

Building Hamilton's Anti-Racism Strategy: Transition Report

Prepared for
Hamilton Anti-Racism Resource Centre

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Executive Summary

The Hamilton Anti-Racism Resource Centre (HARRC) advances anti-racism education and supports community members who have reported experiencing racism in the city. HARRC aims to develop an anti-racism strategy for Hamilton. HARRC approached the McMaster Research Shop for support with a public engagement process to inform strategy development.

The intention was to work with HARRC to conduct a survey and focus groups to understand the community's experiences with racism and their priorities for anti-racism action. Due to unforeseen delays, we were unable to complete all research activities. This transition report outlines the planned engagement methods, preliminary findings from a community survey, and next steps to advance this work.

Next steps we propose for the project include:

- Improve security features of the survey to reduce the potential for bot responses
- Revise the survey questions to ensure only necessary data is collected and that responses are relevant to project goals
- Recruit survey participants by conducting targeted outreach with community partners and promoting the survey in community spaces
- Collaborate with community partners to schedule focus groups and recruit participants and facilitators

Introduction

The Hamilton Anti-Racism Resource Centre (HARRC) is “committed to advancing education about race, racism, discrimination, racial equality, and anti-racist theory and practice in Hamilton”. HARRC advances anti-racism education through interactive community events, programs, and workshops and provides direct support to community members who report experiencing racism in the city.

HARRC endeavours to develop an Anti-Racism Strategy and Action Plan for Hamilton. The goal of the plan is to target systemic racism in policy development, decision-making, and program evaluation. Appendix 1 provides background information on the anti-racism context in Canada and in Hamilton and the need for an anti-racism strategy. HARRC approached the McMaster Research Shop to seek support with a public engagement process to inform the development of the Anti-Racism Strategy.

The objectives of this research were:

- To provide racialized community members in Hamilton the opportunity to give feedback on their experiences of racism
- To identify potential actions to address racism in policy and program development in Hamilton
- To inform the development of an Anti-Racism Strategy and Action Plan in Hamilton

The intention was to work with HARRC to engage the public using a community survey and focus groups, providing HARRC with community feedback on the elements of an anti-racism strategy for Hamilton. Due to unforeseen delays in project planning and data collection, we were unable to accomplish our public engagement objectives. In this transition report, we will summarize the planned engagement methods, preliminary findings from the community survey, and proposed next steps to guide this project to an endpoint.

Methods

Methods for this report were inspired by [Ottawa’s public engagement](#) process on an anti-racism strategy for the city, including a community survey and focus groups.¹

Survey

Our team developed an online community survey using Google Forms to obtain feedback on the effects of racism in Hamilton and suggestions for potential anti-racism priorities and actions that could be introduced in the city (Appendix 2). The survey was intended to reach a broad audience including individuals who 1) live or work in Hamilton

¹ City of Ottawa Anti-Racism Secretariat. (2021). *What We Heard Report*.

and 2) have experienced or witnessed racism in the city. The survey was open from March 7-17, 2023 and shared using HARRC and McMaster Office of Community Engagement social media accounts (i.e., Twitter and Instagram). HARRC offered \$20 gift cards to the first 100 participants who completed the survey.

The survey included demographic questions to provide insight into the identities of the respondents. The main survey questions included categorical and open-ended questions to explore the respondents' experiences with racism and their ideas for change. For categorical questions, the research team reported the number and percentage of respondents who selected each response option. The research team analyzed open-ended questions by categorising responses according to key themes and counting the number of times each theme emerged.

Focus Groups

The focus groups aimed to engage marginalized communities in Hamilton including Black, Indigenous, Jewish, Muslim and other racialized people. While the survey was meant to capture a broad sample, the intention with the focus groups was to take a targeted approach to understanding the unique experiences of racism within each of these communities. Unfortunately, due to unforeseen delays, we were unable to conduct any focus groups. The planned focus group questions can be found in Appendix 3.

Preliminary Survey Findings

In total, we received 1764 survey responses. However, upon reviewing these responses, our team realized most of them were generated by "bots." Two members of our team reviewed each response to determine its authenticity and excluded all those suspected to be generated by bots. We further screened responses according to additional criteria to ensure that the dataset was relevant to Hamilton's context. For instance, respondents who did not indicate that they either live or work in Hamilton were excluded from the analysis. It was important to ensure that this research reflected an understanding of how racism operates in the community and affects racialized people. Individuals who identified as only "White/European" and indicated "yes" to experiencing racism in Hamilton were also excluded from the analysis.

In the following sections, we present the preliminary findings from the survey, which, after filtering out unusable data, includes 46 responses. Despite efforts to clean the dataset and ensure that all responses were genuine, we were uncertain about the authenticity of 13 responses that we included for analysis. It is important to note that this dataset is of limited quality and size. The findings presented below must be interpreted with caution and should not be used for decision-making. They are intended primarily to illustrate the data analysis process that can be used in the future once higher quality data is collected, which we will discuss in the "Next Steps" section.

Participant Characteristics

The survey asked participants to provide responses to several demographic questions. The majority (63%) of respondents indicated they were community members (Table 1).

Table 1: Role in community

Response	Count	Percent (%)
Community member	29	63%
Representative of an organization that supports racialized, ethnic, or religious minorities (equity-oriented)	5	11%
Representative of a government-funded public organization	4	9%
Government official (municipal)	3	7%
Representative of an Indigenous organization	2	4%
Subject matter expert (anti-racism, equity, human rights, etc.)	1	2%
Representative of a newcomer settlement organization	1	2%
Prefer not to disclose	1	2%

Most participants (70%) were aged 20-34 (Table 2). 29 participants (63%) identified as female while 17 participants (37%) identified as male. 7 participants (15%) identified as members of the trans*, non-binary, Two-Spirit, or genderfluid community.

Table 2: Age

Response	Count	Percent (%)
19 and under	2	4%
20-24	10	22%
25-29	12	26%
30-34	10	22%
35-39	7	15%
40-44	3	7%
45-49	1	2%
60-64	1	2%

30 participants (65%) identified as heterosexual or straight (Table 3).

Table 3: Sexual Orientation

Response	Count	Percent (%)
Heterosexual or straight	30	65%
Bisexual	5	11%
Gay	2	4%

Demisexual	2	4%
Asexual	2	4%
Bioromantic	1	2%
Queer	1	2%
Pansexual	1	2%
Prefer not to disclose	2	4%

Most participants (70%) were Canadian citizens or permanent residents.

Table 4: Citizenship status

Response	Count	Percent (%)
Canadian citizen or permanent resident	32	70%
Recently immigrated (less than one year (includes study and work permits))	6	13%
Immigrated (1+ year in Canada (includes study and work permits))	6	13%
Refugee	1	2%
Prefer not to disclose	1	2%

35% of participants reported an annual income of \$45 000- \$74,999, while an equal amount had annual incomes less than \$45,000 (Table 5).

Table 5: Annual income

Response	Count	Percent (%)
\$0 - 14,999	9	20%
\$15,000 - \$44,999	7	15%
\$45,000 - \$74,999	16	35%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	6	13%
\$100,000+	4	9%
Prefer not to disclose	3	7%
No response	1	2%

43 participants (93%) indicated that they live in Hamilton and 39 (85%) indicated they work in Hamilton. 18 participants (39%) indicated they had an undergraduate degree while 13 (28%) had a graduate degree (Table 6).

Table 6: Highest level of completed education

Response	Count	Percent (%)
Bachelor's Degree	18	39%

Graduate Degree	13	28%
High school diploma or equivalent	5	11%
College certificate or diploma (other than trades)	4	9%
Some college or university coursework (no degree awarded)	3	7%
Trades certificate or diploma	3	7%

Participants were asked to indicate their racial/ethno-cultural identity. Participants were allowed to select all groups that applied to them. 20 respondents (43%) identified as Black racial-ethnic identity. Only one participant identified as Latin American/Latinx (Table 7).

Table 7: Racial/Ethno-cultural identity

Response	Count	Percent (%)
Black (including Black African, Black Caribbean/West Indian, Black North American, Afro-Latinx/Black Latin American, multi-racial students who have Black ancestry that they identify with)	20	43%
White (European descent)	6	13%
Indigenous (First Nations, Metis, Inuit)	5	11%
South Asian (Bangladeshi, Bhutanese, Indian, Indo-Caribbean, Indo-Fijian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan descent)	4	9%
East Asian (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Taiwanese descent)	4	9%
Southeast Asian (Cambodian, Filipino, Indonesian, Thai, Vietnamese, other Southeast Asian descent)	3	7%
Middle Eastern (Arab, Persian, West Asian descent)	2	4 %
Indigenous outside of Canada (e.g., Māori, Maya, Nahuatl, Quechua, Indigenous Hawaiians)	2	4 %
Latin American/Latinx (from, descent, or heritage from Latin America including South America, Central America, Latin Caribbean (Spanish-speaking Caribbean and/or Haiti), and Mexico)	1	2%
Prefer not to disclose	1	2%

Over half of participants (54%) identified as Christian, while 24% identified as Secular/Non-religious/Atheist (Table 8).

Table 8: Religious and/or Spiritual Affiliation

Response	Count	Percent (%)
Christianity	25	54%
Secular/Non-religious/Atheist	11	24%
Islam	3	7%
Hinduism	2	4%
Agnostic	1	2%

Prefer not to disclose	2	4%
No Response	2	4%

25 participants (57%) reported speaking a language other than English. The most frequently spoken languages included French (14%) and Spanish (14%), followed by Cantonese (11%).

Most participants (59%) indicated that they are employed full-time, with 10 participants (22%) indicating they are working part time.² 14 participants (30%) indicated they are currently students (Table 9).

Table 9: Employment Status

Response	Count	Percent
Employed - full-time	27	59%
Student	14	30%
Employed - part-time	10	22%
Employed - casual, on-call, temporary or seasonal	1	2%
Unemployed or looking for a job	1	2%

Experiences with Racism

40 participants (87%) indicated that they had experienced racism or discrimination/prejudice based on their race or ethno-cultural identity in Hamilton.

Participants were asked to indicate how many incidents of racism (i.e., discrimination, harassment, prejudice, and microaggressions) they had experienced since the start of 2020. 11 participants (24%) indicated experiencing 1-2 incidents, 14 participants (30%) indicated experiencing 3-4 incidents, and 10 participants (22%) indicated experiencing 5-10 incidents (Table 10).

Table 10: Incidents of racism experienced since the start of 2020

Response	Count	Percent (%)
1-2 incidents	11	24%
3-4 incidents	14	30%
5-10 incidents	10	22%
More than 10 incidents	4	9%
I have not experienced any incidents of racism since the start of 2020	1	2%
No Response	6	13%

² Participants were allowed to select all options that apply; therefore, percentages do not add up to 100.

Participants were asked to indicate how often they have personally experienced racism or discrimination/prejudice based on their race or ethno-cultural identity in Hamilton throughout their life. 18 participants (39%) indicated experiencing racism or discrimination/prejudice several times per year, followed by 12 participants (26%) that indicated experiencing such incidents on a monthly basis (Table 11).

Table 11: Experiences of racism throughout lifetime

Response	Count	Percent (%)
Weekly	2	4%
Monthly	12	26%
Once per year	4	9%
Several times per year	18	39%
Once every couple of years	4	9%
No Response	6	13%

Participants were asked to indicate whether their experiences of racism were primarily systemic (i.e., institutional or organizational racism) or individual (i.e., bigotry or hatred). 18 participants (39%) indicated that their experiences were mostly individual while 15 participants (33%) indicated a 50/50 split between individual and systemic experiences of racism (Table 12). Two participants indicated their experiences were all individual while one participant indicated they were all systemic (2%).

Table 12: Systemic vs individual incidents of racism

Response	Count	Percent (%)
All Individual	2	4%
Mostly Individual	18	39%
50/50	15	33%
Mostly Systemic	4	9%
All Systemic	1	2%
No Response	6	13%

Participants were also asked to identify where they experienced the most discrimination. Participants could select up to 5 options. Participants mentioned that they felt discrimination most often due to employment (28), education (24), healthcare (24), and community spaces (18) (Table 13).

Table 13: Areas where participants experienced the most discrimination

Response	Count
Employment	28
Education	24
Healthcare	24
Community & Neighbourhood Spaces	18

Businesses (stores, malls, etc.)	13
Housing	12
Law Enforcement	11
Government Services	10
Banks	6
Transportation	6
Legal	4

We asked participants to indicate the systems, services, or sectors where they felt most unsafe due to racism. Participants were allowed to select up to 5 responses. Participants indicated that they felt most unsafe due to racism in their employment (25), healthcare (18), education (17), and law enforcement (17) (Table 14).

Table 14: Systems, Services, or sectors where participants felt most unsafe

Response	Count
Employment	25
Healthcare	18
Education	17
Law enforcement	17
Housing	15
Family and social services	11
Businesses/private sector	11
Financial institutions	10
Transportation	9
Legal	7
Government services	5

Participants had the option to elaborate on why the above institutions made them feel unsafe. Some examples they provided include:

- **Employment:** Some participants noted being underrepresented in high-paying jobs and having limited opportunities for advancement, underemployed despite education and job experience, and potentially being viewed negatively for criticizing oppressive policies/systems in the workplace.
- **Healthcare:** A few participants noted disparities in access to quality care and poor health outcomes due to systemic racism. Some participants shared fears of experiencing medical racism or being disbelieved by healthcare practitioners.
- **Education:** One participant stated they subjected to bullying and racist remarks from their graduate supervisor.
- **Law Enforcement:** Some participants indicated they were disproportionately targeted by law enforcement.
- **Businesses/private sector:** Some participants noted being followed by store employees while shopping.

We invited participants to share their experiences of racism if they were comfortable. 23 participants responded. They reported experiencing racial profiling (9), racist microaggressions (6), and being called racial slurs (6) (Table 14).

Table 15: Common experiences of racism

Theme	Count	Sample Response
Racial Profiling	9	“Someone accused me of stealing just because I was exiting a store from the front entrance instead of the primary back exit.”
Racist microaggressions	6	“...You don't have an accent. You're english is so good. One time, a colleague was insisting that I be the one to order at a Chinese restaurant because I was Asian.”
Racial Slurs	6	“I was called the n-word by a middle-aged white man walking down the road.”
Passed over for promotions at work	4	“I have experienced racism in the workplace. I have been passed over for promotions and opportunities because of my race.”
Racist Jokes	1	“I have been subjected to comments and jokes about my race that were meant to be humorous but were actually quite hurtful.”

Participants were invited to share whether they felt they experienced barriers to accessing resources, services, information, or other opportunities in Hamilton. 18 participants (39%) felt that they experienced barriers to accessing these opportunities while an equal number felt that they did not experience any barriers. 4 participants (9%) were unsure while 6 participants (13%) did not provide a response.

Additionally, participants were given the opportunity to elaborate on their choices. 12 participants provided feedback. Some common themes included:

- limited availability of culturally appropriate resources (e.g., mental health)
- not being provided help because of their race
- assumptions about whether they would need or want a particular resource due to their race

Participants were asked how many incidents of racism they had witnessed someone else experience in Hamilton since the start of 2020. Most participants (56%) indicated they had witnessed 5-10 or 3-4 incidents of racism (Table 16).

Table 16: Frequency of witnessing racist incidents in Hamilton

Response	Count	Percent (%)
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1-2 times	8	17%
3-4 times	12	26%
5-10 times	14	30%
More than 10 times	7	15%
Have not witnessed any incidents	5	11%
No response	1	2%

Participants indicated whether these experiences were on a systemic level or individual level. Most participants (57%) expressed that they witnessed an even split between systemic and individual experiences. 11 participants (23%) felt that the experiences they witnessed were mostly examples of individual racism (Table 17).

Table 17: Types of racism witnessed by participants

Response	Count	Percent (%)
All systemic	1	2%
Mostly Systemic	2	4%
50/50	27	57%
Mostly individual	11	23%
All individual	1	2%
No response	5	11%

Reporting Experiences of Racism

Participants were asked if they had ever reported an incident of racism for themselves or for someone else. 26 participants (55%) noted that they had never reported an incident of racism before (Table 18).

Table 18: Participant experiences with reporting racism

Response	Count	Percent (%)
Yes	18	38
No	26	55
Prefer not to say	2	4
No response	1	2

Participants were also asked about their knowledge of different methods to report racism. Participants were able to select all reporting methods that they knew how to use. Participants were most aware of how to report racism to the police (19 participants), followed by community organizations (17 participants) and their employers (14 participants) (Table 19). 12 participants were not aware of how to use any of the reporting options presented in the survey.

Table 19: Participant knowledge of different methods of reporting racism

Response	Count
Police	19
Community Organizations	17
Employer	14
Equity Office	9
Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario	7
No knowledge of any provided methods	12
No response	1

Participants were also invited to share whether they would find support in navigating different methods of reporting racist incidents to be beneficial. 39 participants (83%) indicated that this type of support would be beneficial.

Potential Anti-Racism Actions

We asked participants to share their thoughts on anti-racism actions that should be prioritized in Hamilton. 12 participants indicated that they wanted to see increased diversity and anti-racism training and while 8 wanted robust policies against racism (Table 20).

Table 20: Potential Anti-Racism Actions

Theme	Count	Sample Responses
Increase education and training re: diversity and anti-racism	12	“Mandatory training and screening in public sector like law enforcement, healthcare and education administration”
More robust, enforceable laws/policies against racism	8	“Focus should be on adopting stronger and more enforceable anti-racism policies, laws and initiatives”
Investment in community supports rather than policing	5	“Defunding the police services to redistribute that money to community services that work with racialized peoples.”
Increase diversity in leadership positions/media	5	“Promoting diversity and inclusion in the workplace and other public places”
Improve methods to report racism	2	“More signage on how to report racism”
Increased accountability for perpetrators of racist acts	2	“Legal action should be taken on any racist.”

Additional Feedback

Participants were asked to provide any additional feedback that would be relevant for creating an anti-racism strategy in Hamilton. 11 participants provided additional comments. Some themes that emerged:

- People across cultures will have differing needs and experiences. The strategy should be inclusive of all backgrounds and tailored to based on unique experiences of different racial and ethnic groups.
- An anti-racism strategy should be developed collaboratively with the community.
- The strategy should be implemented in a timely manner and progress should be monitored and reported on regularly.

Next Steps

Due to time constraints and unforeseen delays, not all research activities were completed for this report. The research team has developed recommended next steps to support the continuation of this project.

Based on our experiences conducting the survey, we have several suggested changes to the survey questions and structure:

- **Add a question designed to filter out bot responses.** We received over 1000 survey responses which were generated by bots. It was challenging to filter out these responses and discern which responses were genuine. In future iterations of the survey, it would be beneficial to add a question to which a bot could not provide a valid response. Suspicious answers to these questions could then be used to remove bot responses from the sample. Example questions could include simple math problems or context-specific information such as colours of the Ontario license plate. HARRC could also consider investing in survey software that has better security features than Google Forms where a captcha can be used to reduce bot responses.
- **Make questions mandatory regarding living, working, and studying in Hamilton.** The survey presently has questions asking respondents to indicate whether they live or work in Hamilton. These questions were useful to ensure survey responses were relevant to Hamilton's context; however, they did not account for students who live or work outside Hamilton but still may spend significant time in Hamilton. Adding a question about being a student in Hamilton would ensure these voices are captured by the survey. Making all three questions mandatory could be used to exclude irrelevant answers if respondents answered no to all three.
- **Re-evaluate which demographic questions are necessary to ask.** The survey includes many demographic questions asking for personal and potentially sensitive information. While these questions can be used to provide insight into who is filling out the survey, to identify gaps in recruitment, or to conduct sub-group analyses, it is also important to evaluate which of these questions are

necessary for this research and to avoid collecting data that does not serve a clear purpose.

- **Add an open-ended question about experiences of witnessing racism.** The survey currently asks a categorical question about whether respondents have ever witnessed racism in Hamilton; however, there was no dedicated question asking respondents to elaborate. Feedback regarding incidents that respondents witnessed could add depth to the findings and inform priorities for an anti-racism strategy.
- **Restructure the question, “Do you have any thoughts on potential anti-racism actions that should be prioritized in Hamilton?”**. The survey responses to this question were broad. Rewording the question to ask for a discrete number of ideas may help obtain suggestions that are specific and actionable.

The survey was shared only on social media by McMaster Office of Community Engagement and HARRC. The research team created a poster and social media graphic to support survey promotion (Appendix 4). Survey recruitment could be improved in several ways:

- **Conduct targeted outreach by leveraging HARRC’s existing relationships with community groups or organizations.** The survey could be shared privately with HARRC’s partner organizations who serve racialized populations. HARRC could provide survey promotion materials to their partners and request that they forward the survey within their networks.
- **Promote the survey in community spaces.** HARRC should explore the option to share the survey in physical locations such as the Hamilton Public Library or HSR buses or bus stops. HARRC could also revisit potentially hosting in-person events and/or administering hard copies for individuals with limited internet access.
- **Offer translation services to individuals whose first language is not English.** We had previously discussed either 1) translating the survey into languages other than English that are spoken commonly in Hamilton or 2) providing in-person language support for individuals to complete the survey in English. Funding should be allocated for these options to be revisited in the future.
- **Use incentives to promote thoughtful participation.** While there was an offer of \$20 gift cards to the first 100 survey participants who completed the survey, it is possible to promote thoughtful engagement by conducting a gift card draw. A draw would allow participants to prioritize giving detailed answers and ensure inclusivity for individuals who may not be able to provide an immediate response (e.g., due to work or school commitments). A draw would also provide a relevant incentive for participants recruited towards the end of the survey period.

While the research team did develop a focus group guide, we did not conduct any focus groups as originally intended. Potential next steps for focus group implementation include the following:

- **Clarify policy areas of interest for the focus group questions.** We developed a list of potential policy areas that the anti-racism strategy could target based on a similar public engagement that City of Ottawa conducted. These areas include health outcomes, housing, employment equity, economic development, youth development, and governance. It would be useful to revisit this list and ensure the focus group questions align with policy areas relevant to Hamilton.
- **Develop activities to facilitate data collection during each focus group.** HARRC should consider incorporating activities into the focus groups that would provide participants an opportunity to share ideas anonymously, to facilitate discussion among participants, and to validate key themes emerging from each session. They could use online resources (e.g., Padlet, Mentimeter) to help individuals share their ideas and spark group discussion. Sticky notes or chart paper could also be used brainstorm ideas and responses could be reviewed as a group. Notes created from the focus groups could be used to help the research team interpret the data alongside transcripts. If desired, an outline of these activities could also be provided to facilitators to adapt based on their community's needs or preferences.
- **Pilot test the focus group questions.** The research team did not have the opportunity to test out the focus group questions with community members. HARRC could consider piloting the focus group questions with internal stakeholders or a subset of community members. Alternatively, HARRC could hold a debriefing session after the first focus group they implement and ask for feedback on how to improve the process moving forward.
- **Secure funding to provide honoraria for focus group facilitators and participants.** When working with marginalized communities, funding should be allocated so that both facilitators and community members participating in this process are compensated fairly for their time.
- **Conduct targeted outreach to community organizations to schedule and promote focus group events.** Similar to the survey recruitment, HARRC should look to conduct strategic outreach for the focus groups by leveraging existing connections and partnerships. This outreach should include reaching out to a diversity of groups, including those with non-religious affiliations. HARRC should aim to connect with at least one organization from each of the subpopulations who they plan to engage. HARRC should be mindful of who is being given the opportunity to provide feedback and who may be excluded (even if unintentionally).
- **Recruit focus group facilitators from target subpopulations.** Given the potentially sensitive nature of these focus group discussions and historical lack of trust between external researchers and marginalized communities, it is important to promote trust among focus group participants and facilitators. Having focus group facilitators from the subpopulation being engaged may help participants be more comfortable sharing their experiences and ideas because they share a lived experience.
- **Consider hosting a combination of virtual and in-person events.** Virtual events can support participation in the engagement process from working

individuals or disabled/immunocompromised individuals who may not be able to attend in-person events.

The above recommendations suggest potential next steps to move the project forward. This list is not exhaustive and HARRC should continue to evaluate ways to make this public engagement as inclusive as possible given the resources available to them.

Appendix 1: Background Information

Local and National Hate Crime Trends

Between 2019 and 2020, police-reported race and ethnicity-motivated crimes increased 80% across Canada (Statistics Canada, 2022). A hate crime is one which "was motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on the race, nationality, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability or sexual orientation of the victim" (Department of Justice Canada, 1995). Hate crimes targeting Black and Jewish communities composed most of these crimes at 26% and 13% respectively, followed by those targeting the East and Southeast Asian (11%) and 2S-LGBTQIA+ communities (10%) (Statistics Canada, 2022). Alongside the Black, Jewish, and East Asian populations, Indigenous and South Asian groups are also impacted by hate crimes nationwide (Wang & Moreau, 2022). Arab/West Asian and Muslim communities are also disproportionately impacted province wide.

As crimes motivated by race and ethnicity increased nationwide, Hamilton has also seen an increase in hate crimes over the past decade (Deuling, 2019). Hamilton had the highest per-capita rate of hate crimes of any municipality across Canada in 2014, 2016, 2018, and 2019, with an average number of reported cases of 121.2 per year over the past decade (Hamilton Police Service, 2020). Most of these cases were based on race, followed by those related to religion and sexual orientation. In 2021, nearly half of all hate/bias occurrences in Hamilton were linked to race (Hamilton Police Service, 2020). 70% of occurrences targeted the Black community. Over a third were linked to religion, with the Jewish community being targeted in 63% of these incidents (Hamilton Police Service, 2020). These figures are even more worrying given the reality of underreporting. Crime statistics represent a small proportion of incidents that are reported to the police, with underreporting running as high as 95% for some crimes (Government of Canada, 1995).

A survey of 575 Hamiltonians found that 82% stated racism to be an issue in Hamilton, and 79% of respondents reported having personally experienced and/or witness racism or racism related issues in the past year. These statistics indicate that data collected on hate crimes is insufficient to paint a full picture of racism in Hamilton (Hamilton Anti-Racism Resource Centre (HARRC), 2019).

Systemic Racism in Hamilton

Hamilton has a history of systemic racism within its organizations. For example, Hamilton Police Service was known for its "carding" practices or street checks of innocent members of the Hamilton community. Carding is a practice that involves requesting personal information of individuals even if there is no reason or offence to

investigate them. In Hamilton, this had a disproportionate effect on marginalized people because they endured 25% of carding encounters despite only making up 15.7% of Hamilton's population (Bennett, 2015). Black people experienced 11-14% of carding encounters despite only representing 3% of the city's population. A prominent example of this practice occurred in 2016, when a Black city councilor for the City of Hamilton experienced an unprovoked street check by a police officer while waiting for a bus (Taekema, 2016). The officer only changed their mind about proceeding with this upon realizing they were speaking with a city councilor.

In Hamilton, systemic racism has also been reported in the healthcare sector and affects healthcare workers and patients. A 2022 survey found that 75% of racialized nurses and other hospital staff reported experiencing harassment and abuse because of their race (CUPE, 2022). Healthcare providers who worked with immigrants in Hamilton felt that primary care providers tended to refuse immigrants as new patients due to a lack of English-speaking ability and insurance (Pollock et al., 2011).

There is also evidence of systemic racism existing in Hamilton's education system, the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB). An investigation of the HWDSB Board of Trustees found a lack of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) training amongst trustees, as well as multiple instances of racist comments and microaggressions inside and outside of board meetings (Huggins & Graham, 2020). Racism is also found in schools as well. A 2021 report by the Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion and Hamilton Students for Justice in found that 95.3% of Black students in the HWDSB experienced racist incidents and 90.6% felt unsafe because of the actions of their teachers and fellow students (Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion & Hamilton Students for Justice, 2019).

Research regarding systemic racism in Hamilton is limited, especially in sectors outside of those mentioned above. The existence of this gap in the literature represents a need for further investigation of how racism operations in the city and what actions may be taken to combat systemic racism.

Existing Community Initiatives in Hamilton

The City of Hamilton previously conducted public consultations to develop the Hamilton Hate Prevention and Mitigation Plan. From June through August 2020, the consulting team engaged with equity-seeking groups and people with lived experiences of discrimination to inform the development of the City's Hate Prevention and Mitigation Initiative policies, procedures, and practices. This process informed [20 recommendations](#) categorized according to four overarching themes: Proactive Leadership, Centering Communities, Education and Early Intervention, and Regulation and Enforcement. Community members could provide feedback on the recommendations through a survey; however, this survey did not have a high response

rate (91 responses) and the recommendations may not be informed by diverse perspectives and experiences in the community (Moro, 2020).

The City of Hamilton's Community Safety & Well-Being Plan (CSWB) is meant to create conditions within the community where every individual is safe and feels a sense of belonging ([CSWB Plan](#)). The plan identifies hate incidents as a priority. Though the CSWB plan includes current and long-term goals in addressing hate incidents, there are no clear steps outlining on how these goals will be achieved or a timeline for these goals. Moreover, these goals center mainly on increasing ease of reporting hate crimes and hate incidents.

Neither the Hate Prevention and Mitigation Plan or the CSWB Plan have an explicit focus on anti-racism action. There is an opportunity to conduct a comprehensive public engagement to inform specific anti-racism priorities and actions for Hamilton.

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Appendix 2: Survey Questions

Hamilton Anti-Racism Resource Centre: Building the City's Anti-Racism Strategy

The Hamilton Anti-Racism Resource Centre (HARRC) is committed to advancing education about race, racism, discrimination, racial equality, and anti-racist theory and practice in Hamilton. HARRC is working with the McMaster Research Shop to better understand systemic racism and discrimination in Hamilton and gather community feedback on priority actions for the city. Data gathered through this project will inform HARRC's development of Hamilton's Anti-Racism Strategy and Action Plan. The goal of the strategy is to target systemic racism in policy development, decision-making, program evaluation and outcome measurement.

This survey will ask about your experiences with racism in Hamilton and your ideas on how to address racism in Hamilton. We invite individuals who have experienced or observed racism and who live or work in Hamilton to complete the online survey by _____.

If you have any questions about this survey, please contact info@harrc.ca.

Survey-specific information

When providing your answers, please consider that people can be racialized in several ways, based on their appearance, culture, language, ancestry or place of origin, religion, among others. For more information on racism and racial discrimination, please see the description provided by the Ontario Human Rights Council: <https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/racial-discrimination-brochure>.

There are four sections in this survey:

- Section 1 – Demographics
- Section 2 – Experiences with Racism
- Section 3—Potential Anti-Racism Priorities and Actions in Hamilton
- Section 3 – Final thoughts

The survey will take 10-15 minutes to complete.

Important things to note:

- Completing this survey is voluntary.
- We encourage anyone living and/or working in Hamilton to complete this survey.
- We are not looking for any "right" answers. Please answer all questions truthfully and to the best of your ability.
- No personal information we collect from you will be associated with your survey responses. If you are interested in receiving additional communications from HARRC regarding participation in a focus group or receiving a gift card, you can optionally choose to provide your email address at the end of the survey.
- The information and answers you provide will remain anonymous and confidential.
- All data will be securely stored in a OneDrive folder that only the Research Team has access to.

This survey asks if you would like to share personal experiences of racism. These responses are entirely voluntary. If at any time you feel distressed while filling out your response, please feel free to take a pause, skip the question, or stop filling out the survey altogether. If you would like to talk to someone about your experience, please email Lyndon George at lyndon@harcc.ca, who can connect you with an appropriate support.

Thank you for your interest in participating in this survey. We appreciate you taking the time to provide us with invaluable feedback to inform the City of Hamilton's Anti-Racism Strategy.

Gift Card: The first 100 participants who complete the survey will be eligible to receive a \$20 gift card.

Privacy Statement: HARRC is committed to safeguarding your personal information. All of the information that you provide will be treated as confidential and will only be used for research purposes. For more information, please visit: <https://www.harrc.ca/>

Demographics

This information will help us determine who filled out the survey. This data will not be used to identify you and your answers will remain anonymous.

1. Please choose the answer that best describes your position and perspective while completing this survey.
 - Representative of an organization that supports racialized, ethnic, or religious minorities (equity-oriented)
 - Government official (municipal)
 - Government official (provincial, federal)
 - Representative of a government-funded public organization
 - Representative of an Indigenous organization
 - Representative of a newcomer settlement organization
 - Subject matter expert (anti-racism, equity, human rights, etc.)
 - Community member
 - Other (please specify)
 - Prefer not to disclose

2. What is your age?
 - 19 and under
 - 20-24
 - 25-29
 - 30-34
 - 35-39
 - 40-44
 - 45-49
 - 60-64
 - 65+

3. What is your gender identity?
 - a. Female

- b. Male
 - c. Non-Binary
 - d. Genderqueer
 - e. Two-Spirit
 - f. Other (please specify)
 - g. Prefer not to disclose
4. Are you a member of the trans*, non-binary, Two-Spirit, or genderfluid community?
5. What is your sexual orientation?
- a. Asexual
 - b. Bisexual
 - c. Gay
 - d. Heterosexual or straight
 - e. Lesbian
 - f. Pansexual
 - g. Queer
 - h. Other (please specify)
 - i. Prefer not to disclose
6. What languages do you speak at home, other than English?
7. Please choose the answer that best describes your citizenship status.
- a. Canadian citizen or permanent resident
 - b. Refugee
 - c. Recently immigrated (less than one year – includes study and work permits)
 - d. Immigrated (1+ year in Canada – includes study and work permits)
 - e. Other (please specify)
 - f. Prefer not to disclose
8. Which of the following best describes your current employment status? Please select all that apply.
- a. Employed - full-time
 - b. Employed - part-time
 - c. Employed - casual, on-call, temporary or seasonal
 - d. Unemployed or looking for a job
 - e. Unpaid stay-at-home caregiver
 - f. Student
 - g. Retired
 - h. Unable to work
 - i. Other (please specify): _____
 - j. Prefer not to disclose
9. What is your annual income?
- a. \$0 - 14,999
 - b. \$15,000 - \$44,999
 - c. \$45,000 - \$74,999

- d. \$75,000 - \$99,999
 - e. \$100,000+
 - f. Prefer not to disclose
10. Do you live in Hamilton?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
11. Do you work in Hamilton?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
12. Please select the highest level of education you have completed.
- Some high school or less
 - High school diploma or equivalent
 - Trades certificate or diploma
 - Some college or university coursework (no degree awarded)
 - College certificate or diploma (other than trades)
 - Bachelor's degree
 - Graduate degree
 - Prefer not to disclose
13. Which category best describes your racial or ethno-cultural identity? Select all that apply.
- Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, Inuit)
 - Indigenous outside of Canada (e.g., Māori, Maya, Nahuatl, Quechua, Indigenous Hawaiians)
 - Black (including Black African, Black Caribbean/West Indian, Black North American, Afro-Latinx/Black Latin American, multi-racial students who have Black ancestry that they identify with, and other Black identities)
 - East Asian (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Taiwanese descent)
 - Southeast Asian (Cambodian, Filipino, Indonesian, Thai, Vietnamese, other Southeast Asian descent)
 - Latin American/Latinx (from, descent, or heritage from Latin America including South America, Central America, Latin Caribbean (Spanish-speaking Caribbean and/or Haiti), and México)
 - Middle Eastern (Arab, Persian, West Asian descent)
 - South Asian (Bangladeshi, Bhutanese, Indian, Indo-Caribbean, Indo-Fijian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan descent)
 - White (European descent)
 - Other (please specify)
 - Prefer not to disclose
14. What is your religion or spiritual affiliation?
- a. Secular/Non-religious/Atheist
 - b. Christianity
 - c. Islam

- d. Hinduism
- e. Buddhism
- f. Judaism
- g. Sikhism
- h. Other

Experiences with racism

15. Have you ever experienced racism or discrimination/prejudice based on your race or ethno-cultural identity in Hamilton?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
16. Approximately how many incidents of racism (discrimination, harassment, prejudice, microaggression) have you experienced in Hamilton since the start of 2020?
- a. 1-2 incidents
 - b. 3-4 incidents
 - c. 5-10 incidents
 - d. More than 10 incidents
 - e. I have not experienced any incidents of racism since 2020
17. Throughout your life, how often would you say you have personally experienced racism or discrimination/prejudice based on your race or ethno-cultural identity in Hamilton?
- a. Daily
 - b. Weekly
 - c. Monthly
 - d. Once per year
 - e. Several times per year
 - f. Once every couple of years
 - g. Other (please specify)
 - h. I have not personally experienced racism or discrimination
18. Was the racism you experienced primarily: Individual (bigotry, hatred) or Systemic (institutional, organizational)
- a. All Individual
 - b. Mostly Individual
 - c. 50/50
 - d. Mostly Systemic
 - e. All Systemic
19. If you feel comfortable and wish to share example(s) of your experience(s) of racism, we invite you to do so below.
20. Where, or from what, have you experienced racism or discrimination? Select all that apply.
- a. Education (e.g., school, district, teachers)
 - b. Employment/hiring (e.g., work practices, promotions)

- c. Healthcare (e.g., clinics, hospitals, healthcare providers)
- d. Legal (e.g., legal services, courts)
- e. Family and social services (e.g., income assistance, family supports, childcare, shelters)
- f. Government services (e.g., ID, driver's license, permits)
- g. Law enforcement (e.g., police/security)
- h. Businesses/private sector (e.g., grocery stores, malls)
- i. Financial institutions (e.g., credit unions, banks)
- j. Neighborhood or community spaces (e.g., parks, streets, recreation facilities)
- k. Housing (e.g., buying, selling, renting, housing corporations)
- l. Transportation (e.g., passenger, operator)
- m. Other (please specify)

21. Through what systems, services, or sectors do you feel most unsafe due to racism or discrimination? Please select your top 3 areas.

- Education
- Employment
- Healthcare
- Legal
- Family and social services
- Government services
- Law enforcement
- Businesses/private sector
- Financial institutions
- Housing
- Transportation
- Other (please specify)

- If you feel comfortable and wish to explain your choices, we invite you to do so below.

22. Have you faced barriers in accessing information, resources, services, or opportunities in Hamilton due to your (perceived) race or ethno-cultural identity?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

- If you selected yes or unsure to the previous question, please expand on your answer.

23. Since the start of 2020, how many incidents of racism (discrimination, harassment, prejudice, microaggression) have you personally witnessed someone else experience in Hamilton?

- a. 1-2 times
- b. 3-4 times
- c. 5-10 times
- d. More than 10 times

- e. I have not personally witnessed anyone else experience racism or discrimination in Hamilton
24. Was the racism you witnessed primarily: Individual (bigotry, hatred) or Systemic (institutional, organizational)
- a. All Individual
 - b. Mostly Individual
 - c. 50/50
 - d. Mostly Systemic
 - e. All Systemic
25. Have you ever reported an incident of racism or discrimination in Hamilton on behalf of yourself or someone else?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Prefer not to say
26. Are you aware of how to report a hate incident in Hamilton via the following:
- a. Community organizations
 - b. Police
 - c. Employer
 - d. Equity office
 - e. Ontario Human Rights Tribunal
27. Do you feel you would benefit from support for navigating how to report a hate incident?
- a. Yes
 - b. No

Potential Anti-Racism Priorities and Actions in Hamilton

28. Do you have any thoughts on potential anti-racism actions that should be prioritized in Hamilton?

Final thoughts

29. Do you have any additional feedback to share with the Hamilton Anti-Racism Resource Centre to consider when developing the anti-racism strategy for the City of Hamilton?
30. Please indicate if you are interested in receiving communications from HARRC regarding the following:
- a. Participating in a focus group: Yes or No
 - b. Receiving a gift card following survey completion: Yes or No
31. If you answered "yes" to receiving additional communications from HARRC, please provide your email below.

Thank you for filling out the survey. If you feel distressed from filling out your responses, or if you would like to talk to someone about your experience, please email Lyndon George at lyndon@harcc.ca, who can connect you with support.

Appendix 3: Focus Group Guide

Thank you for joining us today. We appreciate you taking the time to participate in this focus group.

As you might know, the Hamilton Anti-Racism Resource Centre (HARRC) works to advance education about racism, discrimination, racial equality, and anti-racist theory and practice in Hamilton. HAARC advances anti-racism education through interactive community events, programs, and workshops. HAARC also directly supports community members and refers complaints of experiences of racism in the City of Hamilton to community resources.

Currently, we are holding these focus group discussions to support HARRC in developing an Anti-Racism Strategy and Action Plan in Hamilton. The goal of the plan is to target systemic racism in policy development, decision-making, program evaluation and outcome measurement.

The information you share will help to inform The Anti-Racism Strategy and Action Plan, which will identify opportunities to confront systemic racism. We want to hear about your experiences with racism, your perspectives on what an anti-racist action plan in Hamilton should include, and your ideas on how to address systemic racism at the city level across several priority areas: **health outcomes, housing, employment equity, economic development, youth development, and governance.**

Ground rules/ confidentiality:

There are only a few basic rules to keep in mind while participating today:

- There are no “right” or “wrong” answers. We are here to listen to your honest opinions on the subject. Speak freely but be mindful about not interrupting others while they are talking.
- Everyone’s views are welcomed and important.
- We may step in to make sure everyone has a chance to speak, and we may also intervene if we feel the conversation is straying off topic.
- The information which we will collect today will be attributable (connected or associated) to you as a group.
- If we decide we want to use a quote and attribute it to a specific person from the group, we will contact you ahead of time to ask for permission.
- We will strive to protect individual confidentiality.
 - Keep in mind that we are often identifiable through the stories we tell when deciding what to share today.
 - We are assuming that what we learn about one another's views today remains confidential outside of this group. Having made this request, please note that we cannot guarantee that it will be honoured by everyone in the room.
- Your participation in this focus group is voluntary.
 - You do not have to answer any question that you do not feel comfortable responding to.
- If you want to stop being in the focus group, you can leave or stay and simply stop talking.
- You can expect this discussion group to last no more than 1.5-2 hours

Use of Recording– with your permission, this focus group will be recorded to increase accuracy and to reduce the chance of misinterpreting what anyone says.

- All audio files and transcripts will be securely stored in a OneDrive folder that only the Research Team has access to
- We will be taking notes throughout the discussion
- The recordings, transcripts, and notes will only be used for this project and will be destroyed once the report is complete

We ask that when using abbreviations or acronyms, you say the full name at least once to aid transcription.

Does anyone have any questions before we begin?

Do you give your consent to participate in this focus group? **Each focus group member must say “yes” in order to proceed - a nod of the head will not suffice.**

Focus Group Questions:

Introduction

- Personal introductions—name + icebreaker question (e.g., reason for attending)

Experiences of racism in Hamilton

1. What are some unique challenges currently faced by [population/identity] in [priority area] in Hamilton?
2. If you witness or experience racism, do you know how to respond?

Potential Anti-Racism Actions to Implement

1. What are some actions that the City of Hamilton can take to address systemic racism in [priority area] for [population/identity]?
2. What existing activities (programs, policies, services) does the City of Hamilton currently implement in addressing barriers in [priority area] for [population/identity] that they should continue?
3. What could the City of Hamilton do differently when designing or implementing policy, programs and/or services relating to [priority area]?
 - a. If you could have the City of Hamilton take any action in relation to improving [priority area], what would it be?
4. How would you like to see [population/identity] be involved in informing/implementing the actions that have been discussed?
5. Are any of the barriers and challenges complicated because of an intersecting social identity you identify with (such as your gender identity, age, living in a rural area, disability etc.)?
 - a. Are there any specific actions the City of Hamilton could implement to address these barriers/challenges?

Final Thoughts

1. What have we not touched on that you think is important for the City to consider when developing its Anti-Racism Strategy?
2. Are there any final reflections you would like to share that the City should consider when developing its Anti-Racism strategy?

Appendix 4: Survey Promotion

a) Social Media Graphic

McMaster University | Office of Community Engagement

HARRC
Hamilton Anti-Racism Resource Centre

Questions?
Email: info@harrc.ca
www.harrc.ca

**HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED/
WITNESSED RACISM OR
DISCRIMINATION
WHILE LIVING OR WORKING IN HAMILTON?**

**YOUR FEEDBACK
WILL HELP US TO
INFORM OUR ANTI-
RACISM STRATEGY
FOR HAMILTON**

**WE WANT TO HEAR
FROM YOU**

**VISIT THE LINK IN THE
CAPTION & COMPLETE THE
SURVEY BY MARCH 17, 2023**

**The first 100
participants to
complete the
survey are
eligible to receive
a \$20 gift card**

b) Poster



Office of
Community
Engagement



HARRC
Hamilton Anti-Racism Resource Centre

Questions?
info@harrc.ca

**HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED/
WITNESSED RACISM OR
DISCRIMINATION
WHILE LIVING OR WORKING IN HAMILTON?**

**YOUR FEEDBACK
WIL HELP TO
INFORM OUR
ANTI-RACISM
STRATEGY FOR
HAMILTON**

**WE WANT TO
HEAR FROM YOU**

**VISIT THE LINK OR SCAN
BELOW TO COMPLETE
THE SURVEY BY MARCH
14, 2023**

**SURVEY LINK:
bit.ly/3SDHGMW**

**The first 100
participants to
complete the
survey are
eligible to receive
a \$20 gift card**

