
- A Black Peoples History of Canada <https://www.blackpeopleshistory.ca/content/>
- African Nova Scotian Affairs <https://ansa.novascotia.ca/>
- Saint Mary's University <https://libguides.smu.ca/sjcs/websites>
- WAKING THE unCONSCIOUS <https://www.wakingtheunconscious.com/educational-introduction>

Additionally, we suggest a supplementary free course for those working with the public, in community groups, non-governmental organizations, and those in governance:

Women and Gender Equality – *Canada's Gender-Based Analysis Plus Course*
<https://www.canada.ca/en/women-gender-equality/gender-based-analysis-plus/take-course.html>