

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Action Coalition

Nov 17th, 2025

5:00 pm - 7:00 pm

Hybrid Meeting

Meeting Minutes

Members in Attendance: Amy McKague, Pauline Janke, Tami Murray, and Tajay Turner-Smith

Regrets: Joanna Mitchell, Patricia Marshall, Leila Abouzeeni, Ephraim Mwaura & Julie Middleton.

Staff Support: Ayesha Sajid (Oxford County)

Chair: Tajay Turner-Smith

1. Call the Meeting to Order (5:05 pm)

2. Land Acknowledgement and Statement of Reconciliation (Ayesha)

Let us call to mind our relationships with the Indigenous peoples of the lands we are on today, and the histories and impact of these relationships. Let us acknowledge that we meet on the ancestral and unceded territories of the Inuit, Metis, and First Nations peoples. Let us recognize that our historical relationships impact present-day Indigenous experiences and that each day of our present-day actions shapes the future.

3. Committee Member Check-In

4. Approval of the Agenda of Monday, Nov 17th, 2025

- Approved by Tajay
- Seconded by Amy

5. Approval of the Minutes of Monday, Sep 22nd, 2025

- Approved by Tami Murray
- Seconded by Pauline Tajay

6. Discussion Items:

Community Safety & Well-Being Plan(draft)

- Ayesha informed members that the Summit took place in November, during which the draft of this Plan was shared and feedback was collected. The draft that is shared with the Coalition members is the revised version.
- Coalition members shared their feedback on the draft:
- The use of the word "newcomer" implies that racial diversity wasn't present before. It also indicates double buy-in: "Are they new to Canada or the community?" Could use all residents.
- Using the term "identities" under intended outcomes, the first point (Pg 7) implies that racial minorities are grouped into a single identity, whereas we have diversity within those groups, too.

- The entire document and its language feel safe, fluffy, and avoidant, and doesn't name anything. Even the title "People and Belonging" suggests that we are avoiding the term DEI.
- Initiatives are unclear, with minimal objectives and no strategic actions. How will we achieve the intended outcomes, not just for People and Belonging but also for Substance use? Is there an assumption that people will know how to proceed, given that so many organizations will be involved? If Action Coalition members come up with ideas, there is a risk they will be rejected.
- Addiction and mental health state good objectives, but no resources
- With gender-based violence, there is no mention of current support
- Systemic issues (priority risks identified in the Plan) will come down to municipal resource constraints, provincial political barriers, and funding.
- This Plan was developed through consultation with community stakeholders and residents, so those consultations should be used to set clear objectives.
- Accessibility and mention of people with disabilities are mentioned under People and Belonging only.
- Food security is missing.
- Which organizations will be responsible and collaborate with (Pg 10)? Community members who collaborate are paid to perform specific duties but may not achieve the outcomes outlined in the Plan. Therefore, collaboration may not change the systemic issues.
- The Plan reads like an executive summary; it should have been more structured and identified what we have achieved, with no summary of the measurement used to get to this point.
- Coalition members felt the draft Plan uses vague, overly cautious language and avoids naming key issues, including diversity, equity, and systemic barriers. Several terms—such as "newcomer" and "identities"—were considered unclear or misleading. The Plan lacks concrete strategic actions, clear objectives, and a clear explanation of how intended outcomes will be achieved, particularly in the areas of People and Belonging, Substance Use, Addiction and Mental Health, and Gender-Based Violence. Important topics such as food security and disability inclusion are inconsistently covered or missing altogether.

Members also expressed concern that systemic challenges—including limited municipal resources, provincial constraints, and funding barriers—are not addressed. Responsibilities and collaboration expectations are unclear, particularly because community partners may lack the capacity to deliver the outcomes. Although informed by community consultations, the Plan does not translate this input into actionable steps or progress metrics. Overall, it reads more like an executive summary than a fully developed strategy.

DEI Postcard(draft)

- Members really liked the draft.
- The suggestion was to keep the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario as one of the resources on the Postcard.
- To replace the current image used to present equity, as it represents equality.

Update on the discussion with the Police.

- Ayesha updated the members that we are still trying to figure out a way and have a meeting that would be beneficial for both the Police and Coalition members.
 - Potential multi-cultural event, or initiatives/goals for 2026.
 - Members shared that The Heart of Oxford can be a good event with a multicultural focus. Right now, their website, advertising, and the event itself are not inclusive or representative of the community. This event takes place every year in November.
 - Which significant days do the Committee members want to recognize that could help shape specific targeted education or events for this year and next & why?
 - The Committee can also work on developing educational materials on issues highlighted in the Safe and Well Oxford Community Safety & Well-being Plan, e.g., racial issues, racial inclusion in schools, human rights, etc.
- **The DEI Action Coalition Webpage- Article of the Month.**
- The members decided that we should move to bi-monthly posting of the articles. Ayesha will get in touch with Joanna to send the article, and then it will be Amy's turn.
- Amy also mentioned that the Webpage should be promoted as a reminder, so people don't forget about it. **Action:** Ayesha can ask the Communication Department.
- Tajay's podcast as a survivor of gender-based violence can also be posted on the DEI Action Coalition's Webpage.
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Updates:

- Tami will be stepping down from the Coalition, and Katie Schuett, Vice President of Oxford Pride, will replace Tami.

7. **Next Meeting Date – Jan 26th, 2026, 5-7 pm**

8. **Committee Member Check-out**

9. **Adjournment (6:40 pm)**

- a. Approved by Tami Murray
- b. Seconded by Tajay