

**triec** ▶▶▶

Toronto Region Immigrant  
Employment Council

Diversity Drives Success



# Insights into Diversity and Inclusion Practices in GTA Workplaces 2017



# Table of Contents

● Foreword .....	3
● Executive Summary .....	4
Research methodology .....	6
Employers define diversity and inclusion .....	8
Employers describe their focus .....	11
The business case and groups of talent .....	11
● Employers' diversity and inclusion practices and successes...	21
● Progress and outcomes of D&I in GTA workplaces .....	32
● Employers encounter barriers to progress .....	38
● On the horizon – trends and new initiatives .....	40
● Identified Strengths and Gaps .....	43
● Appendix 1: Description of research participants .....	44
● Appendix 2: Research Tools .....	47
Key Informant Interviews Protocol .....	49
Online Survey .....	54

# Foreword

## Project Background

This report forms part of a larger project conducted by the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC). This research report summarizes insights about GTA employer practices and pressing needs, drawing insights from interviews, website analysis and an online survey.

In addition to this research, the broader project also included:

Extensive literature review of Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) research, conceptual frameworks and competency models drawn from Canada and best practices internationally;

Collaboration with an expert working group of employer representatives from a variety of sectors to identify the behaviours, skills, and knowledge required to create an inclusive workplace, and to develop these into a comprehensive competency framework;

Guidance on integrating the D&I competencies into the TRIEC learning and development initiatives and programs;

Recommendations for a D&I measurement framework and methodology;

Development of evaluation methods and tools to measure and demonstrate the impact of TRIEC learning programs;

Consultation with more than 30 employers and key informants through one-on-one interviews and Working Group sessions;

A dialogue session with close to 100 representatives of internationally educated professionals, immigrant serving agencies and employers; and

Validation at critical points with stakeholders and key informants.

The other materials and reports are available through TRIEC. This TRIEC initiative, and others, will lead to more skilled immigrants being employed in jobs commensurate with their skills and experience, and equip more workplaces within the GTA and beyond to become inclusive and leverage the talents of their diverse workforce.

## Acknowledgments

This report has been developed within the context of a broader project funded by the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration.

More than sixty individuals and organizations provided information and insights through fact-finding interviews or participation in an online survey.

The research was conducted by a team from CamProf Inc. and Graybridge Malkam.



# Executive Summary

This research explored current diversity and inclusion practices of employers in the Greater Toronto Area. Insights were gathered from a variety of employers, service providers, and other interested individuals. The depth and variety of research inputs helps to identify trends, strengths and potential gaps, as well as questions for continued exploration and monitoring.

The research themes and key findings included:

## Definitions of diversity and inclusion.

Many employers are moving beyond a focus on the four designated groups (Employment Equity) and protected grounds (human rights legislation) to consider a wider range of differences and their intersections. While ‘diversity’ remains a focus, there is increasing emphasis on ‘inclusion’.

## The business case and the priorities.

The GTA employers who are reflected in this research express a range of rationales for their interest in diversity and inclusion (D&I). Achieving Employment Equity compliance, through an equitable representation of the four designated groups, continues to be a strong focus. Many employers provide general statements of D&I values and intent, without a clearly articulated link to important organizational outcomes. The equitable participation of women in the workplace has been a D&I starting point for many employers and it continues to be a common focus.

## Diversity and inclusion practices.

The GTA employers in this research have at least a few D&I practices in place. Almost all who were involved have the policies for fairness, accommodation and freedom from harassment that are seen as minimum requirements in today’s Ontario workplaces. Some go beyond these, with initiatives that aim to create a workplace where people feel safe, respected and valued. The separate initiatives, while often effective individually, do not necessarily coalesce into a strong strategic approach. Employers are attempting to do some monitoring of the impact of their D&I practices and new initiatives. There are some elements in place for employers to more effectively measure D&I results linked to intended organizational goals, but there is little evidence of this being a widespread practice.

## Progress and outcomes of D&I approaches.

Even among this group of participating employers, who may be further advanced than others, it is clear that there is work still to be done. In most cases the organization’s D&I strategy and specific business case are not coherently expressed. Responses from service providers and other committed individuals suggest there may be important gaps in understanding between employers and the stakeholders who could support them in making progress.

### Critical gaps or barriers.

The research confirmed that many of the barriers that have been long recognized continue to be challenges to employers. The argument that D&I efforts will lead to successful organizational outcomes for a particular employer does not seem to be compelling or well-articulated: the effort often seems too great and/or the payoff often seems too remote.

### Future initiatives and possible trends.

In general many employers seem ready to move beyond recruitment efforts that focused on diversity to now considering a more strategic approach to inclusion. It appears that mental health is a focus on the horizon; however it was not clear how employers see this aligned to D&I plans or desired organizational outcomes, nor what initiatives they will put in place.

There are challenging barriers that limit organizations' progress with diversity and inclusion. Key among these is the frequent absence of a clearly defined strategy and set of plans, and only a general definition of the D&I business case. Not coincidentally, it is rare for organizations to have coherent measurement systems in place. Employers and service providers all struggle with too much to do and limited resources, and in this context building employers' long-term capacity for inclusion gets insufficient attention.

However, the research also highlighted several strengths and opportunities for momentum. There is genuine commitment to creating diverse and inclusive workplaces, and many good practices are in place. There is a strengthening focus on creating inclusive workplaces, as organizations see that as the route to realizing important organizational benefits.

There are challenging barriers that limit organizations' progress with diversity and inclusion. Key among these is the frequent absence of a clearly defined strategy and set of plans, and only a general definition of the D&I business case. Not coincidentally, it is rare for organizations to have coherent measurement systems in place. Employers and service providers all struggle with too much to do and limited resources, and in this context building employers' long-term capacity for inclusion gets insufficient attention.

However, the research also highlighted several strengths and opportunities for momentum. There is genuine commitment to creating diverse and inclusive workplaces, and many good practices are in place. There is a strengthening focus on creating inclusive workplaces, as organizations see that as the route to realizing important organizational benefits.

## Introduction

Much has been written about employers' practices for diversity and inclusion. The intent of this current research study has been to build on that knowledge.

In the context of a more comprehensive project focused on supporting the creation of inclusive workplaces, this research provided the opportunity to explore the perspectives of employers, service providers and other interested individuals on current D&I practices of employers in the GTA. The insights are particularly helpful because they:

- Focus directly on the GTA. Toronto is one of the most diverse cities in the world and home to a wide range of employers – large and small, global and local, in virtually all economic sectors.
- Bring some evidence to supplement and structure the valuable wisdom that is gained from ongoing consultation with employers, informal experience and anecdotes
- Help to inform decisions. The depth and variety of research inputs can identify trends, strengths and potential gaps, as well as questions for continued exploration and monitoring.

The research questions that are addressed in the following sections of the report are:

- **Definitions of diversity and inclusion**  
Whether explicitly or implicitly, how do employers conceptualize these issues?
- **The business case and the priorities**  
What do GTA employers highlight as the desired benefits of D&I? Which demographic groups are the focus of attention?
- **Diversity and inclusion practices**  
What are employers doing and what do they think is working? Which initiatives are seen to be most successful? How do they measure their success?
- **Progress and outcomes of D&I**  
What is the current level of maturity of employers' D&I approaches? How have they evolved and to what extent are they guided by a defined strategy? What are the indicators of outcomes from their D&I efforts?
- **Critical gaps or barriers**  
What challenges do employers face in becoming more inclusive in the workplace?
- **Future initiatives and possible trends**  
What might be on the horizon for D&I in GTA workplaces?

## Research methodology

The research involved three activities to explore the D&I practices of GTA employers:

- Review of employers' websites and other publicly available information for 15 employers and one union identified as leaders in diversity and inclusion
- An online survey open to employers, agencies involved in immigrant employment, and other interested individuals, gathering 40 responses
- Interviews with 14 employers and 6 agencies to gather information and deeper insights about employer practices in the GTA

The research samples are not designed to be statistically representative of all workplaces in the GTA. As much as possible, they were constructed to be reflective of a wide range of employers with interest in implementing good practices for diversity and inclusion. Such a sample is useful in gathering qualitative insights about practices, perceived barriers and benefits, and identified gaps and needs.

### Web-based research

The first phase of the research was a review of publicly available information for a sample of fifteen GTA employers and one union, representative of various sectors that are important in the GTA area, and that have demonstrated an interest and commitment to D&I. A quick scan of the D&I practices of these employers was conducted through a review of company websites and other relevant websites. Information on each employer was collected according to a research template, provided in Appendix 2.

The employers were chosen from several lists:

- **Canada's Best Diversity Employers 2017**  
<http://www.canadastop100.com/diversity/>  
The list of winners of an annual competition held since 2008 by Mediacorp Canada Inc., that recognizes employers across Canada with exceptional workplace diversity and inclusiveness programs, including programs for employees from five groups: women; members of visible minorities; persons with disabilities; aboriginal peoples; and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered/ transsexual (LGBT) people. The finalists are recognized as diversity leaders in their industry and region of Canada.
- **TRIEC partners, obtained from TRIEC's website**  
<http://www.thementoringpartnership.com/partners/employerpartners/partners/>
- **Hire Immigrants Success Stories:**  
<http://www.hireimmigrants.ca/success-stories-home/>

The 15 employers and one union are listed below; additional details are provided in Appendix 1.

- Accenture Inc.
- General Motors of Canada Company
- Humber
- KPMG LLP
- LiUNA LOCAL 506
- Loblaw Companies Limited
- Manulife
- Ontario Power Generation
- PepsiCo Canada
- Procter & Gamble Inc.
- Rogers Communications Inc.
- Stikeman Elliot
- TD Bank Group
- Toronto, City of
- William Osler Health System
- YMCA of Greater Toronto

The key findings have been integrated into this report. Detailed results are available in the companion report, Website Review of GTA Employer D&I Practices.

### **Online survey**

An online survey was distributed during May and early June of 2017, via the FluidSurveys platform.

Survey questions were tailored for three target audiences: employers, service providers or agencies, and 'others'. (see Appendix 2 for the survey questionnaire.) The survey was anonymous, although respondents were given an opportunity to provide their email address if they were interested in attending an invitation-only webinar on the findings.

Email, social media, and website notices were used to invite GTA-based employers and service providers to participate. Approximately 175 organizations were reached through a direct email; they were also encouraged to forward the survey link within their networks.

In total, 45 responses with at least some usable data were received. (See Appendix 1 for a description of the respondents.)

### **Key informant interviews**

A total of 20 interviews were completed with GTA-based employers (n=14) and service providers (n=6). The interviews were conducted by a member of the research team, by telephone.

Each interview lasted 30-45 minutes and followed a semi-structured format (see Appendix 2 for the interview protocol and questions). One of the interviews was a group consultation session with TRIEC staff. All responses were transcribed, coded and analyzed with standard qualitative analysis methodology. Interviewees were assured of confidentiality. They were advised that they would receive the findings and would be notified of the invitation-only webinar to review and discuss the outcomes.



## Employers define diversity and inclusion

This research suggests that there is often inconsistency and a lack of clarity in employers' definitions of diversity and inclusion. Several employer websites provide a general statement about Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) without distinguishing between the concepts. In these cases, the emphasis is almost always on aspects of inclusion. In external communications (websites), most employers defined D&I in terms of its applicability for its employees, but some emphasized D&I in terms of their customer/client/patient base, with implications for goods and services. Some also extended D&I to suppliers. In the websites we reviewed, most employers do not distinguish explicitly between diversity and inclusion; the language is more likely to make reference to aspects of inclusion.

To reduce confusion, many employers have developed a formal definition of the two terms independently and now provide them on their websites and in their internal communications and educational materials. As one employer commented, "Now we have a standard definition. We heard from focus groups that people didn't really know what it means."

### Diversity

Most employers use a definition of diversity that reflects 'difference'. Some are restrictive in nature, listing a small number of categories of difference such as race, gender, and disability; or listing all the protected grounds under human rights legislation. Others are more comprehensive, referring to intersectionality among the identity categories, or differences in perspectives and background, or even 'all differences'. Finally, some definitions go beyond the individual to refer to the representativeness of the workplace. The following quotes from the interviews and survey responses are examples of the range of perspectives:

- 'Encouraging employment of all regardless of race, religion and sexual orientation'
- 'The unique personal characteristics that distinguish us as individuals and groups. These include but are not limited to: age, sex, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, physical and intellectual ability, class, creed, religion, sexual orientation, educational background and expertise.'
- 'All the characteristics and different backgrounds'
- 'Recognizing similarities and differences relating to culture and ethnicity, age, gender, language, socio-economic; beyond IEPs and ethnocultural perspective to recognition of intersectionality'
- 'Representative of Ontario'
- 'Representation of all differences and reflection of the social multicultural fabric'

Some employers, particularly those who do not appear to have adopted a formalized definition distinguishing between diversity and inclusion, emphasize that differences should be valued. For example, research participants offered the following to explain how they define diversity:

- 'A workplace consisting of employees with a variety of cultural backgrounds and knowing how to succeed in a multicultural workplace is sought and highly valued'
- 'We recognize the diverse and multicultural composition of the Society and appreciate the dignity, worth and contribution of each Participant who participates in the activities of the Society.'
- 'Differences are embraced, not just differences of origin and race but also differences in thoughts and ideas.'

## **Inclusion**

Within this research sample, definitions of inclusion generally address the ability of people to have a positive experience within the work environment. Some address the characteristics of the workplace environment and culture (equitable, free from harassment) while others describe an individual's subjective experience such as feeling free to 'be themselves', and feeling appreciated and valued. In some cases, the definition contains an element of the organization being able to benefit from the contributions of everyone. There is occasionally a focus on particular aspects of identity such as race, gender or age; more commonly, the wording tends to refer to 'everyone', or imply that all differences are included. The following definitions offered by research participants reflect some of these variations:

- 'Staff with varied backgrounds, ethnicities, religions ages, genders, orientations working together and getting promoted and sharing meals'
- 'Ensuring a respectful, accessible, safe and inclusive environment that is free from discrimination, harassment and violence for all employees, customers and visitors'
- 'This is about the collective: having an equitable environment and culture that embraces, respects, accepts and values difference.'
- 'Making people feel valued, cared for and involved'
- 'People can express themselves and be themselves'
- 'How these differences are being engaged, leveraged and utilized for a great outcome while enabling a strong sense of belonging, value and respect'
- 'Being able to contribute fully'
- 'Leveraging the uniqueness and belonging of each person'
- 'Inclusion is a workplace culture where leaders bring best teams for best results'

There are clear indications that 'inclusion' is rapidly becoming the preferred emphasis within diversity and inclusion. Some organizations have reversed the terms, referring now to 'Inclusion and Diversity'.

The hope appears to be that 'inclusion' will be more universally accepted by people, avoiding the negative reactions that the word 'diversity' sometimes evoked. Additionally, a focus on inclusion provides new arguments for the business case for diversity and inclusion, by making a link between an organizational culture where all people can contribute fully and organizational outcomes such as innovation and marketplace success.

When diversity is downplayed or described solely as 'diversity of thought', then inclusion becomes very similar to a more general focus on 'employee engagement'. Some interviewees expressed a concern that this could lead to minimizing the very real barriers that certain groups and individuals face in Canadian workplaces. There is an important value in continuing to pair the concepts of 'diversity' with 'inclusion'.



## Employers describe their focus: The business case and groups of talent

This section outlines the insights gathered regarding GTA employers' priorities and areas of focus for their D&I efforts. Understanding what is important to employers is a critical starting point to being able to engage with them effectively and support their D&I progress. In an intentional approach to D&I, the initiatives and activities will align to the organization's desired outcomes. However, the research results suggest that for many organizations there is often a weak connection between their stated goals and the activities they report.

**The drivers of employer commitment to diversity and inclusion.** One of the objectives of the research was to explore what rationale or stated purpose employers give for their D&I actions. Within the interviews, employers were asked to describe their organization's 'journey' for D&I – how it started, what the original reasons were and how they might have changed over time. Seven different approaches could be identified, as described below. They are not mutually exclusive and many research participants mentioned multiple potential benefits of D&I. In most cases, however, one was clearly dominant. For example, one federally regulated employer mentioned the business benefits of having immigrant employees who can help develop and test new products and services for the various cultural communities in their target market, yet the D&I strategy and action plans are focused squarely on meeting Employment Equity goals for representation of the four designated groups. These 'mixed messages' are probably reflective of either a desire to claim a more strategic or lofty goal than being compliance-driven, or perhaps of being in the midst of a gradual evolution from one driver to another, during which there can be inconsistencies as old practices are mis-aligned with new directions.

The seven drivers described below are:

1. Compliance:
2. Delivering on a public service mandate
3. Being market-driven
4. Attracting and retaining talent
5. Valuing employees
6. General benefits of having a mix of backgrounds and perspectives
7. Reputation and brand

## 1. Compliance

Many employers began their diversity and inclusion work with a focus on complying with legislative requirements, particularly the workforce composition goals of Employment Equity. This focus continues to permeate the work of many of these employers, as suggested by one interviewee: “The larger companies and those with a requirement to do so focus on diversity. They are not as far as they think they are with respect to being inclusive.” The following examples illustrate the perspectives of these employers:

- One employer’s Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee has the following statement of ‘philosophy and values’, from 2015:
- [Employer] and [union locals] are jointly committed to the principles of employment equity. Specifically, they recognize that:
- All people are entitled to equal treatment in employment in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code.
- Designated group members (Aboriginal people, persons with disabilities, visible minorities and women) are entitled to be hired and promoted in an environment that is free of barriers, including systemic and deliberate practices and policies that discriminate against them as members of a designated group.
- A federally regulated employer in the private sector described their current D&I efforts: “We focus on five segments: gender, visible minorities and newcomers (combined), aboriginals, people with disabilities, and LGBT. We compare our representation rates to external availability for the Employment Equity (EE) groups. For LGBT it’s a business or market focus.” Although this employer has recently started to shift its focus to the operational and business benefits of diversity and inclusion, their described strategy and plans revolve primarily around workforce composition compared to external labour market availabilities (EE compliance).



## 2. Delivering on a public service mandate

Public sector employers, healthcare and educational institutions, and non-profits involved in direct service delivery to clients often emphasized the value of D&I for operating in the external environment and delivering on their public service mandate. These organizations are driven by standards for client service in a diverse population and the importance of reflecting their constituency (community, patients, clients, students). In these cases, there was often (although not always) a broader implied definition of diversity, beyond the four designated groups. The mandate and political environment is often a key driver and the demographics of the relevant client population are a relevant consideration for shaping the workplace.. For example:

- “Our business case relies mostly on talent and customer service. We have a customer service focus on youth, older adults, new immigrants – so they can thrive.” [public sector]
- “This was an initiative of our municipal council; it has had a D&I Committee for several years. D&I was also very important in the current Mayor’s campaign platform.” [public sector]
- “It is important for us to be representative of Ontario.” [non-profit]
- “As an educational institution, diversity is part of our mandate.” [post-secondary]
- “We want to ensure we’re addressing access barriers and health disparities in vulnerable populations in our area.” [health care]
- In some cases, the external focus is so predominant that there is little emphasis on creating an inclusive workplace. “We do talk about supporting each other as diverse colleagues, but there is not a lot of focus on that.”



### 3. Being market-driven

Private sector employers also see a need to reflect their market and customer base. Most notably among these research participants, employers with an international component to their operations or markets express an interest in greater diversity, particularly IEPs, so that they can more effectively operate in a global environment. Examples of being market-driven included:

- “Research and many areas of expertise are international – it can be a small community, and people are connected. Therefore there are lots of motivators to have good international relations in small areas of expertise. We want the best.” [health care]
- “D&I is very important for the technology sector. For innovation, Canada needs to draw talent from all over the world. “
- A few employers reported that they need staff with international experience - i.e. who speak the language and understand the nuances of their company’s target markets.
- One interviewee described an employer in their network who is proud to say they only work with new immigrants. This has enabled the company to build connections and open up business in different countries.
- “We have put a focus on advancing women into management. Our rationale was based on an analysis – 80% of customers are women, but only 15% of store managers.” [retail]
- “In my experience, the banking sector is enthusiastic – they want customers to be able to go to the local branch and see someone who looks like them.” [service provider]
- “The focus is to leverage everyone’s unique skills, and their lived experience. Our business focus on diverse clients, and developing product and services for them, sends a message that lived experience of the team members is important – to provide input to product development. For example we use the Asian employee network to test products and services etc., also Indian and Pakistani employees to test a particular process that is relevant to their community.”
- One employer commented that they had learned from the failure of others. “One of our competitors lost a lot of money in Canada because of a lack of cultural sensitivity.”

In a more specific instance of being market-driven, the increasing demands for supplier diversity are driving some organizations to be more diverse and inclusive. The Federal Contractors Program is one example of this factor. Other examples mentioned by research participants included:

- “In the technology sector, supplier diversity is important if they are working with U.S. companies. For example, U.S. companies ask questions regarding supplier diversity, and whether they are tier 2, tier 3, etc.”
- “Within the legal services sector, some clients demand the demographics of the firm’s workforce and the firm’s plans for improvement. This becomes a requirement to get business.”
- “We are certified as a diverse supplier and that helps us to win new business with large firms.”

#### 4. Attracting and retaining talent

The “talent” business case was articulated by some employers. These statements are not very detailed, but generally address talent shortages and challenges with retention. For example:

- “Talent is really a key focus.”
- “Recruitment is big.”
- “A lot of organizations realized that they didn’t have good practices for inclusion, such as consistent onboarding processes. They realized that this might be the root cause of turnover, and other issues such as conflict.”
- A service provider explained that hiring immigrants can improve retention: “We find that people are staying on the job – all the people I have placed are still there – that is a real positive for an employer.”
- A few research participants mentioned that the driver of “talent” is most evident in the technology sector because of ongoing skill shortages.

#### 5. Valuing employees

Several employers described the driver for inclusion through a values-based comment about the importance of creating a respectful and welcoming workplace. While there can be a link to better organizational outcomes, it is usually only implicit. Examples include:

- “We want all employees, to feel like they can be who they are while at work without fear of not being accepted.”
- “People at the top of our organization talk about D&I and respect – the value it brings, the benefits of bringing the best of everyone and not excluding anyone. People are our greatest asset – and getting the best from them will be good for business. We need to find ways to make them feel genuinely included.”

#### 6. General benefits of having a mix of backgrounds and perspectives

Whether labeled as ‘innovation’ or a more enjoyable work experience or better problem-solving from thought diversity, a few interviewees described the benefits of having a mix of people. As with the statements about valuing employees (above), these comments are aspirational rather than specific, and seldom have an explicit link to organizational outcomes.

- “Problem solving is better when a company has diverse folks.”
- One employer described the business benefits of D&I as the “foundation of innovation, of diverse ways of resolving problems.”
- “I see the benefits as: it is nice having different perspectives and ideas; and as a result of having a diverse workforce, fun things happen – e.g. employee lunches with food from different cultures.”



## 7. Reputation and brand

Organizations see that there are potential benefits in being recognized as an inclusive employer. This can include the ability to attract talent ('employer of choice'), build a positive corporate reputation ('responsible corporate citizen'), or improve business prospects by gaining public profile and visibility in the media. Some research participants described it as follows:

- One company that participated in an award program highlighted the benefit of the gained publicity: "We received a lot of media attention. This was a goldmine for our small company – we were able to share our story with new customers as a springboard to talk about business opportunities."
- "Positive findings on our employee survey about inclusion would also help us to brand ourselves – i.e. being able to say to future employees that we are a good company; share what current employees are saying."
- "A good reputation on this is about more than just stock value – it is a reflection of having engaged people."
- "We find that employers are also competitive – they will follow others."

## 8. Other drivers for diversity

There were also other drivers for diversity that were mentioned, based on particular experiences of the research participants. These are not the most desirable of business case rationales, but they are evidently still a GTA reality. For example:

- Large employer in banking reached out to a service provider to connect with people with disabilities; the employer is doing it to "meet a quota", according to the service provider.
- Two participants mentioned that hiring new immigrants can be cost effective. The employer can get the same talent but pay less.



## The “identity” characteristics to which GTA employers pay attention

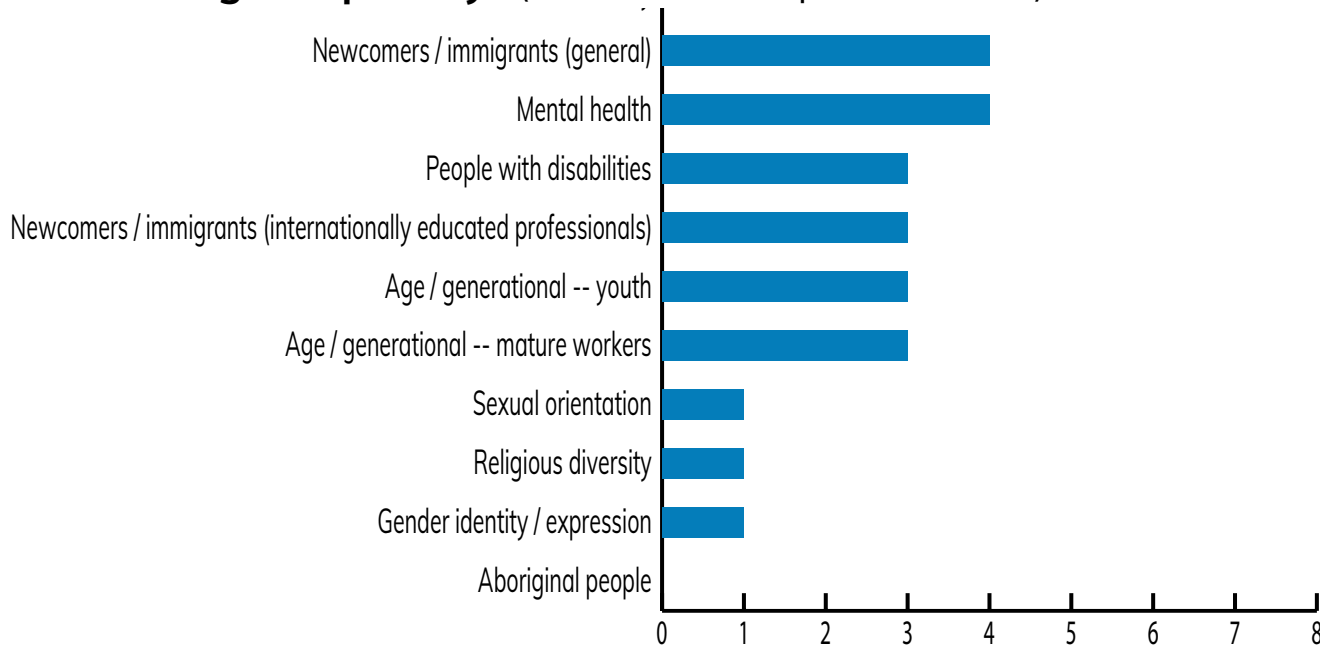
Although definitions for D&I (see above) often refer to ‘thought diversity’ or everyone as a unique individual, demographics and representation rates in the workforce are nonetheless still top of mind for many employers. The research explored which identifiable groups of employees are reported as being the focus of most attention in GTA workplaces.

One interviewee captured it well: “Organizations tend to take a specific focus, for example youth, etc. Their focus is not inclusion of a broad cross-section of people.” Employers are seen as “jumping from group to group. It is not systematized, it is reactive, based on the most recent hot topic, the sector and the market.”

As described above, the foundation is often a compliance focus on representation of the four Employment Equity designated groups. However, the attention is never evenly distributed.

In the online survey, the ‘other’ respondents (not employers or service providers / agencies) were asked directly which ‘diversity groups’ or aspects of identity seem to be the highest priority of the GTA employers they are familiar with. Respondents were asked to select up to three priorities. As the following chart shows, they reported that women seem to be the group receiving the most focus from employers. Ethnocultural diversity ranked second.

### Which identity aspects seem to be employers’ highest priority? (‘others’, n=13, up to 3 choices)



Employers were asked about the D&I practices that they have in place (see next section). For each practice that they reported as being among their most successful, they were asked about the group(s) that it was primarily focused on (if any). Of 29 practices that were highlighted, 9 were designed for 'all groups' and 3 had response of 'unknown'. Of the remaining 17 practices, 10 included a focus on visible minorities or ethnic groups, 7 included a focus on LGBTQ, and 7 included a focus on women. A total of 4 were identified as having any focus on immigrants or newcomers.

A recent survey of employers in the Peel-Halton region explored similar topics. With more than 600 employers taking part, the vast majority (74%) reported that there was no priority target population for their diversity and inclusion goals. This group could well include a number of employers who have no particular D&I goals. For those employers who did report having a particular focus, the top four groups were women (selected by 7.4% of employers), youth (6.1%), newcomers to Canada (5.2%) and racial minorities (2.7%). There were variations by different industry categories, for example: 20% of professional, scientific and technical services firms cited women as their primary focus; 15% of firms in transportation & warehousing identified newcomers.

The website research focused on selected employers: those who have partnered with TRIEC and/or those recognized as leading employers because they have exceptional workplace diversity and inclusiveness programs, including programs for employees from five groups: women; members of visible minorities; persons with disabilities; aboriginal peoples; and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBTQ+) people. Specifically with respect to IEPs, the website research revealed that few employers make a distinction among immigrants, newcomers, or internationally trained professionals in their D&I initiatives. Immigrants are sometimes included in D&I initiatives aimed at visible minorities (although not all immigrants fall under this category) or ethnic diversity (which applies to more than immigrants).



Employers and service providers provided additional insights during the interview process:

- “Gender gets a lot of attention. This is true in most organizations. Many have women’s advancement programs, etc. But they are not focusing on anything else. Sometimes this exacerbates the exclusion for others. These programs are of most benefit to white women, it is not an intersectional perspective.”
- One large employer with a focus on five groups combines visible minorities and newcomers in one category. The interviewee reported that “although this segment is put together in the overall strategy, there are distinct plans for each group. For example, for visible minorities it is about career advancement. Or newcomers, it is about hiring the best talent and integrating them into the organization.”
- Employers reported paying specific attention to:
  - Immigrants (including hiring as well as advancing into management)
  - Women
  - LGBTQ
  - Age diversity, including Millennials or youth
  - People with disabilities (physical and also Autism spectrum)

## Conclusion

The GTA employers who are reflected in this research, either through direct participation or indirectly through the insights of stakeholders or through the review of their websites, express a range of rationales for their interest in diversity and inclusion. Achieving an equitable representation of the four designated Employment Equity groups continues to be a strong focus.

Many statements about goals and intended benefits of inclusion appear to be vague statements of values and intent without a clearly articulated rationale or strategic link that connects initiatives with outcomes. Traditionally, gender has been a starting point for many companies and perhaps as a result of recognized slow progress and/or the widespread media and political attention on the numbers of women in senior roles, it continues to be a focus for many employers.





# Employers' diversity and inclusion practices and successes

The research provided a number of opportunities to explore the practices that GTA employers are using to meet their diversity and inclusion goals. Website reviews, survey responses and interviews produce an interesting portrait of D&I activities in these GTA workplaces.

## D&I initiatives and best practices

The review of websites of employers who are recognized as leaders in D&I uncovered many practices that employers wanted to highlight publicly, beyond those that are workplace-focused. We summarize them here because they demonstrate employer commitment to D&I, are valuable in building awareness and organizational branding, and often overlap with workplace-focused initiatives.

External relations (participation and involvement in conferences, boards, external D&I initiatives, links with communities) are an important aspect of an organization's D&I work and allow employers to promote their initiatives or D&I in general, reach out to communities and specific groups, learn and share, strengthen their association with like-minded organizations, and extend or grow their influence. D&I is also important to many employers at the governance (board) level. Several organizations have Board diversity policies and/or have made public commitments to increasing the numbers of women, in particular, on Boards and in senior management roles (e.g., The 30% Club, the Catalyst Accord). These efforts are consistent with a business case that considers the organization's brand and reputation with job seekers, stakeholders and markets.

Some initiatives are focused outwards and are designed to lead eventually to more diversity within the organization. These include:

- internships, work placements and other employment programs aimed at specific groups
- online tools to assist targeted groups with their job search
- mentoring for targeted groups
- support of student organizations
- workshops with community partners

Some initiatives reported on websites are customer-focused or bring about benefits for clients:

- Seeking differentiated feedback along dimensions of diversity (e.g. one organization expanded gender identity and sexual orientation questions in its monthly customer questionnaire to better understand the diversity of its clients)
- Internal working groups to provide user feedback on the company's products and services

- Products and services tailored to diverse groups (e.g. services offered in different languages, multicultural products, dedicated or flexible pricing for customers with accessibility needs)
- Initiatives with community partners for the benefit of specific or diverse groups

Most of the actions to create an inclusive workplace take place internally and are aimed at employees. These actions are, broadly speaking similar to the best practices that were addressed in the survey.

Initiatives that were highlighted within the leading employers' websites include:

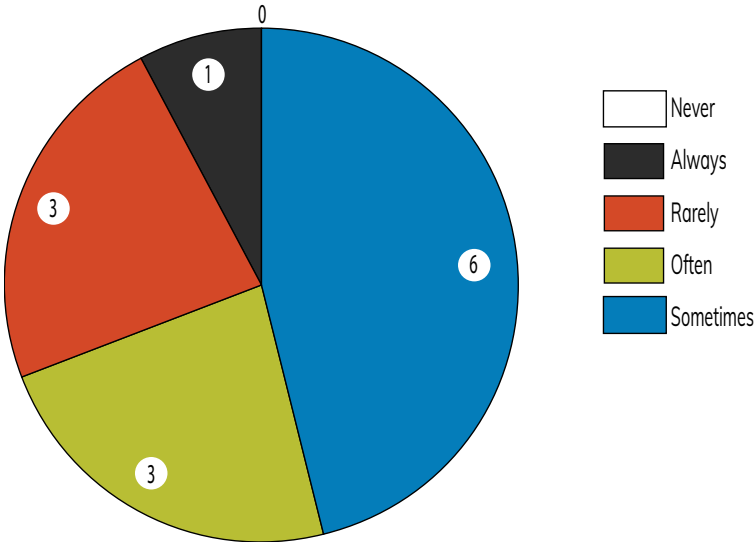
- Support for and facilitation of Employee Resource Groups. Although these were frequently mentioned on websites, they were not commonly reported within the survey sample. This is likely due to having more small – medium employers in the survey sample, where the numbers of employees would not warrant having ERGs or networks.
- Training and development: courses, workshops, networking and events. Some are targeted at specific groups of employees; e.g., recruiters, managers, women. Topics vary, ranging from D&I awareness to leadership development.
- Recognition (proclamations) and celebration of special events (e.g. International Women's Day, Pride Day, heritage festivals, multi-faith days)
- Safe /positive space campaigns
- Intranets for D&I
- Funding and support for D&I initiatives
- Employee D&I awards
- Shift or schedule accommodation for religious observance and faith rooms. Some small-medium employers in the research sample also emphasized their commitment to make accommodation for employees with disabilities (temporary or permanent) and family care responsibilities.
- Intervention into concerns and complaints resolution

One interviewee commented that D&I award programs are primarily a marketing exercise and consequently some of the initiatives that are highlighted by employers in their external communications lack substance. The interviewee highlighted, "For example they might have a work-life balance program, but using it is a career limiting move. They talk but don't walk." The survey and interviews in the current research provided an opportunity to explore the public declarations more deeply and with a wider lens than solely the practices of the leading employers.

In the survey, the "other" respondents (i.e., individuals who are not employers nor service providers) were asked: How often do you see employers taking action to create a workplace that is respectful and welcoming?

Of 13 respondents, the most common response was 'sometimes' (n=6). Remaining responses were split among 'rarely' (n=3), 'often' (n=3) and 'always' (n=1). Overall, these individuals do not create a positive picture of employers' active and consistent commitment to inclusive workplaces.

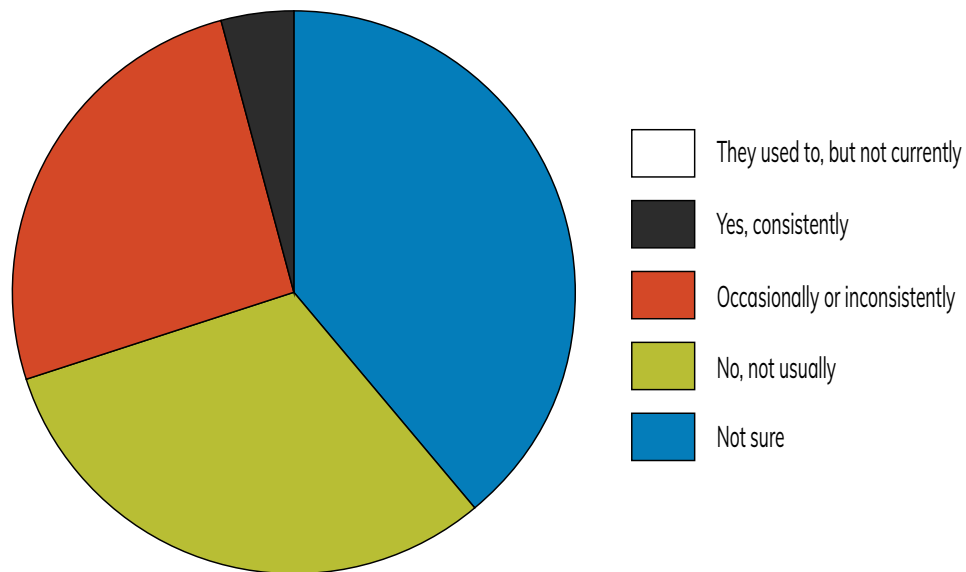
### How often do you see employers taking action to create a workplace that is respectful and welcoming? ('others', n=13)



Also in the survey, agency respondents were asked whether employers they work with use any of a list of 29 identified D&I 'best practices'. The list was drawn from sources such as the Inclusive Workplace Index (IWI), the Global Diversity and Inclusion Benchmarks, recent surveys such as the Conference Board of Canada's benchmarking study, and the earlier review of employer websites. The practices were grouped into four broad categories: Recruitment & Hiring, Employee Development, Workplace Culture and Leadership. (See the later chart and/or the survey questionnaire in Appendix 2 for the list.)

Almost 40% of the responses from the service providers were "don't know", suggesting that the agency does not actively discuss these practices with their employer partners. This might reflect a missed opportunity for more active and engaged partnership. When agencies did provide an assessment, just over half of the actual ratings were "No, not usually". One-quarter were 'occasionally or inconsistently', and only 7% of the ratings were "Yes, consistently".

## Agency perspective on employer use of listed D&I practices



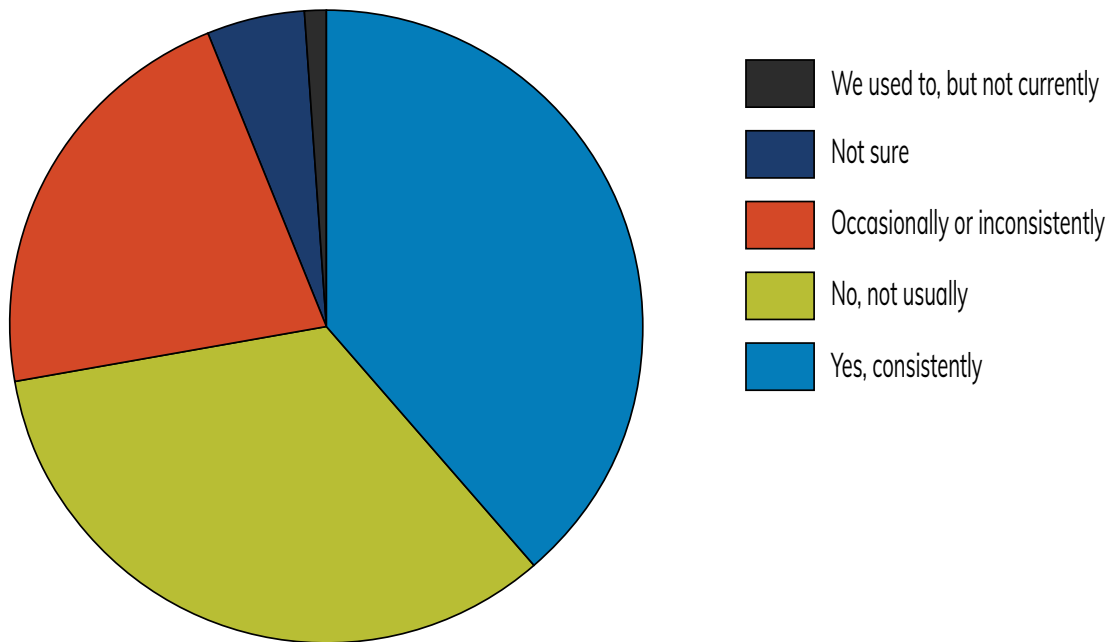
Although this is admittedly a small sample, these agencies were most likely to indicate that employers had the following practices in place to some degree:

- Targeted outreach to under-represented groups
- Policies to remove barriers in the hiring process
- Practices for equitable access to training and development
- Policies to eliminate harassment
- Practices to make accommodation

Employers were asked how frequently they use the 29 D&I best practices. As can be seen in the following chart, employers were much more likely to say that they use these practices consistently; almost 40% of the responses were 'yes, we use this consistently'.



## Employer use of 29 D&I practices (n=21)

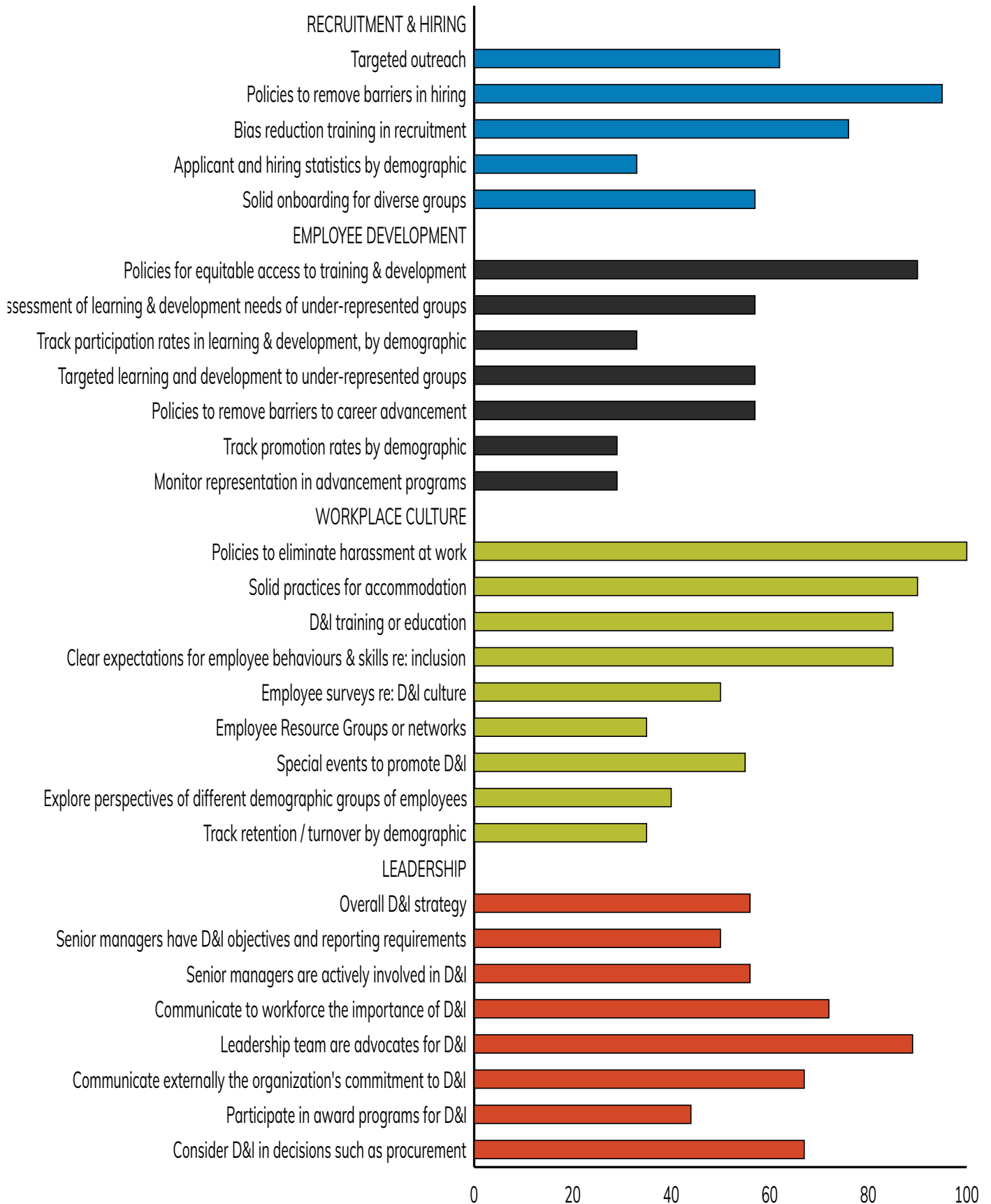


There is a wide range in the likelihood that certain practices will be used by employers. Across the 29 practices, each of the practices was reportedly used by at least 6 of the 21 employers who responded to these questions; some practices were described as being used by almost all employers. (See following chart) The practices that are least frequently used are those related to metrics broken by demographic group – tracking statistics for hiring, promotion, participation in development programs, as well as examining employee engagement and satisfaction. The practices most frequently used are related to having policies in place for fairness and equity, harassment and accommodation. D&I communication and training are also common within this particular sample.

On average, the employers in this survey sample reported using approximately 17 of the 29 practices. Some employers reported using all of the listed practices while others use only a handful. There was not an evident pattern – for example, while one large employer subject to Employment Equity used all of the practices, so too did a small non-profit. It should be remembered that these are self-reported and not verified; it is possible that some employers over-stated or under-stated their use of these practices.

In the survey, employers also had the option to list other initiatives they had implemented. Responses were either more specific examples of one of the practices, such as listing a 'lunch & learn' topic as an example of D&I training, or were early mentions of practices that appeared later in the survey. No new, innovative approaches were uncovered.

## Percentage of employers using D&I practices



For each of the four general categories of D&I practices, survey respondents were asked to identify one or at most two practices that they considered had been the most successful approach, and then to comment on the impact it had and how they knew it had been successful. The most commonly mentioned successes were:

- Policies to remove barriers in the hiring process
- Targeted recruitment outreach and broad advertising
- Training and other support to reduce bias in the hiring process
- Targeted learning and development programs for under-represented groups
- Diversity and inclusion training
- Policies to eliminate harassment in the workplace
- Direct involvement of senior managers in D&I initiatives

From the interviews, it is interesting to note which practices the employers choose to emphasize in response to an open-ended question (see interview protocol in Appendix 2). The following examples reflect the range of input received and uncover some innovative practices:

#### **The personal touch in small companies**

- “At staff meetings, everyone is required to share what they've been doing in past week, others can comment - can't have nothing to report - makes everyone feel heard. Everyone remains standing to make it happen fast.”
- “We do a lot of outside activities – e.g. have an upcoming dinner to mark some work we have been doing in Brazil. Every two months we do something outside office - spouses are invited too.”
- “Even though we are a small company, we allow staff to take one month vacation as many are immigrants and they want to go home (internationally).”
- “We have a buddy system – a new hire can call anyone in our agency who speaks their language to clarify any issues.”
- “We do one on one performance reviews - usually 1-3 times a year – and we include a discussion on goals and gaps relating to each person's individuality and D&I. We encourage them to take an idea and allow them to implement it – this is an easy and important measure. We focus on each person's strengths.”
- “We do one-on-one's every week. We sit down for 30 minutes: 15 minutes for the employee on whatever they want to talk about (not about their projects) and 15 minutes for the manager to do the same - helps opens door and builds relationship. If someone feels like an outsider, this is a way to help them feel included.”

## Learning and development

- “We have mandatory training on unconscious bias, and other education to help serve a global community. We partner with agencies to provide this training.”
- “We’re emphasizing training for first line supervisors. We like the TRIEC videos as a way to help front end managers understand cultural nuances.”
- “We are doing Unconscious Bias training, but in a fun, simple way – the key message is that it’s easy to train biases and hard to remove them; we are avoiding a focus on the science behind it. The training is very well received, scoring 98 / 100 for usefulness and effectiveness. We’re using it globally –senior leaders will have to deliver training.”
- “Senior leadership monthly meetings now allocate time to talk about D&I – e.g. a member of our D&I Council presented "Learning Bursts" – a short presentation on importance of appropriate wording. Our aim is that this will trickle down to middle managers and employees.”
- “We have had a mentoring program since 2015 – it was originally for professionals, but we recently rolled out to the clerical group (we think it will help frontline people in field operations locations.)”

## Changing systems and practices

- Some employers emphasized changes to their recruitment practices – creating strong partnerships with agencies.
- “We instituted a multi-faith prayer room in our metro (GTA) operational location – we’re hoping to do it at our corporate office too.”
- “We no longer do performance reviews - equity and inclusion are embedded in a 360 index for leaders in a number of areas – e.g. using diverse perspectives to lead.”

## External relationships

- “We support various Women in Tech initiatives.”
- “Overall, we try to partner with organizations/vendors that have some demonstrated interest in D&I. For example, we use a third party vendor for our Family and Employee Assistance Plan (FEAP) – they offer services in 150 languages. We are proud of that. In 2016, we did a review of all agencies and recruiting firms we were using – we retained those that demonstrated D&I as important; we ended two relationships where there was not a strong D&I commitment.”
- In one small company, the company owners do a lot of volunteering and mentoring in programs for new immigrants.

## Communications

- “We use Slack as a communications tool. We put out a call on Slack saying we wanted to recognize Pride month and curious to know if anyone wanted to take part. We got so much positive feedback – I was surprised that so many people paid positive attention. As a results, a group of employees met and they are rolling out some actions. Initiatives don’t have to be big – e.g. for Pride, we will have a movie screening and Slack chat. Whatever we do must be meaningful and respectful for that group.”
- “We’re trying to build managers’ awareness about how they work with individual employees. We started by sending articles (biweekly newsletter) on topics like unconscious bias and the benefits of D&I.”

## Practices for measurement

The results of the recent Peel-Halton employer survey highlight important gaps in organizations’ measurement practices. The areas that received the highest scores for “Needs improvement” were ‘tracking the contribution of diversity and inclusion to corporate performance’(27%) and ‘tracking progress in the implementation of diversity and inclusion goals’ (25%). As discussed above, a key developmental step in becoming a more inclusive workplace is the step of moving from a series of isolated D&I initiatives to a coherent, business-linked strategy. Measurement is a critical enabler of a more coherent, strategic and impactful approach to D&I.

The website review identified those measurement practices that employers choose to highlight in their public communications. The choice of what to discuss on a large employer’s website is likely to be quite intentional. Presumably these practices are credible and easily understood by the public, are connected to the company’s desired public positioning with respect to D&I, and do not raise potentially awkward questions that the employer might not want to address publicly.

- Some employers have conducted surveys that include aspects of D&I, either within a more general employee survey or in a targeted D&I census or questionnaire.
- Some include D&I measures in employee reviews.
- Many employers report on their D&I work in corporate social responsibility reports, or in their annual reports. Many report simply on initiatives, a few report on representation (usually EE designated groups), and a few report on progress on commitments in their D&I strategies. Particular initiatives may have their own special reports.

As indicated above, the practices that were least frequently used by the employers who responded to the survey were those related to measurement – tracking hiring, promotion or development separately by demographic group; or using identity characteristics to explore possible differences in workplace experiences of inclusion.

Over half (60%) of the responding employers reported that they use employee surveys to gain feedback on D&I within the workplace. One large employer's experience with their current survey shows how challenging this can be: "We are currently doing a survey in the U.S. and Canada about how we are doing on recognizing and supporting various groups - whether our programs are inclusive. We are struggling to get our target minimum participation rate (40%) – but we are getting close."

One subject matter expert in the interviews advised that there is an increase in demographic measures. However, a very low percentage of employers measure anything beyond a compliance focus, such as employment equity. One large GTA employer who was interviewed is planning a diversity census of their workforce; they plan to spend the next 18 months to lay the groundwork with employees to encourage employees to self-identify against a range of identity characteristics. Without accurate demographic data it is difficult to conduct meaningful quantitative measurement.

The research survey and interviews asked not only about formal measurement practices, but also those qualitative and less formal indicators that employers use to monitor the effectiveness of their D&I practices. When asked about the indicators that their D&I initiatives are successful, survey respondents and interviewees mentioned specific outcomes that showed they have been tracking results to some extent. For example,

### **Diversity in the workforce**

- 'We have a highly diverse workforce many of whom are recent immigrants. In total we speak more than 30 languages in a workforce of approx. 120.'
- 'Based on demographics of our new hires'
- 'It has resulted in more diversity at the senior staffing levels.'
- 'Increase in visible minorities being promoted in different roles, according to our most recent Employment Equity narrative report.'

### **Impacts on workplace practices**

- 'Our hiring practice is now close to impartial.'
- 'Our previous ESR (Employment Systems Review) identified that employees were hesitant to come forward with concerns. But since doing some awareness-building last year with managers and staff, we have had an increase in the number of employees with requests for accommodation, indicating more confidence than before.'
- "We find that in the GTA metro region (GTA) some employees with language barriers are now coming forward looking for ESL training support – this is as a direct result of our D&I communication efforts."

### **Organizational outcomes**

- 'More ideas, innovation, employee and client satisfaction'
- 'We have great retention: staff never leave.'

## Employee feedback

- ‘Based on exit interviews and our employee representatives asking questions about diversity to their members, it feels that employees appreciate our efforts at celebrating differences.’
- ‘Our employee engagement survey includes questions on feeling respected and included. We have a positive response, overall; in some locations / work groups it is lower.’
- ‘The feedback from our engagement survey is more favourable since we introduced our inclusion initiative.’

Taken as a whole, these indicators suggest that many employers are attempting to do some monitoring of the impact of their D&I practices and new initiatives. Some of the elements for more effective measurement seem to be in place.

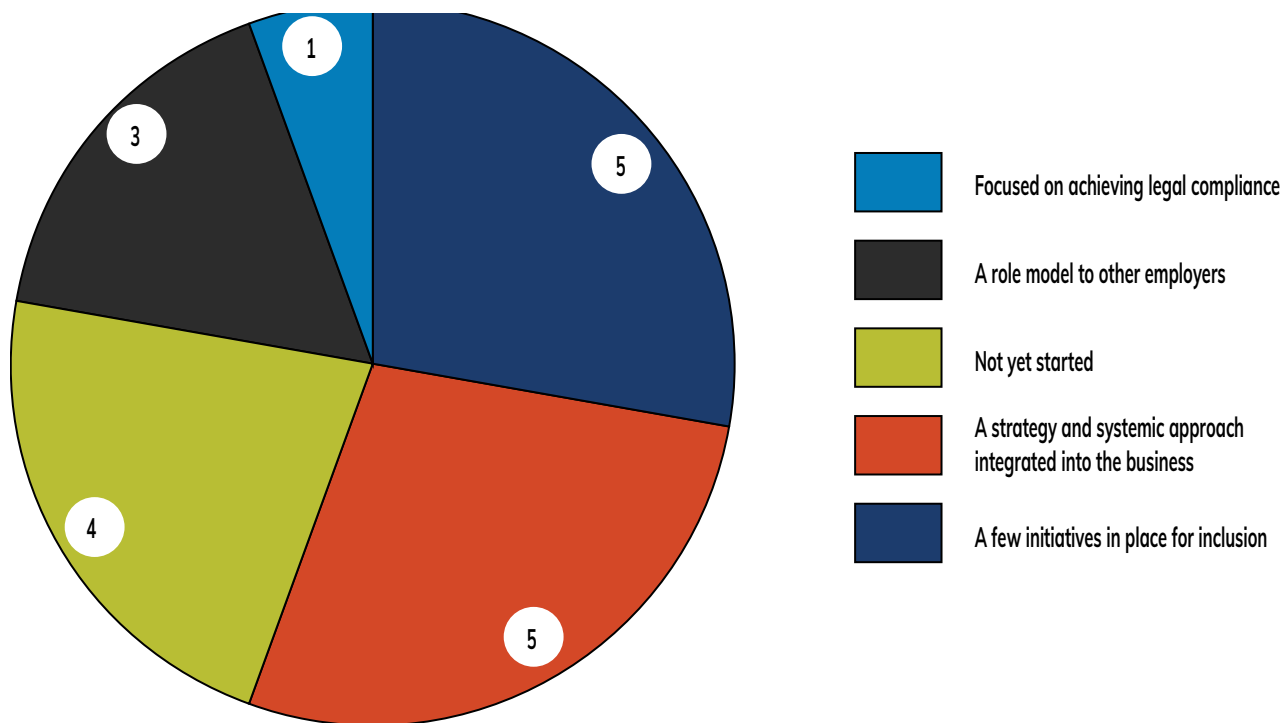
**Conclusion.** The GTA employers who engaged in this research project report that they are actively implementing at least a few D&I practices within their organization. Some of these, admittedly, are policies for fairness, accommodation and freedom from harassment that are seen as minimum requirements in today’s Ontario workplaces. However, others demonstrate a consistent commitment to creating a workplace where people feel safe, respected and valued. As outlined in the next section, many GTA employers recognize that they still have only started their D&I journey. The separate initiatives, while often effective individually, do not necessarily coalesce into a strong strategic approach with monitoring founded on a clear identification of intended organizational goals.



# Progress and outcomes of D&I in GTA workplaces

Progress and development over time. Employers who responded to the survey provided a rating of their current stage of development in their “D&I Journey”. As can be seen from the chart below, 8 of the 18 indicated they are quite advanced – having a strategic and systemic approach (n=5) and being a role model to other employers (n=3). The remaining 10 rate themselves as earlier in the journey, including 4 who say they have not yet started. These ratings seem generally consistent with their reports of their use of D&I practices (see previous section); the ‘role model’ employers report that they use most of the best practices consistently, whereas those who have not yet started report that they have very few of these practices in place.

**Employers’ Current Stage in D&I Journey** (self-reported; n=18)



The interviews garnered a range of insights about GTA workplaces, from employers themselves and from stakeholders or service providers who work with a large number of employers.

There was a consensus that organizations differ in their D&I understanding and progress – across industry sectors and employer size, in particular. For example, a service provider commented that many organizations in the technology sector understand the importance of D&I but still don’t know how to deal with diverse talent.

Among the employers we work with, there is a lot of inconsistency, a large range. We have over 10 employer partners, and over 50 clients. Each one is at a different point in their journey.

- Service provider



With regard to the stages outlined in the chart above, most of the employers who agreed to an interview described themselves in ways consistent with the later stages of the “journey”. Several talked about the progress they had made, and how their approach to D&I had evolved over recent years. These examples illustrate this sense of progress:

An inclusion focus takes care of compliance.

- Large employer covered by Employment Equity

- “Historically we had the desire to have a diverse and inclusive workforce and we had a number of initiatives [...]. Now we have excellent support from the leadership team and we have a newly approved D&I strategy we will launch in the fall. It will pull together the different pieces.”
- Some organizations that are subject to Employment Equity confirm that it has driven progress in the past. “We conducted an Employment Systems Review in 2014 and it helped identify gaps and opportunities.” “Our ESR prompted us to develop short- and long-term goals (to 2018 and 2022, respectively).” These employers are quick to point out that a compliance focus can co-exist with a more complete approach to D&I. “Our particular focus is on EE, but inherent in that is D&I.”
- Service providers commented that over the past several years, employers have become more open to hiring immigrants. “Before, employers/supervisors would say they don’t have the time to integrate an immigrant.” Some of these employers have created positive partnerships with agencies that can provide a range of different support services.
- “Ten years ago some employers were not even aware of the concept of Diversity, it was not on the agenda. They were simply trying to hire folks who were easy to ramp up, would best fit in, in the least amount of time, and for whom they could check references. Now they have a more open mind to take chances, and see that a focus on D&I can bring innovation. Maturity and growth can be seen through [actions like the] introduction of diversity champions, a CSR perspective and a clear business case.”

“We are at a maturity level now to realize the benefits of D&I and highlight those. For us, it means being an employer of choice and participating in positive way in our communities.”

- Large employer

**Strategy.** One of the indicators of progress along an organization’s D&I ‘journey’ is the move from a series of isolated initiatives to the development of a guiding strategy that is linked to the business. Large GTA organizations are more likely to have, or be developing, formal D&I strategies and plans; but the general consensus is that small to medium sized GTA employers don’t have the resources (both time and people) to develop these coherent strategies and plans.

Many larger employers (>3000 employees) have started to think about [having a strategy]. They realize they need to focus on it.

- Service provider

In the web-based research of recognized D&I leaders, all of the employers reviewed showed evidence of formal commitment to D&I through mechanisms such as:

- A diversity council committee that guides D&I initiatives. In some cases, there was specific mention of senior level involvement in this council.

- Regional diversity committees for organizations with operations across Canada
- Other advisory committees related to D&I; e.g., women’s advisory committee, LGBTQ committees, supplier diversity council, youth advisory body
- Involvement of board members, Board policies on D&I, or initiatives for diverse representation on the board
- Assignment of specific responsibility for overseeing D&I initiatives to senior official
- Specific teams dedicated to D&I

Almost all employers also noted formal strategies, policies or plans related to D&I. In some cases these were embedded within corporate plans. Some employers had specific strategies for focus areas in D&I; e.g., newcomer strategy, or aboriginal recruitment and retention strategy.

The interviews revealed that these strategies have been prompted by various factors, including a change in leadership, a realization that progress was slow, a desire to get ‘bigger bang for the buck’, or an opportunity to integrate D&I into newly developed HR or business strategies. A number of employers described their D&I plan as being integrated directly into their organization’s “People Plan”, or as an “Inclusion and Equity Plan” that is embedded into the strategic plan that incorporates a focus on the perspective of clients / patients, staff and community. One employer described the fundamental difference from their earlier ‘plans’ to the most recent: “Our new plan includes a structured implementation strategy - nothing that wasn’t in previous plans, but now a more detailed component,” with supports such as a revised internal management structure, clear senior executive accountabilities, and a brand for communicating the plan and its intent.

In contrast, the following quote exemplifies the risk of not having a solid plan in place:

- “We first started D&I work in 2005, there was some commitment from leadership [with an internal and external focus]. We struggled over the years to meet objectives. In 2012 we evaluated and the reality was that not a lot of progress had been made. We had set lots of objectives but they were broad in nature and many employees struggled to figure out what to do to get to successful achievement of the plan.”
- Not all employers currently have plans: “We are doing some stuff already – it is more ad hoc. They’re not necessarily in a D&I “program” – we are in our infancy in terms of creating a formal structure for it.”

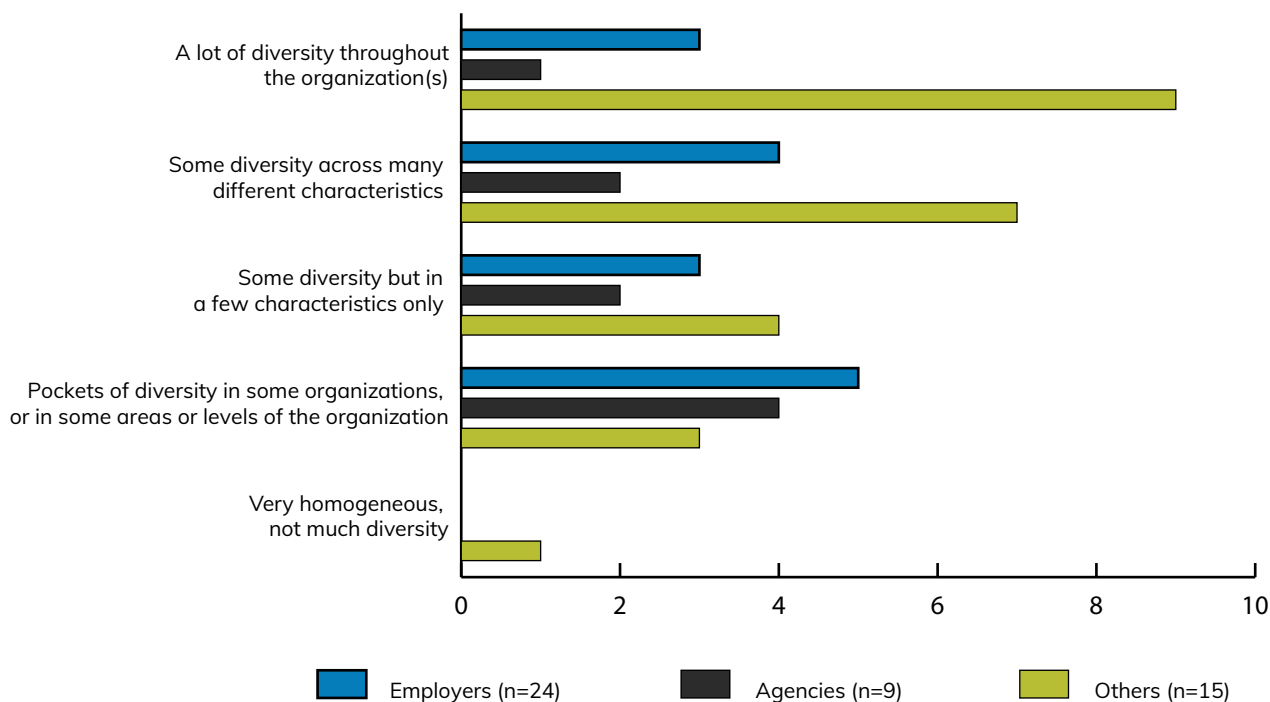
Examining some of the comments by interviewees is a reminder that calling something a ‘strategy’ does not make it so. Some respondents suggested that often employers announce a strategy, but do not necessarily follow through. Some strategies are little more than compliance-focused staffing plans. For example one employer that is subject to Employment Equity commented:

- “We really try to hone our strategy by business segment – what are the challenges, what are the gaps for example in [Department A], and in [Department B] , visible minorities are doing well, while persons with disabilities and Aboriginal people show

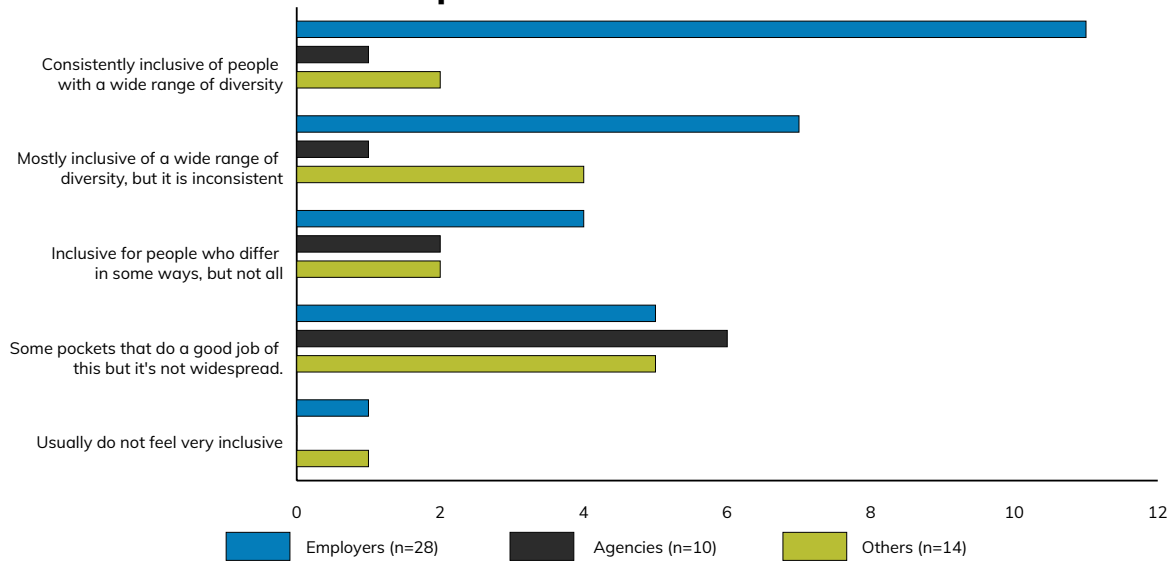
a gap [compared to labour force availability]. Therefore we have special initiatives for workforce composition – focused on people with disabilities and Aboriginal people. In [Department C], it is focused on visible minorities and women – particularly, career advancement opportunities for these groups [because that is where we have EE gaps].”

Evidence within the workplace. The previous sections explored employers’ current status with regard to their implementation of best practices that create the conditions for an inclusive workplace. In addition, the research explored the perspectives of employers, agencies and other individuals regarding the current levels of diversity and inclusion within GTA workplaces. It should be noted that the responses are not directly comparable – employers were describing their own workplaces whereas agencies and other respondents were describing GTA workplaces that they are familiar with. As the charts below shows, the employers were considerably more positive about their own workplace than the other two groups were about GTA workplaces they know.

### GTA Workplaces: Level of Diversity



## GTA Workplaces: Level of Inclusion



There are two reasonable explanations for the discrepancy in perspectives about both diversity and inclusion shown in the above tables. First, it is probable that those employers who chose to answer the survey are not typical, but are achieving better results than are other employers. The service providers (“agencies”) who completed the survey are typically those that are engaged with employers who are seeking, or at least open to, increasing diversity in their organization. One might expect that the employers in their networks are also not completely representative of the GTA population of workplaces. Some employers in the interviews elaborated on their current situation and gave evidence of their positive workplaces:

- “It is a rather diverse environment. We have trainees from all over the world.”
- “Our current focus is on gender. We want to be the best place to work for all women at all levels. Since 2013, more than half of our full-time managers in Canada, in the home office and in the field, are women – first [unit in our organization] to achieve it.”
- “We have recently succeeded in promoting more racialized people and women into senior ranks.”
- “We are pleased with our employee engagement results on feeling respected and included – we have a positive response, overall. Of course, in some locations / work groups the results are lower.”
- “Our annual survey includes two inclusion-related questions (are people treated fairly; are different points of view valued) and a net promoter score. And in the past, the visible minorities scored as well or better than the average.”

Second, it is possible that employers have an overly positive view of their workplaces. A number of interviewees made comments about encountering these differences in perspective:

- “In large organizations diversity still needs work. The workforce is more diverse but not nearly so in upper management levels.”
- “The larger companies and those with a requirement to do so focus on diversity. They are not as far as they think they are with respect to being inclusive.”
- “Senior leadership and HR often think the organizations are more inclusive than the average employee does. And there is a huge gap with equity seeking groups.”

Interviewees have also emphasized the critical influence of senior leaders on the progress toward an inclusive workplace. Leaders’ conscious awareness of the current situation in their own workplace, and in others, is a key determinant of commitment to change.

- “We got a new CEO two years ago who really gets it. The culture change has been refreshing. There is huge interest and uptake now.”
- According to one subject matter expert, three important points about senior leadership teams make them less likely to be natural champions for D&I, without some additional awareness building:
  - They have social privilege.
  - They are at a relatively early stage in intercultural development, where they recognize superficial cultural differences in food, customs, etc., but emphasize similarity in physical structure, psychological needs, and/or assumed adherence to universal values. One service provider in the research reported that when leadership teams complete an assessment, 65-70% are at the “Minimization” level.
  - They think the organization is inclusive. They don’t understand that others experience it differently, and therefore it is not a focus for them.

The recent Peel-Halton employer survey found that the respondents were so positive about their firm’s practices that it “strained the credibility of the results”. For example, for any D&I practice, typically only 1-2% of respondents admitted that their practices needed serious improvement. For advanced practices such as tracking a link between D&I and the organization’s performance, 15% rated their practice as ‘excellent’ and over half rated it as ‘satisfactory’. This suggests a lack of understanding of these practices and/or a managerial ‘blind spot’ about the need for improvement.

**Conclusion.** Many of the GTA employers involved in the research rate themselves as relatively well advanced in their practices for D&I. However, even among this self-selected group of employers willing to devote time and energy to this research project, it is clear that there is work still to be done. D&I strategies are not as coherent as they could be and do not appear to be tightly connected to important organizational outcomes. Employers did not clearly articulate any logical storyline that connected their practices to workplace indicators of inclusion and/or to their stated business case. There may be important gaps in understanding between employers and their partners – the agencies, service providers and committed individuals who will support them in making progress.

# Employers encounter barriers to progress

In general, most of the employers who participated in the research have already demonstrated interest in moving forward with D&I efforts. Nonetheless, many are not as far advanced as they would hope to be. The survey and interviews directly explored the barriers that employers perceive they face.

**Competing demands.** The most commonly mentioned barrier is that D&I has to compete with other organizational demands – for resources and attention. Employers who responded to the survey were most likely (10 of 14 who responded to this question) to report that having competing priorities was one of their three most significant barriers to advancing on D&I. Other barriers (each selected by 5 of the 14 respondents) were a lack of resources (human or financial) and not really having a strong consistent commitment.

It is just a question of workload, and focus. There are 15 trillion things to do.

- Large employer

**Small employers.** It was noted that small employers face particular challenges with regard to resource constraints – human and financial. Often they do not have internal HR or staff development resources; and with few employees it can be difficult to find time for people to participate in training. Many small employers are not familiar enough with the supports that might be available to them and do not have the capacity to learn about them or take full advantage of them.

**Business case.** Several participants mentioned that it is a barrier when the business case is not well understood throughout the organization. This is clearly related to the barrier of competing priorities as decisions must be made about allocating time, energy and resources to initiatives. One stakeholder suggested that part of the barrier is that many D&I practitioners come from a social justice background and lack the business acumen to develop and communicate a compelling business case.

**Lengthy timeframes.** An interesting insight from the consultation is that even when the business case might be understood, the timeframe to see the impact can be long. When organizations are driven by quarterly or annual targets, waiting two years to see the effects on business outcomes will make executives less likely to prioritize the D&I initiative. Similarly, it can take time to implement new D&I practices, such as creating new partnerships for recruitment outreach or for procurement with diverse suppliers; many managers will be more likely to go with the 'tried and true' rather than invest energy in a long-term change with possibly uncertain outcomes.

**Gaining buy-in.** Whether due to an unclear business case, persistent myths and misconceptions, or too many other demands, a lack of commitment and buy-in throughout the organization is often cited as a barrier to advancing with D&I. As an example, one interviewee mentioned that managers in certain areas will not hire IEPs due to a worry that the person will be over-qualified and will not stay long. Another employer mentioned that it takes a lot of coaching of the front-line unionized workforce to take a different perspective. One individual emphasized that managers will be resistant to getting on board if they feel they are being 'shamed' for not having done enough; this interviewee sometimes feels this at D&I related events. One stakeholder's perspective is that employers

We have not yet created an internal culture where every person recognizes their role in creating an inclusive organization and inclusive community. Our biggest challenge is the internal culture shift. Developing a diversity competent workforce is a challenge.

- Large public sector employer

who are already engaged and familiar with working with new Canadians will continue to delve more deeply and are less prejudiced; those that haven't done it are 'shy and afraid' – they worry when they hear stories about newcomers who can't speak English, or about challenges with soft skills, etc. An employer confirmed this assessment: employers are risk-averse, the challenge is to help them overcome bias. One stakeholder emphasized how important it is to adapt the messaging to the individual, based on where they are.

**Group-specific challenges.** Some employers or agencies mentioned specific barriers relevant to underrepresented groups such as: finding modified work for injured employees; adapting management style to work more effectively with recent immigrants; increasing the numbers of women in front-line non-traditional roles; finding the resources needed to help new immigrants integrate into the workforce; and understanding how to work with youth and Millennials.

Immigrants are good workers, but soft skills can be such a burden that employers let them go.

- Stakeholder

**Systemic workforce dynamics.** There are aspects of workforce management that can create unintended barriers to D&I progress. For example, the population of recent hires in many organizations is often more diverse than long-tenured employees. One interviewee mentioned that retention is a challenge: the new hires become impatient for promotion and when there is a lot of marketplace competition for talent, they leave. Another example identified that new hires might not have the same access to networking, training and career advancement if they are working in entry-level positions that are night shifts, or otherwise further removed from the opportunities. In sectors where there is a critical skill shortage, service providers report that employers are more open to diverse hiring; when there is not such a shortage, there is less interest.

**Lack of a plan.** Finally, the lack of a clear strategy and plan was also mentioned as a barrier, although not frequently. With limited resources, employers may struggle without direction for making decisions and taking action. Such a plan could also align D&I initiatives with the desired organizational outcomes, reinforcing the business case. An implication of not having a clear plan is that there is often also unclear accountabilities. Often only the most senior executives have a defined goal for diversity and inclusion. At lower levels of the organization, other business goals can run counter to good D&I practices, at least temporarily – for example, if recruiters are measured primarily on 'time to fill' then they may be incented to rely on traditional talent pools and longstanding relationships. A barrier to clarifying accountabilities is a general weakness in organizations' ability to measure D&I.

Biggest block has been lack of one overriding plan. Our work was all being done in pieces, and we have limited resources. We were not getting the most out of the initiatives.

- Large employer that has recently begun to develop a D&I strategy

**Conclusion.** The current research with GTA employers confirms many of the barriers that have been long recognized in trying to 'move the needle' on diversity and inclusion. If there is one theme, it is perhaps that the effort-to-payoff equation is not compelling. The effort sometimes seems too great: too many initiatives without a clear plan; the need for resources to design and implement D&I initiatives; and the typical challenges of implementing change and maintaining momentum on large initiatives within organizations. The payoff sometimes seems too little or too remote: an unclear understanding of the desired impact; an inability to measure that impact; and long timeframes to see the benefits.

# On the horizon – trends and new initiatives

Employers were asked about what they see in the near-term future for D&I in general, and within their own organization in particular.

Within own organization. In the near-term future, many of the employers who were interviewed are already committed to specific plans in order to continue to make progress. For example, one large public sector organization has recently developed a five-year strategy (to 2021) with a sequence of activities, including a communication plan, a diversity census, enhanced recruitment practices, engagement tools for leaders, and succession planning with a diversity lens; their efforts will now focus on executing the plan. Another highlighted that they still need to work on becoming more internally inclusive – this is already an element in their organization’s strategic plan. Another employer will continue their focus on recruitment and retention, on educating people about accommodation, and on using their regional D&I councils to promote change.

Others are considering new initiatives, often building on their earlier successes. For example:

- One employer has made substantial progress advancing women into senior leadership positions. They now want to leverage these practices to achieve the same benefits for other employee groups (e.g., Black, Asian, LGBT).
- For one small company with a long history of hiring immigrants, the next focus is succession planning and advancing / developing them into management roles.
- Conducting an audit to understand their starting point – building on data collection methods already in place in their U.S. operations (ethnic background), but not yet in Canada and other locations
- Several employers are planning to develop a strategy for D&I. One employer described it this way in the survey, “Developing a D&I strategy and plan within the next six months – to establish a broader focus / vision for D&I, be clear on what we want to accomplish, clear leadership role, actions beyond recruitment focus.”

New directions that were mentioned were often less specific. They included:

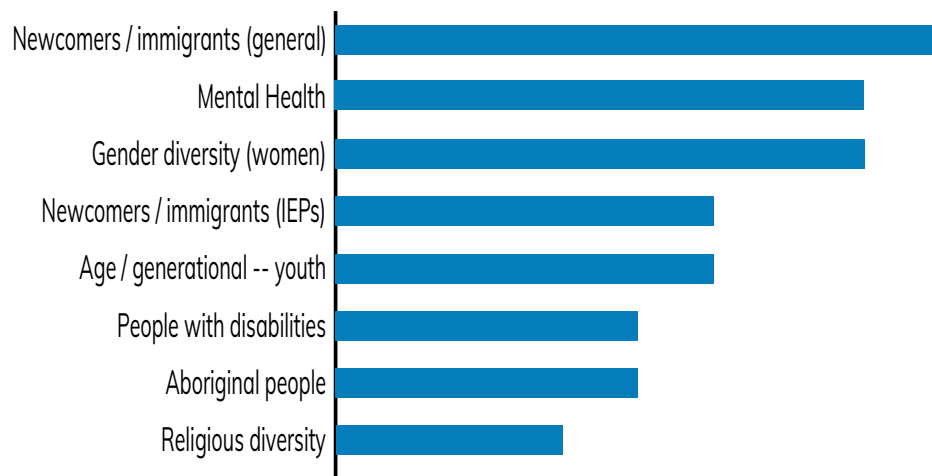
- Working with the local immigration partnership to be further integrated into programming led by others
- Clarifying D&I accountability for managers as part of being a leader
- Communicating the expectations for employees to make sure they are on board; to be clear that D&I is not just a ‘HR program’, but an organization-wide shift
- Changing recruitment methods to diversify the staff in terms of industry experience and ethnic backgrounds
- Moving from compliance to embracing inclusive culture

The survey asked employers to indicate up to three “diversity groups” or “aspects of identity” that will be a priority for their D&I focus in the next three years. The most common response was newcomers / immigrants (general); this is to be expected given the nature of the survey outreach. The other most frequent responses were ‘mental health’ and ‘gender diversity (women)’.



Compared to the indicators of their current focus (see earlier section), one can see that mental health is expected to increase substantially in importance. There also seems to be momentum building for an increased focus on newcomers / immigrants in general. It is possible that employers are responding to the considerable media attention for both of these issues in recent months.

## Upcoming focus for employers (3 years)



Notes: In total, 14 employers responded to this question. Only one additional employer marked 'Newcomers / immigrants (IEPs)' without having also marked 'Newcomers/immigrants (general)'; thus, the total for 'immigrants' could be considered to be 9.

Trends for D&I. Employers, agencies and other stakeholders shared some perspectives on the next steps for D&I more broadly. Four themes emerged:

- As discussed above (in the section on Definitions), the emphasis on inclusion continues to increase. Similarly, there is a trend toward moving to a more comprehensive view of diversity, that goes beyond the four Employment Equity designated groups, and beyond the protected grounds in human rights legislation. Whether or not this will be understood and described as 'intersectionality' or along the lines of 'everyone is unique' is not yet known.
- Organizations are looking for easier ways to engage. They are looking to partner but they find the system hard to navigate. One employer said it seems confusing and bureaucratic when there is a lack of coordinated efforts between various agencies – both those addressing different diversity groups and those for IEPs only.
- There may be a growing interest in employers positioning themselves as 'on the right side of history' as issues related to diversity and inclusion gain public attention. Concurrently, social media and public interest in a company's social responsibility and community impact can support a focus on equitable employment practices, supplier diversity, and customer service that reflects different needs and interests. These dynamics may drive an increased focus on gaining public recognition for D&I efforts and on being able to tell a compelling story about successes.

- Specifically with respect to IEPs, a few interviewees commented that the context is changing. At least within the GTA there is good awareness about IEPs, but the challenge is to move to more meaningful engagement with both employers and IEPs. One suggestion was to move beyond mentoring to focus on 1-on-1, goal-oriented coaching for IEPs.

A few individuals also mentioned possible external factors on the horizon. First, mental health is a topic of great interest at the current time. A focus on mental health in the workplace can overlap with D&I in at least two ways: people with mental health challenges can benefit from attention for accommodation and inclusion, and an inclusive work environment can have an impact on supporting the mental health of the wider workforce. Second, there will be a benefit in having new data once the census results are released; this will help organizations to understand the local labour market as well as their community and potential customers / clients. Third, the legislative landscape is always something to be alert to, including the potential impact of Ontario's anti-racism legislation.

**Conclusion.** Many of the employers involved in the research have identified plans for next steps in their D&I efforts. While they report that mental health will be a focus, none of them identified any specific initiatives in this regard or discussed how it would link to their D&I plans or desired outcomes. Several indicated that they are intending to develop a strategy or D&I plan to guide their efforts. In general they seem ready to move beyond recruitment efforts that focused on diversity to now considering approaches that will create a welcoming and inclusive workplace for their more diverse workforce.





# Identified Strengths and Gaps

The findings discussed above permit some conclusions to be drawn about the current state of D&I in many GTA workplaces.

## Strengths to leverage

- There is a clear trend to extend the focus beyond achieving a diverse workforce to creating an inclusive workplace. This is a positive move for creating outcomes that will benefit both employers and employees: welcoming and collaborative workplaces, greater retention, strong employee engagement, rewarding careers and opportunities to contribute.
- There is a strong focus on the business case for diversity and inclusion. There is evidence that GTA employers are starting to more clearly see the links among diversity, inclusion and business outcomes. This is particularly true in some sectors where innovation, skills shortages, and serving diverse markets / clients are critical determinants of an organization's success.
- There is legitimate commitment to creating diverse and inclusive workplaces.
- Many good practices are in place and employers can identify some positive outcomes and benefits that have been achieved.

## Barriers and gaps to address

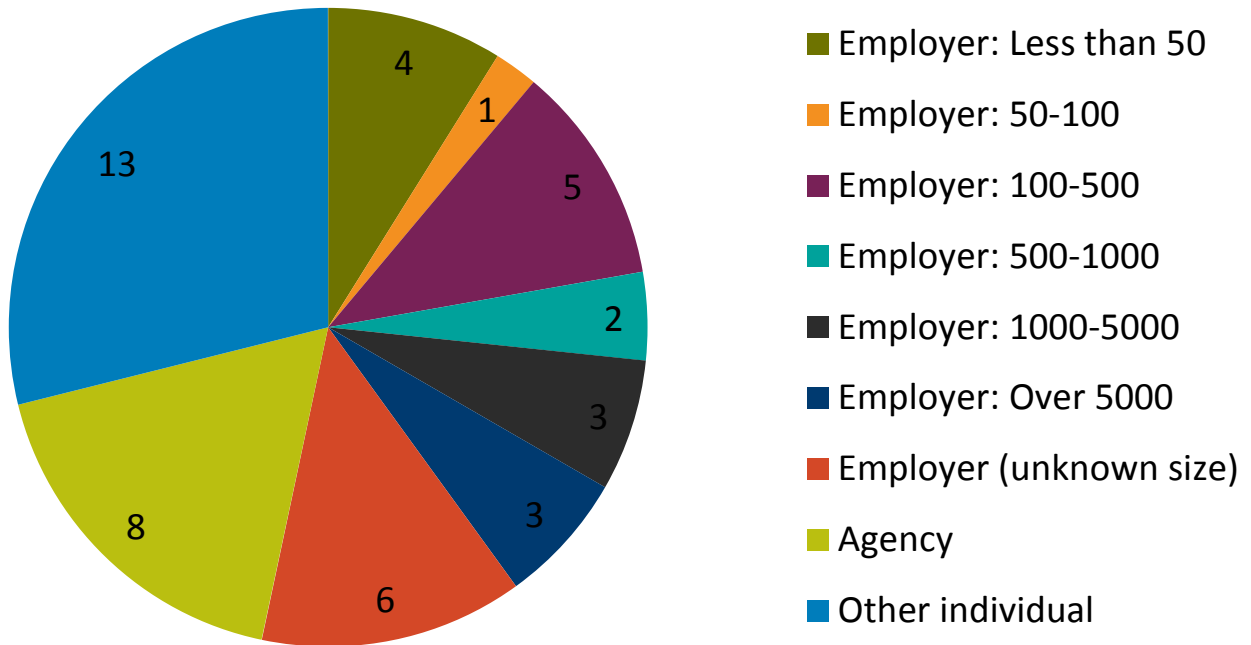
- Most employers lack a clearly defined strategy and set of plans. The organization-specific links between D&I and business outcomes (i.e., the business case) are often poorly articulated beyond the generalities.
- There is a general lack of measurement processes. As a result, there can be significant gaps in perception among senior leaders, employees, equity-seeking groups, and other stakeholders on the 'current state'. For achieving outcomes, it is difficult to manage investments and D&I initiatives without some measurement.
- At a systemic level, employers are struggling in a sub-optimized D&I system. They report that they find it difficult to navigate the services offered. Small and medium-sized employers face particular challenges in accessing services and adapting/ implementing best practices. The service providers are often unaware of the employers' practices, making it difficult for them to be active partners. Employers (both small and large) as well as their service providers are busy and stretched for resources; and there are some indicators in the research input received that there is little attention paid to building the long-term capacity of employers to be inclusive. (For example, service providers provide support to employers who are 'too busy' to integrate an immigrant – effective in the short term but is this the right solution in the long term?)

# Appendix 1: Description of research participants

For the web-based research, the following 15 employers and one union were reviewed.

	Best Diversity Employer 2017	TRIEC TMP Employer Partner	Sector	Employees in Canada
Accenture Inc.	X		Management Consulting	3,425
General Motors of Canada Company	X		Manufacturing	8,264
Loblaw Companies Limited	X		Retail (Food)	28,481
PepsiCo Canada	X		Consumer	9,358
Procter & Gamble Inc.	X		Consumer	1,754
Rogers	X			23,177
KPMG LLP	X	X	Professional Services (Accounting)	6,365
Manulife		X	Insurance	12,868
TD Bank Group	X	X	Banking	43,273
Stikeman Elliot		X	Professional Services (Legal)	1,300
YMCA of Greater Toronto	X		Non-Profit	1,546
Humber		X	Education	1,582
William Osler Health System	X		Health	2,994
Ontario Power Generation		X	Utility	10,840
Toronto, City of	X	X	Municipal	22,983
LiUNA LOCAL 506			Union	8,000 members

# Survey Respondents



The 'other' individuals who provided survey responses described themselves as:

- Working mostly in the GTA (n=10); some worked mostly elsewhere in Ontario (n=3)
- Knowledgeable about a few GTA workplaces (n=7) or about many GTA workplaces (n=6)
- Having mostly gained their knowledge about GTA workplaces through direct experience working with or in organizations (n=10)
- Immigrants (6 arrived as adults; 2 arrived as youth) or Canadian-born (n=5)
- Participating in the research as an interested employee (n=5), a HR practitioner (n=4), or other role such as interested immigrant or manager/supervisor [note that multiple answers were permitted]

There was not sufficient information about the agency respondents to provide a meaningful breakdown of their characteristics.

The employer respondents described themselves as follows:

- Of the 18 employers who provided location information, almost all have employees at work locations in the GTA (n=17). They also have operations in other Ontario locations (n=6), other locations in Canada (n=4), and outside of Canada (n=3).

- Most are provincially regulated (n=10). Some are federally regulated (n=5) and/or are governed by equity-related legislation (n=7; Employment Equity, the Federal Contractors Program or other).
- Most were private sector employers (n=10); some were not-for-profit (n=5) and a few were municipal government or Crown Corporations (n=3).
- The responding individuals were most likely to identify themselves as senior leaders (n=9); or as D&I champion, lead or change agent (n=6). Interestingly, no one identified themselves as both a 'senior leader' and a 'D&I champion'.
- Half of the employers who completed the full survey have asked to receive a summary of the findings and/or participate in a by-invitation webinar (n=9).

Interview participants represented perspectives from a variety of sectors. Included in the sample of 20 interviewees were organizations described as follows (categories are not mutually exclusive):

- Private sector employers (n=9)
- Public sector employers (n=5)
- Service providers (n=6), including consulting services, networks/associations, or employment support for underrepresented groups
- Small businesses (n=2)
- Organizations with a focus on technology sector (n=4) or on health care (n=2); others had a primary focus in financial services, education, retail or transportation

# Appendix 2: Research Tools

## Website Review: Information Capture Template

Organization:

Source:

	Question
	<p>Definitions / focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is Diversity defined? Inclusion?</li> <li>• What is the organizational business case for D&amp;I?</li> <li>• Does the focus weigh more heavily towards complying with legal obligations, building a diverse workforce, or building an inclusive workplace as part of business strategy? How is this demonstrated?</li> </ul>
	<p>Which aspects of diversity is most attention on?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E.g. designated groups, immigrants, women, other?</li> <li>• How much emphasis is there on immigrants?</li> </ul>
	<p>Is there evidence of a formal D&amp;I strategy in place?</p>
	<p>What specific actions are taken to create an inclusive workplace? That is – including change and learning at an individual / organizational level?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What initiatives are in place, who is involved?</li> <li>• Any specific actions relating to immigrants?</li> </ul>
	<p>What barriers are identified as being faced in working towards an inclusive workplace? What barriers were addressed? What barriers remain? What supports have been (or would be) particularly helpful?</p>
	<p>What are employers' "journey" to inclusion?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How have priorities evolved in recent years?</li> <li>• What changes have been made in programming / initiatives?</li> <li>• What next steps are planned?</li> <li>• How do they describe their current status or level of maturity?</li> </ul>

	Question
	<p>What measures are in place to track diversity? To monitor inclusion?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is tracked? What is publicly reported?</li> <li>• What vehicle(s) are used to gather this data – e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employee engagement / EE surveys?</li> <li>• Focus groups?</li> <li>• Through other HR metrics such as exit interviews, turnover/ promotion/ L&amp;D/ pay rates?</li> <li>• Other tools?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Are these measures in place just in GTA locations, or other operations (if any, such as other Canadian, international)?</li> <li>• Any specific focus on immigrants? Or a similar proxy “term” (e.g., newcomer, foreign worker, IEP, visible minority, etc.)</li> <li>• If so: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How are “immigrants” defined?</li> <li>• Do employers look at the intersection of immigrant status with any other demographic traits?</li> <li>• What results have been uncovered?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• How are measurement findings used?</li> </ul>
	<p>In terms of the needs of employers in the GTA, what trends or priorities are seen on the horizon, particularly regarding immigrant inclusion in the workplace? What factors are expected to have an influence?</p>
	<p>Any other findings or comments ....</p>



## Key Informant Interviews Protocol

CONFIDENTIAL Research Interview

Interview protocol

Interviewer:		Interview code:	
Organization type:	<input type="checkbox"/> Employer: <input type="checkbox"/> Stakeholder or Service Agency	Sector:	
Organization name:		Interviewee role:	
Notes:			

### Introduction:

- Interviewer introduces self, project.
- Thanks interviewee for taking the time for the call.
- Reminds interviewee about purpose of call (see information sheet).
- Confirm that still convenient, including duration of call. (30-45 minutes).
- Describe the format – semi-structured; we encourage candid comments; reminder that confidential.
- Confirmation of TRIEC’s commitment to ethical practices in collection of data:
  - You may decline to answer any questions asked, or return to a question already answered.
  - Your participation in this project is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from the interview at any time.
  - All comments you provide will remain strictly confidential; only group results will be reported, and individuals and organizations will never be identified.
  - Data collected for this research will be kept in a secure and confidential manner .
- Asks if interviewee has any questions for clarification about the research. Begin.

**Conduct interview using the questions on the following pages as a guide.**

Close:

- Invite any other comments.
- Ask if possible to follow up/contact again if required. [For example to clarify or delve deeper in certain areas / get sign-off on an attributed quote.]
- Ask if they would be interested in continuing to be involved, such as to validate some of the recommendations or the competencies.
- Thank individual for their time and insights; TRIEC will be in touch regarding the summary research findings and invitation only webinar.

	Question
1.	<p>Let's start with a very general question. Can you tell me your organization's "story" up until now, regarding Diversity and Inclusion? First of all, what (and when) was your starting point, and what if anything has changed over time?</p> <p>Probes (only as needed):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When and why did the organization start to focus on D&amp;I?</li> <li>• What were the original drivers for a focus on D&amp;I? How, if at all, have those evolved over time?</li> <li>• Would you say the focus has weighed more heavily towards complying with legal obligations, building a diverse workforce, or building an inclusive workplace as part of business strategy?</li> </ul>
2.	<p>Keeping with 'telling your story', where do you think your organization is now? [where do you think employers you work with are now]?</p> <p>Probes (only as needed):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is the situation today in your company [in employers you deal with] different from the past?</li> <li>• How important is a focus on D&amp;I to [your organization / employers you work with]?</li> <li>• What shows that it has that level of importance (whether high or low)? (that is, 'how do you know'?)</li> <li>• Today, what is the organizational business case for your organization's [employers you work with] D&amp;I work? How clearly articulated (or understood) is that?</li> <li>• Overall, how inclusive do you think your organization is [employers you work with are]?</li> </ul>

	Question
3.	<p>How do you [they] define Diversity? Inclusion?</p> <p>[Note to interviewer: If the definition is very different than what we might use, clarify here and/or be clear about meaning later in the interview when you use these terms.]</p>
4.	<p>Do [you / most of the employers] have a formal D&amp;I strategy in place?</p> <p>Probe (as needed):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If so, how would you describe it?</li> <li>• Who is accountable for it?</li> <li>• How well do you think it is working?</li> </ul>
5.	<p>Are there particular aspects of diversity &amp; inclusion that get more attention than others, in your company [employers you deal with]?</p> <p>For example, is there more focus on particular groups?</p> <p>Probe (as needed):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For example, does advancement of women get most attention, or people with disabilities, or LGBTQ, etc.? This could be formal attention, or informal (that is, what really matters to key decision makers?).</li> <li>• How much emphasis is there on immigrants, newcomers, Internationally educated professionals (etc.)</li> <li>• Can you comment on why that is?</li> </ul> <p>As another example, is there more focus on particular indicators of D&amp;I, such as minimizing harassment complaints, or recruiting a wider array of talent, or reflecting the demographics of your customers?</p>

	Question
6.	<p>What specific actions do [you/most of the employers] take to create an inclusive workplace?</p> <p>[Note to interviewer: this is likely to be a long list. No need to get into details for each one. If needed, focus on what is specific to inclusion [vs. diversity], and/or what is new, innovative or seen as most successful/effective.]</p> <p>Probes (as needed):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What initiatives are in place? [probe: Is that mostly focused on a particular group (women, visible minorities, newcomers, etc.? Who is involved in making it happen?]</li> <li>• Any explicit inclusion-related focus on change and learning at an individual / organizational level?</li> <li>• Any specific actions relating to immigrants / IEPs / cultural differences / visible minorities / etc.?</li> </ul> <p>[Note to interviewer: the goal is to explore for initiatives that might capture immigrants – e.g., if there is a particular initiative for visible minorities does this in their mind include immigrants]</p>
7.	<p>1. What barriers do [you/employers] face in working towards an inclusive workplace?</p> <p>Probe (as needed):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What has been the biggest block to progress?</li> </ul> <p>2. What supports would be helpful?</p> <p>Probe (as needed):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What supports have been particularly helpful in addressing other barriers that you have been able to resolve?</li> </ul>
8.	<p>Let's talk now about what you see on the horizon. What have you [employers you deal with] got planned, or what might be coming up?</p> <p>Probes (as needed):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why is that seen as important?</li> <li>• What benefits are you [they] hoping for?</li> <li>• What challenges do you [they] foresee with that?</li> </ul>

	Question
9.	<p>Do [you/most of the employers] have measures in place to track diversity or to monitor inclusion?</p> <p>Probes (as needed):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If so, what is tracked?</li> <li>• What vehicle(s) are used to gather this data – e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employee engagement / EE surveys?</li> <li>• Focus groups?</li> <li>• Through other HR metrics such as exit interviews, turnover/promotion/L&amp;D/ pay rates?</li> <li>• Other tools?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Are these measures in place just in GTA locations, or other operations (if any)?</li> <li>• Any specific focus on immigrants? Or a similar proxy “term”? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If so: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> How are “immigrants” defined?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Do [you/employers] look at the intersection of immigrant status with any other demographic traits?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> What have [you/employers] found regarding immigrant inclusion in your organization?</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• How are measurement findings used?</li> </ul>
10.	<p>Have competencies for D&amp;I been used as part of [your / employers’] measures to increase inclusion?</p> <p>If so:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how have [you/employers] used them (e.g. in L&amp;D, job descriptions, corporate values, etc.)? Which employee group did they focus on (e.g. leaders, HR, D&amp;I champions, etc.)?</li> </ul> <p>If not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would there be interest [in your organization / among employers you work with] in using a compiled list of behaviours, knowledge, etc. to promote inclusion? (Note that these are currently under development by TRIEC as part of this project.)</li> </ul>
11.	<p>In terms of the needs of employers in the GTA, what trends or priorities do you see on the horizon as regards immigrant inclusion in the workplace?</p> <p>Probe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What might affect that?</li> </ul>

## Diversity and Inclusion in GTA Workplaces: Exploring Current Employer Practices

### Welcome

Thank you for your interest in developing a new and innovative approach to building inclusive workplaces. Your responses to this questionnaire will be completely confidential. If you have any questions regarding this research please contact [name] at our research firm [company], at [email] or [phone].

### About you

This survey asks about your perspectives on the action that GTA employers are taking to create diverse and inclusive workplaces. While our particular interest is in immigrant employment, we are asking you about the full set of Diversity and Inclusion initiatives that GTA employers have in place. Please check one of the following:

<input type="radio"/>	I am answering as an employer
<input type="radio"/>	I am answering as an agency that supports employment of under-represented groups, including immigrants
<input type="radio"/>	Other, please specify.. _____

NOTE: The questions on the following three pages were asked of respondents who self-identified as neither employers nor service providers (agencies).

### Getting started

Thank you for your interest in completing this survey. There are several questions about Diversity and Inclusion, followed by a few questions about you.

### Definitions

In general terms, how would you (or your organization) define Diversity and Inclusion within a workplace?

Diversity	
Inclusion	

### Your experience of GTA workplaces

How diverse are GTA workplaces that you are familiar with? That is, how much variety or heterogeneity is there among the employees? (You can choose multiple answers)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Very homogeneous, not much diversity
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pockets of diversity in some organizations, or in some areas or levels of the organization
<input type="checkbox"/>	Some diversity but in a few characteristics only (for example, a mix of ages and education, but not much ethnic diversity; or vice versa)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Some diversity across many different characteristics
<input type="checkbox"/>	A lot of diversity throughout the organizations
<input type="checkbox"/>	I do not know
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other comment ... _____

Thinking about GTA workplaces you are familiar with, how inclusive are those workplaces for the full range of employees? That is, to what extent do people who are somehow different from the majority feel welcome and engaged? (you can choose multiple answers)

<input type="checkbox"/>	GTA workplaces I am familiar with usually do not feel very inclusive
<input type="checkbox"/>	There are some GTA organizations, or some pockets within an organization that do a good job of this but it's not widespread.
<input type="checkbox"/>	GTA organizations are inclusive for people who differ in some ways, but not all
<input type="checkbox"/>	GTA organizations are mostly inclusive of a wide range of diversity, but it is inconsistent
<input type="checkbox"/>	GTA organizations are consistently inclusive of people with a wide range of diversity
<input type="checkbox"/>	I do not know
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other comment ... _____

### Employer Actions

How often do you see employers taking action to create a workplace that is respectful and welcoming?

<input type="radio"/>	Never	<input type="radio"/>	Often
<input type="radio"/>	Rarely	<input type="radio"/>	Always
<input type="radio"/>	Sometimes	<input type="radio"/>	Don't know or Not applicable

## Successful Practices

What positive practices have you seen in GTA workplace(s)? What has helped people from different backgrounds to feel included and to succeed?

--

## Employer focus

There are several "diversity groups" that often face barriers in the workplace. Based on your knowledge of GTA employers, which aspects of identity seem to be their highest priority? Please mark up to 3 priorities (if any).

<input type="checkbox"/>	Gender diversity (women)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gender diversity (women)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gender identity / expression	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gender identity / expression
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sexual orientation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Age / generational -- youth	<input type="checkbox"/>	Age / generational -- youth
<input type="checkbox"/>	Age / generational -- mature workers	<input type="checkbox"/>	Age / generational -- mature workers
<input type="checkbox"/>	Aboriginal people	<input type="checkbox"/>	Aboriginal people
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ethnocultural diversity		

## About You

Where do you work, most of the time?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Alberta	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ontario -- outside of GTA
<input type="checkbox"/>	British Columbia	<input type="checkbox"/>	GTA (Greater Toronto Area)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Manitoba	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prince Edward Island
<input type="checkbox"/>	New Brunswick	<input type="checkbox"/>	Quebec
<input type="checkbox"/>	Newfoundland and Labrador	<input type="checkbox"/>	Saskatchewan
<input type="checkbox"/>	Northwest Territories	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yukon
<input type="checkbox"/>	Nova Scotia	<input type="checkbox"/>	Outside of Canada
<input type="checkbox"/>	Nunavut		

How familiar are you with Diversity and Inclusion practices in GTA workplaces?

<input type="radio"/>	Not at all familiar
<input type="radio"/>	Knowledgeable about a few GTA workplaces
<input type="radio"/>	Knowledgeable about many GTA workplaces
<input type="radio"/>	Other, please specify... _____



How have you gained your understanding of Diversity and Inclusion in GTA workplaces?

--

Are you an immigrant to Canada?

<input type="radio"/>	No
<input type="radio"/>	Yes, I arrived before the age of 21
<input type="radio"/>	Yes, I arrived when I was 21 or older

Your role

Which of the following best describes you? (you can check more than one)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Interested immigrant	<input type="checkbox"/>	HR practitioner
<input type="checkbox"/>	Interested employee	<input type="checkbox"/>	Advisor in communications, legal, corporate social responsibility or other
<input type="checkbox"/>	Consultant or researcher	<input type="checkbox"/>	Line manager or supervisor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Advocate for members of an under-represented group	<input type="checkbox"/>	Senior leader
<input type="checkbox"/>	Employment counsellor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other, please specify... _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Diversity and Inclusion champion, lead, or change agent		

Sharing the insights

Thank you for your participation. If you would like to receive an advance copy of the summary findings, please give us your email address. We will not use this information to contact you for any other purpose.

--



Developed with support from:



With funding provided by:

