

THE ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE

# ANTI-RACISM POLICY

AN OVERVIEW

Visit **Ontario.ca/antiracism** to read  
the entire Ontario Public Service  
Anti-Racism Policy.

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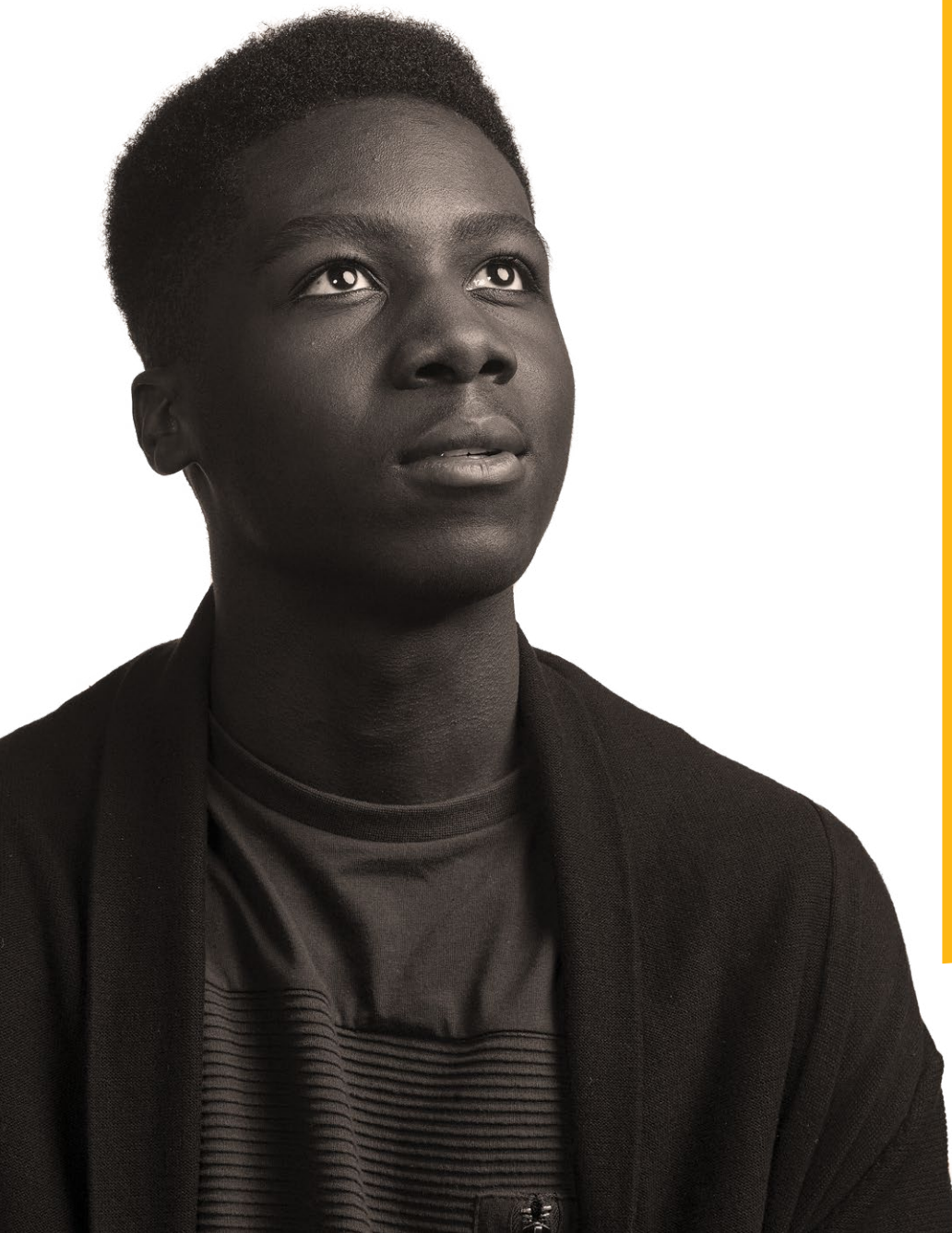
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# Anti-racism is about...

✓ **Racial equity**

## RAC•IAL E•QUI•TY

Racial equity refers to the systemic fair treatment of all people resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for everyone. It contrasts with formal equality where people are treated the same without regard for racial differences. Racial equity is a process (such as meaningfully engaging with Indigenous, Black and other racialized employees regarding policies, directives, practices and procedures that affect them) and an outcome (such as equitable representation of Indigenous, Black and other racialized employees at all levels of the organization).





## MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY OF THE CABINET

As one of the province's largest employers, the Ontario Public Service (OPS) has the responsibility to lead by example in advancing racial equity. It's our responsibility to build a diverse, inclusive, accessible and respectful workplace where every employee has a voice and the opportunity to fully contribute.

We must *speak truth to power* by acknowledging that racism exists in the workplace, which is a reflection of our society and our history. While talking about racism has sometimes proven to be difficult and uncomfortable, I believe our culture is changing.

During my town halls and employee engagement sessions, I witnessed first-hand a growing commitment to addressing racism in the workplace. Managers and employees have told me they believe we can no longer ignore the challenges that Indigenous, Black and racialized employees face in the workplace. There is growing empathy to hear the personal experiences racialized employees have endured and to developing concrete action plans to remove barriers and to end discrimination.

We all need to be champions of change to ensure we are free of racism. This work must be embraced by every part of our organization, in every part of our province. This is why the government established the [Anti-Racism Directorate](#) and why it is strategically located within Cabinet Office.

Anti-racism aligns with our other priorities that strive towards greater social equity (e.g., [It's Never Okay: An Action Plan to Stop Sexual Violence and Harassment](#), [OPS Inclusion & Diversity Blueprint, 2017-2021](#) [OPS Multi-Year Accessibility Action Plan](#)) and focuses specifically on race. This new policy will help to identify, prevent, mitigate and eliminate systemic racism in all aspects of the OPS, wherever it may exist.

By rooting out and removing systemic racism, we will be better positioned to recruit, retain and develop the best and brightest talent this province has to offer. This will lead to better programs, services and outcomes for the people of Ontario.

This important work will bring fundamental and meaningful change to the OPS. I am proud of, and committed to, the new OPS Anti-Racism Policy.

I would personally like to thank the Black OPS Network and the Anti-Racism Directorate for their active advice and support in developing this policy to end discrimination in the workplace.

I know I can count on all of the Ontario Public Service to create an environment for all to give their best and achieve their full potential.

**Steve Orsini**

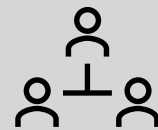


The OPS is one of Ontario's largest employers with

**60,000+**  
employees.



Employee Engagement survey results in recent years reveal that the OPS should strengthen efforts to be a **more inclusive** and **racially equitable** workplace.



**Indigenous, Black and racialized** employees are **underrepresented** in senior leadership positions.



**23%** of Indigenous employees

**AND**



**25%** of Black employees

reported experiencing **discrimination** compared to 13% of the entire OPS.



Such challenges, if unaddressed, will certainly grow.

IN 2036,

**48%**

of Ontarians  
will be racialized.

# MOVING TOWARDS A STRONGER, MORE INCLUSIVE PUBLIC SERVICE

The Ontario Public Service has a responsibility to lead by example by driving innovation and excellence in public policy development and service delivery. Our organization must also ensure all people are served equitably – including public service employees.

To create an equitable OPS, we need to recognize that there are systemic racism barriers that prevent people from reaching their full potential. We need to recognize that histories of colonialism and slavery have resulted in institutionalized inequity for Indigenous, Black and racialized people.

Racism and power imbalances can be hidden or deeply embedded in government policies, practices and procedures.

Sometimes, we are not aware of implicit or institutional racial biases. These biases manifest throughout the employment cycle, from recruitment to advancement. They also manifest in workplace culture, from exclusionary practices based on who “fits” to harassment and discrimination.

Racism should never limit anyone’s opportunity for employment or advancement within the OPS.

This is why an OPS Anti-Racism Policy is so important.

This policy addresses systemic racism head-on and will build a more diverse, inclusive and respectful OPS. Removing systemic racism barriers creates more equitable human resource management directives, policies, procedures and practices which support all employees in achieving full participation in the workplace.

## SYS•TEM•IC RAC•ISM

Systemic racism refers to organizational culture, policies, directives, practices or procedures that exclude, displace or marginalize some racialized groups or create unfair barriers for them to access valuable benefits and opportunities. This is often the result of institutional biases in organizational culture, policies, directives, practices, and procedures that may appear neutral but have the effect of privileging some groups and disadvantaging others.

# Anti-racism is about...



## **Inclusion**

### IN•CLU•SION

Inclusion recognizes, welcomes, and makes space for diversity. An inclusive OPS capitalizes on the diversity of thought, experiences, skills and talents of all of our employees.



# CALLS FOR CHANGE

Over the years, public servants, employee networks, bargaining agents and external stakeholders have called on the OPS to critically assess and address racial disparities and inequities in the OPS workplace. Recommendations from many of these groups have supported a targeted focus to affect change, both within the OPS and beyond.

OPS employees have led the charge, reinvigorating leadership with their calls to raise the bar and embed more inclusive behaviours and practices throughout the OPS. For example, the Black OPS employee network (BOPSers) has been at the forefront of calls for bolder anti-racism organizational change in the OPS for more than a decade.

Some bargaining agents have also voiced the need for proactive measures to identify and respond to systemic racism barriers. In response to the Respectful Workplace Policy and Workplace Discrimination and Harassment Prevention (WDHP) Program Review, they called for specialized training, competency and capacity building, continued engagement and consultation in the development of change strategies.

Public meetings have also served as an outlet for distinct community voices. At community meetings held across the province in 2016, the Anti-Racism Directorate (ARD) heard from public servants about the importance of the OPS being an anti-racism leader and model for Ontario's public and private sector organizations.

By taking action and working consistently and collaboratively within, and outside government, we will build trust and confidence in a stronger public service.

“ The Directorate has to work closely with the Ontario Public Service to set targets for achieving equality in employment, retention and promotions.

AUDIENCE MEMBER,  
ARD COMMUNITY MEETING,  
HAMILTON, ON

# Anti-racism is about...



## Intersectionality

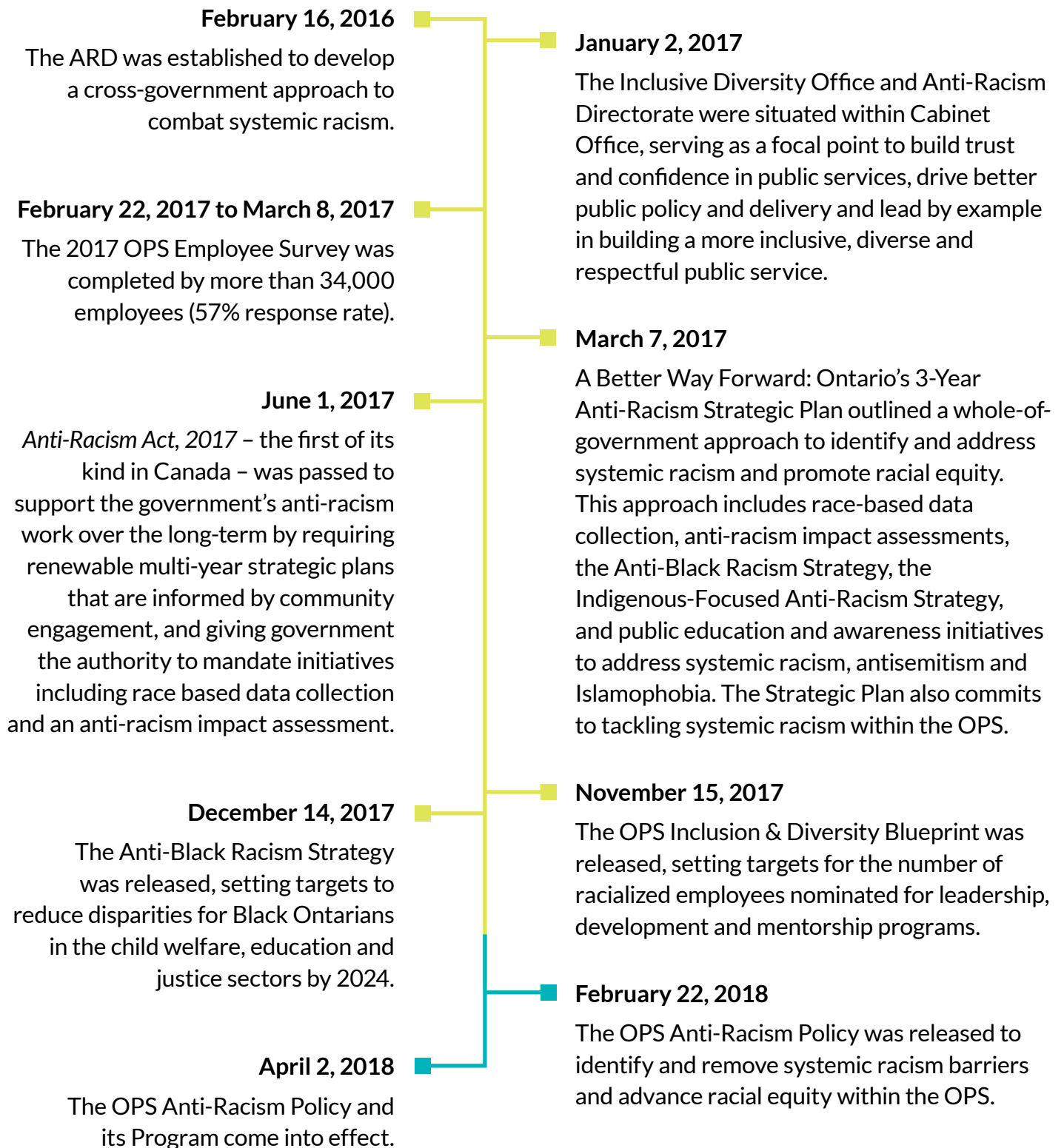


### IN•TER•SEC•TION•AL•ITY

Intersectionality acknowledges the ways in which people's lives are shaped by their multiple and overlapping identities and social locations, which, together, can produce a unique and distinct experience for that individual or group; for example, creating additional barriers or opportunities. In the context of race, this means recognizing the ways in which people's experiences of racism or privilege, including within any one racialized group, may differ and vary depending on the individual's or group's overlapping (or "intersecting") social identities, such as ethnicity, Indigenous identification, experiences with colonialism, religion, gender, citizenship, socio-economic status or sexual orientation.

# THE ARD'S JOURNEY

Systemic change takes time, but it is integral to establishing a thriving and productive OPS.



# ANTI-RACISM AS A WAY FORWARD

The OPS has heard the calls for transformational change and is taking action.

We are tackling systemic racism with the OPS Anti-Racism Policy – a priority in Ontario's 3-Year Anti-Racism Strategic Plan.

The OPS Anti-Racism Policy will establish a binding enterprise-wide commitment to anti-racism and anti-oppressive initiatives regarding all aspects of employment, and provide clear accountability for organizational change.

With its specific focus on race and systemic racism, the new policy bridges the OPS Inclusion & Diversity Blueprint, the OPS HR Plan 2015-2020 Building on our Strengths – Leading Change for the Future and the OPS Policy on Preventing Barriers in Employment. It also builds on the 2015 Anti-Racism Action Plan.

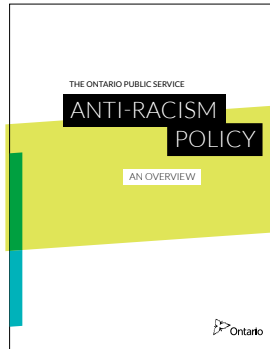
By removing the barriers facing the most disadvantaged groups, we will create a more equitable OPS where all employees can achieve full participation in the workplace.

## AN•TI RAC•ISM

An anti-racism approach is a systematic method of analysis and a proactive course of action. The approach recognizes the existence of racism, including systemic racism, and actively seeks to identify, remedy, and prevent the racially inequitable outcomes and power imbalances between groups and the structures that sustain these inequities.

## THE VISION

Eliminate systemic racism and advance a more racially equitable, diverse and inclusive workplace.



### The mechanism for accountability

The OPS Anti-Racism Policy ensures the accountability and sustainability of anti-racism work. It outlines scope, principles, responsibilities and mandatory requirements.



## Anti-Racism Program

### The tools for change

The policy mandates the development of an Anti-Racism Program with measurable targets and indicators.



## OPS ENGAGEMENT TO INFORM PROGRAM ELEMENTS



1/

Systemic Racism Barrier Identification and Removal

2/

Anti-Racism Competency and Capacity Building

3/

Leadership Diversification\*

4/

Anti-Racism review of WDHP program



## PUBLIC REPORTING ON PROGRAM ELEMENTS

\*Leadership Diversification is fulfilled through the OPS Inclusion & Diversity Blueprint.

# Anti-racism is about...



## Calls for action



### TAR•GET•ED U•NI•VER•SA•LISM

Targeted universalism, as a principle, recognizes that everyone benefits from government's targeted removal of systemic barriers faced by the most disadvantaged communities. Reducing barriers and disparities leads to a better Ontario for everyone.

# TAKING ACTION

The **OPS Anti-Racism Policy** establishes mandatory requirements, principles, roles and responsibilities to help ensure the accountability and sustainability of the government's anti-racism commitment.

The policy will enable the OPS to develop more equitable policies, procedures and practices to better support all employees in achieving full participation in the workplace, including Indigenous, Black and racialized employees.

## POLICY PRINCIPLES

Key guiding anti-racism principles that are embedded in the OPS Anti-Racism Policy are:

- Taking a **proactive** and **systemic** approach
- Using **evidence-based** decision making (with data and information)
- Integrating **employee engagement**
- Ensuring **accountability** through public reporting/transparency
- Incorporating **intersectionality** into the analyses
- Promoting **targeted universalism**
- Ensuring **sustainability**

## MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

The OPS Anti-Racism Policy mandates the development of a focused Anti-Racism Program with measurable targets and indicators. The Program elements will be reviewed at least once every five years.

To ensure public accountability, the ARD and central agency partners will publish annual progress reports on the enterprise-wide Anti-Racism Program and publish de-identified race data for trend analysis.

The Anti-Racism Program will also be informed by employee voices. The ARD and central agency partners (including the Inclusive Diversity Office) will engage and solicit input from Indigenous, Black and racialized employees, employee networks, the OPS Diversity Council and OPS bargaining agents.

# TOOLS FOR CHANGE

The Anti-Racism Directorate, along with central agency partners, will lead the development of a multi-year Anti-Racism Program.

There are four key Anti-Racism Program elements, each with measurable targets and indicators.

## 1 /

### OPS SYSTEMIC RACISM BARRIER IDENTIFICATION AND REMOVAL

To identify and remove any systemic racism barriers within policies, processes and/or practices that are leading to racialized disparities across the employment cycle and to advance racial equity.

This will include:

- Developing a **centralized process** that includes **annual trend analysis**
- **Trend analysis** will include de-identified disaggregated race data
- Anti-Racism Directorate will lead an **enterprise-wide action plan** with focus areas, in collaboration with corporate and ministry partners, to identify and remove any systemic racism barriers.

## 2 /

### ANTI-RACISM COMPETENCY AND CAPACITY BUILDING

To increase Ontario Public Service employee awareness and understanding of systemic racism and equip OPS leaders at all levels with the necessary anti-racism competencies.

This will include:

- Ensuring that all **managers** receive anti-racism training
- Making foundational anti-racism training available to all **OPS employees**
- Customizing anti-racism training for OPS **HR professionals**.

## 3 /

### LEADERSHIP DIVERSIFICATION

To increase the percentage of Indigenous, Black and racialized groups in the senior leadership ranks of the OPS.

This will include:

- Setting a **three-year corporate goal** to increase the percentage of racialized groups in senior leadership (director and above) ranks
- **Establishing annual targets** in leadership development programs, succession plans, recruitment short-lists, and coaching/mentoring to meet the corporate goal
- Conducting an **analysis of employee data** (collected voluntarily) and trends to ground the monitoring of issues and to guide evidence-based strategies for improvement
- **Implementing a sponsorship framework** to retain, develop and advance high-potential employees from racialized groups
- The Leadership Diversification action item is fulfilled through the implementation of the OPS Inclusion & Diversity Blueprint.

## ANTI-RACISM REVIEW OF THE RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE POLICY AND WORKPLACE DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT PREVENTION (WDHP) PROGRAM

To review the WDHP complaint management process by applying an anti-racism perspective.

This will include:

- Assessing how the current policy and complaint process **meet the concerns of racialized employees** and **identifying any patterns or trends** in the processing of race-based complaints
- **Making recommendations** on what policy and program enhancements are needed, including how direct, indirect and systemic race-based discrimination claims can be identified, monitored and resolved
- Considering new opportunities to **create a safe environment** to work through these issues in a proactive and responsible way is key to creating a respectful workplace.

## WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

By challenging systemic racism head-on in the OPS, we will build a more racially equitable and inclusive workforce. Removing barriers and disparities will lead to a better Ontario for everyone.

The policy will establish:

- Barrier-free practices in recruitment, hiring and promotions
- Talented senior leadership that is inclusive of Indigenous, racialized and Black employees
- Enhanced data collection, analysis and reporting for evidence-based decision-making
- Increased understanding of systemic racism and how to create a more inclusive OPS.

## ADDITIONAL DEFINITIONS



### AN•TI•OPP•RES•SIVE

An anti-oppressive approach recognizes the power imbalance within society that attributes benefits to some groups and excludes others. This approach seeks to develop strategies to create an environment free from oppression, racism and other forms of discrimination. It acknowledges the intersections of identity and diversity including race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, record of offences, marital status, family status and disability and aims to promote equity between the various identities.

### RAC•IAL•IZED EMPLOYEES

Racialized employees refers to employees who can have racial meanings attributed to them as a group in ways that negatively impact their work and social life. This includes but is not necessarily limited to people classified as “visible minority” under the Canadian census and may include employees impacted by antisemitism and Islamophobia.

### DI•VER•SI•TY

Diversity is the range of visible and invisible qualities, experiences and identities that shape who we are, how we think and how we engage with, and are perceived by the world. These can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical or mental abilities, religious/spiritual beliefs, or political ideologies. They can also include differences such as personality, style, capabilities, and thought/perspectives.

# ANTI-RACISM DIRECTORATE



Visit [Ontario.ca/antiracism](https://ontario.ca/antiracism) for more information  
on the OPS Anti-Racism Policy

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