

Taking Action Against Racism

What Albertans told us and what to do next

Ministry of Education, Government of Alberta
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Taking Action Against Racism
alberta.ca/CombatRacism

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MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER



“Until all of us have made it, none of us have made it.”

Rosemary Brown, the first Black woman elected to a provincial legislature, spoke these words in 1972. Her message was part caution and part inspiration: For society to thrive, everyone must have the opportunity to realize their full potential. Everyone.

Today, three-in-10 Albertans are members of a racial minority. We are a better place thanks to their talent, culture, achievements and perspectives. And while Alberta is a welcoming place, filled with accepting people who believe in equality, it's important to acknowledge that racism is still a serious issue.

Racism is more than just hatred or violence. It can be subtler, but just as damaging — from creating gaps in health care supports for immigrants, to denying people jobs or housing because of their cultural identity. It includes insensitive practices and unconscious biases. It includes racist words, deeds and processes that disrespect and demoralize others, which ultimately diminishes us all.

When racism undermines education, health, employment and social stability, we all suffer. We succeed when Albertans of every heritage are full participants in public life. That's only possible in an inclusive society where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

Because racism has no place in our province, our government is committed to combatting it in all its forms. In 2017, we asked Albertans for their help. We heard from thousands of people and more than 100 community groups who offered their expertise on how we can support diversity and inclusion. They generously shared their stories, their successes and their suffering. Racism is deeply painful and personal. It is not easy to share such stories, and I'm thankful to all participants.

Their feedback has been important in making this plan. Some of it we will implement immediately. Other parts we think make sense, but we will engage further to make sure we've got it right, so we can help every Albertan be treated with the dignity and respect that's worthy of a province as welcoming as ours.

I invite you to monitor our progress and continue to share your ideas at

alberta.ca/CombatRacism Together, let's take action against racism.

MESSAGE FROM MINISTER EGGEN



In 2017, after the horrific mass murder at a mosque in Quebec City, the Premier made a commitment that Alberta would develop a plan to take action against racism. She asked me to lead consultations about what this plan would include.

I was honoured to engage with Albertans about racism, and how we can fight it. Thousands of people, representing our rich diversity, shared their thoughts, experiences and recommendations. For that, I am grateful.

I heard and saw a lot of things I will never forget.

I heard the deep anguish felt by those who endure racism. I saw parents cry as they described trying to explain the

hostility of strangers to their children. And I saw the shock of immigrants who fled violence to begin new lives here, only to come face-to-face with hatred again.

I also experienced Albertans' incredible resolve, in communities big and small. Overwhelmingly, they rejected racism in all its forms. They expressed a powerful desire to drag prejudice out of the shadows, and confront it in the light of truth. Acknowledging that we need to do that, as this report does, is an important first step.

They also made it clear that, while there is no single solution to discrimination, we can act to promote inclusion and fairness. Training, cross-cultural dialogue, removing barriers to reporting hate crimes and developing policy with input from community groups are all effective ways our government can counter racism.

This report is the result of that invaluable input. We will use it to continue our engagement, which we hope will help us take action against racism as effectively as we can.

The conversation is far from over.

Together, we will make Alberta safe and respectful for everyone. Albertans expect nothing less.

MESSAGE FROM MINISTER FEEHAN



Racism has a profound impact on Indigenous peoples, who are subjected to a unique form of prejudice in their day-to-day lives.

Generations of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples have faced systemic racism imposed by policies and institutions not of their making, such as the federal Indian Act, residential schools and the Sixties Scoop. Many continue to experience discrimination to this day, in areas such as the justice and health care systems.

The trauma this history inflicts cannot be easily healed.

Our government's commitment to the principles of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is the

starting point for all of our work with Indigenous peoples.

In our consultations, Indigenous peoples and groups said identifying solutions to fight the racism they experience must be led by First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples. We agree.

And our nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous peoples helps us to better collaborate with and learn from them to combat systemic racism. We look forward to supporting Indigenous-led strategies to combat the racism Indigenous peoples face, and are committed to taking the time to get it right.

Thank you for being part of this process.

In 2015, Premier Notley apologized on behalf of Albertans to Indigenous peoples for decades of abuse in residential schools. This year, another powerful first step toward reconciliation came in the Premier's apology for the Sixties Scoop. Indigenous awareness training will soon become mandatory for all public servants, and all government policies must now respect the principles of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

CABINET PERSPECTIVES

As an immigrant myself, I relate to the experiences and sense of uncertainty of someone in a new culture and country. I believe a welcoming environment, along with the supports I found, were essential to my journey and success. I am committed to making sure Alberta remains a place where everyone feels welcome. We must work together to ensure everyone can realize their dreams and participate meaningfully in our social, economic and political life.

– Irfan Sabir, Minister of Community and Social Services

Newcomers help build our economy and strengthen our communities. Our government is working hard to make life better for them by helping them flourish at work and in society. We're committed to supporting initiatives that prepare immigrants for success, and ensure they have the supports they need to thrive.

–Christina Gray, Minister of Labour and Democratic Renewal

Like so many refugees, my family fled a war-torn country in search of a better life. We came in search of a safe and welcoming place to live and we found it here. As Albertans, we all have a responsibility to take a stand against intolerance and ensure that our province is a safe, inclusive and welcoming place for everyone.

–Ricardo Miranda, Minister of Culture and Tourism

All Albertans should be treated with dignity, compassion and respect. Our communities are safer places when we get involved, look out for our neighbours and show respect to everyone. I look forward to working with my colleagues, Indigenous leaders, and fellow citizens to ensure all Albertans live in safe and resilient communities.

–Kathleen Ganley, Minister of Justice and Solicitor General

Our government has been working hard to make life better for Albertans. We're helping the boardroom tables of our agencies reflect today's Alberta, and we will continue to do more as an employer. I'm committed to making sure all Albertans, regardless of background, have the training, skills and opportunities they need to succeed.

–Joe Ceci, Minister of Finance and Treasury Board



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: TAKING ACTION AGAINST RACISM

After six Muslims were killed in a Quebec City mosque in 2017, the Premier committed to take action against racism in Alberta. This plan delivers on that commitment, following Minister Eggen's extensive consultations with Albertans who experience racism first-hand.

Participants in these consultations told us a lot about problems: How racism makes finding good jobs harder, and how hate crimes and racial slurs hurt their targets. We heard how hard it sometimes was to get access to programs, or even know what rights someone had.

We also heard a lot about solutions: About how experiencing other cultures makes us fear them less, and about how our schools can do even more to foster respect for diversity. Most encouragingly, we heard how people wanted to be involved and help shape decisions, using insights informed by their own experiences.

This report responds to what we heard—good and bad. It also shows who we now are: A province quickly becoming more diverse; more diverse than Canada itself, according to the most recent census. This underscores the need to fight racism to create an even more welcoming place.

The core of our plan is listed here. Two items will be implemented immediately, so we can benefit from the insight and guidance of those who experience racism directly. For the remainder, we'll continue to engage with Albertans to make sure we're on the right path.

We will do two things right away, so our work can be informed by people who experience racism themselves, and so we can fund smaller groups to tackle racism directly, at the community level:

- **Establish an Anti-Racism Advisory Council:** We want people most affected by racism to guide our work, so we will establish this council to shape how we tackle discrimination. It will be the first government organization dedicated to fighting racism in Alberta, comprised of members of varying ethnic and cultural backgrounds and Indigenous peoples. We will consult with Indigenous people to determine how best to reflect the unique nature of racism directed toward them in a way consistent with our nation-to-nation relationship.
- **Start a Community Anti-Racism Grants program:** Across Alberta, smaller groups are doing great work fighting racism. We will help them do more, with a grant program to fund community initiatives that fight racism. This will help by breaking down barriers—at the grassroots—where people live, work and study. Grants will fund better training and support services, and there will be a dedicated stream of funding for groups led by Indigenous peoples.

Things that require further engagement to make sure we're on the right path:

- **Starting a Foreign Qualification Recognition Fund:** We will work with regulatory bodies to develop new tools that measure skills and experience, not only credentials, and make sure immigrants know about these changes to help them better prepare for work here.
- **Expanding career mentorship programs to smaller cities:** New immigrants often settle in smaller communities, but existing career mentorship programs are predominantly in Calgary and Edmonton. We will make these programs available in smaller cities. We will also conduct a pilot project involving professions with a high number of people trained internationally who are unable to become licensed to help identify rewarding career paths.
- **Creating a Provincial Hate Crimes Unit:** This unit will work with police and law enforcement, including Crown prosecutors, to improve the specialized training they receive to fight hate crimes.
- **Funding the Alberta Hate Crimes Committee:** This existing, community-based committee brings together law enforcement, academics, the government and volunteers to prevent and respond to hate crimes. We will fund it to help expand its valuable work and get more Albertans involved.
- **Updating the curriculum to include materials focused on fighting racism:** We want to support educators to help them teach a better understanding of and respect for diversity, and how to teach about racism. The existing curriculum includes many helpful tools to fight racism. A new curriculum is in development and will reaffirm our focus on fighting racism and respecting diversity—in every grade, and in many subjects.
- **Expanding the number of languages students can learn in.** We currently offer education in core subjects such as math and science in eight international languages. We will expand this to 10 languages.
- **Making sure Albertans know their rights:** A new human rights commissioner will soon be in place. We will work with him or her to ensure the commission's education and advocacy mandate is effective in letting all Albertans know and understand their rights, and that they receive support after suffering discrimination.
- **Making it easier for Albertans to have access to anti-racism resources:** To ensure that Albertans facing racism can more easily find the supports they need, and to make it easier to connect with the Anti-Racism Advisory Council, we will establish a new phone line. It will have multilingual capacity to ensure all communities feel supported.

- **Reflecting Alberta as a government.** We are already removing biases in our hiring, and training public employees about Indigenous awareness. As an employer, we are actively looking at fairer ways to hire and to help our employees appreciate Alberta's diversity. We will also work to make funds from charitable gaming distributed more equitably.
- **Celebrating our diversity.** The government already acknowledges and celebrates important cultural events. But there may be more or different ways we can let more people know about the benefits of diversity, and about different cultures. We'll be asking Albertans for their advice shortly about how best to celebrate and learn about our differences.

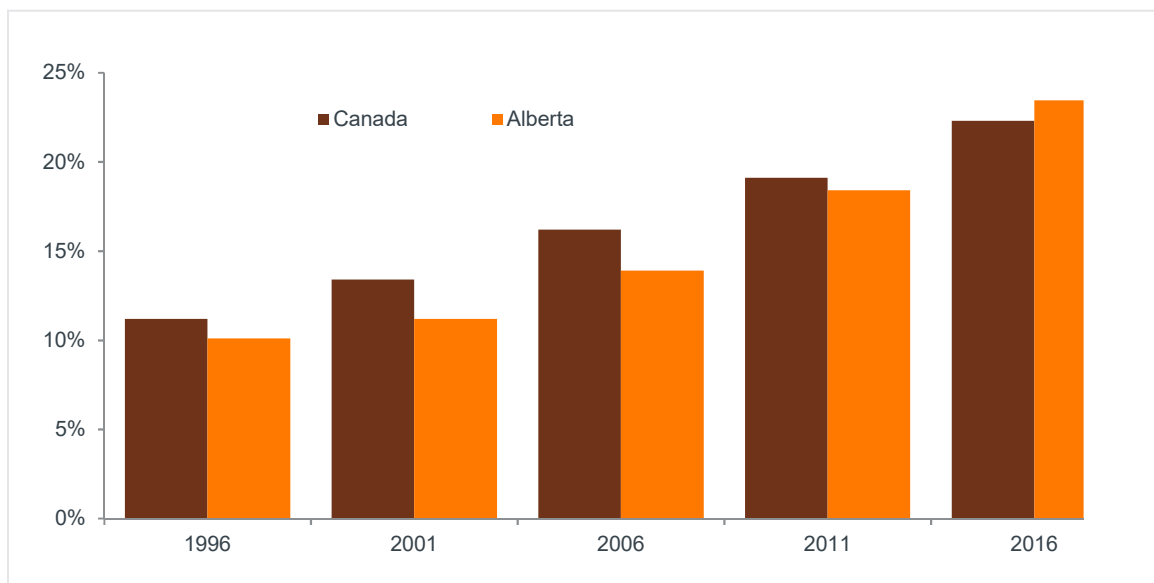
We are committed to listening to Albertans as the plan to take action against racism is implemented to make sure we get things right. We will report measurable outcomes so Albertans can track our progress, and watch our plan adapt as our province grows and changes.

INTRODUCTION

Alberta's demographics are always changing. We are a diverse province, and becoming more diverse every day. This is reflected in statistics, as well as in the experiences of people who call Alberta home.

The statistics first: Census figures over the last 20 years show the share of Albertans from different racial backgrounds has more than doubled. In 1996, it was about one in 10. Today, it's about one in four. That's an increase of about 245%, while the overall population grew by about 50%¹.

Racial diversity in Alberta is growing



We are also becoming more diverse because of Indigenous population growth, which is increasing about 50% faster than the non-Indigenous population. The Indigenous population is also young—almost half of Alberta's 258,000 Indigenous peoples are under 25, compared with about 30% of the population in general.

We are a welcoming and accepting place. Calgary, our biggest city, elected Canada's first Muslim mayor. Our legislature increasingly reflects the people who call Alberta home. But there are signs not all is well.

These are seen in some statistics, too. In 2016, for example, there were 88 hate crimes against racial minorities reported to police in Alberta, and another 25 hate crimes based on religion, with most of these against Muslims or Jews². Put another way, a police-reported hate crime occurs in Alberta about once every three days. The Alberta Human Rights Commission is also seeing an increased caseload, and receives more than one complaint every day about racial or religious discrimination³.

1 Source: Statistics Canada censuses, 1996—2016

2 Source: Statistics Canada, "Police reported hate crime 2016"

3 <https://www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca/about/statistics/Pages/grounds.aspx>

Statistics, though, don't tell the whole story. A chart can show us how diverse we are, but this is best felt by speaking with today's Alberta, and more importantly, listening to the people who make today's Alberta what it is.

Minister Eggen did just that in his consultations, sitting down and asking Albertans what their experiences with racism are like. How it feels, where it happens, how it happens, and most importantly, why it happens.

In all, he met with more than 100 organizations, including ones representing Indigenous peoples. Participants shared their stories, often deeply personal ones. We also wanted to hear from people not involved in organizations, and asked for input through an online survey that almost 1,900 people completed.

Here, we didn't hear about statistics, or see many charts. Instead, we heard about the stories behind the stats. We've printed some of what people had to say in their own words on this page.

These are the experiences that make people call the police to report a hate crime or that drive them to file a human rights complaint. They represent the slurs, the vandalism, the on-line bullying, and sometimes the physical violence that often come to mind when we hear the word racism. And they leave people feeling vulnerable, unwelcome and judged by stereotype instead of by who they are.

When we hear the word racism, we might not think about getting a job well below our skill level, or not getting a job at all. It might never occur to us that race or religion could mean someone gets a different kind of health care, but we heard about that form of racism, too.

There is no sugar-coating it. We heard plenty of things that we don't recognize, or don't want to recognize, as being part of Alberta. We need to be honest about it: We do value equality, we are an open and welcoming people, and there is racism here.

That's the bad news.

Albertans' experiences

"I am a registered nurse and I was to give IV medication, and the patient refused and said, 'Go get me a better nurse' based on my appearance."

- Edmonton consultation with members of the African community

We heard several stories of street harassment of Muslim women wearing hijabs being yelled at to "go home."

The Calgary Filipino community shared that the night before their meeting with Minister Eggen, a community mural had been vandalized with racist graffiti. Non-white faces on the mural had been painted over.

"I made a complaint to a government agency, and the intake worker didn't know what Métis meant."

- Calgary consultation with the Indigenous Urban Council

The hopeful news is there are plenty of people determined to fight racism. We heard how individuals and organizations, often volunteers, do amazing things to help us understand each other better.

They don't look at statistics and see numbers that show diversity. They look at the stats and know there are lots of people from all sorts of backgrounds who can get to know each other better, get to understand each other better, and celebrate their differences—together.

This is who we are, too: Albertans who work to prevent hate crimes before they happen, and who promote respect for diversity, so nobody feels unwelcome enough or disrespected so much that they file a human rights complaint. Their successes will never show up as a statistic, because their successes are often never known.

Our plan to take action against racism, we hope, responds to all of this: To our growing diversity, to incidents of racism, and especially, to the good ideas and resolve of Albertans to fight racism in all its forms, every day.

“My son, who is of African descent, was born in Ontario, and moved to Alberta where he was stigmatized and had to take ESL [English as a Second Language] course in high school. His whole life, he has been educated in Canada.”
- Calgary consultation with members of the Nigerian community

“There is no ‘us’ and ‘they’. There is just ‘us’.”
- Edmonton community consultation

TAKING ACTION AGAINST RACISM: WHAT WE'RE DOING AND WHAT'S NEXT

Being guided by people who experience racism

The new Anti-Racism Advisory Council will help us hear about solutions from people who face the problem

What we heard: Albertans told us how racism affects their daily lives—as students, or workers, or as they simply walked down the street. Their experience with racism makes them want to fight it, and be involved in how we tackle the problem.

We want and need these insights—of people from many backgrounds, who know what racism is like first-hand—to guide how we fight it. We believe creating a structure that lets us hear different perspectives on an on-going basis will make government more aware of the barriers that racism creates, and find the best ways to remove those barriers.

What we're doing next:

We will establish the first Alberta government organization dedicated to fighting racism.

The Anti-Racism Advisory Council will guide how we fight racism, and better engage Albertans. It will advise on how we should:

- Remove systemic and language barriers to using government programs and services.
- Educate and inform Albertans to prevent racism and encourage greater acceptance of diversity.
- Connect with law enforcement agencies and communities to support positive and responsive relationships.

The council will include Indigenous representation that reflects the unique nature of racism directed toward Indigenous peoples, consistent with our nation-to-nation relationship. We will consult with Indigenous leaders and organizations to determine the best ways to do this.

Helping communities fight racism

**Smaller groups do great work helping us experience other cultures.
We want to help them target racism directly**

What we heard: Many organizations told us how they were breaking down barriers, and helping people experience other cultures and learn from them. We heard many success stories with a consistent theme that solutions are found at the community level, where smaller organizations do good work.

One example is people working with Syrian refugees new to Alberta, who arranged for meetings with Indigenous peoples to help them gain a better understanding of each other. Actions like this take place across the province, every day. They rarely make the news, but each one of them improves understanding of our diversity—the most effective tool against racism.

Smaller groups believed larger organizations received the most support from government. We want to change that impression with a grants program dedicated to smaller groups, working in urban and rural communities alike.

What we're doing already: The government funds 122 Community Adult Learning Program Centres to help organizations learn how to engage respectfully with adults from diverse backgrounds. We partner with groups such as the Multicultural Health Brokers, the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society, and the Africa Centre to deliver culturally relevant services. We also fund 20 Alberta Friendship Centres that support health, employment, housing, recreation and cultural programs for Indigenous peoples living in cities.

What we haven't done, until now, is fund community activities that explicitly target racism and work to foster respect for diversity.

What we're doing next:

We will fund smaller groups to fight racism directly. By creating new anti-racism community grants, we will help smaller groups build on the excellent work they already do, such as:

- Training and education, including workshops, roundtables and social media.
- Creating resources for workplaces and other community locations, including toolkits, posters and fact sheets.
- Helping support people affected by racism, including peer groups and security to make spaces used by cultural groups safer.
- Capacity-building activities, including sharing best practices so more groups can do what we know is working well.

There will be two kinds of grants for organizations fighting racism, including one dedicated to groups led by Indigenous peoples. Applications will open this summer, and we will work with Indigenous leaders and organizations on the best way to fund Indigenous-led efforts against racism.

Valuing skills and experience in the workplace

We need to do a better job looking at a worker's skills and experience because their foreign credentials are often not respected

What we heard: One of the biggest frustrations immigrants shared was being unable to get appropriate work in Alberta if they were trained and gained their experience abroad. While people were mostly supportive of help from existing programs, they felt more needed to be done so newcomers didn't feel forced into entry-level positions by unfair stereotypes.

Many people told us they work in jobs well below the level they had in other countries. They felt the inclusion Canada says it stands for is often not reflected in how foreign credentials are treated. We were told it takes 10 years of working here to return to the level someone was at abroad.

What we're doing already: Over the last 10 years, we have funded 84 projects with grants of more than \$8 million to help immigrant workers find employment that matches their skills and training. The programs we've funded help professional regulatory bodies, employers and other organizations to help get immigrants' education and work experience recognized.

We also operate the Immigrant Bridging Program, which helps immigrants find jobs in the field in which they have qualifications or experience by giving language advice, help writing résumés to apply for jobs, and some translation support. In larger cities, new immigrants are also offered career mentorship programs to help them learn local workplace culture and create networks.

Our Trades Qualifier Program for Internationally Trained Workers lets people obtain an Alberta trade certificate by showing they have the necessary skills and experience. Language interpreters are also allowed for exams workers have to take to make the entering the workforce faster.

We also help unemployed, marginally employed and under-represented groups find jobs. This includes the First Nations and Aboriginal Training to Employment Program for Indigenous workers.

What we're doing next:

We will create measures to better recognize immigrants' skills and experience. We will create a Foreign Qualification Recognition Fund to help us broaden how we assess workers beyond looking at qualifications alone, and use the new measurements to help immigrants find appropriate work. This will start in a focused way to:

- Work with professional regulatory organizations to develop assessments that better reflect a worker's skills and experience, and ensure that these measurements are shared by licensing bodies so immigrants are more aware of how they will be evaluated before arrival.
- Better connect immigrant-serving organizations with professional regulatory organizations so new competency-based assessments are widely known and understood.

Career mentorship programs will expand into smaller communities. We will respond to changing immigration patterns by creating a career mentorship program for immigrants living in smaller centres. Current programs, predominantly in Calgary and Edmonton, successfully support newcomers entering the workforce. We will ensure funding is provided to make this proven success available to more people.

Preventing and responding to hate crimes

Hate crimes are motivated by a specific prejudice, so we need a specific approach to prevent and respond to them

What we heard: People told us how devastating it is when a mosque, synagogue or gurdwara is attacked in a hate crime. We heard how attacks based on skin colour or articles of faith undermine someone's sense of belonging. This targeted, prejudiced feature of hate crimes means we need to treat them differently, with a specialized response.

We were pleased to hear that existing community responses are effective, and should be expanded to make them even more effective. It bears repeating that about once every three days, a hate crime motivated by racial or religious intolerance is reported to police in Alberta. That number is unacceptable.

What we're doing already: The Alberta Hate Crime Committee was formed as a community-based network in 2002 after hate crimes rose in the wake of 9/11. Its mandate has evolved since, and today it works with its members—police, courts, the Human Rights Commission, and volunteers—to prevent and respond to hate crimes. Some of its activities include forums for young people, the #StopHateAlberta social media account, and sponsoring Hate Crimes Awareness Day.

The government also provides supports for police and law enforcement to respond to hate crimes, and prosecute them through the Crown Prosecution Service.

What we're doing next:

We will create a Provincial Hate Crimes Unit. It will provide intelligence, specialized support and co-ordination to reduce and respond to hate crimes by:

- Offering specialized support to police to fight hate propaganda and hate-motivated crimes.
- Improving hate crimes training and information for front-line police officers, Crown attorneys and community groups. This will include training for law enforcement to improve how they interact with communities of varying racial backgrounds.
- Engaging with law enforcement, federal partners and stakeholders, including Alberta Hate Crime Committee and the Anti-Racism Advisory Council, to develop and coordinate provincial hate crime strategies. These will include outreach, education and help for neighbourhoods that have experienced racism.

The Alberta Hate Crime Committee will receive stable funding. It is an ideal vehicle to expand the number of people involved in fighting racism. Stable funding will help expand the committee's collaborative, integrated approach to prevent hate- and bias-motivated activities, and improve the way we respond when they occur.

Teaching respect for each other

Education creates knowledge, and the more we know about each other and our history, the less racism there will be

What we heard: We heard often that racism flows from ignorance and that education turns ignorance into knowledge—of other cultures, and of our history. We also heard how learning more about both of these helps increase acceptance of diversity and support for pluralism.

We heard, especially from people of different racial backgrounds, how important it is for Alberta's identity to reflect the people who live here. Schools are ideal places to help do this, with children of many backgrounds learning together, and existing programs that help them learn about each other's cultures and diversity.

What we're already doing: Through existing language programs, we offer public education in core subject areas such as math and science in Arabic, Chinese, German, Italian, Japanese, Punjabi, Spanish, and Ukrainian.

Indigenous peoples' culture and language still suffer from the shameful legacy of residential schools. One path towards reconciliation is to help revive languages and traditions at school, through language and culture programs in Blackfoot and Cree that are available as options for students from kindergarten to Grade 12.

Today, students from kindergarten through high school are learning to respect and accept others. We teach about our immigrant history, the harmful legacy of residential schools, and the rights and responsibilities that all Canadians enjoy. Teaching about these topics gives opportunities to discuss race and racism in the classroom.

What we're doing next:

The new curriculum will have a specific focus on racism. It is already being developed, and when complete, it will give teachers specific, dedicated products to teach about racism directly. This will expand on the good work being done in classrooms today by increasing the number of diverse perspectives students hear about, so we can teach more about respect for pluralism. It will include lesson plans on topics such as the Holocaust and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

The new curriculum will give students more opportunities to discuss citizenship and diversity—in all grades, and across subjects. We will ensure the excellent lesson plans and resources already in use are available to educators across the province. And we will provide guidance to school authorities on how to best choose resources that help fight racism.

We will help teachers teach about racism. Because teaching about racism is sensitive, we will help educators by providing training as part of professional development.

We will make education available in more languages. Our existing language programs will be expanded to include more languages, and we'll make these available in communities where demand warrants.

Knowing our rights

Every Albertan has human rights, and every Albertan should know what those rights are

What we heard: Many people told us they often don't know their rights, such as having access employment, public services or housing no matter what their racial, ethnic or religious background is.

This was especially common among new immigrants, who sometimes worried that this lack of understanding may result in them being sent back to their home countries. For some, this fear was intensified because they didn't know where or how they could find information about what their rights were.

What we're doing already: Like all provinces, Alberta has a Human Rights Commission and human rights legislation. It responds to complaints about rights being violated, and in 2016-17 saw these complaints rise by 14%. Not all of these were related to race or religion, but 475 were. That's more than one complaint a day.

The commission has the authority to investigate and resolve cases. In some instances, a human rights tribunal may be convened to ensure a person's rights are respected, and it has the power to enforce its ruling.

The commission also operates a grants program that supports larger, province-wide organizations, to educate Albertans about their rights. This awareness part of its mandate also includes giving employers information about human rights to help workplaces respect those rights.

What we're doing next:

We'll make sure the commission does the best job letting people know their rights.

Alberta will soon have a new chief of the Human Rights Commission. We will work with her or him to assess how effective current education programming is in letting Albertans know what their rights are, and helping those whose rights have been violated.

A government that reflects Alberta

As an employer and major institution, government can lead by example and look like the province we serve

What we heard: People told us it's important that government reflects Alberta's diversity, beyond our role in making laws and regulations. We are a major employer, a key source of information, and we provide ways that people can become involved in improving their community. We heard we need to lead by example, because when we do, important change follows.

What we're doing already: As law-makers, we are including race and religion in new legislation more and more. Recent changes to make workplaces safer, for example, strengthened the way harassment is defined to specifically include racial- and religious-based bullying.

As employers, we've implemented training to remove unconscious bias in our hiring. We also developed an Indigenous Awareness Training program with Indigenous organizations that will be mandatory for all members of the public service. It will be implemented soon. We've also implemented a diversity and inclusion policy for the Alberta Public Service to ensure the public service represents the people it serves.

As information providers, we are taking concrete steps to inform Albertans whose first language is not English about our programs, services and actions. Through our new translators, pages on our website, leaflets, and advertising about key changes such as new workplace laws are available in other languages, including Chinese and Punjabi.

The government also operates many agencies, boards and commissions that offer ways for people to get involved in improving our province. We actively encourage applications that reflect our diversity, and have a new website to make it easier for people from all walks of life to apply. Appointments shouldn't be based on whom people know, they should be based on what people know, and we are committed to making our agencies, boards and commissions reflect the province.

What we're doing next:

We will evaluate new ways of hiring that could improve diversity. With other provinces, we're evaluating a pilot project that could improve the way we hire by removing names from job applications. This will make it harder to know an applicant's ethnicity, and may mean decisions are based more on skills and experience.

We will make government more aware of different cultures. To make dealing with government more welcoming, we're going to work with the Anti-Racism Advisory Council to develop cultural awareness benchmarks; and share these with the private sector.

We will make finding anti-racism resources easier. We will set up a government phone line to help people access anti-racism resources, and to support people experiencing or witnessing racism. This line will also help people connect with the Anti-Racism Advisory Council.

We will ensure charitable gaming funds are distributed equitably. We heard concerns that funds from charitable gaming may be hard to access for many cultural groups, so we will work with the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission to distribute these funds more equitably.

Celebrating diversity

The more we know about other cultures, the less we'll fear them

What we heard: People told us how proud they were of their culture—its traditions, celebrations, food, and music. They spoke about how sharing these things with each other created a sense of belonging, and about how sharing them with others created understanding.

We heard, too, how enriching it was to experience other cultures, their traditions and celebrations. And how these face-to-face interactions broke down barriers and created a sense of community that celebrates its diversity. We want to do more to help Albertans learn about and experience other cultures, so the benefits of diversity are more widely supported.

What we're doing already: Each year, the government is proud to acknowledge events of significance to our diverse population: Christmas, Diwali, Easter, Eid-al-Fitr, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Orthodox Christmas, Passover, Ramadan, and Vaisakhi. These acknowledgments show our respect and signal our welcome to people of all faiths and backgrounds.

The government also proclaims a growing number of months to honour and celebrate different communities. These include Black History Month, Sikh Heritage Month, and for the first time in 2018, Philippine Heritage Month.

What we're doing next:

Consult with Albertans about how best to celebrate diversity. Over the years, Alberta has celebrated diversity in different ways, such as funding cultural events and organizations. We don't currently have a dedicated program to do this, and we want to ask Albertans their thoughts on how, or if we should start one. There are several options:

- We could establish a fund similar to ones that supported cultural groups in the past, and accept applications for specific events. It's important to note that while we funded groups, the Government of Alberta has never taken an active role in fighting racism.
- We could create a unit within government, perhaps similar to the new Francophone Secretariat, to focus on celebrating and educating about our diversity. Currently, there are no government employees who play this role, which may be something Albertans want to change.
- We could expand the mandate of the Human Rights Commission to include diversity promotion and education.

As we ask what Albertans think about our plan, we'll be certain to include asking how best to celebrate diversity, because as our province becomes more diverse, it's time to help more Albertans experience all that our many cultures have to offer and share. As we heard often in Minister Eggen's consultation, the best tool against racism is getting to know each other and each other's cultures. We are going to pick up that tool so that together, we can take action against racism.

