# acces
## employment

**Diversity** in Canadian Workplaces

# The Current State and Future Goals of D&I Initiatives in Canadian Workplaces

# INTRODUCTION

Racism and discrimination are not new issues, but they are often hidden and ignored. The pandemic has exposed the significant vulnerabilities and inequity that racialized communities face. The murder of George Floyd ignited worldwide attention about the continued existence and impact of racism, specifically anti-Black racism. Racism is not simply about individuals and their attitudes, it is systemic, which is why it is deeply embedded within the policies and structures in which we live and operate. Systemic racism is prevalent and systemic change is needed to tackle this persistent and widespread problem. With recent events, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) has become an urgent priority among Canadian employers. In relation to the workplace, Michael Bach (2020) describes diversity as bringing a mix of people into the organization, and inclusion as getting this mix of people to work together respectfully and openly. D&I, although present in many organizations, has only really become a priority in the last 18 months (Kim, 2020). According to Deloitte (2014), about 49% of Canadian organizations started focusing on noncompliance D&I efforts within the last five years and a majority (66%) of Canadian organizations either have no D&I function at all or staff it solely by volunteers. While there is value in companies publicly announcing their commitment to D&I, employers may find it beneficial to provide more detailed insight into the ways in which they will ensure the realization of these commitments. This will demonstrate their dedication to achieving these goals beyond simply listing them.

Through our work and program delivery, ACCES Employment, a charitable not-for-profit organization assists over 40,000 clients every year; 80% of those clients are new to Canada. Our job seeker demographics include racialized job seekers and alumni from over 80 different countries around the world who seek employment that reflects their skills and experience. As an organization, we recognize that racialized communities continue to face challenges and barriers during the hiring process and while they are in the workplace.

ACCES Employment's Diversity in Canadian Workplaces initiative, funded by Canadian Heritage, is an innovative project with the goal of examining barriers and challenges faced by racialized and newcomer employees in Canadian workplaces as they move through key phases of employment: recruitment, retention, and career development. Our approach is to work directly with employers in various industries to target and address specific barriers to hiring racialized minorities, gather and identify training needs, and implement solutions in the workplace to mitigate and change the processes that hinder or negatively affect the retention and career mobility of racialized individuals.

The gap between immigrant unemployment numbers compared to Canadian-born individuals continues to narrow over time. However, newcomers to Canada continue to face barriers and challenges as they navigate the local job market. Education and training for employers plays a critical role in ensuring the adoption of sound hiring practices. Through this funding, our goal is to develop a tactical ongoing employer engagement strategy to encourage equitable hiring and retention among employers who may lack the resources (and size) to develop and execute an effective action plan. The focus is on supporting small and medium sized employers to develop an understanding of issues facing racialized individuals and provide them with customized workshops and tools they can use, particularly in the absence of broader diversity or human resources priorities within their own organizations.

# Methods

**(Education, Awareness, Engagement, and Learning)**

An extensive environmental scan of existing EDI and anti-racism projects, initiatives, and programs within the Greater Toronto Area identified past and present EDI/anti-racism initiatives with over 60 different employers from various sectors. The goal is to gain an understanding of employers' best practices and principles pertaining to hiring and recruitment, workplace culture, employee retention, and career development. The organizations that were identified and examined in our environmental scan consisted of private companies, government and public sector employers, and not-for-profit organizations across different sectors within the Canadian workforce. Existing public reports and company websites, D&I indexes of top (Canadian) employers, existing partners of CCDI, the Refinitiv Diversity & Inclusion Index, Thomson Reuters, "Great Places to Work," and Fortune's "100 Best Companies to Work For" were used to target many of the organizations. The search began with large, well-established companies (such as banking and consulting institutions within Canada) with dedicated D&I staff as well as mid-sized to smaller organizations. ACCES Employment's existing employer network was also examined.

Through a series of three virtual roundtable discussions with highly engaged employers from various sectors, we also learned about current best practices and policies, as well as challenges in implementing D&I from various Talent Acquisition or D&I specialists within those companies. The data and information collected during the roundtables informs this report, and will inform future reports, training workshops, and resource materials to support all employers in our network to ensure the success of racialized employees in their workplace.

Based on the environmental scan and roundtables, we identified several prominent

themes in relation to the three broad categories of recruitment, retention, and career development. While not every organization will be mentioned here, there were many interesting findings and discussions to be noted and we thank all those involved for their contribution to this report, either directly or indirectly.

# Recruitment and Hiring

When it comes to recruitment, most employers focus on attracting and engaging diverse pools of candidates, introducing equitable practices in the screening, interview, and selection processes, and implementing unconscious bias training for hiring managers and committees. Sourcing, selection, and unconscious bias training emerged as consistent areas of focus both in the literature and during our roundtable discussions.



**SOURCING**

*REFERRALS & NETWORKING*

Employee referrals are a prominent recruiting source for many companies. While this may be an effective way to engage employees and find new talent, these types of referrals may not inherently lead to diversity if the workplace itself is not diverse already. This is because employees tend to refer those who are similar to themselves (Deloitte, 2014). In discussions with employers, it was noted that if employees recommend someone for the role, they will likely be hired because the referrer is already a part of the organization. If the employee referral is someone from a diverse community, it can be a great

way to reach talent you may not have otherwise found, but it can also be problematic if this is not the case. Networking is an instrumental aspect of the job search process here in Canada and, if done fairly, it can create opportunities for strong, diverse talent. Unfortunately, many newcomer workers to Canada don't necessarily have access to a stable network. To tackle this, programs have begun to emerge to assist newcomers in this regard. For example, The National Connector Program provides communities and employers with an opportunity to increase immigrant talent retention through intentional networking. A balance between sound hiring practices and evaluation criteria, along with referrals, will ensure that those being interviewed are diverse and meet the qualifications and are not being hired strictly based on who they know.

Many companies seek to reach underrepresented populations through establishing partnerships with various organizations (including universities and not-for profit organizations). Rexall has several partnerships with organizations such as ACCES Employment, Tropicana, Catalyst, and Pride at Work, aimed at attracting diverse candidates. Recently, they have partnered with four major Schools of Pharmacy to award bursaries to Black and Indigenous students. Such strategic partnerships allow organizations like CISCO, Gildan Activewear, HSBC, IBM, McCarthy Tétrault, Microsoft, RBC, GTAA, Salesforce, and TD Bank to connect with diverse talent, and increase hiring from marginalized communities.

In 2011, Accenture piloted its Aboriginal Internship Program to open opportunities for young Aboriginal technology professionals. Accenture developed the Aboriginal Internship Program by partnering with Acosys, an Aboriginal-owned, social impact consulting firm specializing in business, technology, and talent management. RBC's Career Bridge Internship is a recruitment program which leverages the company's partnership with the Career Edge Organization

to provide a variety of paid internships to new Canadians with international work experience. RBC further aims to give 40% of all its summer opportunities to BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Colour) youth. Partnerships such as these create an opportunity for organizations to diversify their candidate pipelines.

## SELECTION

### JOB POSTINGS

Job descriptions are an essential recruitment tool and the first step in attracting the right talent for a role. The job description must be accurate and generated based on the core competencies required of the incumbent. If there are "requirements" listed that are not essential for the role, it can deter potential candidates from applying because of the perception that they are unable to meet them. When asked about the selection process during the roundtable sessions, it was evident that many employers face a range of issues in attracting diverse talent. It begins with the structure and wording of job postings, which tend to focus on experience, education, and often use acronyms that may not be universally understood. Many employers seemed to recognize the need to change the approach to job descriptions to ensure they are inclusive. This includes listing only the required skills necessary to perform the job, removing terms that may not be gender or age inclusive, removing acronyms that may not be recognizable to all candidates, removing jargon that can be too technical, and even eliminating educational titles, such as 'bachelor's degree,' as they are not universally recognized and are not a sole indicator of a candidate's ability to successfully perform the job. In addition, removing names, employment gaps, and information that may identify the candidate as belonging to a particular community on

resumes, is one solution to consider prior to hiring managers receiving them for review. According to WES (2021), a recent study showed that the name on a resume impacted the candidate's chance of being called for an interview, despite having identical education and experience to other candidates. To avoid these biases, employers have started utilizing several AI tools such as Diversio and Text IQ to track, measure, and improve the inclusivity of job postings.

## "CANADIAN" EXPERIENCE

Newcomers to Canada face a range of barriers, including English language fluency and communication, unfamiliarity with cultural norms and practices, lack of access to networks, and lack of recognition and/or devaluation of foreign credentials. Discounting the value of international education and experience, because they are unfamiliar to hiring managers, is a key obstacle for many racialized newcomers and candidates. Miratec Inc. and 4S Consulting mentioned that, for certain positions, they started focusing on hiring qualified newcomers with experience outside of Canada and transferrable skills. This provided those candidates with much-needed "Canadian experience." Unsure of how it would turn out, hiring newcomers and diverse candidates proved to be an asset to their business, and many of the employees have remained loyal to the company with long tenures and increased productivity for the entire organization.

## UNCONSCIOUS BIAS TRAINING

As part of their commitment to equitable recruitment, many employers provide unconscious bias training to all those involved in the hiring process. Unconscious bias, also referred to as implicit bias, is something that affects everyone. There are many definitions, but Acho (2020) defined it as, "not just about race, but knee-jerk judgments about every superficial difference between people," (22) and acknowledged that it is always present in some form within human interactions. For example, the tendency to hire someone similar to one's self may play a role in the elimination of diverse candidates by managers who have not been trained to recognize their biases. However, creating intentionally diverse interview panels that are reflective of the workplace community may help to avoid this situation. For example, Softchoice suggested asking candidates if there were a certain individual they would like on their panels. Additional checks and balances to the hiring process include having multiple people from various levels of management involved in the interview process and ensuring thorough interview notes are recorded and reviewed to justify hiring decisions in writing.

Unconscious bias training can help overcome biases that are present in hiring processes. Dixon (2011) identifies research suggesting that many of us are still prone to automatic or unconscious forms of racism and bias, and that we behave in ways that depict this, without knowing. This may affect hiring decisions and question the effectiveness of a company's EDI planning. Current employer practices mentioned by Randstad, Softchoice, and TD Bank suggest that we can correct this with compassion and change the narrative through conversation. By facilitating open, honest and continuous conversation with newcomer and racialized job seekers and hiring managers, there is opportunity to share lived experiences, break down communication barriers, and confront our biases. In a study by Todd et al. (2011), there is evidence that "perspective taking" can combat automatic expressions of racial biases without decreasing sensitivity to ongoing racial disparities. 'Putting ourselves in another person's shoes' can significantly reduce unconscious biases and improve our real-world interactions with people who look different from us, but it won't desensitize us to these differences.

In addition to implementing unconscious bias training, many employers are taking action beyond acknowledging biases and towards a conscious altering of behaviours. For example, last year TD Bank introduced opportunities for staff to engage in conversations aimed at understanding anti-Black racism. Early feedback suggests these talks are positively influencing leaders in their hiring and recruitment activities. In September, Mattamy Homes embarked on its D&I journey, with employee training being a critical component of their D&I framework and roadmap. CIBC realized that focusing on unconscious bias alone was not enough. Now, a virtual program has been implemented, called Leading with Equity and Inclusion, which goes into detail about systemic racism, microaggressions, reconciliation, equity, and more. Lastly, Jacobs Engineering Group highlights their mandatory conscious inclusion training, which was initiated for all employees to heighten awareness of unconscious bias and to turn awareness into action to activate a culture of transformation, reinforce open communication, and empower employees to consciously create an inclusive environment. Feedback from the training has been overwhelmingly positive with a 4.5/5 on satisfaction.

Many employers are taking promising steps toward equitable recruitment practices, including a reevaluation of job postings, shifting away from "Canadian experience," finding sponsorship and partnership opportunities, ongoing conversations, and the evolution of unconscious bias training. However, most employers do not publicly describe or specify detailed plans or metrics for carrying out such commitments. "We need information from companies about the outcomes they are achieving, not only the values they espouse, and it is our duty as shareholders to hold them accountable for inaction," explains John Streur, CEO of Calvert Research and Management, the sustainable investing arm of Eaton Vance. It is difficult to ensure the success of these strategies if they are not being recorded. Goals for diversity hires should be set and progress toward, or any challenges in reaching these goals, policies, and strategies, should be transparent and consistently communicated to racialized and newcomer employees, the organization, and future candidates.

# Retention

Retention of employees is a top priority for all companies and retention of racialized and newcomer individuals is an important consideration for EDI efforts. The rate of retention of underrepresented employees, to a large extent, is an indicator of how inclusive, safe, and welcoming a workplace is. The overall strategy for increasing employee retention involves fostering an inclusive and diverse work environment. Most of the companies included in our scan had utilized this strategy by having dedicated EDI staff and/or, in some cases, advisory boards, teams, and committees. It is not enough to have these initiatives as an added responsibility to someone's role; it should be a dedicated individual or a team who is responsible for EDI for the organization and is directly reporting back to the CEO (Bach, 2020). This will ensure that the organization is effectively practicing and communicating EDI strategies to its employees. Creating a diverse and inclusive environment, where employees feel they can bring their whole selves to work, the importance of anti-racism training and leadership, as well as thinking about the growth of all employees are important aspects of retention. While 68% of leaders feel they create empowering environments in which employees can be themselves, raise concerns, and be innovative, only 36% of employees agreed (Accenture, 2019). Clear communication of these policies and strategies to all employees is critical in ensuring that the perception of fairness matches

the work being done toward equity within the organization.

## AN INCLUSIVE CULTURE

### EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUPS (ERGS)

An environment with effective communication as well as people to champion EDI helps create fairness across practices, and the creation of a 'safe space' among employees contributes to an inclusive environment. Having Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) and committees fostering open conversations between employees is one of the ways to create an inclusive workplace culture. Many employers have ERGs that provide opportunities for employees with shared identities to connect, provide support to each other, and work together on EDI initiatives. ERGs inspire a sense of community and drive allyship, ensuring employees feel supported. ACCES Employment's very own Black Action Coalition for Change (BACC), comprised of employees from the Black community, works with the leadership team to implement EDI initiatives across the organization with a focus on driving positive change related to anti-Black racism. Rexall launched their IDNs (Inclusion and Diversity Networks) and IBM formed their BRGs (Business Resource Groups) to ensure that they not only attract, but also retain diverse talent by giving their employees a platform to share their voices.

### OPEN CONVERSATIONS

Many organizations have created opportunities for open, and sometimes uncomfortable, conversations, including BMO's Bold Conversation Series to advance their progress on anti-racism and TD Bank's Uncomfortable Conversation Series for all colleagues to talk about what's on their mind. These are opportunities for employees and leadership to voice their concerns and talk about what they want to see in their organization's EDI efforts. Randstad introduced "Rise Chats," a space for all employees (including senior leadership) to safely share their stories and better understand the silent struggles of their peers, while Lush has implemented a company-wide panel discussion where no topics are off limits. RBC's Speak Up for Inclusion video series encourages everyone in the business community to call out discrimination and give space to the voices and experiences of people from underrepresented groups in the workplace. A clear best-practice is the combination of more formal anti-racism training and open conversations among employees about their experience as members of racialized communities. This helps all employees better understand racism and confront their biases.

## ANTI-RACISM TRAINING & LEADERSHIP

It is essential for leaders to be well-trained and informed on EDI principles and strategies, including anti-racism. This will ensure that leaders are able to plan and support all employees with EDI initiatives. DAC Group and BMO are ensuring success by tying EDI strategies to compensation and performance. Others are emphasizing the organizational benefits of anti-racism training and its importance for leadership in creating a safe and welcoming work environment, which contributes to increased employee retention and greater productivity.

Anti-racism initiatives in the form of tools, job aids, courses, workshops, and events can be provided to leadership to help them deepen their understanding of racial inequity and anti-racism. Leadership will also learn how to confront and challenge unconscious bias, unpack racial microaggressions, and how to be an ally (someone who understands, empathizes with and acts in support of marginalized individuals

or groups). For example, BMO's EDI learning program (a multi-year initiative) Learn from Difference, focuses specifically on building leadership capacity to create a more inclusive environment for colleagues, customers, and communities. Jacobs Engineering Group has each member of senior leadership sign an Inclusion & Diversity Accountability and Commitment Statement, committing them to enhanced goals and accountability for creating an inclusive environment. The City of Toronto formed a multi-year project to support the promotion of racial equity; this project includes the Confronting Anti-Black Racism unit (CABR), which is responsible for implementing the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism.

The Regional Diversity Roundtable (RDR) is an organization that delivers EDI training and EDI curriculum to help workplaces in Peel gain a shared understanding of essential diversity concepts and to improve the individual and collective understanding of the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion. Through the development and delivery of an accreditation tool, the creation of faculty train-the-trainer models, and other skills-sharing delivery models, the RDR supports the promotion of equity and inclusion in the workplace as it recognizes its value in the recruitment and retention of racialized employees. BMO's Racial Inclusion for the Black Experience eLearning program is a 45-minute, self-directed session that presents the historical journey of Black Americans and Canadians to build awareness of anti-Black racism among employees with the aim to improve equity and inclusion efforts in the workplace and throughout the financial sector.

*TRACKING PROGRESS*

When asked about tracking and monitoring progress on EDI goals, employers provided information on various policies and strategies they are using. Jacobs Engineering Group uses a real-time dashboard system to ensure that every manager sees the same data on hiring, attrition, and promotion. This dashboard ensures transparency and mutual understanding of progress on meeting their operational EDI goals. Finastra, a financial tech company, is striving for an equal gender balance amongst employees and racial diversity at the leadership level. To achieve this, the organization is providing "Conscious Leadership" training which is designed to help all employees actively address their biases and work together to improve the employment experience for racialized employees. Softchoice has a five-year hiring plan that goes beyond recruitment. Data is regularly reviewed with VPs making it easier to understand the numbers and to see where there may be a recruitment or retention problem.

As mentioned earlier, our literature review demonstrated that there is a consistent lack of evaluation metrics for EDI work. These metrics would assist in evaluating programs and initiatives to assure there is consistency and transparency in their implementation and progress. Additionally, it is important for employees to know that diversity and inclusion initiatives are a priority and that organizations are accountable to track, communicate, and constantly reevaluate their EDI plans on a consistent basis.

## Career Mobility

According to data from HR consulting company Mercer, within the top executive ranks, 85% of positions are held by non-racialized individuals (Stevens, 2020). This discrepancy demonstrates the need for improvement in fostering the career development of racialized and newcomer employees. EDI plans should include the use of coaching and mentoring, increased representation of racialized people at the leadership level, and the need for allies.

## MENTORSHIP

More than half of companies invest in mentorship or coaching to foster relationships, expand networks, and support career advancement. In a survey by Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), most racialized employees said that mentoring would be useful to help achieve their potential at work as it creates a safe space to share information and overcome the lack of trust that is felt with their direct manager in discussing career goals (Bean, 2017).

The Mentoring Partnership by TRIEC (Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council) has assisted hundreds of companies to advance their Corporate Social Responsibility goals by engaging their employees in mentoring relationships with newcomers to Canada. The Immigrant Employment Council of British Columbia (IEC-BC) has a similar mentoring program. Ares Staffing Solutions partnered with TRIEC to advance their mission to integrate skilled immigrants into the GTA labour market. In addition to their recruitment and staffing services, Ares Solutions provides employers with effective educational tools that support them to hire and retain a diverse workforce. At TD Bank Group, approximately 200 employees have participated in a supplementary, one-year group-mentoring cohort led by members of the Visible Minority Leadership committee, while RBC has partnered with The Black Professionals Tech Network (BPTN) to pair 350 Black early-career professionals with Canadian executives annually for direct mentoring and career coaching.

Other organizations utilize one-to-one coaching and mentoring between leaders and employees through their ERG groups. Salesforce is focused on increasing diversity at the senior leadership level through their equality mentorship program, which connects employees of colour with executive mentors. Google offers targeted career development programs, which provide coaching, community-building, mentorship, and advocacy to help women in leadership roles foster relationships with senior executives and advance their careers.

Launching traditional mentoring programs between senior leaders and employees strengthens relationships and encourages employees to develop the skills they need to advance. In addition, Finastra, KPMG, and RBC, among others, introduced 'reverse' mentoring programs between C-suite executives and racialized employees. This type of mentoring has provided a pivotal learning opportunity by helping leaders understand some of the challenges faced by their employees. KPMG created a reciprocal mentoring program where Black Senior Managers were paired with C-suite leaders to share their experiences. Facilitators from the Black Professional network were able to create a safe space for participants by facilitating introductions, providing insight, and answering questions. This learning led to the creation of a dual program that combined reciprocal and traditional mentoring. KPMG stressed the importance of both forms of mentoring because development opportunities for employees without educating leaders, who serve as gatekeepers to their advancement ignores the biases and barriers that exist. Finally, RBC's mentoring program pairs entry-level employees with mentors in leadership roles based on shared racial identities. This provides employees with the opportunity to connect with "leaders who look like them," while Rogers Communications asks their employees who they would like to be mentored by.

## ALLYSHIP

Fostering allyship has been a focus of organizations such as Jacobs Engineering Group, IBM, and Microsoft. Microsoft developed four introductory courses on allyship. Jacobs Engineering Group has their Global I&D Ally Program, which provides specialized training to employees to promote, lead, develop, and participate in Jacobs I&D events as well as initiatives for employees and clients. IBM has encouraged their employees to take the pledge and affirm their commitment to allyship. Allyship is instrumental in promoting an inclusive environment, where racialized employees feel safe and comfortable to have difficult conversations at any level of the organization. In sharing their experiences, the hope is to foster growth and change within the workplace and among fellow employees, both racialized and non-racialized, surrounded by supportive, informed leadership.

## DIVERSE REPRESENTATION IN LEADERSHIP

As leadership continues to be comprised primarily of non-racialized individuals, and there is a clear lack of diverse talent in the pipeline, racialized employees continue to face significant challenges with career development. A report from Ryerson University's Diversity Institute (2019) found that although Greater Montreal's population was made up of 22.6% racialized people, only 5.3% held senior leadership positions. Having diverse representation at the leadership level is a strong indicator that the organization's EDI strategy is placing emphasis on the career development of its racialized employees. TD Bank Group has a unique program called Visible Leadership, in which racialized employees can develop and strengthen their leadership skills and experience. To date, 500 visible minority employees have participated in over 30 cohorts.

Other companies realize that there is a 'broken rung' in the mobility process and are trying to focus on the advancement and promotion of racialized employees to leadership roles. According to Gagnon and Ng (2020), racialized Canadians have higher labour market participation than non-racialized Canadians but are less likely to be in management positions. In response, RBC has a targeted leadership program called Ignite for high-performing, ethnically diverse talent, aiming to accelerate this group's trajectory to senior management. As a result, 40% of employees promoted across RBC in 2019 were visible minorities. PwC focuses on succession planning by identifying at least one racialized individual as a successor for each leadership position.

During one of the roundtable sessions hosted by ACCES, Ecolab mentioned that while they do career mapping with all employees as part of their retention process, they often struggle to create enough opportunities for career growth within the company. Miratec Inc. echoed those comments, stating that their organization does not have room for growth in certain areas, and they often lose long-term employees to other companies. In response, CANADA MASQ Corporation suggested that to better facilitate career mobility, companies should consider building strategic alliances within their business networks. With such a framework in place, employees' career development could include moving to a partner organization and becoming an ally once there.

Seeing opportunities for growth is an important factor in hiring and retaining racialized minorities. McKinsey & Company (2021) noted that 45% of racialized and newcomer candidates have decided not to pursue a position because of lack of inclusion at all levels of the organization. They noted that factors like inclusive leadership, diversity training, holding people accountable, and providing opportunity for open conversations between employees and senior personnel through mentorship are instrumental in

attracting, retaining, and developing a diverse workforce.

## Community Support

Many businesses align themselves with community-based organizations that have also developed initiatives focused on equity, diversity, and inclusion. Employers can work in collaboration with community agencies to brainstorm ideas and solutions that are customized to their D&I approach. A few collaborations of this nature are noted below.

The CEE (Careers Education Empowerment) Centre for Young Black Professionals is a Toronto-based charity that is dedicated to addressing the economic and social barriers that affect Black youth ages 14 and over who are not in employment, education, or training. The group's mission is to create a society and economy in which Black youth achieve financial prosperity and high quality of life for themselves and their families (CEE, 2020). This is achieved through collaborations with Black youth, their families, employers, and broader communities.

The Canadian Council of Business Leaders Against Anti-Black Systemic Racism released the BlackNorth Initiative CEO Pledge, asking senior business leaders in Canada to commit their companies to specific actions and targets designed to end anti-Black systemic racism and create opportunities for all BIPOC communities. The intent is to increase the representation of black employees in senior leadership as well as the Black youth workforce.

Black Professionals in Tech Network (BPTN) is an organization that supports Black tech and business professionals to network, build professional competencies and receive support. Some of the services that the BPTN offers include connecting recruiters with job seekers, finding clients to support the work, seeking capital and investments, building networks, and professional development.

## Conclusion

While approaches may differ, all employers examined here are focusing their efforts toward a more diverse and inclusive workplace where employees feel there is equity and fairness in hiring, retention, and career mobility practices. It is evident that the employer is a driver of change and is responsible for implementing practices that reflect their respective business culture and context while considering their diverse workforce. The key is to activate this ability to change and instill best practices by demonstrating opportunities and providing tools to implement strategies more easily and effectively. It is important for organizations to listen to, collaborate with, and inform their diverse groups of employees when strategizing on issues that directly affect their career progression.

In the next phase of this project, a survey of 100 racialized job seekers will be conducted to gather their lived experiences as they enter and navigate the phases of employment in the Canadian labour market. The next white paper will analyze their responses and the culmination of our findings will be used to develop EDI training modules, which will be available to all employers within ACCES Employment's network. The training modules will be especially beneficial to smaller businesses as they develop and implement EDI initiatives. The final white paper, "Solutions and Strategies to Move the Dial," will summarize our findings from the development and piloting of the training modules. ACCES will use the learnings and results of this project to enhance the existing services and support we provide to employers and job seekers.

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