

Annual progress report 2023: Ontario's Anti-Racism Strategic Plan

Learn about Ontario's progress in implementing the 2017 Anti-Racism Strategic Plan, and the launch of the amended strategy: *Building a Stronger and More Inclusive Ontario: Ontario's Anti-Racism Strategic Plan* (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/building-stronger-and-more-inclusive-ontario-ontarios-anti-racism-strategic-plan>) .

Overview

The 2023 report reflects the progress the government has made over the last 5 years toward building a more inclusive Ontario and delivering on the objectives of the 2017 Anti-Racism Strategy (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontarios-anti-racism-strategic-plan>) . The report illustrates some of the ways the government is working with sector partners, community leaders and organizations to take concrete action to address systemic racism, eliminate barriers and advance racial equity.

Policy, research and evaluation

Race-based data collection

The Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/ministry-citizenship-and-multiculturalism>) oversees the implementation of the Data Standards for the Identification and Monitoring of Systemic Racism (<https://www.ontario.ca/document/data-standards-identification-and-monitoring-systemic-racism>) . As of January 1, 2023, all 9 regulated areas in the child welfare, education and justice sectors are collecting race-based data in compliance with the *Anti-Racism Act, 2017* (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/17a15>) and the Anti-Racism Data Standards (<https://www.ontario.ca/document/data-standards-identification-and-monitoring-systemic-racism>) . Collecting race-based data, such as Indigenous identity, race, ethnic origin, and religion, helps public sector organizations make better, evidence-based policy and program decisions to improve outcomes for Indigenous, Black and other racialized communities.

Targets and indicators

Targets and indicators (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontarios-3-year-anti-racism-strategic-plan-targets-and-indicators>) were established in 2019 to enable the province to track the progress of race-based data collection. The 9 regulated areas are required to report their annual compliance and response rates.

Compliance rates refer to the percentage of programs, services and functions regulated under the *Anti-Racism Act, 2017* (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/17a15>) that are collecting race-based data. Response rates refer to the percentage of responses from individuals who voluntarily provide their race-based personal information. Considerable progress has been made by regulated areas in establishing race-based data with compliance rates ranging from nearly 80 and up to 100% since rates were first reported in 2020. The compliance and response rates for regulated areas as of June 30, 2023, are presented in the sections below.

Child welfare sector

Children's Aid Societies

As of July 2021, specified children's aids societies (societies) (<https://www.oacas.org/>) , listed under O. Reg. 267/18 (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/r18267>) have been collecting race-based data on children who are the subject of a child protection investigation and who receive society services. To date, listed societies have achieved an overall compliance rate of 100% and a response rate of 48% during this period.

Education sector

As of January 1, 2023, all school boards in Ontario have begun collecting voluntary student race-based data about academic performance, special education received, suspensions, expulsions and the decisions made by principals to refuse to admit students to a school or classroom. There has been a 100% data-collection compliance rate with an average survey response rate of approximately 50% based on 52 school boards that shared their overall results.

Justice sector

Bail process

Since July 2021, Legal Aid Ontario (<https://www.legalaid.on.ca/>) (LAO), on behalf of the Ministry of the Attorney General (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/ministry-attorney-general>) (MAG), began collecting race-based data from LAO Duty Counsel clients who have been charged with an offence and are to appear in bail court. The overall compliance rate over this period is 78% and the response rate is 81%. However, only 15% of respondents have provided consent to LAO to share their personal information with MAG.

While LAO does not interact with all individuals in the bail process, they represent and seek to collect data from the majority of accused individuals.

Special Investigations Unit

The Special Investigations Unit (<https://www.siu.on.ca/en/index.php>) has been collecting race-based data since October 2020. This data is collected in circumstances where either:

- a person is seriously injured or dies
- a firearm is discharged at them
- they are sexually assaulted
- these situations may have resulted from criminal offences committed by a police officer

The overall compliance rate for affected persons is 94% and the response rate is 21%. The compliance rate for subject officials whose conduct is under investigation is 99% and the response rate is 6%.

Office of the Independent Police Review Director

Since April 2020, the Office of the Independent Police Review Director (<https://www.oiprd.on.ca/>) (OIPRD) has been collecting race-based data from members of the public who have made a complaint to the OIPRD. The overall compliance rate is 100% and the response rate is 80%.

Adult correctional services

Since August 2020, the Ministry of the Solicitor General (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/ministry-solicitor-general>) has collected race-based data from individuals who are either:

- in custody in an adult correctional institution
- released on parole
- subject to a probation order
- on a conditional sentence order

The program compliance rate is 100% while the response rate is 68%.

Youth Justice Division

The Youth Justice Division (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/youth-justice-system>) has been collecting race-based data since March 2018 in the following programs:

- Extra-Judicial sanctions
- Community supervision
- Custody and detention

The overall compliance rate since reporting began is 100% and the response rate is 75%.

Use of Force Reports

As of January 2020, all use of force reports submitted to the Ministry of the Solicitor General (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/ministry-solicitor-general>) by police services have included information about a police officer’s perception of race when they have used force in the performance of their duties.

The ministry launched a modernized Use of Force Report (<https://forms.mgcs.gov.on.ca/dataset/026-0195>) on January 1, 2023, which expanded data collection to include perceived age and gender. This new report aims to improve the ministry’s ability to conduct race-based data analysis in compliance with the Anti-Racism Data Standards.

Policy interventions, sustainability and public education and awareness

The province continues to support innovative policy interventions, targeted public education and awareness initiatives, and community-focused efforts that address barriers and advance racial equity. Examples of initiatives being undertaken include a public review of the province’s Anti-Racism Strategy and programs that target known systemic barriers to facing Indigenous, Black and racialized Ontarians. Two programs are highlighted below: Racialized and Indigenous Supports for Entrepreneurs (RAISE) and the Anti-Racism Anti-Hate Grant.

Anti-Racism Directorate's review of Ontario's Anti-Racism Strategic Plan

The Anti-Racism Directorate (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/anti-racism-directorate>) in the Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/ministry-citizenship-and-multiculturalism>) launched a review and consultation of Ontario’s Anti-Racism Strategic Plan. This included consulting with over 300 participants through community-led engagements and reviewing over 1,000 online and written submissions.

Racialized and Indigenous Supports for Entrepreneurs

Ontario invested \$5 million between 2021–23 to provide business development training, culturally responsive support and funding to over 400 Indigenous, Black and other racialized entrepreneurs, through the RAISE program (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/anti-racism-directorate#section-4>). Building on the success of the pilot program, Ontario is investing an additional \$15 million over 3 years to help more Indigenous and racialized entrepreneurs start or grow a business.

Anti-Racism Anti-Hate Grant

In 2022–23, Ontario invested an additional \$1.6 million in the Anti-Racism Anti-Hate Grant program (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/anti-racism-anti-hate-grant-program>) in 24 projects that help prevent and combat racism and hate. This increased funding brings the government’s total investment close to \$5 million and supports more than 80 community-led projects that aim to help Ontarians understand the impact of racism and hate, support those who experience it and promote a culture of respect, understanding and inclusion.

Population-specific anti-racism initiatives

Population-specific policies, programs and services, such as the Indigenous Relationship Building, Anti-Black Racism Strategy and Black Youth Action Plan, have been implemented to combat systemic racism and support, empower and improve outcomes for Indigenous, Black and other racialized populations.

Indigenous-focused anti-racism initiatives

The province has taken a collaborative approach to address systemic barriers and disparities experienced by Indigenous communities. Some examples of these initiatives being undertaken include:

Economic Development in Indigenous Communities

Between 2022–25, the province is investing \$25 million (<https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1002671/ontario-promotes-indigenous-economic-development>) to:

- support economic development in Indigenous communities
- support COVID-19 recovery needs
- modernize business processes
- remove barriers to pursuing an apprenticeship
- provide training opportunities

Advancing Meaningful Reconciliation

Pathways to Safety: Ontario’s Strategy in Response to the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/pathways-safety-ontarios-strategy-response-final-report-national-inquiry-missing-and-murdered>) is Ontario’s first progress report on the strategy to advance the safety and security of Indigenous women, children and 2SLGBTQIA+ people. The second progress report is set to be released in the Fall of 2023 and will highlight the progress made in key Indigenous-led prevention-focused resources and programs that promote safety, healing and wellness.

Indigenous Relationship Building

The Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/ministry-citizenship-and-multiculturalism>) continues to build relationships with First Nation, Inuit, Métis and Urban Indigenous partners, providing funding to 10 Indigenous organizations in 2022–23 to support Indigenous-led anti-racism projects.

Anti-Black racism

Ontario is addressing the adverse impacts of systemic racism and the racial disparities that Black communities experience. Examples of initiatives that focus on managing the impacts of anti-Black racism include:

Anti-Black Racism Strategy

Ontario’s Anti-Black Racism Strategy (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontarios-anti-black-racism-strategy>) aims to eliminate the disparities, or differences in outcomes, experienced by Black Ontarians in the child welfare, education and justice sectors. To address this gap, the Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/ministry-citizenship-and-multiculturalism>) supported various initiatives and provided over \$1 million in funding to increase public education and awareness of the impacts of anti-Black racism.

Black Youth Action Plan

The Black Youth Action Plan (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/black-youth-action-plan>) (BYAP) is a program focused on eliminating systemic, race-based disparities by increasing culturally relevant supports and opportunities for Black children, youth and families across the province. In 2023, the Ontario government announced an additional \$3 million to enhance the economic empowerment stream, bringing Ontario’s total 2023–24 investment to \$31 million. The BYAP is delivered by more than 70 community-based and culturally focused partners to support more than 10,800 Black children, youth and families in Ottawa, Windsor and the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area.

One Vision One Voice

Ontario continues to invest \$800,000 annually through One Vision One Voice (<https://www.oacas.org/programs-and-resources/onevisiononevoice/>) (OVOV) to improve outcomes and equitable services for Black children, youth and families in the child welfare system. OVOV is a program led by the African Canadian community that addresses overrepresentation and disparities faced by African Canadians who come into contact with the child welfare system.

Ontario Public Service (OPS) Anti-Racism Policy

The OPS Anti-Racism Policy (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-public-service-anti-racism-policy-progress-report-april-2020-july-2021>) outlines the government’s responsibilities to address systemic racism and increase racial equity in employment practices within the Ontario Public Service (OPS). Anti-racism initiatives in the OPS workplace include:

- The development of a Roadmap to Racial Equity that sets out strategic direction to ministries and public bodies on:
 - building anti-racism competency and capacity
 - diversifying the talent pool
 - fostering an inclusive workplace
- Continuing efforts to close gaps in representation between the Ontario labour force and the most underrepresented groups in OPS senior leadership by 2025.
- The recently launched corporate Diversity Sponsorship Program will support the advancement of talent identified as underrepresented in senior leadership. Sponsors and participants will work together, leveraging skills and networks, to create greater visibility and endorsement for the employee participant.

Looking ahead

Ontario will continue the necessary work to address systemic racism and create a truly inclusive and equitable society. A key part of that effort will include advancing racial equity through the Building a Stronger and More Inclusive Ontario: Ontario’s Anti-Racism Strategic Plan (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/building-stronger-and-more-inclusive-ontario-ontarios-anti-racism-strategic-plan>) , released in August, 2023. This plan will guide government action through to 2028 with investments of more than half a billion dollars in over 40 initiatives that will help build a stronger, more inclusive and prosperous province. Annual progress reports will continue to be used to share information about the strategy’s initiatives, targets and indicators and the progress being made to ensure all Ontarians can participate, contribute and succeed.