

Niagara Region // February 2022

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION DATA SUMMARY

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Citation: Niagara Region Corporate Strategy and Innovation (2021). Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Data Summary. February 2022. Thorold, Ontario.



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1.0 Introduction

The Niagara Region and the 12 Local Area Municipalities joined the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities in 2020 and are currently working towards developing a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Action Plan. The DEI Action Plan will be for Niagara Region as an organization, with connections to Niagara region as a community, including the Local Area Municipalities. The foundation for the DEI Action Plan are the three objectives of the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities:

1. Improve municipal practices to promote social inclusion
2. Establish policies to eradicate racism and discrimination
3. Promote human rights and diversity

Data to inform the creation of the DEI Action plan was collected through an environmental scan, 28 focus groups with 110 Niagara Region staff members, and 82 community members, 1670 staff surveys, and 1599 community surveys. See Appendix A for demographic information of the survey respondents. Detailed summaries of the methodology of data collection and analysis as well as the findings from the data collected are available in the following reports:

- DEI Environmental Scan Report
- Niagara Region DEI Staff Experiences Report
- Community DEI Experiences Report
- NR DEI Opportunities for Change Report

This report provides a summary of the data from all the research done on the project to date. To develop the Action Plan, the Driver's Model has been selected as a framework, which outlines the following content that should be developed for the Action Plan:

- Vision (preferred future picture)
- Mission (overall purpose)
- 5-8 key values (foundation of purpose, guiding principles)
- 4-5 Goals (broad long term aims to accomplish the mission)
- Objectives associated with each goal (specific, quantifiable realistic targets that measure the accomplishment of a goal)
- Strategies (broad activities required to achieve an objective)
- Indicators (measures used to determine success of achieving objectives)

The data presented in this report provides information about the current context of DEI through successes and gaps, critical success factors, which are best practices, and barriers. Best practices are presented first, outlining what research or industry best practices relate to that theme area. The successes are areas where the Region or community is achieving or working towards the best practice. Gaps are areas where the Region or community is not reaching the best practice. Barriers are challenges that were described by research participants that reduce the ability of organizations to achieve the



best practices. The final section in each theme area is opportunities for action, which outlines potential actions that can be taken to reduce the gaps and reach the best practices, based on the data collected throughout this project.

2.0 Data Summary

The data is summarized based on the seven key theme areas for municipalities to address racism and discrimination, as well as advance inclusion and diversity are:

1. Create an inclusive workplace culture with leadership and accountability
2. Provide a range of DEI training opportunities
3. Implement inclusive recruitment, hiring, and promotion practices
4. Creation and review of policies considering DEI
5. Improve reporting incidents of bias, harassment, and discrimination
6. Use inclusive planning and evaluation processes
7. Improve access to services for all community members

2.1 Create an Inclusive Workplace Culture with Leadership, and Accountability

1. Create an inclusive workplace culture with leadership, and accountability	
Best Practices	<p>Leadership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change must be seen from leaders for whole organization buy-in <p>Culture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEI needs to be embedded within the culture • Staff need to feel comfortable and respected at work by all levels of employees • The workplace needs to be free from bias and discrimination <p>Accountability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff should feel comfortable addressing instances of bias or discrimination without fear • DEI can be embedded in performance management • Accessible policies and practices allow for people to voice complaints in a safe manner
Successes	<p>Leadership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the level of awareness, most people leaders (have staff report to them) recognize that DEI is important and some want to start making changes



1. Create an inclusive workplace culture with leadership, and accountability

	<p>Culture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEI is starting to be embedded within the culture of Niagara Region as an organization <p>Accountability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2022, all people leaders are required to have at least one performance objective related to a shared DEI related objective: Model behaviours and implement actions that promote a diverse, inclusive and connected culture in the organization • Policies and practices in place for complaints to be raised
Gaps	<p>Culture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not all staff and community members feel comfortable and respected by co-workers, fellow students, or other community members • Bias and discrimination exists in work places, schools, and in the community <p>Accountability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of consistent and effective accountability related to potential bias or discrimination displayed by Regional Councillors • 17% of staff that responded to the survey would not feel comfortable reporting an incident of bias, discrimination or harassment that they experienced or witnessed
Barriers	<p>Leadership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current limited diversity within leadership, of Regional staff and elected officials (See Appendix B) <p>Culture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current culture relating to DEI is inconsistent, with support from most leaders, and perceived lack of support from others • Staff and community members described multiple types of discrimination encountered, based on age, gender, race, immigrant status, language, disability, religion, income level, and sexuality • The types of discrimination experienced and witnessed included insulting comments; barriers to participation; teasing, mocking, or bullying; verbal abuse; hate speech; and microaggressions



1. Create an inclusive workplace culture with leadership, and accountability	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most common locations of discrimination in the community were businesses, work places, interpersonal, social media, health care, and public spaces • 32% of community survey respondents did not feel accepted in Niagara • 65% of survey respondents disagreed that elected officials reflect the community they identify with • 64% of survey respondents disagreed that elective officials listen to them
Opportunities for Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use specific indicators and metrics to keep leaders and staff accountable based on identified outcomes • Invest in capacity and resources for staff to implement DEI work • Create a safe and inclusive workplace for open discussions through providing education and resources to support leaders • Create Employee Resource Groups where staff with similar background can safely discuss their concerns • Celebrate diversity through informing staff and community members of significant cultural and religious dates • Increase diversity in elected leadership through reducing barriers and providing mentorship opportunities

2.2 Provide a Range of DEI Training Opportunities

2. Provide a range of DEI training opportunities	
Best Practices	<p>Provide multiple levels of training for all staff. Topics can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unconscious Bias Training • Indigenous Cultural Safety Training • LGBTQ2S+ Training • Accessibility • Introductory Diversity Training • Intercultural communication • Leading diverse teams <p>There should be formal and informal training opportunities. For training to be effective it needs to be combined with institutional change, and accountability</p>



2. Provide a range of DEI training opportunities

Successes	<p>Multiple levels of voluntary training are available, a total of 4549 staff have participated in DEI related trainings as of Dec 2021 (not all unique staff, some may participate in more than one training)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unconscious Bias Training – 19 staff • Indigenous Cultural Safety Training – 99 staff • Mandatory Indigenous Docuseries – 2290 staff • Indigenous Speaker Series – 145 staff • LGBTQ2S+ Training – 281 staff • Accessibility – All staff, part of orientation • Introductory Diversity Training – 410 staff • Leader’s Edge – Addressing Bias and Discrimination – 18 staff • Health Equity or Social Determinants of Health – 384 staff • DEI module incorporated into Seniors Services orientation package
Gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEI Training is not a consistent requirement for all staff • Lack of DEI training plan, trainings are disconnected • Uptake is inconsistent across departments • Lack of resources and support for leaders to initiate informal discussions and training • Institutional change is recognized as needed, in awareness stage
Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large workforce with varied capacity for training • Time commitment from staff is a challenge, especially for front line and operations based staff • Funding required to provide training (especially if mandatory for all staff) • Available trainings are not always well advertised or have sufficient spaces
Opportunities for action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make DEI training mandatory for all staff • Incorporate DEI training into new staff, Council, and Advisory Committee onboarding • Have specific DEI training for leaders and elected officials • Provide DEI related resources to staff and community members • Connect training plan with the broader DEI Action Plan



2.3 Implement Inclusive Recruitment, Hiring, and Promotion Practices

3. Implement inclusive recruitment, hiring, and promotion practices	
Best Practices	<p>Recruitment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use inclusive language in job postings • Forward job postings to external organizations <p>Hiring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concealed hiring • Diverse Interview Panels • Questions and model answers established ahead of time <p>Promotion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentorship • Opportunities widely known • Fair and transparent selection process • Consider DEI as a criteria for promotion
Successes	<p>Hiring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions and model answers established ahead of time <p>Promotion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have established mentorship program, available to all staff, although not focused on diversity • Opportunities widely known • Fair and transparent selection process <p>Current level of diversity among staff is similar to community (see Appendix A)</p>
Gaps	<p>Recruitment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language has not been reviewed • Some job postings are forwarded to external organizations on an ad hoc basis <p>Hiring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No current process for concealed hiring, not possible with current software • Interview Panels are not purposefully diverse
Barriers	<p>Recruitment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncertainty of who to partner with to review and share job postings • Lack of social media presence to create awareness of positions <p>Hiring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current technology does not allow for anonymizing resumes



3. Implement inclusive recruitment, hiring, and promotion practices	
	<p>All:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unconscious bias and lack of training within hiring managers • Current web platform is a challenge to navigate and submit information • 53% of community survey respondents disagreed that employers in Niagara do a good job of attracting people of diverse backgrounds • 58% of community survey respondents disagreed that employers do a good job of promoting people of diverse backgrounds
Opportunities for Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement strategies to expand diversity of applicant pool • Provide more or targeted co-op and student intern opportunities • Examine job qualification requirements to reduce unintended barriers and consider different types of knowledge and lived experience • Incorporate diversity-related questions into interviews • Have more inclusive onboarding practices • Encourage mentorship with leaders from diverse backgrounds

2.4 Creation and Review of Policies Considering DEI

4. Creation and review of policies considering DEI	
Best Practices	<p>Equal opportunity statement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate to potential employees and the public that diversity of staff is celebrated and not a barrier <p>Policy Audit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of existing policies with a DEI lens • Policies should be reviewed regularly, involving those impacted by the policy • Policies should be simple and communicated clearly
Successes	<p>Equal opportunity statement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal opportunity statement being piloted on limited job advertisements <p>Policy Audit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies are reviewed on a regular basis



4. Creation and review of policies considering DEI	
Gaps	Policy Audit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies are not yet reviewed with a DEI lens • Not all policies are simple or well communicated • Lack of policies relating to religious and transgender accommodation
Barriers	Policy Audit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No current formal process for public or Advisory Committee input on policy creation or review • Policy review is time consuming
Opportunities for action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review policies with a DEI lens, such as Gender Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) • Create DEI specific policies, such as one to guide compensation for people with lived experience who provide input into Regional projects • Consider religious accommodations • Have policies regarding collecting or changing personal information, particularly for individuals who are transgender

2.5 Improve Reporting Incidents of Bias, Discrimination, or Harassment

5. Improve reporting incidents of bias, discrimination, or harassment	
Best Practices	Formal complaints process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow staff to formally document complaints Anti-harassment or Anti-racism policies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pro-active policy to protect staff against harassment
Successes	Formal complaints process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a formal complaints process in place that includes discrimination and harassment • 64% of staff that responded to the survey agreed that they knew how to report an incident of discrimination or harassment that they may experience at Niagara Region Anti-harassment or Anti-racism policies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an anti-harassment policy that includes anti-racism
Gaps	Formal complaints process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some have said that the process is challenging for someone who has a complaint • The current process is not known by everyone (23% of staff do not know how to report an incident of discrimination or harassment)



5. Improve reporting incidents of bias, discrimination, or harassment	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current process is also for injuries or other work place incidents and not always relevant for discrimination • In the community, 19% of survey respondents reported incidents of discrimination they experienced, 18% of respondents reported incidents they witnessed. • Community members reported the incidents most often to their workplace, the Niagara Region Police Service, other police services, and the media
Barriers	<p>Formal complaints process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current process is not widely known ether at the Region or in the community • People do not feel comfortable reporting incidents they experience or witness, they fear the repercussions of reporting, they feel there is a lack of allies to support them, and there is a disappointment with past outcomes
Opportunities for action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review or revise complaint and reporting processes for staff and community members • Improve responses to reports made • Provide better support for complainants

2.6 Use Inclusive Planning and Evaluation Processes

6. Use inclusive planning and evaluation processes	
Best Practices	<p>There should be a rigorous process in regards to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence informed planning • Collect quantitative and qualitative data <p>Involve partners and community members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community is important in order to gather relevant information, provide input on what and how data is gathered • Provide connections to the community and people with lived experience • Ensure programs and services are relevant and appropriate • Ensure individuals are fairly compensated and costs of participation are covered for their time <p>Collect diversity based demographic questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding who is and who is not using the services is important • Be able to dis-aggregate data



6. Use inclusive planning and evaluation processes	
	<p>Set measureable goals, use data to regularly monitor and evaluate progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting realistic goals helps organizations and community work together • Regular monitoring and evaluation measures progress and allows initiatives to be adjusted to ensure goals are met
Successes	<p>Rigorous process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of the organization uses evidence to inform decisions • Health Equity Informed Planning project is incorporating health equity considerations into corporate planning and decision making • Some programs and projects collect quantitative and qualitative data <p>Involve partners and community members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community consultation is a standard part of planning processes • Currently over 200 identified community organizations that relate to diversity <p>Involve people with lived experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisory Committees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Women’s Advisory Committee, Accessibility Advisory Committee, DEI Advisory Committee ○ Establishment of 2SLGBTQQIA+ Advisory Committee and Anti-Racism Advisory Committee with 2022 term of Council ○ Advisory Committees across Public Health and Community Services: Lived Experience Advisory Network (LEAN), Public Health Youth Advisory Committee, Mental Health Client Advisory Committee, Housing and Homelessness Action Plan (HHAP) Lived Experience Advisory Committee, Seniors Family Council, Tenant Advisory Committee (TAC) ○ Multiple DEI related Advisory Committees across LAMs <p>Collect diversity based demographic questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some areas are beginning to do this <p>Set measureable goals, use data to regularly monitor and evaluate progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are processes in place, planning is done well



6. Use inclusive planning and evaluation processes

Gaps	<p>Rigorous process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not all programs or services collect quantitative and qualitative data • Data is not consistently collected with a DEI lens <p>Involve partners and community members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community consultation does not always consider DEI • Currently diverse groups are not being recognized, celebrated, or invited to participate consistently across the organization <p>Collect diversity based demographic questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most departments are not aware which demographic groups are not providing their voices or attending their programs or services • Not consistent across the corporation • Not consistent across the Region by other services, such as health care, police, businesses <p>Set measureable goals, use data to regularly monitor and evaluate progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring and evaluation is not done consistently across the organization • DEI lens has not yet been incorporated
Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are a lot of community partners to coordinate or incorporate • Establishing relationships with community members and organizations is time consuming and can be difficult • Rigorous data collection is time consuming and requires staff with specialized skills to collect and analyze the data • People with lived experience require additional accommodations to be able to participate
Opportunities for action	<p>Inclusive Planning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate people with lived experience • Improve collaboration with community organizations • Provide compensation for community members to participate <p>Use disaggregated quantitative and qualitative data to plan programs and services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate disaggregated data into planning and evaluation • Set measureable goals, use data to regularly monitor and evaluate progress



2.7 Improve Access to Services for All Community Members

7. Improve access to services for all community members	
Best Practices	<p>Champion DEI values to other community organizations</p> <p>Improve access to services via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible customer service • Accessible transportation • Accessibility Design Standards • Gender-Neutral Washrooms • Religious/Cultural Accommodations <p>Ensure there is clear communication of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs and services in multiple modes to be accessible by everyone. This includes multiple languages, low literacy levels, electronic and paper advertising • How barriers are being addressed and inviting feedback on how to address barriers more effectively
Successes	<p>Improve access to services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility Design Standards are integrated through the Planning and Development department, and considered in new and renovated buildings • Transportation - Currently there is consideration and implementation of more accessible transit across the region • Regional programs with DEI considerations include : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 911 Translator Services ○ Niagara EMS Mobile Integrated Health Team ○ Housing and Homelessness Action Plan ○ The Built for Zero Community ○ Public Health & Emergency Services Health Equity Strategy ○ Public Health work in multiple areas ○ Grants provided by the Niagara Prosperity Initiative <p>Current successful communication campaigns by the Region include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Attractiveness Strategic Marketing Plan • NLIP Anti-Racism/Anti-Stigma Campaigns
Gaps	<p>Improving access to services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of gender neutral bathrooms, although many buildings have single, accessible washrooms that are not gendered • No prayer spaces in any of the Regional buildings • No specific policies on religious or cultural accommodations



7. Improve access to services for all community members	
	<p>Communication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website is not very user friendly • Website is only available in English • Most resources and messaging is only available in English • Programs are not widely communicated, or targeted • Lack of consistent communication between the Region and community partners/members to share knowledge, resources and accomplishments
Barriers	<p>Championing DEI values to other community organizations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time consuming, many organizations to reach <p>Improving access to services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility can be expensive • Accessibility is time consuming to ensure all different accommodations are considered and incorporated • Religious/Cultural Accommodations are a challenge when statutory holidays are built around Christian holidays • Staff shortages make providing additional time off a challenge • Potential costs associated with accommodations <p>Communication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translating all documents is time consuming and expensive • Current website platform has multiple limitations
Opportunities for action	<p>Improve access to services for all community members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide relevant and accessible programs and services • Have clear signage throughout the Region • Create safe spaces for community members • Continue efforts for coordinated transportation, including paratransit • Improve access to health care for marginalized groups • Support police to improve their responses to DEI related incidents • Continue efforts towards providing more affordable housing and supporting people experiencing homelessness <p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have inclusive promotion of current programs and services • Make it easier to for community members to provide feedback • Improve public education on DEI topics



3.0 Vision

Focus group and survey participants provide words or phrases of what they would like Niagara to look like in five years. The top words from the different sources were: inclusive, diverse, free, safe, accepting, and welcoming. Four participants provided a phrase that aligned with those concepts:

- Niagara is a place where all feel welcome, can thrive and be treated fairly
- Inclusive and accepting, prospering economically and socially
- Inclusive, anti-discrimination and barrier free for all residents and guests in Niagara
- Niagara – the region of compassion and inclusivity; where all are seen and heard

Additionally, at the start of the DEI work in Niagara the Local Area Municipality Working Group, consisting of representatives from all Local Area Municipalities across the Region, came up with the following vision:

- From all four corners of the Niagara Region, everyone is welcome and connected

4.0 Conclusion

This report summarizes the key thematic data presented in four other reports: Environmental Scan, Staff DEI Experiences, Community DEI Experiences, and Opportunities for Change Reports. The seven themes can be grouped into three areas:

- A) Create an inclusive work place where employees can effectively lead and serve diverse people
 - 1) Create an inclusive workplace culture with leadership and accountability
 - 2) Provide a range of training opportunities
 - 3) Implement inclusive recruitment, hiring, and promotion practices
- B) Create inclusive policies and practices that incorporate and support diverse people
 - 4) Creation and review of policies considering DEI
 - 5) Improve reporting incidents of bias, discrimination, and harassment
- C) Ensure municipal programs and services are accessible for everyone
 - 6) Use inclusive planning and evaluation processes
 - 7) Improve access to services for all community members

The research identified best practices, successes, gaps, barriers, and opportunities for change, which will be used to inform the creation of the DEI Action Plan. Members of the DEI Advisory Committee, community organizations, community members, and staff members will collaborate to develop the details of the plan. The draft plan will be available for the public to provide input and feedback. The aim is to have the finalized plan brought to Regional Council by August 2022.



Appendix A: Demographic Profile of Survey Respondents

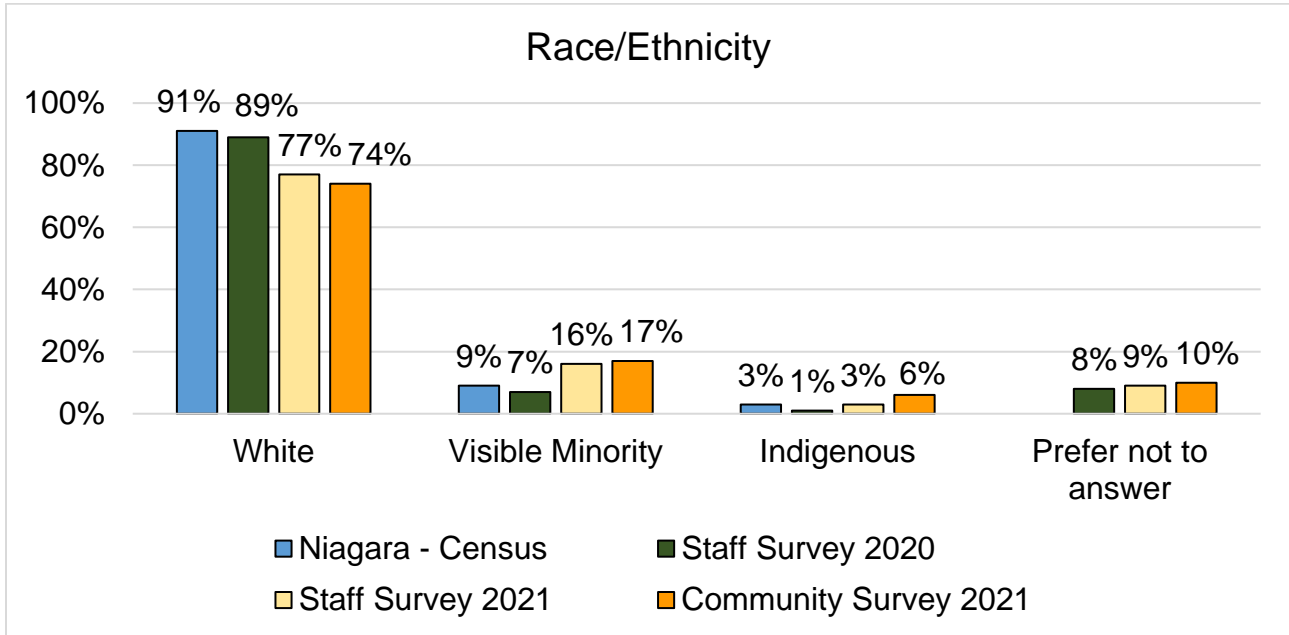


Figure 1: Race or Ethnicity of Survey participants

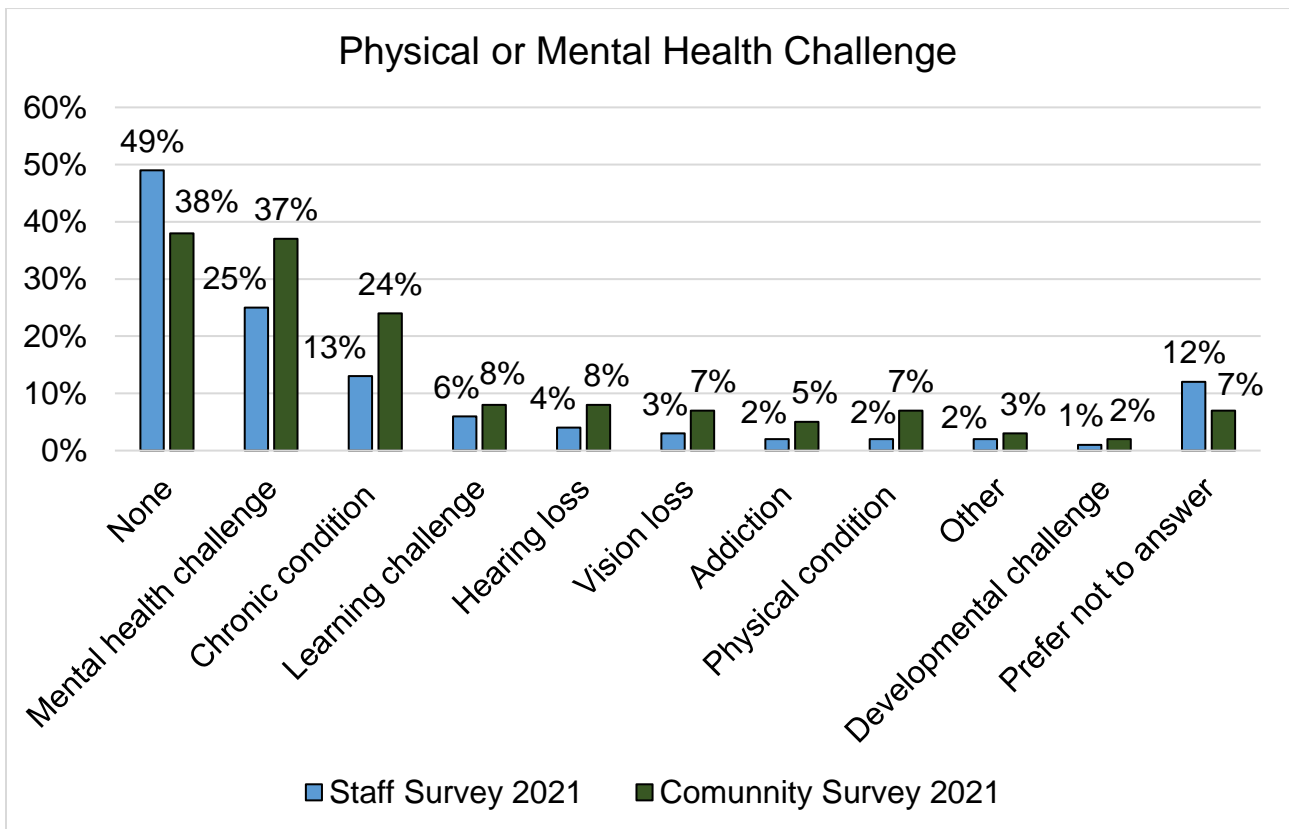


Figure 2: Physical or Mental Health Challenges of Survey Participants



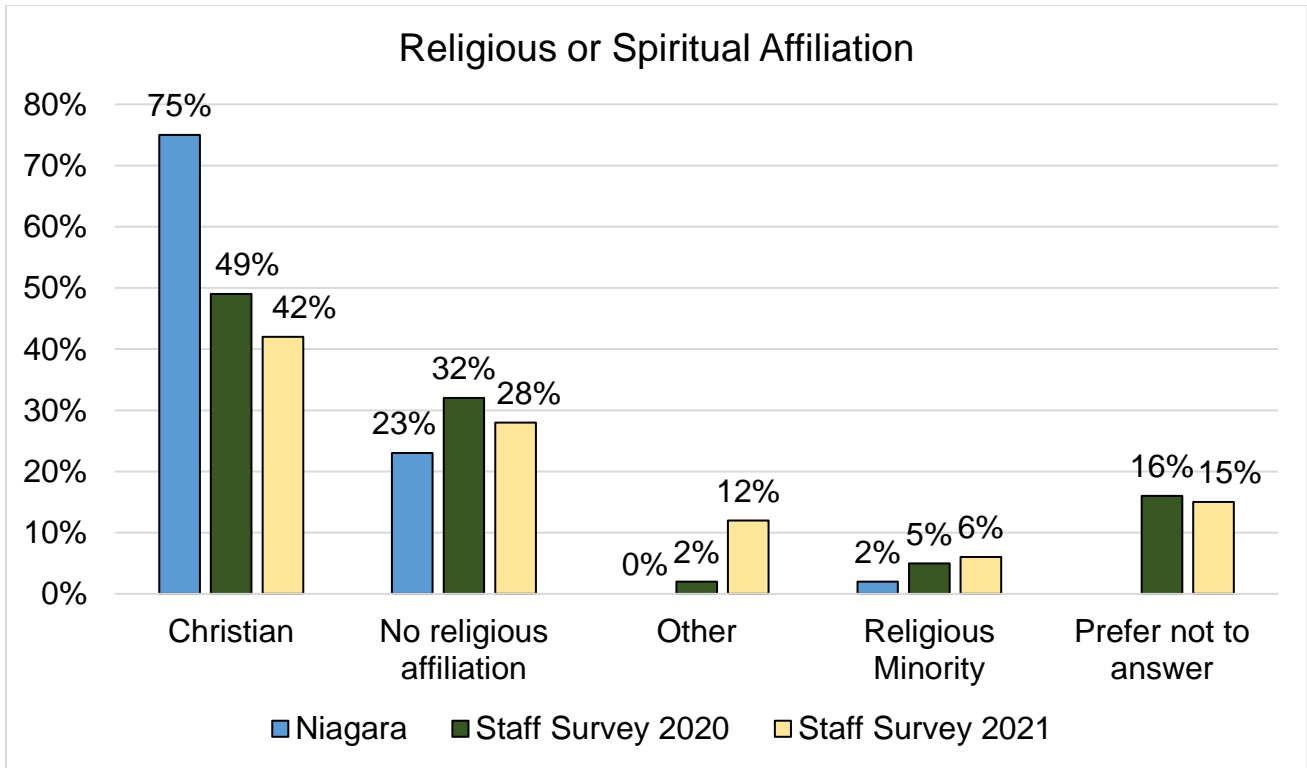


Figure 3: Religious or Spiritual Affiliation of Survey Participants

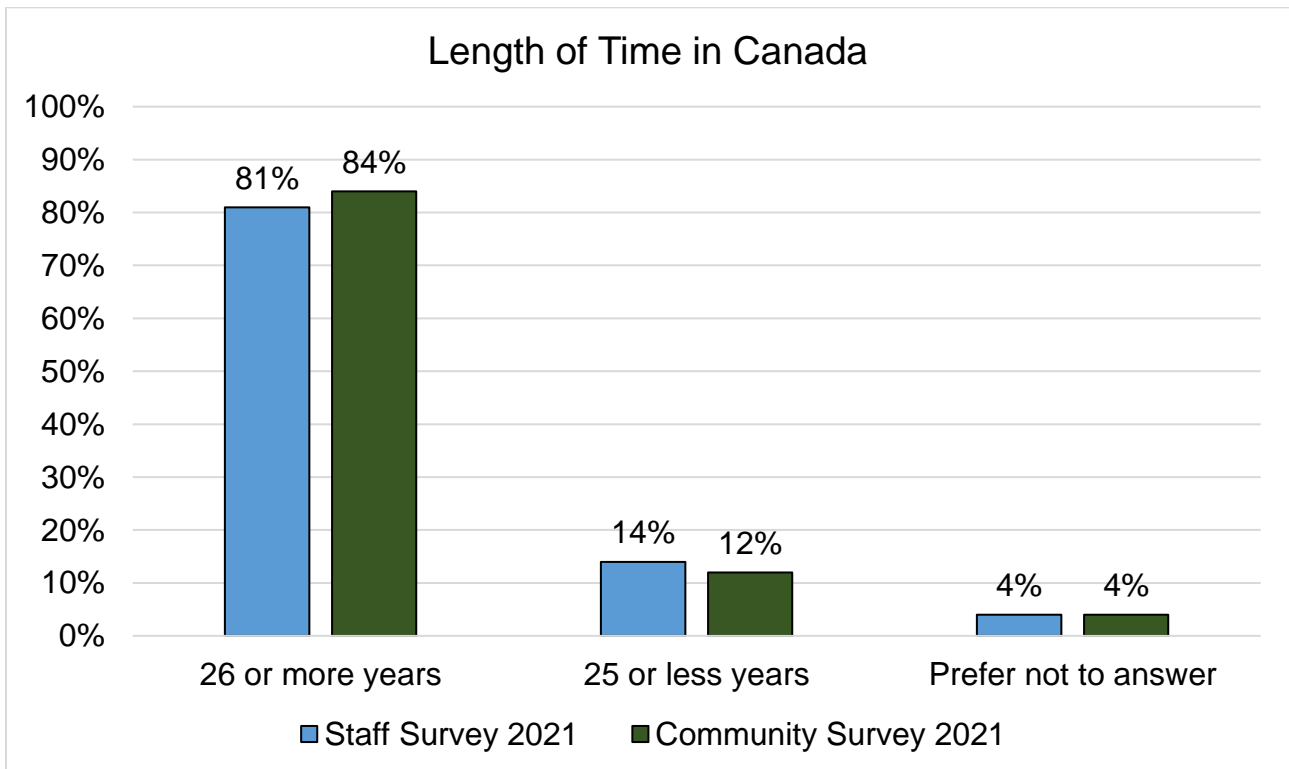


Figure 4: Length of Time in Canada of Survey Participants



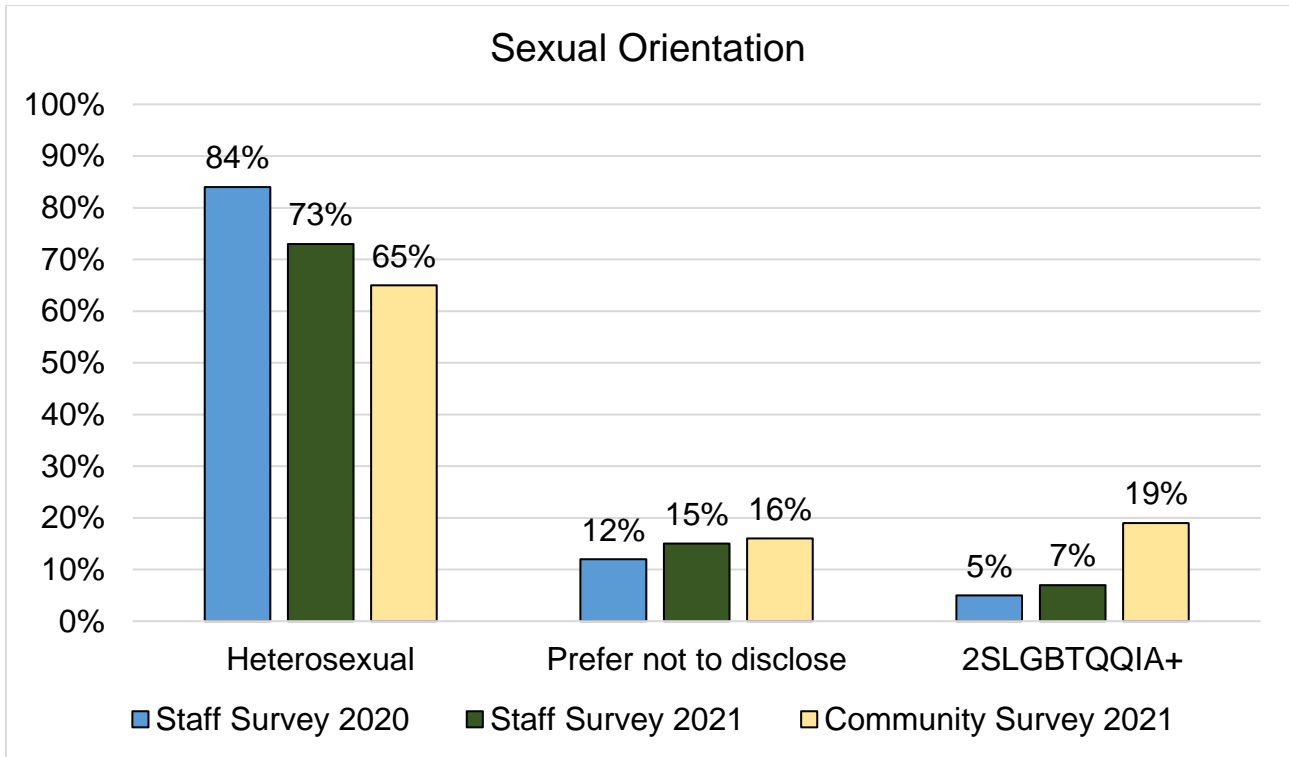


Figure 5: Sexual Orientation of Survey Participants

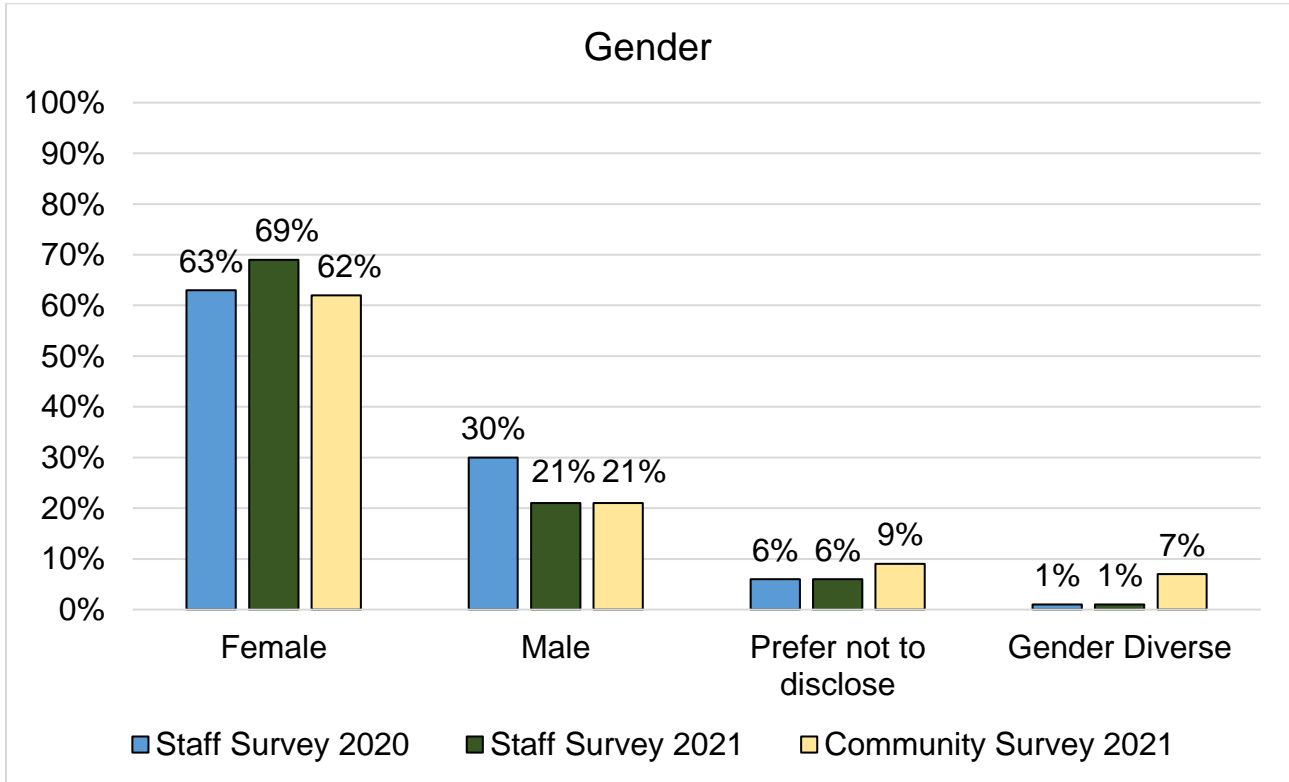


Figure 6: Gender of Survey Participants



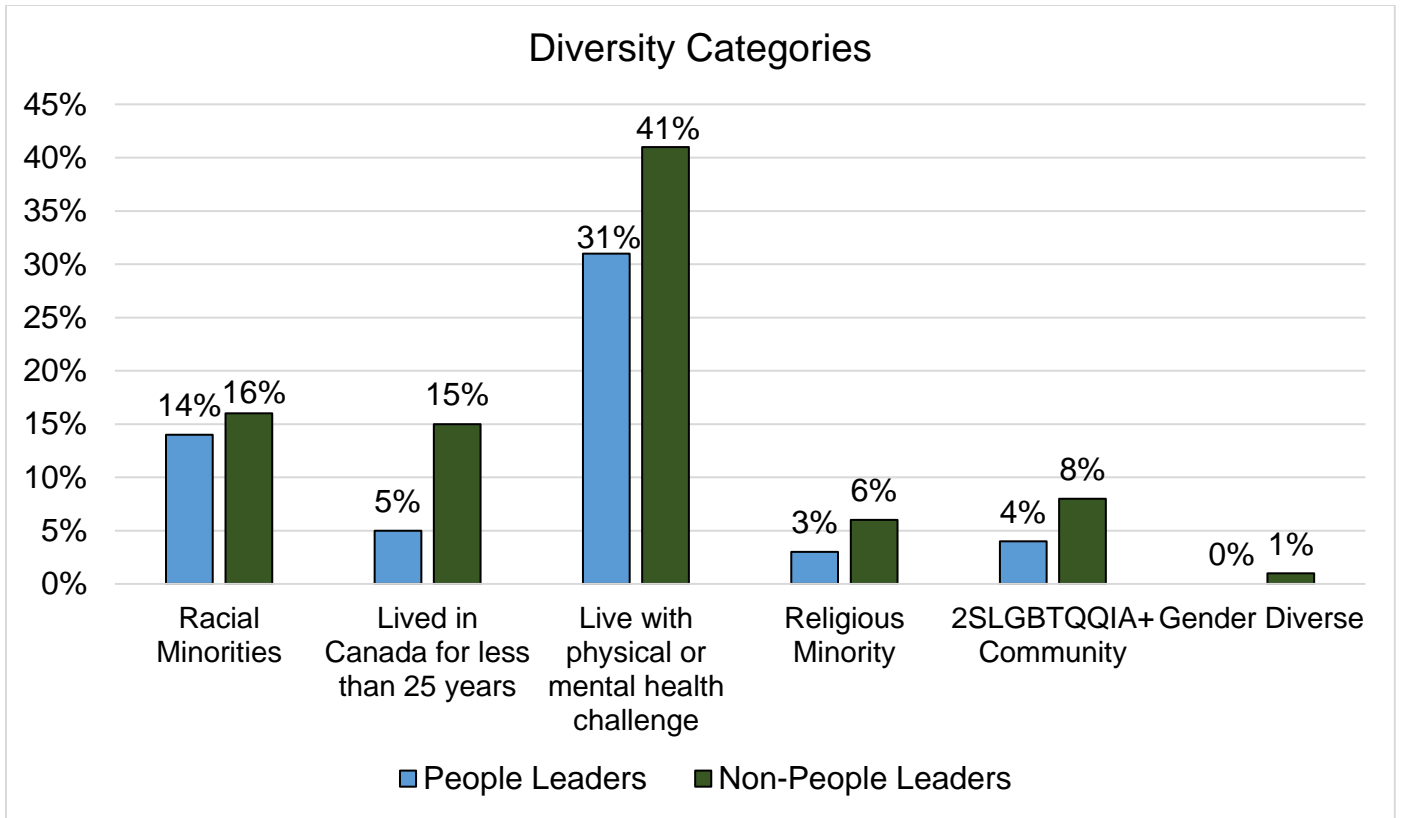


Figure 7: Diversity Category Comparison between People Leaders and Non-People Leaders

