



Halton Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Charter

VISION

An inclusive community where individuals are valued, respected, and empowered to reach their potential.

COMMITMENTS

1. Encouraging safe and welcoming communities that reflect the diversity of all residents
2. Integrating a holistic approach of equity, diversity, and inclusion for needs of residents to be reflected in policies
3. Increasing diverse representation in decision-making roles
4. Promoting spaces where all people experience an equal sense of belonging
5. Providing residents opportunities for self-expression and to participate to the full extent of their potential
6. Encouraging relationship building among diverse individuals and groups to develop solidarity and allyship
7. Supporting the elimination of systemic discrimination and barriers
8. Providing marginalized communities opportunities for education, employment and training
9. Acknowledging the valuable contributions of all members of the community
10. Advocating for public and community services to be inclusive and reflective of the needs of diverse residents and communities

The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Charter is an explicit declaration of commitment to the values of equity, diversity and inclusion.

The EDI Charter is a living document based on feedback from Halton residents and community stakeholders. The Charter reflects the realities of residents' experiences and their commitment to removing systemic barriers and championing inclusionary practices. The purpose of the Charter is to guide the Halton community to foster equity, diversity and inclusion in the region.

Halton is comprised of the vibrant municipalities of Burlington, Halton Hills, Milton and Oakville. Halton Equity and Diversity Roundtable (HEDR) conducted consultations to understand the significant issues facing residents. Priorities identified include accessible transportation and affordable housing. Key concerns raised relate to racialization of poverty, racism, lack of cultural awareness and limited sense of belonging due to increasing isolation.

By endorsing the Charter, individuals and organizations commit to understanding diversity through the lens of allyship, recognition of intersectionality as a critical component of equity, and embracing inclusion through acceptance of all residents in Halton.

Name

Date

Organization (if applicable)

GUIDING PRINCIPLES



■ Equity

Equity is a condition or a state of fair treatment, which recognizes that every person has a right to equitable treatment with respect to goods, services, and spaces without discrimination. Equity does not mean treating people the same, it acknowledges individual differences (Government of Ontario - Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, 2009).

■ Allyship

Allyship begins when a person of privilege seeks to support and operate in solidarity with a marginalized individual or group. It is a consistent practice of unlearning and relearning, and is a lifelong process of building relationships based on trust, consistency and accountability with marginalized individuals or groups (PeerNetBC).

■ Intersectionality

A theory that examines how various biological, social and cultural categories (e.g. gender, race, class, sexual orientation, etc.) interact on multiple, simultaneous, and inter-locking levels, contributing to systematic social inequality (Kimberle Williams Crenshaw, Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color, 1991).

■ Inclusion

Inclusion is creating an environment where people have both the feeling and reality of belonging and are able to work to their full potential (Ontario Inclusion Learning Network).

■ Diversity

Diversity is the presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within a group, organization or society. The dimensions of diversity include, but are not limited to, ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation and socio-economic status (Government of Ontario - Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, 2009).



The Common Commitments

The Coalition's Common Commitments cover areas of municipal responsibility – such as housing, service delivery, employment, and culture – to guide local authorities in developing policies and programs. The Common Commitments are structured around three areas of municipal responsibility.

The municipality as a guardian that respects the public interest

- 1** Increasing vigilance against systemic and individual discrimination.
- 2** Monitoring discrimination in the municipality and taking action to address it.
- 3** Supporting individuals who experience discrimination.
- 4** Providing police services that are exemplary institutions for fighting discrimination.

The municipality as an organization that upholds human rights

- 5** Providing equal opportunities as a municipal employer, service provider, and contractor.
- 6** Supporting measures that promote equity in the labour market.
- 7** Challenging discrimination and promoting diversity and equal opportunities in housing.

The municipality as a community that promotes diversity

- 8** Involving citizens by giving them a voice in anti-racism initiatives and decision-making.
- 9** Challenging discrimination and promoting diversity and equal opportunities in education and other forms of learning.
- 10** Promoting the respect, knowledge, and appreciation of cultural diversity and the inclusion of Indigenous and racialized communities in the cultural fabric of the municipality.

When a municipal council signs the declaration to join the Coalition, it endorses the Common Commitments and agrees to develop a [Plan of Action](#). This process is flexible so that each municipality can address its own inclusion-related issues. The Plan of Action is a key tool for signatory municipalities; once adopted, it becomes integrated into the municipality's visions, strategies, and policies.