TRIBE

C-TRIBE UNDERESTIMATED COMMUNITIES'

CORPORATE EQUALITY INDEX REPORT

JOURNAL, VOL. 1

Benchmarking, celebrating and improving equity and inclusion practices shaping modern-day workforces

2025

Canada Alberta mitacs Edmonton

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As part of Alberta's broader efforts to strengthen workforce development and support innovative labour market solutions, this initiative enabled C-Tribe Society to conduct in-depth research into the equity and inclusion practices that shape modern workplaces. Through this strategic support, various collaborators helped amplify the voices of Underestimated Communities and advance a more equitable future for Alberta's economy and beyond.

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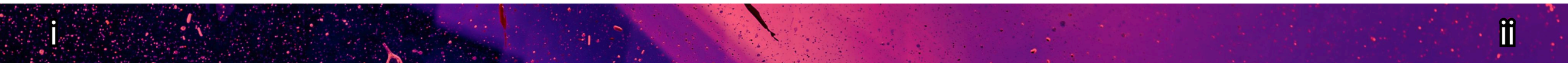

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Canada Alberta mitacs THE CITY OF Edmonton

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YOU'RE ABOUT TO UNLOCK C-TRIBE'S UNDERESTIMATED COMMUNITIES' CORPORATE EQUALITY INDEX

Workforces globally are modernizing and we believe that Edmonton's workforce has to evolve, too.

When C-Tribe was started eight years ago, it was tough to put into words some of the gaps that existed for less privileged groups across all forms of institutions—education, health care, entrepreneurship, government, criminal justice, and the workforce, just to name a few. Reciprocally, it was tough to define how regions like the City of Edmonton were not fully leveraging its potential to be globally competitive by ignoring these gaps. Furthermore, it was even more challenging to have concerted evidence demonstrating these inequities that translated into inefficiencies in the ecosystem did not serve the needs of the communities in which we live, work and play.

Instead, we marched forward, recognizing these challenges while creating a safe and fun place where highly ambitious, innovative, and creative people from Underestimated Communities could gather and help support each other. Fast-forward to today, we're thrilled that we have taken the next step to turn this community into data-driven insights that speak to the same challenges we felt when we started.

We did not invent this methodology ourselves. This evaluation framework builds and refines upon established DEI benchmarking practices, including the Human Rights Campaign's Corporate Equality Index 2023 and Catalyst's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Matters: Benchmarking Report 2022. It also draws on definitions of Employee Resource Groups and inclusion practices outlined by the Society for Human Resource Management (2021) and maturity models such as Deloitte's Diversity and Inclusion Maturity Model (2017). The scoring rubric has been adapted specifically to assess Edmonton-based employers and standardized for comparability across six identity groups.

For the main purpose of this report, it's transitioned into a full circle moment where these challenges can be turned into opportunities for institutions and companies that take (or plan to take) concerted bets on Underestimated Communities (more specifically, the talent that they attract, nurture, and build with). This reports helps crystallize the challenges and opportunities as they build more substantial, competitive firms where all talent can thrive and Underestimated Communities grow.

The journey to true equality and unlocking the full potential of our workforce starts with recognizing the systemic barriers faced by groups like Black, Indigenous, Immigrant, Women, Youth and 2LGBTQS+ communities (this report's focus for Underestimated Communities).

While this isn't fully encapsulating of *all* underestimated or underserved communities, its a strong step forward to help employers address barriers with actionable data. It's not a charity case, either. It's a powerful insight-backed narrative that, when unlocked, can elevate a region like Edmonton's and help shape the products and services that continue to scale and be accessible globally. We can achieve this together while co-created the type of communities we all want to live, work, and play in.

C-Tribe aims to be a platform that celebrates diversity and help more innovative and creative people achieve their dreams. We hope that the C-Tribe Underestimated Communities' Index Report helps employers re-imagine new opportunities and act as an anchor for fresh ideas, perspectives and next steps.

Sahr Saffa
Founder, Chairperson & CEO

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Underestimated Communities' Corporate Equality Index Report is a comprehensive tool designed to quantitatively and qualitatively measure policies, practices, and benefits of the workforce culture in the Edmonton region. The goal of the report is to a) celebrate the diversity we have in our region, and b) offer valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities presented to employers building and growing modern-day workforces.

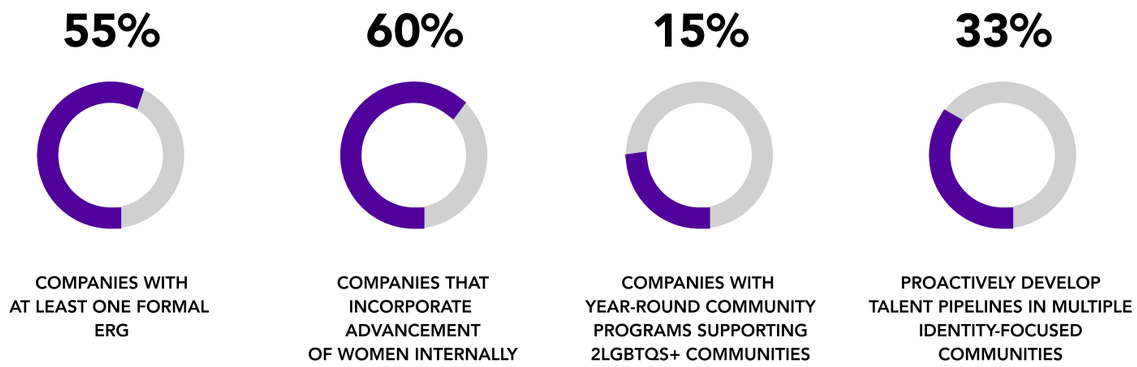
Currently, there is limited and opaque data and awareness regarding the understanding of systemic workplace inequalities, workplace cultures, policies and practices that affect Underestimated Communities and the companies that hire them.

That changes now.

At the national level, Canada has experienced an undercurrent of anti-DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) resistance, particularly reflected in the rhetoric of political and corporate behaviours that echo U.S. anti-DEI pressure (Gibson, 2025). However, data-backed evidence that we share in this report demonstrates that inclusive workplace practices are economically strategic for top-tier firms and align with the direction of the institution of work.

For Instance:

- Fifty-five percent of companies evaluated in this report have at least one formal Employee Resource Group (ERG), with top performers having multiple ERGs (four or more) targeted at different Underrepresented Communities.
- Eighteen out of the twenty top-rated companies offer inclusion training during onboarding, which helps set the tone for new team members as they are assimilated into an inclusive workplace culture.
- Close to 60% of companies evaluated incorporate the advancement of women into their internal programs.
- Approximately 15% of companies have year-round community programs and long-term partnerships focused on 2LGBTQ+ individuals, and just under 20% of companies publicly report partnerships with local immigrant settlement agencies or mentorship placements for new Canadians.
- Thirty-five percent of executives had executives visibly participating in external events focused on uplifting and supporting Underestimated Communities.
- There is a subset of companies (33% of those evaluated in this report) that proactively develop talent pipelines in three or more identity groups, signalling they are investing in the next generation of diverse talent and reducing historical access barriers.



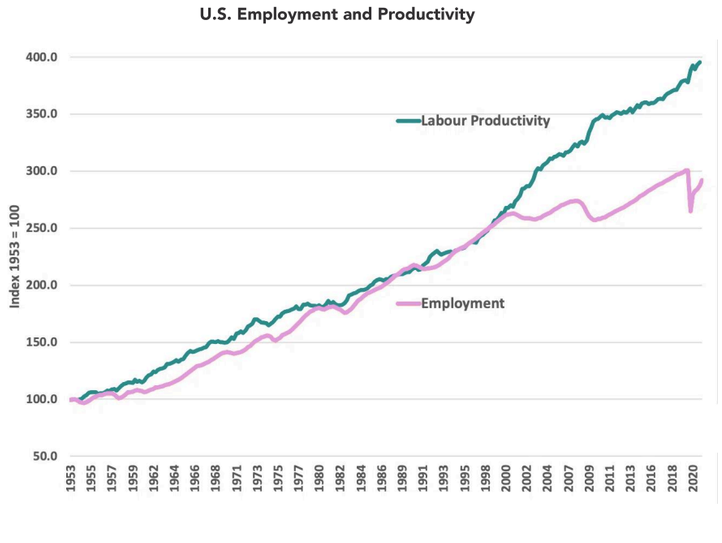
Edmonton's workforce resembles that of Canada's and is composed of historically marginalized communities. Failure to embrace this diversity risks widening inequities and reducing business competitiveness.

As we make our mark in the 21st century, one thing is certain: we are entering an era of abundance.

- We have instant, global access to almost all human knowledge.
- AI, robotics, and global supply chains have drastically lowered the marginal costs of producing many goods (GJIA, 2024).
- Billions of people are connected, creating new markets, accelerating innovation, and allowing ideas to scale faster than ever.
- Extreme poverty has declined globally, life expectancy has risen, and we've seen breakthroughs in medicine and the prevention of diseases (OWID Poverty 2025; OWID Life Expectancy 2025; FT 2024).
- We are on the cusp of eliminating energy scarcity as breakthroughs in renewables, storage, and fusion promise to make clean affordable energy effectively limitless (21stC Tech, 2025).

With abundance on the horizon, there is no excuse that the institution of work (or any institution for a fact of the matter) to leave any groups behind. It must become a vehicle for shared prosperity, dignity and human flourishing.

The chart below presents a vital lesson from the U.S. economy: while labour productivity has steadily increased over the decades due to technological advancements, employment wages have not kept pace. This gap illustrates a crucial truth: abundance does not automatically lead to shared prosperity. If we do not design our systems intentionally, the benefits of innovation and efficiency are likely to concentrate among a few, leaving many communities behind. This same trend could occur and intensify in regions like Edmonton unless employers, policymakers, and changemakers work collaboratively to embed equity at the core of the local workforce.

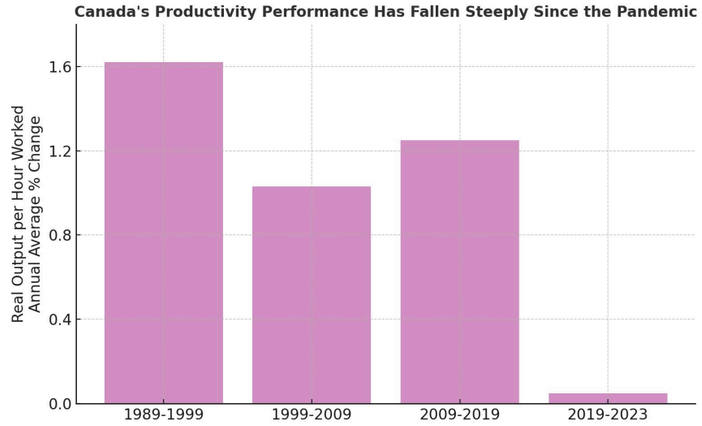


U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Nonfarm Business Sector: Labor Productivity (Output per Hour) for All Workers [OPHNFB]

This is not just an American story. Canada's own productivity figures tell a cautionary and contrasting tale. Over the last decade, Canada's labour productivity has stagnated at an average rate of -0.8% per year between 2015 and 2023, with recent quarters showing sharp volatility (1% drop in Q2 2025, the steepest since 2022 according to StatsCan). On a multi-decade scale, productivity growth has slowed to less than half the pace of earlier generations (CSLS, 2023).

For employers, this context is both a warning and a call to action. With immigration flows slowing and policies progressively limiting the number of temporary foreign workers entering the country, Canada's future growth cannot rely indefinitely on simply adding more people to the labour market.

Instead, it demands an *all-hands-on-deck* approach for the fourty-million Canadians who are already residing here. One avenue of deriving more productivity from the workforce is by removing systemic barriers that still hold many Underestimated Groups back from fully contributing their skills and creativity.



Business Sector. Source: Statistics Canada, TD Economics.

As this report highlights, abundance without equity will only reproduce and further amplify the disparities of the past in new forms. Edmonton's employers have a rare opportunity to lead by example and ensure prosperity is not concentrated in the hands of a few but is broadly access across all communities.

In contrast, by building inclusive hiring pipelines, providing the right training, removing bias in recruitment and advancement, and creative workplaces where every employee can thrive, employers not only expand the size of their accessible workforce, but also increase the productivity of their existing teams.

From this framing, equitable practices in the workplace can be a core productivity strategy and companies that embrace this reality gain an advantage in how they attract, retain, and elevate talent at a moment when Canada's economic competitiveness depends on making the most of every worker.

Companies that rise to this challenge will not only strengthen their reputations and attract top talent and increase business competitiveness, but also be part of the solution that transforms the institution of work into an engine of inclusive growth that reflects the full diversity of the communities it serves.

The C-Tribe Underestimated Communities' Corporate Equality Index Report serves as both a mirror and roadmap. It showcases and celebrates where our region stands today, revealing the top companies curating an equitable workplace, while also charting a path forward, through actionable benchmarks, recommendations and best practices for those closely behind.

We invite employers, policymakers, and community leaders to help us build a future of work that is abundant, fair, competitive, and deeply human.

ENGAGEMENT SNAPSHOT

AT-A-GLANCE ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

The C-Tribe Underestimated Communities' Corporate Equality Index Report draws upon three complementary research approaches:

1) Survey data completed by employers and employees,
2) One-on-one interviews with employers and employees,
3) Secondary research and analysis of existing reports, policies, and publicly available data.

The survey engaged a broad cross-section of Edmonton's workforce, comprising 162 total respondents, including 39 employers and 133 employees from various industries. Employer responses were concentrated in financial services, healthcare, technology, and insurance, while employees most often identified technology, nonprofit/public sector, and telecommunications as their industries. Taken together, this reflects a cross-section of the regional economy, encompassing both large private-sector employers and public/nonprofit institutions, as well as emerging industries such as technology.

The scope of research for the Underestimated Communities' Corporate Equality Index required augmenting survey results with desk research. While the survey results provide valuable insights, the sample size remains modest in relation to the scale of Edmonton's workforce and the number of data points required for collection. To ensure a rigorous and well-rounded assessment, the report supplemented these findings by reviewing company websites, corporate reports, media coverage, social media channels and third-party sites. This triangulation was critical in establishing a comprehensive baseline.

By adopting this layered approach, the Index provides a more complete picture of equitable practices across Edmonton's workforce. It acknowledges the limitations of early survey data while laying the foundation for more robust participation in future editions.

162
TOTAL
SURVEY RESPONDENTS

39
TOTAL
EMPLOYERS

133
TOTAL
EMPLOYEES

18%

FINANCIAL SERVICES

13%

HEALTHCARE

WHERE DID EMPLOYER SURVEY PARTICIPATION COME FROM (TOP 10)?

1. Financial Services (18%)
2. Healthcare (13%)
3. Technology (12%)
4. Insurance (10%)
5. Education (7%)
6. Telecommunications (7%)
7. Non-Profit / Public Sector (6%)
8. Construction (5%)
9. Consulting (4%)
10. Energy & Utilites (4%)

WHERE DID EMPLOYEE SURVEY PARTICIPATION COME FROM (TOP 10?)

1. Technology (19%)
2. Non-Profit / Public Sector (11%)
3. Telecommunications (11%)
4. Financial Services (8%)
5. Construction (8%)
6. Healthcare (8%)
7. Energy & Utilites (6%)
8. Education (5%)
9. Insurance (4%)
10. Consulting (4%)

19%

TECHNOLOGY

11%

NON-PROFIT / PUBLIC SECTOR

STORIES AND PERSPECTIVES CAPTURED

"I'm an Indigenous professional who left a small community to work in the city to support my family. How I came across the opportunity to work here was due to the outreach efforts of my company in Indigenous communities. They have established real partnerships with Indigenous-led nonprofits, created training built on the Indigenous perspective, and included reconciliation goals that the entire organization can see. These activities highlighted the realities and lightened the burden of representation. I take pride in my work when I can bridge my two worlds together."

- Employee from an Energy & Utilities Company

"I arrived in Canada with two advanced degrees and prior experience in my field of yet. Still, my first job here was entry-level. My international credentials weren't recognized. I worried people saw me as less capable. When a company values prior work experience it makes a very big difference."

- Employee from a Technology Company

"My first job out of university was as an intern analyst and I secured it from an on-campus job interview while I was still in university. I applied at over 200 other companies before landing this opportunity. I appreciate my job not only for the opportunity I have to work here, but because they have transparent promotion pathways. I now manage a team and I feel as if I'm making meaningful progress in my career."

- *Employee from a Consulting Company*

"You do not see many Black female engineers in the industry that I work. I am still the only one on my team. Meetings can feel isolating and I have to work twice as hard to get to where I am today. The work I do as an ERG co-lead helps me connect with others like myself in the company and create a foundation for engineers who don't find the mould.

WHAT ARE UNDERESTIMATED COMMUNITIES?

Often referred to as underrepresented communities, C-Tribe has adapted this terminology to "Underestimated." These groups consist of individuals who are not adequately or proportionally represented in various sectors of society, such as business, media, employment, education, and criminal justice, among others. This lack of representation can have significant consequences, leading to marginalization, limited access to opportunities, and reduced influence in decision-making processes.

The report intentionally uses the term "Underestimated" to highlight the extraordinary potential and capabilities within these often-overlooked communities. It aims to celebrate and showcase their resilience and talents. The six Underestimated Communities prioritized in this report include: Black, Indigenous, Immigrant, Women, Youth, and 2SLGBTQ+.

OVERVIEW OF EVALUATION CRITERIA

To evaluate how Edmonton's leading employers are creating equitable workplaces, this Index assesses five core criteria, inspired by the *Human Rights Campaign Foundation's Corporate Equality Index*. Each criterion reflects a dimension of organizational culture, policy, and practice that directly affects Underestimated Communities within the workforce.

1. **Supporting an Inclusive Culture**
   This criterion evaluates how companies build internal capacity. It examines training programs, representation in leadership positions, recognition of diverse identities, and the celebration of cultural heritage. It aims to determine if the day-to-day workplace culture is welcoming and affirming for all employees.

2. **Corporate Outreach & Engagement**
   This measures how companies extend their commitment beyond internal operations. It includes community partnerships, support for grassroots organizations, outreach to schools and training programs, and active engagement from leadership with Underestimated Communities.

3. **Workforce Protections**
   This criterion assesses the strength and enforcement of policies and accountability processes. It considers whether employees can safely raise concerns and if protections are applied equitably across different identities.

4. **Inclusive Benefits**
   This reviews how benefit structures meet the diverse needs of employees. It encompasses areas such as mental health support, family care, wellness programs, and tailored benefits that reflect the unique experiences of various identity groups.

5. **CSR, Supplier Standards & Philanthropy**
   Examines how companies leverage their purchasing power and community investment. This includes supplier diversity practices, capacity-building for diverse SMEs, and philanthropic commitments directed toward Underestimated Communities.

CRITERIA 1: SUPPORTING AN INCLUSIVE CULTURE

CRITERIA 1: SUPPORTING AN INCLUSIVE CULTURE

Criteria 1 Overview of Methodology

We evaluated 65 companies with a significant presence in Edmonton to gain insights into their support for an inclusive culture across six identity groups: Black, Indigenous, Immigrant (racialized/newcomer), Women, Youth, and 2SLGBTQ+. For each group, we assessed the presence and strength of specific initiatives, including targeted training programs, employee resource groups (ERGs) or networks, data collection and reporting, cultural celebrations and recognitions, leadership and advancement programs, and inclusive policies such as language accessibility, transitioning support, and parental leave.

Criteria 1 Evaluation Framework

We evaluated each company's internal inclusion efforts using the following four sub-categories, consistently applied to each identity group:

1. Identity-Focused Training Programs (0-3): assessed whether companies offer targeted training programs designed to address the barriers faced by specific identity groups. This includes anti-racism workshops, gender inclusion modules, cultural safety training, and content focused on dismantling bias or discrimination. Higher scores were awarded to programs that go beyond general diversity training to provide group-specific learning with measurable impact.

2. Identity-Focused Data Collection (0-3): We examined whether companies collect, report, and use disaggregated data to track the representation, experiences, or advancement of various identity groups. Companies received higher scores for transparent public reporting, established targets for representation, and the use of this data to inform internal strategies and accountability mechanisms.

3. Celebration of Group Cultures (0-3): We looked for active efforts to recognize and celebrate the cultural contributions and lived experiences of each identity group. Examples include public observances such as Black History Month, Indigenous Peoples Day, Pride celebrations, and other cultural or heritage programming that enhances visibility and a sense of belonging.

4. Leadership Representation and Advancement (0-3): We evaluated the presence of members of each identity group in leadership roles (e.g., senior management, board positions, executive roles) and documented efforts to support their advancement. This includes internal sponsorship or mentorship programs, diverse leadership pipelines, and public disclosure of leadership demographics.

A company could receive a maximum of 72 points and total raw scores across all six groups were normalized to a score out of 20 for dashboard comparisons. A score of:

- 0 indicates no notable evidence in that area;
- 1 point indicates minimal or ad-hoc action taken;
- 2 is moderate implementation, with some identity-specific design or tracking;
- 3 shows strong, identity-specific initiatives with measurable outcomes or structural integration.

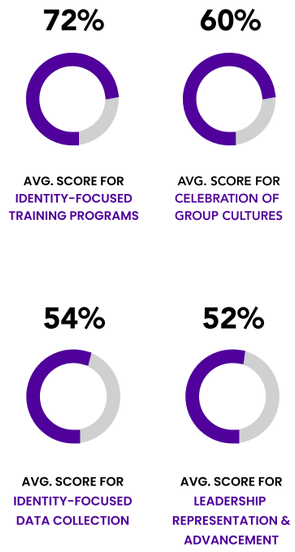
We gathered publicly available information from verifiable sources (ie., company websites & reports, social media posts, press coverage, internal policy documents, or third-party reports) and we reviewed survey responses and qualitative employee interviews where available.

With 65 companies evaluated for this criterion, our research found a wide range of inclusivity support among Edmonton organizations. A subset of leading employers excel with comprehensive strategies touch all six identity categories, whereas others have modest or nascent efforts.

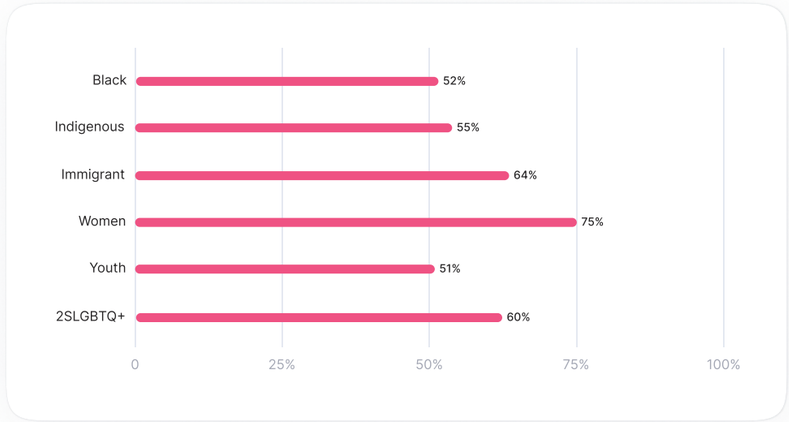
11.9/20

CRITERIA 1 OVERALL EVALUATION

Average by Dimension



Average by Identity Group



Criteria 1 Key Findings

Below are key findings and statistics from the analysis:

- Prevalence of ERG/networks: Just over half of the companies (≈ approximately 36 of the top 65, or approximately 55%) have at least one formal Employee Resource Group or affinity network dedicated to a specific identity group. Top performers often have multiple ERGs (three or more). For example, many globally reaching institutions (e.g., RBC, Stantec, Accenture) have ten or more team member networks spanning Immigrant, Indigenous, and women groups, among others. These networks provide mentorship, support and drive policy change from within. However, many mid-size and smaller firms lack ERGs, relying on broader HR or culture committees if anything.

- Training & Education: Approximately 65% of organizations offer some form of diversity/ inclusion training for staff or leaders. This ranges from mandatory company-wide training (e.g., unconscious bias training and inclusive workplace workshops) to specialized modules. For instance:

    - PCL Construction introduced training focused on inclusive behaviours to build on earlier unconscious-biased training (PCL Construction).
    - Edmonton International Airport requires mandatory DEI training for all employees and even trains 500+ staff to recognize human trafficking as part of inclusion and safety.
    - The City of Edmonton offers extensive training through its Talent Diversification & Inclusion team, and has rolled out Indigenous cultural awareness workshops (e.g. the Blanket Exercise) and anti-racism training for employees (Edmonton International Airport).

- Data Collection & Transparency: Very few companies publicly report disaggregated workforce diversity metrics or have concrete representation targets. Larger organizations track data to drive accountability.

    - CWB, for example, publishes diversity stats up (60% of its workforce were women and 33% were Black, Indigenous or People of Colour)
    - Enbridge administers an annual Inclusion Survey to employees, measuring sense of belonging and authenticity at work, and uses a Diversity Dashboard to track representation by demographics and level.
    - Several companies, including Capital Power and Sherritt International, have set targets for women in leadership.

- Leadership & Advancement Initiatives: Approximately 40% of organizations have explicit programs to boost Underestimated Communities in leadership or career advancement. This includes mentorship/sponsorship programs, leadership development workshops, and succession planning with a focus on diversity.
    - CWB Women focuses on mentoring and sponsoring women for advancement
    - Capital Power's "WE Lead" community (Women Empowered Lead) focuses on professional development and an inclusive environment for women to thrive.
    - Accenture runs global I&D leadership programs and women's development programs.

- While gender is the most common focus for leadership programs, some extend to other groups. Still, the majority of employers did not cite specific leadership programs for marginalized groups, suggesting room for broader adoption.

- Cultural Celebrations & Recognition: Approximately half of the companies (just over 50%) actively celebrate diversity through internal events or public recognition of heritage months. Internal cultural events are a common, tangible way organizations show support. Examples include PCL's "robust calendar" of cultural events and observances in Canada, the U.S., and Australia, ensuring that important events (e.g., Black History Month, Pride, Indigenous History Month, International Women's Day) are celebrated across all offices.

- Just over 38% of employers make public statements during Pride Month or National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. For example, EPCOR and the City of Edmonton encourage employees to wear orange and reflect on reconciliation on September 30, and have hosted Pride flag raisings. However, not all companies go beyond issuing a statement or email. Top-tier organizations dedicate a budget and time to internal events or community sponsorships. In contrast, lower-ranked firms show little evidence of celebrating cultural days beyond perhaps a social media post.

In summary, the most inclusive organizations based on criteria 1 distinguished themselves by having comprehensive, multi-pronged DEI programs: multiple ERGs, leadership accountability for diversity, metrics and public targets, mandatory training and strong community partnerships. The top 15 companies fall in this category.

The middle tier of companies often has a general commitment to diversity. It may excel in one or two areas (often gender or Indigenous inclusion), but lack breadth or depth (for example, a mid-size firm might have a women's network and celebrate Indigenous culture, but no specific supports for 2LGBTQS+ or immigrant employees).

Lower-ranked organizations (generally smaller or in traditional industries) tend to rely on a basic "equal opportunity employer" stance, with few specific programs or data. Their inclusion efforts appear ad hoc or minimally communicated. Notably, the industry plays a role: companies in sectors such as finance, government, education, and utilities (which face public scrutiny and diverse customer bases) are among the leaders. In contrast, some industrial manufacturing and resource companies, although improving, often scored lower, except where strong corporate DEI mandates were in place.

Criteria 1 Organizational Rankings

Ranking/ Company Name	Critiera 1 Score	Notes on Top 20
1. TELUS	19.4	TELUS ranks at the top for supporting Underestimated Communities by embedding equity and belonging into its workplace at every level. Mandatory training on anti-harassment, unconscious bias, and psychological safety is integrated into onboarding, while employee resource groups like Spectrum (2SLGBTQS+), Connections (women in leadership), and the Indigenous Peoples Network receive executive sponsorship and funding to drive peer support and policy input. The company also collects and publishes workforce data on belonging and representation in its annual ESG reports, ensuring transparency and accountability. Cultural observances such as Pride, Orange Shirt Day, and International Women's Day are celebrated with visible executive participation, while leadership representation is strengthened through gender equity targets and near parity on TELUS's board. Though Edmonton-specific programs are less distinct than its national ones, TELUS sets a benchmark for inclusive culture across Alberta.
2. Clark Builders	19.4	Clark Builders ranks in the top-tier as a leader in inclusive culture, reflecting its commitment to building equity into both its workforce and industry. The company integrates diversity and inclusion training into its onboarding and leadership development, with a focus on unconscious bias and respectful workplace practices. It has also invested in employee-led networks and mentorship opportunities, particularly for women and Indigenous employees, ensuring that underrepresented groups have structured pathways for growth. Cultural observances are actively recognized, with Clark Builders participating in events such as National Indigenous Peoples Day and Women in Construction initiatives. Leadership visibility is a hallmark of the company's approach. Senior executives frequently serve as champions of DEI, supporting industry-wide conversations about inclusion in construction.
3. Accenture	18.9	Accenture consistently performs at the top of the inclusive culture rankings due to its global DEI infrastructure and its active presence in Edmonton. All employees complete training on unconscious bias and inclusive leadership. The firm supports a wide network of employee resource groups, including Women at Accenture, Pride, and Indigenous Peoples ERGs, each with budget and executive sponsorship. Cultural observances are consistently recognized through campaigns, events, and executive participation in Pride, Orange Shirt Day, and International Women's Day. The bank's leadership has been visible in championing inclusion both internally and in Edmonton's broader business community, including through its Black Talent Mentorship Network partnership
4. ATB	18.5	ATB Financial has established itself as one of Edmonton's leaders in inclusive culture, with equity and belonging woven into its corporate identity. All employees complete training on unconscious bias and inclusive leadership, and the bank supports several employee networks focused on women, 2SLGBTQS+ employees, and Indigenous team members. ATB has also published inclusion targets as part of its ESG commitments, tracking representation and pay equity across its workforce. Its W by ATB initiative, focused on empowering women entrepreneurs, further reflects how ATB aligns its internal practices with external community impact. Cultural observances are consistently recognized through campaigns, events, and executive participation in Pride, Orange Shirt Day, and International Women's Day. The bank's leadership has been visible in championing inclusion both internally and in Edmonton's broader business community, including through its Black Talent Mentorship Network partnership.
5. RBC	18.3	RBC has built one of the most robust frameworks in Canada for supporting Underestimated Communities, and its Edmonton operations reflect that commitment. The bank requires anti-racism and bias training for all staff, and its extensive network of employee resource groups—spanning Indigenous, 2SLGBTQS+, women, newcomers, and youth—provides employees with structured peer support and input into policy development. RBC is also notable for its transparency: it published annual diversity reports with representation, pay equity, and promotion data disaggregated by identity groups, holding itself accountable to measurable progress. Cultural observances are consistently recognized, with local and national executives visibly supporting Pride, Black History Month, and National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. RBC backs this with tangible initiatives like the "4 Seasons of Reconciliation" e-learning program and mentorship pipelines

Ranking/ Company Name	Critiera 1 Score	Notes on Top 20
6. University of Alberta	18.0	The University of Alberta demonstrates a comprehensive approach to inclusive culture that reflects its role as one of Edmonton's largest employers and academic institutions. Faculty and staff participate in regular training on unconscious bias, respectful workplaces, and Indigenous awareness, including programs like the Kairos Blanket Exercise. The university supports multiple employee resource groups and equity committees, with staff and faculty-led initiatives focusing on women in academia, Indigenous scholars, and 2SLGBTQS+ inclusion. It also conducts regular climate surveys and publishes diversity-related reports, signaling accountability to both employees and the wider community. Cultural observances are embedded in the university's rhythm, with campus-wide recognition of Pride, Black History Month, and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. Leadership is visible in advancing these efforts, with senior administrators frequently participating in panels, reconciliation events, and diversity forums.
7. NAIT	17.5	NAIT has embedded inclusive culture into its institutional identity, with staff regularly participating in training on unconscious bias, respectful workplaces, and Indigenous awareness. The polytechnic has made reconciliation a visible priority through its Centre for Applied Technology, which incorporates Indigenous design elements, and through programming that integrates cultural safety into daily operations. Cultural observances are consistently recognized on campus, including Pride, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, and International Women's Day, often accompanied by public events and staff participation. Leadership visibility is notable, with executives actively endorsing reconciliation initiatives and women-in-STEM programs.
8. Alberta Blue Cross	17.4	Alberta Blue Cross stands out for embedding inclusion directly into its identity as a health benefits provider. The organization provides anti-discrimination and respectful workplace training for employees and reinforces belonging through resource groups and committees that give employees a voice in shaping policy. Cultural observances are recognized through events and communications marking Pride, Indigenous Peoples Day, and International Women's Day, with senior leaders visibly championing these initiatives.

Ranking/ Company Name	Critiera 1 Score	Notes on Top 20
9. Stantec	17.2	Stantec has made inclusive culture a strategic priority, demonstrated in both its workforce policies and community presence. All staff are offered unconscious bias and inclusive leadership training, and the company supports a growing network of employee resource groups, including Pride@Stantec, Women@Stantec, and Indigenous Connections. These ERGs are backed by executive sponsors and provide forums for peer support, mentorship, and policy advocacy. Cultural observances are a visible part of the company's rhythm, with active recognition of Pride, Orange Shirt Day, and International Women's Day through events and campaigns. Leadership is engaged, with executives frequently speaking at panels and inclusion summits.
10. CWB	16.5	CWB has emerged as a strong mid-tier performer in inclusive culture, investing in policies and employee-led initiatives that reflect the bank's growing diversity. The organization provides training on unconscious bias and respectful workplaces and supports an expanding set of employee resource groups that span women, Pride, Black employees, and Indigenous staff. These networks have been given formal budgets and leadership sponsorship, creating meaningful platforms for feedback and peer support. CWB also publishes elements of its workforce data, including representation of women and visible minorities, signaling progress toward accountability. Cultural observances such as Pride, Black History Month, and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation are visibly marked, and leadership has become more active in external forums addressing equity and inclusion.
11. Deloitte	16.5	Deloitte Canada embeds inclusive culture into its operations through mandatory training on unconscious bias, anti-harassment, and inclusive leadership, reinforced by leadership development programs that emphasize equity. The firm supports a wide network of employee resource groups across Canada, including those for women, Pride, Black professionals, and Indigenous employees, with local participation in Edmonton. These groups provide mentorship, peer support, and input into firm policy. Deloitte also publishes workforce diversity data nationally, including representation by gender and visible minority status, signaling accountability for progress. Cultural observances are marked both internally and externally, with campaigns tied to Pride, Black History Month, and Indigenous reconciliation, and executives often participate in industry DEI panels and community events in Edmonton. Inclusive benefits such as extended parental leave, transition-related healthcare, and flexible work reinforce a culture of belonging for employees across identity groups

Ranking/ Company Name	Critiera 1 Score	Notes on Top 20
12. Servus Credit Union	16.1	Servus Credit Union integrates inclusive culture into its cooperative values, ensuring that belonging is reflected in both policy and practice. Employees receive respectful workplace and unconscious bias training, and the organization has established internal committees to support women in leadership, Indigenous engagement, and emerging 2SLGBTQS+ initiatives. The credit union marks cultural observances such as Pride and National Day for Truth and Reconciliation with visible staff events and communications, often led by executives to highlight leadership commitment.
13. Alberta Health Services	15.9	Alberta Health Services has demonstrated a strong commitment to building an inclusive culture, embedding diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) across multiple levels of its operations. The organization has established a number of employee resource groups (ERGs), training programs, and policies designed to foster belonging and safety in the workplace. In particular, AHS offered Indigenous cultural competency training, and created programs to support newcomer and internationally educated health professionals in integrating into the workforce. Leadership accountability is evident through public reporting on workforce diversity metrics and the adoption of equity-focused goals within broader organizational strategies.
14. MacEwan University	15.6	MacEwan University demonstrates a growing commitment to inclusive culture, reflected in both policy and programming. The university offers staff training on respectful workplaces and unconscious bias, while also embedding Indigenous cultural awareness through workshops and public events tied to reconciliation. Cultural observances such as Pride, Black History Month, and National Day for Truth and Reconciliation are marked through campus-wide programming and communications, often featuring collaboration with local community organizations. Leadership visibility is evident in senior administrators' participation in diversity forums and cultural events, helping to normalize inclusion at an institutional level.
14. EPCOR	15.6	EPCOR has made visible strides in building an inclusive culture supportive of Underestimated Communities, particularly through training, employee networks, and cultural observances. The utility provides employees with diversity and respectful workplace training, and in recent years has expanded its internal inclusion committees to focus on Indigenous relations, women in leadership, and Pride. These committees are supported by senior leaders and provide input on both workplace policies and community-facing programs. Cultural observances such as National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, Pride, and International Women's Day are recognized through both internal events and public campaigns, with executives visibly participating. For example, EPCOR has raised the Pride flag at its headquarters and supported Indigenous programming in partnership with community groups.

Ranking/ Company Name	Critiera 1 Score	Notes on Top 20
16. Williams Engineering	15.5	Williams Engineering has been steadily advancing inclusive culture in a sector where formal DEI programs are still emerging. The company provides respectful workplace and anti-harassment training and has begun incorporating equity principles into recruitment and career development. Its leadership has publicly committed to reconciliation, with Indigenous land acknowledgements now standard at company events, and it has sponsored initiatives tied to National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. Cultural observances such as Pride and International Women's Day are recognized internally, and senior leaders have participated in industry forums addressing women in STEM and equity in engineering.
17. AIMco	15.0	AIMCo has been steadily building its inclusive culture framework, aligning with broader efforts in Alberta's financial and public sector institutions. The organization provides respectful workplace and anti-bias training for staff, and in recent years has taken steps to integrate equity into recruitment and leadership development. Employee-led inclusion councils help guide internal initiatives, with specific focus areas such as women in leadership and Indigenous relations. Cultural observances are marked through internal campaigns and staff events recognizing Pride, Orange Shirt Day, and International Women's Day. Leadership has become more visible in supporting inclusion, with executives speaking at community and industry DEI forums.
18. NorQuest College	15.0	NorQuest College reflects Edmonton's diversity in its workforce and has made inclusive culture a core priority. The institution provides training on unconscious bias, reconciliation, and respectful workplace practices, with a strong emphasis on Indigenous cultural awareness. It has also launched an Anti-Racism Action Plan and supports equity-focused committees that give staff a direct role in shaping policy and programming. Cultural observances are deeply embedded in the college's rhythm, with campus-wide recognition of Pride, Black History Month, and National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. Senior leaders are visible advocates, frequently participating in reconciliation events and equity-focused forums.
19. Finning	13.9	Finning has taken meaningful steps to improve inclusive culture in a traditionally male-dominated industry. The company offers training on unconscious bias and respectful workplaces, while also developing programs to increase women's representation in technical and leadership roles. Employee networks such as the Women@Finning group provide mentorship and peer support, and the company has begun building Indigenous engagement into its workforce strategies through partnerships and awareness initiatives. Cultural observances are recognized through internal campaigns and community sponsorships, such as participation in Indigenous awareness events and recognition of International Women's Day. Senior leaders have increasingly taken visible roles in DEI conversations, helping to normalize equity in the heavy equipment sector.

Ranking/ Company Name	Critiera 1 Score	Notes on Top 20
20. PCL Construction	13.3	PCL Construction integrates inclusion into its long-standing culture of safety, treating respect as a core workplace value. The company provides diversity and respectful workplace training to staff and reinforces accountability through its Health, Safety, and Environment program, which explicitly embeds anti-harassment and discrimination policies. Employee inclusion committees operate across multiple regions, including Edmonton, to support women in construction, Indigenous awareness, and emerging 2SLGBTQS+ networks. Cultural observances such as Pride, Orange Shirt Day, and International Women's Day are recognized internally, and the company has partnered with industry associations to promote women and Indigenous peoples in trades.
21. Edmonton Public Library	12.9	
22. Enbridge	12.8	
23. Strathscona County	12.7	
24. BMO	12.5	
25. Gilead Sciences	12.4	
26. Alberta Innovates	12.3	
27. Ledcor	12.2	
28. Capital Power	12.1	
29. Aurora Cannabis	12.0	
30. Peace Hill Insurance	12.0	
31. Field Law	12.0	
32. Good Samaritan Society	11.9	

Ranking/ Company Name	Critiera 1 Score	Notes on Top 20
33. Explore Edmonton	11.8	
34. Ernst & Young (EY)	11.7	
35. Edmonton Public Schools	11.6	
36. CapitalCare	11.5	
37. Alberta Motor Association	11.4	
38. KPMG Canada	11.3	
39. TD Bank	11.2	
40. Edmonton Police Services	11.0	
41. Scotiabank	10.9	
42. CIBC	10.8	
43. IBM Canada	10.8	
44. PwC	10.0	
45. Rogers	9.5	
46. Intuit	9.0	
47. CGI Edmonton	8.5	

Ranking/ Company Name	Critiera 1 Score	Notes on Top 20
48. Syncrude	8.5	
49. Bee-Clean	8.5	
50. Walmart	8.5	
51. Sobeys	8.0	
52. Canadian Tire	8.0	
53. Boston Pizza	8.0	
54. McDonald's	6.5	
55. Loblaws	6.5	
56. PepsiCo	6.5	
57. Federated Co-Op	6.5	
58. Hatch	5.8	
59. Imperial Oil	5.5	
60. UPS	5.0	
61. Chemtrade Refinery	5.0	
62. General Electric	5.0	
63. Sherritt	5.0	

CRITERIA 1 KEY FINDINGS SUMMARY

Overall, Edmonton's corporate landscape boasts strong leadership from larger employers, which are setting the tone with comprehensive inclusion programs. This, in turn, is influencing mid-sized and emerging players to adopt similar practices. The city's strong public sector and community ethos likely contribute to this sense of collaboration, as evidenced by networks like Edmonton Business Diversity Network (EBDN), where organizations share the practices that work.

The C-Tribe Underestimated Communities Corporate Equality Index also highlights that an inclusive culture is multidimensional. For an employer to succeed, it cannot focus solely on one group or endeavour. The top performers invest across the spectrum (from hiring to celebrating differences to removing systemic barriers).

RECOMMENDATIONS TO STRENGTHEN INCLUSIVE CULTURE IN EDMONTON'S WORKFORCE

To build on these findings, we propose a set of targeted, actionable recommendations for improving Inclusive Cultures (Criteria 1). Each recommendation addresses a focus where many organizations had gaps, and is followed by an explanation of why it matters and a concrete action plan.

- **Establish clear, identity-specific inclusion goals.**
  - Why it matters: Our research shows that companies with the strongest inclusion cultures (such as TELUS, Accenture, Clark Builders, and RBC) go beyond broad "diversity and inclusion" statements by setting measurable goals tied to specific identity groups. This approach reduces the risk of generic commitments that fail to address the barriers faced by particular communities. By naming groups — for example, Indigenous, Black, newcomer, or 2SLGBTQS+ employees — and linking goals to concrete timelines and metrics, organizations send a signal of seriousness both internally to employees and externally to stakeholders. Without identity-specific goals, companies risk overlooking persistent inequities, diluting accountability, and missing the opportunity to show progress transparently.
  - Actions: Companies should define and publish clear inclusion goals for each identity group, ensuring that targets are realistic but ambitious. Examples include: "increase Indigenous leadership representation by 30% by 2027," "mandate 100% of managers complete anti-bias training annually," or "double the number of 2SLGBTQS+ employee resource group participants by 2026." Organizations should also connect these goals to existing performance management systems (e.g., executive KPIs, annual reviews), report progress in public-facing diversity dashboards or ESG reports, and consult with employee resource groups and community partners to refine and validate targets. To build credibility, companies should commit to regular updates on progress and explain corrective actions when targets are not met.

- **Measure inclusion qualitatively.**
  - Why it matters: Culture is about lived experience, not just demographic headcounts. While representation data can highlight who is in the room, it does not capture whether employees feel respected, valued, or able to thrive. Our research found that only about 10% of companies in Edmonton conduct consistent "pulse checks" or climate surveys to measure belonging, psychological safety, and barriers to advancement.

    This leaves a blind spot: organizations may look diverse on paper but still struggle with toxic cultures, uneven promotion pathways, or exclusionary practices. Companies that invest in regular, experience-based measurement (e.g., TELUS and Enbridge with their inclusion and belonging surveys) are better equipped to identify hidden inequities, respond with targeted interventions, and track progress over time. Without this, leaders risk relying on superficial metrics that mask deeper systemic issues.

  - Actions: Employers should run regular Inclusion Climate Surveys that combine quantitative indicators (e.g., sense of belonging, trust in reporting mechanisms, perceived fairness in promotions) with qualitative feedback (open-ended employee stories, focus groups). Findings should be disaggregated by identity group to reveal where gaps are most pronounced.

    Crucially, organizations should publish high-level results and the actions taken in response to maintain trust and credibility. Complement surveys with other measures, such as anonymous reporting dashboards, exit interviews, and ERG feedback loops, to gain a multidimensional view of workplace culture. By institutionalizing these practices, companies can transition from one-off diversity initiatives to a continuous cycle of listening, learning, and continually improving inclusion.

- **Elevate leadership diversity through succession planning.**
  - Why it matters: Representation at the top remains one of the clearest indicators of whether inclusion is truly embedded within an organization. Our research found that visible Black and Indigenous executives are almost absent across Edmonton's major employers (less than 18% of companies in our report have Black or Indigenous C-Level executives). At the same time, achieving gender parity in leadership remains rare.

    Even companies with substantial mid-level diversity often see progress stall before the executive ranks, reinforcing systemic barriers and limiting diverse perspectives where the most critical decisions are made. Without deliberate strategies, the "leaky pipeline" effect persists: underestimated employees may enter organizations in higher numbers but struggle to advance due to biased promotion practices, lack of sponsorship, or exclusion from informal leadership networks.

  - Actions: Employers should create succession pipelines that intentionally identify, prepare, and advance underestimated talent into senior leadership roles. This means conducting audits of current leadership demographics, setting time-bound representation targets, and tying progress to board and executive accountability. Sponsorship (not just mentorship) programs should be built to ensure high-potential employees from Black, Indigenous, Immigrant, Women, Youth, and 2SLGBTQS+ communities receive active advocacy from senior leaders.

    Formal leadership development programs should be resourced with stretch assignments, rotational leadership opportunities, and coaching tailored to underestimated employees. To sustain progress, companies should transparently report on leadership demographics, highlight role models internally and externally, and partner with community organizations and post-secondary institutions to strengthen leadership pipelines over the long term.

- **Invest in formal Employee Resource Groups (ERGs).**
  - Why it matters: Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) are one of the most effective tools for peer-led inclusion, offering safe spaces where employees can share experiences, build networks, and influence company culture. However, our research found that fewer than 20% of evaluated companies had visible, structured ERGs across three or more identity groups, and even fewer gave them meaningful budgets or executive access.

    This is a missed opportunity: ERGs not only help underrepresented employees feel a stronger sense of belonging, but they also act as a feedback channel to surface barriers and propose practical policy improvements. Companies that actively invest in ERGs gain a competitive advantage by fostering deeper engagement, improving retention, and building trust with identity-based communities.

  - Actions: Employers should establish and sustain ERGs for (but not limited to) Black, Indigenous, 2SLGBTQS+, Women, Youth, and Immigrant employees. This includes providing annual budgets for programming, training, and community initiatives; securing executive sponsorship to ensure ERGs have a direct line of influence on leadership decisions; and formally integrating ERG input into HR, recruitment, and communications policies. Companies should also measure the reach and impact of ERGs (e.g., participation rates, policy changes influenced, retention outcomes for members) to demonstrate value and accountability. Finally, cross-ERG collaboration should be encouraged to strengthen solidarity across identities, while also recognizing the unique needs of each group.

- **Formalize inclusion training & onboarding.**

  - Why it matters: The onboarding process is often the first sustained interaction a new hire has with company culture. It sets expectations, signals values, and shapes how included they feel from day one. Our research found that more than 90% of top-ranked organizations (those in the top 20) have embedded formal inclusion training into their onboarding programs.

    In contrast, most mid-ranked companies only offer ad hoc or optional sessions, leaving new employees with uneven exposure to inclusion practices. Without a standardized approach, organizations risk normalizing exclusionary behaviours, forcing underestimated employees to shoulder the burden of navigating bias on their own, and weakening the foundation for an inclusive culture. By embedding structured, identity-specific inclusion training early, companies can build stronger outcomes in terms of belonging, psychological safety, and employee retention.s build stronger belonging, psychological safety, and retention outcomes.

  - Actions: Employers should mandate inclusion training as part of onboarding for all new employees, managers, and executives. Training should cover core areas such as anti-racism, unconscious bias, and inclusive communication, while also integrating modules tailored to local workforce realities (e.g., Indigenous cultural awareness, anti-Black racism, 2SLGBTQ+ allyship). Beyond onboarding, companies should refresh training annually to ensure sustained impact and alignment with evolving best practices.

    To strengthen credibility, training should be delivered in partnership with community organizations and experts, rather than being developed in-house. Companies should also evaluate training effectiveness by collecting participant feedback, tracking shifts in behaviour, and linking completion to performance management. Finally, integrating inclusion content into leadership development and promotion processes ensures that inclusion is not viewed as "extra," but as core to professional growth within the organization.

- **Embed celebrations of cultural observances.**

  - Why it matters: Acknowledging cultural observances only through social media posts or corporate statements risks coming across as performative. Our research found that fewer than 35% of companies move beyond statements to actively host or participate in panels, speaker series, rallies, or storytelling events tied to cultural and identity-based observances (e.g., Black History Month, National Indigenous Peoples Day, Pride, International Women's Day).

    Actions: Employers should develop a funded annual calendar of cultural observances that integrates education, dialogue, and celebration. This could include hosting internal events (such as fireside chats, storytelling sessions, or panel discussions with diverse leaders), providing curated learning resources (articles, podcasts, and training modules), and forging partnerships with community organizations to co-create authentic programming. Companies should also encourage employee-led initiatives, supported with budget allocations and paid time to plan or participate, ensuring that observances are not seen as token efforts but as meaningful investments.

- **Join or Support Cross-Section Inclusion Networks.**

  - Why it matters: No single company can solve systemic inequities in isolation. Cross-section inclusion networks — such as the Edmonton Business Diversity Network (EBDN), Indigenomics, the Black Talent Initiative, Indigenous Partnerships Success Showcase, and The Firehood — provide platforms for employers to learn, collaborate, and demonstrate accountability. Our research revealed that more than 90% of companies ranked in the top 20 are active in at least three such networks, providing them with access to shared best practices, training, and credibility within diverse communities. These collaborations not only amplify impact but also help mitigate resource gaps for smaller companies that may lack internal DEI infrastructure.

    Organizations that fail to engage in collective efforts risk falling behind peers, missing opportunities to demonstrate leadership in inclusion, and isolating themselves from the broader movement toward inclusive economic development.

- Actions: Employers should formally join and support regional and national inclusion networks as part of their inclusion strategies. This includes contributing financial support, dedicating staff time to network initiatives, and actively participating in events, roundtables, and working groups. Companies can also co-sponsor community-driven projects, collaborate on supplier diversity pipelines, and share anonymized data or case studies to build collective intelligence. Importantly, involvement should not be passive membership — organizations should commit to visible leadership roles within these networks (e.g., board representation, hosting partnered events, or serving as champions of cross-sector initiatives). By pooling resources and advocating collectively, Edmonton's employers can accelerate systemic progress, strengthen their reputations, and embed themselves within the ecosystem of inclusive economic development.

CRITERIA 2: CORPORATE OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

CRITERIA 2: CORPORATE OUTREACH ENGAGEMENT

Criteria 2 Overview of Methodology

We evaluated 65 companies with a significant presence in Edmonton to better understand how companies extend their diversity and inclusion efforts beyond their own walls and into the broader community. The goal was to understand the extent to which Edmonton-based companies engage with and support Underestimated groups in the community through partnerships, programs, and leadership involvement.

Criteria 2 Evaluation Framework

We evaluated each company's community outreach using the following three sub-categories, applied consistently to each identity group:

1. Community Partnerships (0-3): Evidence of formal partnerships, sponsorships or ongoing collaborations with organizations serving the above identity groups (e.g. nonprofits, community initiatives, educational institutions). This includes activities like funding or joint programs with Indigenous community organizations, women's leadership networks, cultural festivals, etc.

2. Talent Pipeline & Outreach (0-3): Initiatives aimed at recruiting, mentoring or developing individuals from Underestimated Communities outside the organization. Examples include internship or scholarship programs for diverse youth, outreach to immigrant job-seekers, and mentorship programs for students.

3. Leadership Visibility (0-3): The public visibility of company leadership in supporting DEI causes in the community. We sought leaders' participation in community events (e.g., Pride parades, Indigenous celebrations), service on boards or councils of community organizations, or public advocacy on behalf of these identity groups.

A company could receive a maximum of 54 points, and total raw scores across all six groups were normalized to a score out of 20 for dashboard comparisons. A score of:

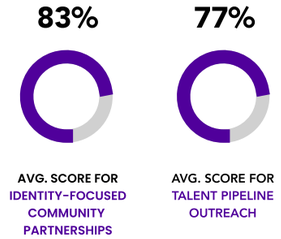
- 0 indicates no notable evidence in that area;
- 1 point indicates minimal or ad-hoc action taken;
- 2 is moderate implementation, with some identity-specific design or tracking;
- 3 shows strong, identity-specific initiatives with measurable outcomes or structural integration.

Our team collected data from publicly available sources, including corporate websites (particularly sections on community engagement, sustainability, and diversity reports), press releases, news articles, and social media posts. We also collected information from surveys, when available, that both employees and employers completed.

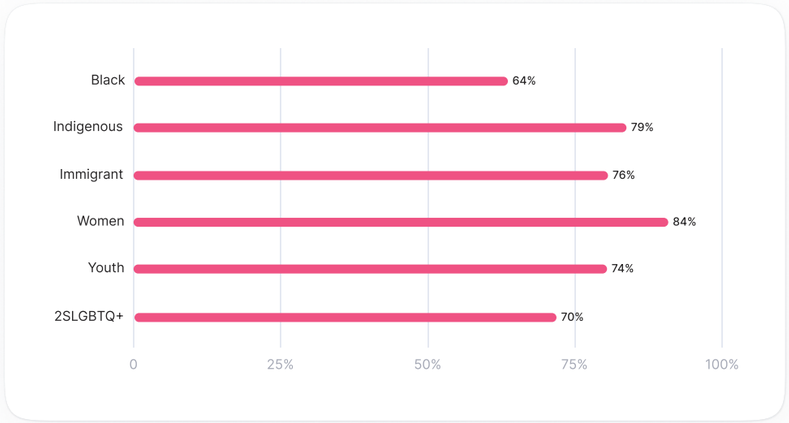
14.93/20

CRITERIA 2 OVERALL EVALUATION

Average by Dimension



Average Score by Identity Group



Criteria 2 Key Findings

Overall, Edmonton companies demonstrated a mix of strengths and gaps in their community outreach efforts. Most firms recognize the value of engaging communities, but the depth of that engagement varies widely by identity group. Broadly, initiatives supporting Indigenous- and women-focused communities and youth development were the most common, whereas targeted outreach to Black, Immigrant, and 2SLGBTQS+ groups was less frequent. Below, we highlighted the general trends and noteworthy findings for various groups:

- Indigenous Partnerships: almost every large company we reviewed had some form of Indigenous community engagement. Making this the most consistently addressed area of outreach. This trend aligns with widespread corporate response to Truth and Reconciliation efforts in Canada. Many firms and organizations have formal Indigenous Relations strategies or partnerships. For example, Enbridge was part of a landmark partnership in which 23 First Nations and Metis communities united to purchase an 11.57% equity stake in several Enbridge pipelines — a $1.12 billion deal hailed as a template for Indigenous ownership in significant projects. ATB Financial played a key role in enabling this deal by providing financial solutions and advisory support to the Indigenous coalition, demonstrating a deep level of corporate allyship.
- Numerous companies also support Indigenous communities through education and employment initiatives. Suncor, for instance, has a dedicated Indigenous Summer Student Program that offers work placement to Indigenous post-secondary students each year, and partners with the CAREERS foundation to provide paid internships for Indigenous students in Alberta. These efforts foster trust and reciprocity with Indigenous Peoples, while also contributing to economic reconciliation. On average, Indigenous outreach was the strongest-performing sub-category for Criterion 2, with many companies scoring full points for sustained partnerships (e.g., long-term funding agreements, Indigenous advisory boards, or procurement initiatives with Indigenous businesses).
- Youth Outreach & Talent Pipelines: Investing in youth was another relatively ubiquitous theme. About half (55%) of the companies had programs aimed at developing young talent, which often doubles as a diversity pipeline for the future workforce. Some of these opportunities are general in nature (e.g., scholarships or summer student jobs open to all youth), while others are specifically focused on Underestimated Youth. We found multiple examples of internship and education programs designed to reach marginalized youth. Examples include Suncor's Indigenous student internships, ATB Financial runs the ATB 101 summer student program, a four-month paid work experience that has helped launch the careers of students across Alberta.

  While ATB 101 is open to all students, ATB and other employers often utilize such programs to engage diverse young people in building a more representative talent pipeline. Additionally, some companies sponsor or host youth-oriented community programs. For example, a few firms sponsor science and technology camps for girls or partner with local schools in mentoring programs. Overall, youth outreach tended to score well when present. Companies earned points if they had any structured program for students or young professionals. However, about half the companies lacked specific youth-focused initiatives, suggesting room for expanded efforts to inspire the next generation from all backgrounds.
- Women's Community Initiatives: Outreach aimed at women (as a broad demographic) was moderately visible. Many companies (just under 65%) incorporate the advancement of women into their internal programs, but external community efforts were more limited to specific industries and larger firms. Still, around one-third of the companies showed notable engagement in women-focused initiatives beyond their workforce. For example, Enbridge partners with external organizations to support women in traditionally underestimated fields. One highlighted partnership is with WinSETT (Women in Science, Engineering, Trades, and Technology), through which Enbridge exchanges best practices and promotes the development of women in these fields.

- Other companies sponsored events, such as women-in-business conferences (attended by 95% of the top 20 companies), women's mentorship circles, or made donations to women's shelters and charities. These efforts tended to be less standardized compared to Indigenous partnerships, often taking the form of one-time sponsorships or ad hoc events. They indicate, however, that some Edmonton employers are extending their efforts to promote gender equity in the community. On this criterion, companies that actively collaborated with established networks or programs for women earned higher scores, whereas those that only mentioned generic support for "women empowerment" without specifics did not score as well.

- 2LGBTQ+ Community Support: 2LGBTQS+ community was present but usually in a limited capacity. About a quarter of the companies demonstrated visible support, often centred around Pride Month activities (single-event activities). For instance, several large employers participate in or sponsor local Pride events. Having top leaders walk alongside community members sends a powerful message of inclusion.

  ATB is an example that goes beyond single-event activations. In 2022, ATB updated its logo to include the Progress Pride flag colours and announced partnerships with several 2LGBTQS+ organizations. ATB provides support to the Centre for Sexuality to expand outreach into rural communities, funds programs at the University of Alberta's Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services (which runs initiatives such as the CHEW Project for 2LGBTQS+ youth), and supports youth-focused nonprofits, including the Skipping Stone Foundation, which serves transgender and non-binary youth. These targeted partnerships earned ATB a top score in this area.

  However, beyond examples like this from top firms, most companies' 2LGBTQS+ outreach was modest and often limited to sponsoring Pride festivities or making public statements of support. Few (just over 10%) have year-round community programs or long-term partnerships focusing on sexual and gender minorities. This suggests that while openness to 2LGBTQS+ inclusion is high, proactive and durable engagement is an area of growth.

- Black Community Outreach: Engagement with Black communities was another area with mixed performance. Internally, many employers have launched diversity initiatives in the wake of the post George Floyd area and many other anti-racism movements (note: many have dissipated or do not offer relevant programming anymore), but externally, specific outreach to Black communities was limited. Only a few companies (roughly 8% of the 65 companies evaluated) showed notable programs or partnerships targeting Black Edmontonians/Canadians.

  A leading practice comes again from ATB: its Black Team Member Network has established strategic partnerships with groups like the National Black Coalition of Canada (NBCC) in Edmonton and local startup incubators to host financial literacy workshops, mentorship opportunities, and networking events for Black professionals.

- This form of community-facing engagement directly supports Black entrepreneurs and youth, and ATB earned full points in the Community Partnerships sub-section for it.

  Notably, Black-focused outreach tends to be event-based (e.g. sponsoring Black History Month celebrations or anti-racism speaker series), rather than sustained programs. The findings indicate that while companies are increasingly vocal about Black inclusion within their workforce (and as a byproduct, in the community), translating that into community engagement (such as partnerships with Black-led organizations or support for Black students) is still nascent. Just over 5% of companies had publicly noted outreach specifically for Black communities, representing a gap in overall performance under Criteria 2.

- Immigrant/Newcomer Community Support: Among all groups, immigrant (newcomer) communities received the least explicit attention in corporate outreach. We found limited examples (5%) of companies engaging directly with immigrant-serving organizations or tailoring programs for newcomers. A handful of firms (70%) mentioned diversity in broad terms, which would include newcomers, or had hiring programs that welcomed internationally trained professionals. However, no company in our sample stood out with dedicated initiatives for immigrant communities.

  For instance, 5% of the reviewed companies publicly reported partnerships with local immigrant settlement agencies or mentorship schemes for new Canadians. This is an area where companies could improve, especially given Edmonton's growing immigrant population. It is worth noting that some outreach efforts under other categories indirectly benefit immigrants (for example, youth or women's programs may include immigrant participants, or general donations to United Ways will support newcomer services). However, the lack of targeted newcomer programs meant most companies scored 0 in this specific aspect. The limited level of immigrant-focused outreach was a notable finding, suggesting that corporate community engagement strategies have yet to fully catch up with supporting immigrants' inclusion and economic integration.

Ranking/ Company Name	Critiera 2 Score	Notes on Top 20
1. City of Edmonton	19.6	The City of Edmonton actively collaborates with community organizations to advance equity. It convenes an Anti-Racism Advisory Committee and funds local anti-racism projects, and has partnered with agencies like the Africa Centre, ASSIST (serving newcomers), IslamicFamily, and MacEwan University's kihêw waciston Indigenous Centre to co-deliver programs. For example, the City's new Civic Youth Fellowship internship is co-designed with community partners (e.g. Africa Centre, Canadian Race Relations Foundation) to engage diverse youth in municipal governance The City also works closely with Indigenous communities – it maintains an Indigenous Relations Office, has formal Memoranda of Understanding with local First Nations, and jointly plans events like the annual Treaty 6 Recognition Day. Talent Pipeline & Outreach: The City runs multiple outreach programs for Underestimated groups. It offers an Indigenous Peoples Summer Student Program (up to 5-month internships for Indigenous students) and work-experience practicums to help Indigenous students build public-sector careers. The City's Nîkânîw program blends Indigenous cultural teachings with certified job training (e.g. aquatic safety) for Indigenous youth.
2. RBC	19.6	RBC maintains extensive partnerships to uplift diverse communities. It works with numerous organizations to expand opportunities for Underestimated groups – e.g. partnering with the Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work (disability employment), Women in Capital Markets (advancing women), the Onyx Initiative (mentoring Black students), and the Financial Alliance for Racial Equity. RBC also invests heavily in Indigenous communities, having for decades partnered with First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples to drive social and economic progress. For instance, RBC provides 20 annual Indigenous youth scholarships up to $10,000/year (over $2 million awarded since 1992). RBC runs targeted recruitment and development programs. It has specialized hiring partnerships to attract diverse talent and offers coaching, mentorship and upskilling programs for equity-deserving groups. Signature initiatives include the RBC Indigenous Peoples Development Program and scholarships (as noted), as well as support for Black and other racialized youth through RBC Future Launch. RBC's charitable arm also funds educational access (e.g. partnership with NorQuest College to remove barriers for diverse learners). RBC's leadership is highly visible in DEI efforts. CEO Dave McKay chairs the bank's Diversity Leadership Council and has publicly set the "tone from the top" by refreshing RBC's five-year D&I blueprint.
3. University of Alberta	19.2	The University of Alberta (U of A) engages broadly with communities to promote inclusion and reconciliation. It partners with Indigenous communities on research and education initiatives – for example, an Indigenous-led collaboration with the U of A and University of Calgary is advancing community-driven Indigenous health policy research. The university also works with First Nations University of Canada and other Indigenous institutions to implement its Indigenous strategic plan ("Braiding Past, Present and Future") across faculties. For newcomers, U of A's Community Engagement programs cooperate with local immigrant-serving agencies to bridge university expertise with newcomer needs. The university's Senate and Community Committee include cultural and industry leaders to guide outreach programs. U of A runs multiple pipeline programs for underrepresented learners. It offers an Indigenous Student Transition Program and awards numerous Indigenous scholarships (often funded in partnership with Indspire) to increase Indigenous representation in academia. The university's Women in Scholarship, Engineering, Science & Technology (WISEST) initiative has, for decades, provided mentorship and research internships to young women and girls, including Indigenous youth, to pursue STEM fields. Similarly, U of A hosts the Black Youth Mentorship and Leadership Program (within its Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry) to connect Black high school students with health science mentors. These efforts, along with targeted recruitment of faculty from equity-deserving groups, help diversify the talent pipeline.

Ranking/ Company Name	Critiera 2 Score	Notes on Top 20
4. Edmonton Public Library	19.1	EPL's award-winning Community-Led Service Philosophy centers on partnering with community organizations to serve Underestimated Communities in Edmonton. EPL has formal collaborations with agencies supporting newcomers, Indigenous peoples, and vulnerable groups. It works with immigrant-settlement organizations to offer library-based ESL conversation circles and digital literacy help (including an Interpreter Volunteer Program to assist non-English speakers). EPL also partners with Indigenous elders and cultural educators – for instance, the new Stanley Milner Library features an Indigenous gathering space (PÎYÊSÎW Wâskâhikan) developed with local Indigenous advisors. For the 2SLGBTQ+ community, EPL co-hosts Reading With Royalty events (children's storytimes led by drag performers) in partnership with the Pride Centre of Edmonton, to foster acceptance and family inclusion. The CEO and Board have publicly championed inclusion – EPL was the first Canadian library to eliminate late fees to remove barriers for low-income patrons. Library managers and senior staff actively participate in city-wide initiatives (EPL sits on Edmonton's Anti-Racism Advisory Committee and the Poverty Elimination Council). Internally, EPL provides diversity training to all staff and has an Inclusion & Diversity Committee reporting to library executives.
5. TD Bank	19.1	TD Bank is notable for its broad support of community organizations serving equity-deserving groups. It supports over 230 organizations across North America serving 2SLGBTQ+ communities— a commitment reflected in TD's ubiquitous presence as a sponsor at Pride festivals and queer community events. TD also invests in Indigenous community programs that promote education, health, and cultural celebration. For example, TD funds early-learning initiatives in Indigenous communities and partners with groups to improve financial literacy and health outcomes for Indigenous peoples. TD runs targeted initiatives to build a diverse talent pipeline. It has specialized recruitment programs for Indigenous peoples (e.g. Indigenous summer internships and a rotational Indigenous Leadership Program) and for persons with disabilities. TD's Visible Minorities in Leadership goal led to mentorship and sponsorship programs that helped boost representation of racialized employees in senior roles by ~30%. The bank also offers scholarships – for instance, TD has funded "TD Scholarships for Indigenous Youth" (20 awards annually) and has supported women in STEM through sponsorship of Canada's Women in Tech scholarship contests. Notably, TD recently committed $10 million to create bursaries and internships for Black students in partnership with the Black Opportunity Fund and Canadian government (as part of the BlackNorth Initiative). TD's leadership has a long history of championing DEI publicly.
6. Stantec	19.0	Stantec actively partners with educational and cultural organizations to promote inclusion. In partnership with the University of Alberta, Stantec co-created an Indigenous Partnership Development Program to train non-Indigenous professionals on working respectfully with Indigenous communities Stantec also supports Indigenous arts and youth – it sponsored the imagineNATIVE Indigenous film festival and has been a long-time conference partner of Indspire's Soaring Indigenous Youth Gathering, engaging hundreds of Indigenous students in career workshops. The firm invests in scholarships and mentorship for underrepresented groups. It launched the Stantec Equity & Diversity Scholarship to support BIPOC students in STEAM fields, and offers Indigenous bursaries and five-year scholarships for Indigenous engineering students. Stantec's leadership shows strong public commitment to DEI. The company earned Canada's bronze-level Indigenous business accreditation (PAIR) in 2024.

Ranking/ Company Name	Critiera 2 Score	Notes on Top 20
7. KPMG	19.0	KPMG Canada has woven community partnerships into its inclusion strategy, especially in education. The firm has collaborated with the Alliance of Black Employee Experience and Leadership (ABEEL) Foundation (founded by employees in the construction industry) and ICON Talent Partners to create a unique scholarship, mentorship, and internship program for Black youth. KPMG also partners with Indspire to administer its long-running Indigenous student awards – since 2012, KPMG has provided 114 scholarships to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students via Indspire's Building Brighter Futures program. KPMG has several equitable recruitment programs. For Indigenous talent, it offers KPMG Indigenous Student Awards(which include a financial award and an offer of internship/employment), and a dedicated Intern/Co-op hiring stream for Indigenous students across Canada. To bolster Black representation, KPMG established the ACE scholarship program in partnership with ABEEL/Icon – targeting Black high schoolers with scholarships plus internships at KPMG to encourage them into accounting/ finance careers. KPMG's leaders also championed anti-racism in the aftermath of 2020; the firm's Executive Committee set targets for Black employee recruitment and partnered with external Black-led councils to hold themselves accountable.
8. ATB	19.0	ATB invests heavily in grassroots initiatives that support underestimated groups, such as sponsorship of Indigenous entrepreneurship and reconciliation programs in collaboration with organizations like the Alberta Indigenous Opportunities Corporation and First Nations Technical Services Advisory Group. ATB also runs financial literacy workshops for newcomers and immigrants, delivered in partnership with settlement agencies, to help families establish credit, navigate Canadian banking systems, and build long-term wealth. The bank's ATB Up initiative provides tailored mentorship and business coaching for women entrepreneurs, while youth-focused programs include partnerships with Junior Achievement Northern Alberta to provide financial education and career preparation for thousands of students annually. ATB also funds scholarships and bursaries targeted toward racialized and Indigenous students pursuing business and STEM disciplines at Alberta post-secondary institutions. ATB has consistently been a sponsor of Edmonton's Heritage Festival, Dreamspeakers Indigenous Film Festival, and Africa Centre's community events, helping to amplify and celebrate historically marginalized communities. Furthermore, its Build Her Business competition specifically invests in women-led startups, providing both funding and visibility for founders.
9. BMO	19.0	BMO demonstrates strong community alliances in many areas. It partners with United Way and local governments on economic inclusion projects, particularly those to revitalize underserved neighbourhoods. BMO also works closely with Indigenous communities: it created an Indigenous Advisory Council (comprised of Chiefs and Indigenous leaders from across Canada) to guide its policies and has teamed with First Nations University of Canada on employee cultural awareness training. BMO backs extensive programs to develop diverse talent. It pledged that 40% of its student hires will be BIPOC youth and set new five-year targets for increasing BIPOC representation in management. BMO has also provided over 100 scholarships to Indigenous students since 1992 through its Indigenous scholarship program and runs the BMO Women in Leadership mentorship program internally and for clients. The bank's recent $15 million commitment to Black entrepreneurs is creating incubation and financing opportunities for Black-owned small businesses

Ranking/ Company Name	Critiera 2 Score	Notes on Top 20
10. TELUS	18.5	TELUS invests heavily in community programs that advance inclusion. It supports Indigenous communities via grants (the TELUS Indigenous Communities Fund backs cultural, health, and education projects and through Mobility for Good, partnering with Indigenous Friendship Centres to provide free phones to at-risk Indigenous women. TELUS is also a visible Pride sponsor and funds over 230 LGBTQ2S+ organizationstd.com, and contributes to multicultural initiatives (e.g. TELUS Mosaic ERG and community board grants for newcomers). Talent Pipeline & Outreach: TELUS offers scholarships and bursaries to underrepresented youth – for example, its Diversity in Technology Scholarship (40+ awards of $5,000 to women and visible minorities in STEM since 2018). TELUS executives actively champion DEI. Senior leaders sponsor internal inclusion networks (e.g. VP Shazia Sobani sponsors the Indigenous "Eagles" group) and the company's CEO has publicly advocated reconciliation and inclusive learning. TELUS' leadership also convenes local community boards to direct funding to inclusive causes, underscoring a top-down commitment to diversity in the community.
11. PCL Construction	18.5	PCL integrates community partnership into its business model, especially with Indigenous and minority communities. PCL joined the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB) in 2021 and is a member of the Northeastern Alberta Aboriginal Business Association, working to include Indigenous contractors and build capacity in those communities. It has formal partnerships with multiple Indigenous communities on projects and has co-developed cultural awareness training with Algonquin College to strengthen Indigenous inclusion on job sites. PCL also strategically partners with organizations to diversify its talent pipeline – for example, it collaborates with ICON Talent Partners and Black community organizations to recruit Black university students (providing scholarships, internships and mentorship). The company supports women in construction through partnerships with groups like Women Building Futures and the Canadian Association of Women in Construction (advocating for women apprentices and sponsoring leadership training for female project managers). Talent Pipeline & Outreach: PCL has a robust internal DEI infrastructure to foster diverse talent. It established DE&I committees in every district office, supported by senior leadership, totaling 180 employees engaged in diversity initiatives across the company
12. Scotiabank	18.5	Scotiabank directs substantial support to programs that advance inclusion and economic resilience. Its flagship Scotiabank Women Initiative commits funding, mentorship, and advisory services to women-led businesses and non-profits, aiming to enhance opportunities for women and non-binary individuals in the economy. Scotiabank has also been a leader in LGBTQ2S+ support – it was the first Canadian bank to open a branch on a First Nation reserve (demonstrating commitment to Indigenous inclusion) and it sponsors numerous Pride and AIDS awareness events (Scotiabank's international Pride Network engages employees in community volunteering). The bank recently partnered with The 519 (a Toronto LGBTQ+ community center) on Project Unlock, providing individualized training and financial assistance to LGBTQIA+ newcomers to help them obtain Canadian professional credentials. Scotiabank's top executives have publicly reinforced these commitments. For example, Tanja Perry, a regional VP, have driven internal change – Perry helped create a mandatory Indigenous cultural competency training for all Canadian staff

Ranking/ Company Name	Critiera 2 Score	Notes on Top 20
13. EllisDon	18.5	EllisDon, a major construction firm, has become an industry leader in anti-racism and inclusion initiatives. It established the Alliance of Black Employee Experience and Leadership (ABEEL) in 2020 – an employee-founded group that quickly spun off a charitable foundation. In collaboration with community partners, the ABEEL Foundation runs the Shaping the Future Sponsorship Program, enabling Canadian high school students to propose ideas for a more inclusive community and awarding scholarships to the best ideas. EllisDon has also teamed with competitors and clients to tackle racism industry-wide: it co-launched an alliance with other construction companies (like Tridel) to share best practices and stop anti-Black racism on job sites. The company's ALLied inclusive diversity committee has other subgroups (for women, for new immigrants, etc.) that organize recruitment fairs and apprenticeship opportunities for those groups EllisDon also recently introduced an Indigenous Internship Program in partnership with Indspire, hiring Indigenous youth into project coordinator roles with built-in mentorship from senior staff. To improve retention, EllisDon created a specialized Cultural Competency training for managers to better support diverse apprentices on site. Senior executives sit on the Inclusive Diversity council (ALLied) and personally champion its initiatives – for example, EllisDon's VP of Inclusive Diversity, Jennifer Khan, often speaks at industry events about their journey and progress.
14. CIBC	18.5	CIBC focuses its community investments on breaking down barriers for marginalized groups. In 2020, CIBC announced over $1 million in new donations to organizations supporting Black communities (funding scholarships for Black youth and community programs)cibc.com. It also partnered with TELUS's Friendly Future Foundation to create a joint $2 million fund for up to 500 Black youth "changemakers," providing grants and skills development opportunities. CIBC supports Indigenous inclusion through education: it donated $100,000 to Algonquin College to endow bursaries for Black, Indigenous, and disabled students in need. he bank was also the first Canadian bank to form an employee network for LGBTQ+ staff (in 1992!) and has long sponsored Pride festivals and HIV/AIDS charities (e.g. as lead sponsor of Toronto's AIDS Walk). It has a dedicated Indigenous Recruitment team and participates in Indigenous career fairs, resulting in a steady intake of Indigenous interns and new graduates each year. CIBC set goals to increase Black representation at all levels and in 2020 committed to internships for Black students and mentorship through the BlackNorth Initiative. The bank's Inclusive Leadership Development program pairs high-potential women and BIPOC employees with executive mentors to prepare them for promotion.
15. Deloitte	18.5	Deloitte Canada engages in partnerships that reflect its Reconciliation and Inclusion commitments. Since 2020, Deloitte has worked with the First Nations University of Canada and Reconciliation education experts to deliver Indigenous cultural awareness training company-wide. It also supports Indigenous youth initiatives – for example, a recent Deloitte report spotlighted Indigenous youth leaders and recommended policy changes to support their well-being. indicating Deloitte's collaboration with Indigenous youth networks. Deloitte is a corporate partner of Pride at Work Canada and a major sponsor of Catalyst (which promotes women's advancement in business), demonstrating support for LGBTQ2S+ and gender equity organizations. Deloitte Canada also published a detailed Reconciliation Action Plan – one of the first in its industry – outlining executive-level accountabilities (for instance, appointing a senior partner to monitor TRC Call to Action #92 compliance in Deloitte's operations). Leaders at Deloitte frequently share insights on inclusion in publications and events.

Ranking/ Company Name	Critiera 2 Score	Notes on Top 20
16. Alberta Blue Cross	17.5	Alberta Blue Cross (ABC) leverages its community investment to support diverse Albertans' wellbeing. Through its Community Wellbeing Grant program, ABC funds dozens of local organizations that serve newcomers and refugees, seniors, families, vulnerable youth, children, LGBTQ2S+ people, and persons with disabilities — for example, recent grants supported a refugee women's health network and a rural Pride youth conference. ABC also partners with the Alberta Women's Health Foundation on the "Inspire Inclusion" campaign, aimed at addressing historic gaps in women's healthcare (especially for Indigenous and racialized women). Furthermore, Blue Cross's Ledcor Cares (corporate social responsibility arm) frequently sponsors Indigenous cultural events and disability sports programs, demonstrating a breadth of community engagement. As a smaller Crown-owned insurer, ABC focuses on educational outreach. It established an Indigenous Scholarship Program to help First Nations, Inuit, and Métis students pursue post-secondary education, acknowledging and tackling inequities faced by Indigenous youth. ABC also runs the Shape Your Future high-school outreach, offering career mentorship sessions in Alberta schools with high newcomer or Indigenous populations. Internally, ABC ensures inclusive hiring by working with agencies that connect candidates with disabilities and newcomers (its HR team notes partnerships with inclusion-focused recruiters to increase workforce diversity).
17. Enbridge	17.0	Enbridge partners with nonprofits and community groups across identity groups – for example, collaborating with Egale Canada and Pride at Work to support LGBTQ2S+ youth (e.g. the "OUT at Night" campaign). Enbridge also works closely with Indigenous communities, providing scholarships, skills training, and support for Indigenous businesses. The company offers targeted opportunities such as an Indigenous scholarship at Mount Royal University for Indigenous youth bridging to post-secondary , and has multiple employee resource groups (for women, Indigenous people, LGBTQ2S+ employees, newcomers, etc.) to foster diverse talent. Enbridge's executives visibly champion DEI; for instance, COO Leon Zupan served as executive sponsor of the Prism LGBTQ ERG and publicly advocated for LGBTQ youth homelessness initiatives. Enbridge's leadership also engages in economic partnerships with Indigenous nations (e.g. inviting Indigenous equity investment in pipelines) and regularly communicates its commitment to reconciliation
18. Suncor	17.0	Suncor has forged significant partnerships with Indigenous communities and advocacy groups. It has formal agreements with numerous Indigenous nations near its operations, covering consultation, economic benefits, and community programs. The company also partners with the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) – Suncor supported NWAC's calls for justice on Red Dress Day, highlighting the rights of Indigenous women and two-spirit people. Additionally, Suncor's charitable foundation funds Indigenous-led initiatives in education and cultural preservation. Suncor focuses its outreach on increasing Indigenous and female representation in its workforce. It implemented an Indigenous Workforce Development Strategy to recruit, train and advance Indigenous employees through partnerships in education and skills training. Internally, Suncor has six employee inclusion networks – including "Women's Networks," "Journeys" for Indigenous employees, "Prism" for LGBTQ+ – which sponsor mentoring, career development events, and allyship training year-round (e.g. for Black History, Pride, National Indigenous Peoples Day)

Ranking/ Company Name	Critiera 2 Score	Notes on Top 20
19. Ledcor	16.0	Ledcor Group emphasizes partnerships that reflect its commitment to Indigenous engagement and community care. The company works closely with Indigenous communities wherever it operates – it has multiple partnerships and joint ventures with Indigenous-owned enterprises (for example, Ledcor has partnered with Indigenous groups in pipeline and mining projects to ensure shared benefits). Ledcor publicly affirms respect for Indigenous cultural values and engages in "meaningful engagement" to build long-term relationships. On National Indigenous Peoples Day, Ledcor released a video showcasing how its many Indigenous partnerships are created and sustained underlining transparency in this work. Beyond Indigenous communities, Ledcor supports diverse local causes through its Ledcor Cares program: employees volunteer and fundraise for initiatives ranging from children's hospitals to disability advocacy walks. The company also sponsors community events such as multicultural festivals in Edmonton and Vancouver, aiming to celebrate the diversity of the neighbourhoods where it builds. The CEO and senior VPs champion the I&D Councils, ensuring diverse voices are heard at the decision-making table. Each year, top executives lead an internal "Inclusion Day" town hall to discuss progress and next steps on diversity goals, which has included frank discussions on challenges faced by minority employees. Externally, Ledcor's leaders have made their stance clear via social media – the company's official channels, often with executive quotes, celebrate events like International Day of Persons with Disabilities and emphasize Ledcor's commitment to engagement with Indigenous peoples.
20. EPCOR	16.0	The company builds robust community partnerships, exemplified by a decade-long collaboration with Boyle Street Community Services and a recent pledge to match $250,000 in donations for Boyle Street's new King Thunderbird Centre supporting homeless and Indigenous Edmontonians. It invests in the talent pipeline and outreach through initiatives like a three-year $130,000 partnership with the University of Alberta's Transition Year Program to help more First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students pursue STEM degrees. EPCOR also supports programs such as Empower Me, hiring multilingual Energy Champions to educate newcomers and multicultural communities about energy savings and utilities in their first language. The company's leadership is highly visible in these efforts – for instance, EPCOR's CEO publicly championed the Boyle Street campaign, demonstrating structured, executive-level commitment to community causes.

Ranking/ Company Name	Critiera 2 Score	Notes on Top 20
21. Capital Power	15.8	
22. Ernst & Young (EY)	15.8	
23. ATCO	15.8	
24. Finning	15.8	
25. Dentons	15.8	
26. NorQuest College	15.8	
27. Alberta Health Services	15.7	
28. WSP Global	15.7	
29. Canadian National Railway	15.7	
30. Air Canada	15.7	
31. Servus Credit Union	15.7	
32. PwC Canada	15.7	
33. Rogers	15.7	
34. Bell	15.7	
35. Shell Canada	15.7	
36. Jacobs	15.7	

Ranking/ Company Name	Critiera 2 Score	Notes on Top 20
37. AECOM Canada	15.6	
38. IBM	15.6	
39. Canadian Western Bank	15.0	
40. Pembina Pipeline Corp	15.0	
41. Trans Mountain	14.8	
42. Cenovus Energy	14.8	
43. NAIT	14.8	
44. MacEwan University	14.8	
45. United Way of Alberta	14.5	
46. Chandos Construction	14.5	
47. TC Energy	14.0	
48. Fluor Canada	14.0	
49. Bird Construction	14.0	
50. Imperial Oil	14.0	
51. Edmonton International Airport	14.0	
52. Women Building Futures	14.0	

Ranking/ Company Name	Critiera 2 Score	Notes on Top 20
53. Canadian Tire	13.6	
54. Walmart	13.0	
56. Starbucks Canada	8.0	
57. IKEA Canada	8.0	
58. Costco	8.0	
59. TransAlta Corporation	8.0	
60. Intact Financial	6.5	
61. MNP	6.5	
62. Loblaws	6.5	
63. Sobeys	6.5	
64. Grant Thornton	5.8	
65. Covenant Health	5.5	

CRITERIA 2 KEY FINDINGS SUMMARY

In summary, our analysis of Criteria 2 reveals that Edmonton companies are strongest in outreach where there have been clear calls to action or business-community linkages (Indigenous reconciliation, women empowerment, youth development), but less consistent in areas that might require extra proactivity (immigration integration, Black community support, and 2LGBTQS+ beyond Pride).

Where companies fell short was often because their community giving lacked a specific focus on equity-deserving groups (e.g., making broad charitable donations or volunteering without targeted inclusion). This is not to discount any effort to engage and support community growth, as it can all produce net-good outcomes.

When comparing Criteria 1, inclusive (internal) culture, it is evident that external outreach is where companies differentiate themselves. The overall trend is that outreach engagement (criterion 2) outperforms inclusive culture. Companies tend to score higher on average in community partnerships, talent pipeline programs, and leadership visibility than in identity-based training, demographic data collection, and leadership diversity. The most significant opportunity for improvement now lies in strengthening internal inclusion practices — while continuing to invest in outreach and partnerships to amplify impact and retention

RECOMMENDATIONS TO STRENGTHEN OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT IN EDMONTON'S WORKFORCE

To build on these findings, we propose a set of targeted, actionable recommendations for improving outreach and engagement (Criteria 2). Each recommendation addresses a focus where organizations had gaps, and is followed by an explanation of why it matters and a concrete action plan.

- **Build long-term community partnerships beyond one-day events**
    - Why it matters: Leading companies, such as RBC, the University of Alberta, TD Bank, Accenture, and ATB, stood out by forming ongoing partnerships with Black-led organizations, Indigenous communities, 2SLGBTQ+ service providers, and youth-focused nonprofits. Most other companies (bottom ~45%) relied on short-term or one-off sponsorships (typically materialized as one-day events). Strategic partnerships with diverse organizations demonstrate a company's sustained commitment to equity and inclusion. These relationships deepen brand trust and reputation in Underestimated Communities and establish long-term goodwill. This leads to more inclusive economic development, sustained talent pipelines and potentially new markets to offer products and services.
    - Actions: align business goals (e.g., talent pipeline, supply chain diversification, globalizing product skews with multi-year partnerships with organizations that serve aligned communities.
- **Design targeted pipelines for Underestimated Communities**
    - Why it matters: Hiring from Underestimated Communities starts well before the job posting goes live. Companies that proactively develop talent pipelines in three or more identity groups (top 33% of companies) signal that they are investing in the next generation of diverse talent and reducing historical access barriers. Youth and Indigenous communities benefited most from internships and early talent initiatives. Other Underestimated Groups rarely had targeted programs.
    - Action: Launch scholarships, mentorships or internships in partnership with community organizations that focus on underrepresented talent. Programs like Black Tech Fellowships, 2LGBTQ+ career mentorships, and newcomer reskilling accelerators can be tangible and practical in this manner.
- **Empower leadership to show up in community spaces.**
    - Why it matters: Executive presence at culturally significant events or in grassroots spaces sends a powerful message that inclusion is a company-wide priority. It also builds authentic visibility with a leadership-led, boots-on-the-ground presence. For communities, this helps their voices to be heard and respected by decision-makers, rather than being filtered up the chain when convenient for organizations. Only a subset of companies (top 35%) had executives visibly participating in external inclusion initiatives (e.g., speaking at cultural events, marching at Pride, serving on nonprofit boards).
    - Actions: Plan a quarterly calendar for executives that encourages them to publicly participate in cultural observances and inclusion events as allies and sponsors. Track and celebrate leadership involvement in external forums and company-sanctioned social media channels.
- **Invest in immigrant-focused inclusion programs.**
    - Why it matters: Immigrant and newcomer outreach was the most underrepresented area across the Edmonton-region-wide scan (15% of companies). Despite the slowdown in immigration efforts, newcomers represent a disproportionately growing segment of Edmonton's talent pool. However, this pool of (oftentimes highly skilled) talent faces persistent barriers to recognition, inclusion, and economic advancement.
    - Actions: Corporations that build pathways for immigrants unlock untapped talent, language and cultural fluency for global markets and reinforce their position as an inclusive employer of choice. For the immigrant community, these programs provide vital access to mentorship, networks, and economic stability.

CRITERIA 3: WORKFORCE PROTECTIONS

CRITERIA 3: WORKFORCE PROTECTIONS

Criteria 3 Overview of Methodology

We evaluated 65 companies with a significant presence in Edmonton to better understand how companies protect and support their workforce through workforce protections. The goal was to understand how effectively companies protect employees from discrimination, harassment, and inequitable treatment in the workplace, with the emphasis on enforceable policies and accessible reporting structures. This criterion assesses whether protections explicitly cover Underestimated Groups, whether companies provide training, accountability and a safe workplace environment.

Criteria 3 Evaluation Framework

We assessed each company's workplace protections using three sub-sections applied consistently across identity groups, while accounting for identity-specific criteria.

Black-Focused Workforce Protections

1. Anti-Racism & Non-Discrimination Policies (0-3): Explicit policies prohibiting racial discrimination, harassment, and micro-aggressions with precise accountability mechanisms.
2. Racial Bias Reporting & Accountability (0-3): Clear, confidential channels for reporting bias and addressing racial injustice transparently.
3. Psychological Safety and Mental Health Support (0-3): Culturally competent mental health supports, such as EAPs for racial trauma and systemic stress.

Indigenous-Focused Workforce Protections

1. Culturally Safe Work Environments (0-3): Policies to prevent stereotyping/cultural appropriation and ensure Indigenous respect and inclusion.
2. Land Acknowledgement & Cultural Recognition (0-3): Institutionalized acknowledgements and integration of Indigenous practices in workplace norms.
3. Indigenous Mental Health & Wellness Supports (0-3): Access to Indigenous-led counseling and trauma-informed supports reflecting traditional knowledge.

Immigrant-Focused Workforce Protections

1. Anti-Discrimination for Immigrants (0-3): Policies preventing discrimination based on citizenship, status, language, or cultural difference.
2. Language & Translation Support (0-3): Accommodations and tools to reduce communication barriers (translation, plain-language documents, etc.).
3. Immigration Integration & Support (0-3): Onboarding/mentorship addressing immigration issues, cultural adjustment, legal/visa support.

Women-Focused Workforce Protections

1. Pay Equity & Transparency (0–3): Equal pay policies, audits of gender pay gaps, and transparent salary frameworks.
2. Parental Leave & Caregiving Support (0–3): Inclusive maternity/adoptive leave, caregiving benefits, and flexible work.
3. Workplace Safety & Harassment Prevention (0–3): Zero-tolerance harassment policies, anonymous reporting, and gender-based violence prevention.

Youth-Focused Workforce Protections

1. Internship & Entry-Level Opportunities (0–3): Structured, paid pathways for early career development.
2. Mentorship & Career Development (0–3): Formal mentorship programs pairing youth with experienced staff.
3. Protection Against Exploitation & Discrimination (0–3): Explicit safeguards against unpaid work, bullying, or ageism.

2LGBTQS+-Focused Workplace Protections

1. Inclusive Non-Discrimination Policies (0–3): Explicit protections for sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression.
2. Gender-Neutral Facilities & Benefits (0–3): Access to inclusive washrooms and benefits (e.g. transition care).
3. Support for Gender Transitions (0–3): Formal support for transitioning employees (pronoun/name change processes, counselling, leave).

A company could receive a maximum of 54 points and total raw scores across all six groups were normalized to a score out of 20 for dashboard comparisons. A score of:

- 0 indicates no notable evidence in that area;
- 1 point indicates minimal or ad-hoc action taken;
- 2 is moderate implementation, with some identity-specific design or tracking;
- 3 shows strong, identity-specific initiatives with measurable outcomes or structural integration.

11.87/20

CRITERIA 3 OVERALL EVALUATION

Average by Dimension

70%

AVG. SCORE FOR INCLUSIVE NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICIES

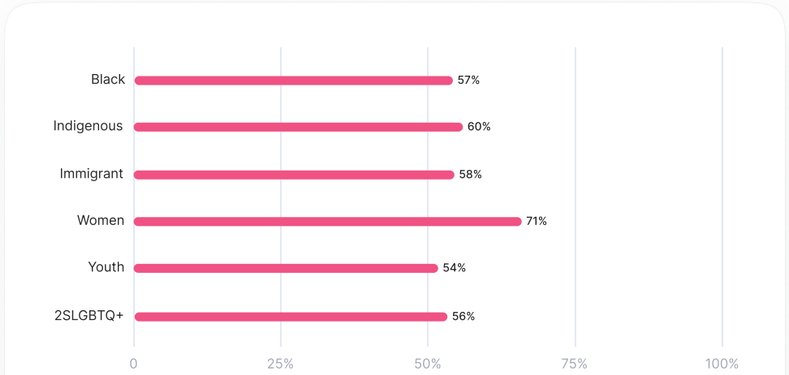
58%

AVG. SCORE FOR SUPPORTIVE PROGRAMS & CULTURAL INCLUSION

50%

AVG. SCORE FOR SAFETY, WELLNESS & INTEGRATION

Average Score by Identity Group



Criteria 3 Key Findings

With 65+ Edmonton-based companies evaluated, our research revealed a broad spectrum of workforce protection maturity.

Below are key findings and statistics from the analysis:

1. Non-Discrimination Policies: Virtually all of the 65 companies (over 90%) were found to have formal non-discrimination or equal opportunity policies in place. About two-thirds explicitly enumerate a broad range of protected characteristics — including 2LGBTQS+ identities — in their policy language, reflecting modern best practices.

   Top employers publish very comprehensive statements. For example, RBC's employment policy prohibits discrimination on numerous grounds, including "without regard to their race, colour, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, disability, marital status," among others. The City of Edmonton's Respectful Workplace policy similarly lists all grounds protected under law (race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, etc. Fifteen percent provide only a generic equal-opportunity clause without detailing specific groups, indicating a gap in explicit inclusion language compared to leaders.

   Notably, some organizations have gone further to acknowledge internal inequities — Alberta Health Services (AHS), for instance, has issued an Anti-Racism Position Statement openly recognizing that racism and discrimination exist within its workforce and committing to becoming an inclusive and equitable organization. This level of transparency signals a more profound commitment to protecting the workforce.

2. Harassment Prevention & Training: A substantial majority (~85%) of the companies have clear anti-harassment or "respectful workplace" policies, but only 46% back these policies up with training and education. Nearly all large employers mandate regular harassment-prevention or respectful workplace training for staff (at least for managers or new hires). For instance, Edmonton International Airport (YEG) requires all employees to complete Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion training, which is mandatory, and has even trained over 500 staff members to identify and prevent human trafficking as part of creating a safe and inclusive environment.

   Many organizations adopt a zero-tolerance stance on harassment. For example, PCL Construction embeds a Harassment and Discrimination policy within its Health, Safety, and Environment program, emphasizing that a respectful workplace is as non-negotiable as any safety rule. Leading employers also continually update their policies. Overall, roughly three-quarters of the companies offer anti-harassment training or workshops (and in many cases, these are required), whereas a few lower-scoring firms only mention harassment in their employee handbooks with minimal active training.

3. Reporting Mechanism & Accountability: Just over 80% of the organizations provide formal mechanisms for employees to report discrimination, harassment, or other misconduct confidentially—such as dedicated ethics hotlines, ombudsperson offices, or anonymous feedback tools. Larger institutions, especially in finance and the public sector, tend to have robust reporting channels and strict non-retaliation guarantees.

   RBC is a prime example: it not only has a Respectful Workplace policy that prohibits harassment, but also explicitly forbids retaliation against any employee who, in good faith, reports a concern or participates in an investigation. Moreover, RBC requires its managers to enforce these policies actively and to report any violations to HR for resolution, illustrating leadership accountability in practice. Similarly, public-sector employers, such as the City of Edmonton and AHS, have formal grievance or whistleblower procedures in place.

   In contrast, just over 15% of companies rely more on informal HR reporting channels and manager discretion. If not clearly communicated, this can deter employees from speaking up. The presence of well-publicized, safe reporting avenues is a differentiator among top performers in workforce protections.

In summary, the organizations that excelled in Workforce Protections (Criterion 3) distinguished themselves not only by having the requisite anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies on paper, but also by actively enforcing and expanding upon them. Twenty of the top companies in this category combine comprehensive non-discrimination and harassment policies with robust training, user-friendly reporting systems, and progressive benefits to foster an equitable workplace. These leaders often align with international best practices (several even earn external recognitions such as HRC Equality 100 ratings), and they hold management accountable for maintaining a safe, respectful environment for all employees.

The middle tier of companies generally meets the basic legal requirements and shows genuine good intent. For example, a mid-sized firm might declare itself as an equal opportunity employer and have a standard harassment policy. However, it may lack depth or follow-through (no specific mention of certain groups, no data tracking, or only limited special initiatives).

Finally, the lower-ranked organizations (often smaller or in more traditional industries) tend to rely on a more straightforward, bare-bones approach: a statement on non-discrimination to satisfy compliance, with few (if any) proactive programs or transparency measures in place. Industry plays a role in these outcomes. Highly regulated, public-facing sectors, such as finance, government, and utilities, tend to implement stronger workforce protections (and face more public scrutiny in doing so). In contrast, some smaller private companies in the source or manufacturing sectors have been slower to adopt the full spectrum of protective policies beyond the minimum standards required by law.

Overall, the analysis indicates that women benefited the most from workforce protections, while youth, 2SLGBTQ+ employees, Black employees, and immigrant employees saw a lag.

Ranking/ Company Name	Critiera 3 Score	Notes on Top 20
1. RBC	19.0	RBC earned the highest score due to its comprehensive, multi-faceted approach to workforce inclusion and protections. The bank has explicit anti-racism and non-discrimination policies backed by concrete action plans – for example, RBC mandates anti-bias and anti-racism training for all employees and even ties diversity and inclusion objectives to managers' performance evaluations. It provides clear, confidential channels for reporting harassment or bias and fosters a "speak up for inclusion" culture to hold individuals accountable. RBC also offers extensive support for underrepresented groups: it set ambitious hiring and development goals (such as dedicating 40% of student opportunities to Black, Indigenous and other racialized youth) and rigorously measures outcomes like pay equity across racial and ethnic groups. The bank's longstanding diversity programs – from Indigenous mentorship and scholarship initiatives to active LGBTQ2S+ employee resource groups and benefits that cover gender-affirming medical care – create a workplace where employees of all identities feel safe, valued, and supported. These efforts have made RBC a national leader in building an inclusive workplace with strong identity-specific protections.
2. TELUS	18.5	Telus ranks very highly thanks to its strong commitment to inclusion, reconciliation, and employee well-being. The company has implemented a robust Indigenous reconciliation action plan – Telus formally acknowledges traditional lands, partners with Indigenous communities, and even provides employees with resources for cultural practices like smudging and healing ceremonies in the workplace. Telus fosters a culture of psychological safety and respect: internal surveys report that 94% of team members feel the organization respects people from diverse backgrounds and identities. It maintains rigorous anti-discrimination policies and confidential reporting channels, alongside multiple employee resource groups (for example, "Eagles" for Indigenous staff, "Spectrum" for LGBTQ2+ staff, "Connections" for women, and "Mosaic" for multicultural inclusion) that ensure every voice is heard. Telus also offers inclusive benefits – including coverage for gender-affirming health care – and provides gender-neutral facilities to support transgender and non-binary employees. Additionally, Telus is recognized for its mentorship and youth programs (it has been named among Canada's Top Employers for Young People) which illustrate the company's holistic approach to workforce protection across all identities
3. BMO	18.0	BMO's "Zero Barriers to Inclusion" strategy and related initiatives propelled it to a top score. The bank has taken strong actions to address racial inequities and support Black, Indigenous, and other marginalized employees. In 2020 it announced new diversity targets and these efforts are backed by transparent tracking and reporting of progress. BMO has clear, well-publicized avenues for employees to report discrimination or bias, and it promotes a very open, accountable culture on these issues. The bank offers extensive culturally competent mental health and wellness resources through its Employee Assistance Programs, recognizing the impacts of racism and systemic stress on employees. It also provides strong support for other groups: BMO has longstanding networks and tailored programs for women (e.g. women's leadership development and pay equity audits), for LGBTQ2S+ inclusion (with policies protecting gender expression and employee resource groups for Pride), and for newcomers (BMO was founded by an immigrant community and continues to offer mentorship and onboarding tailored to newcomers' needs).

Ranking/ Company Name	Critiera 3 Score	Notes on Top 20
4. Deloitte	17.5	Deloitte earned a top score by integrating diversity, equity, and inclusion deeply into its organizational strategy. The firm has made public commitments to reflect the makeup of contemporary society at all levels by 2027, meaning it sets concrete representation goals for women, Indigenous peoples, Black and racialized people, 2SLGBTQ+ individuals and others. Deloitte backs these commitments with robust policies: it rolled out a mandatory firm-wide Indigenous cultural competency training (“4 Seasons of Reconciliation”) for all employees, and it continuously reviews its HR processes to identify and break down systemic barriers, including performing pay equity analyses to close any gaps. The company cultivates a safe, respectful environment with active support networks – for example, its Black Action Council provides a forum to champion Black employees’ advancement and ensure accountability on anti-racism. It has explicit LGBTQ+ inclusion policies and was one of the first of the “Big 4” firms in Canada to offer coverage for gender transition and to sponsor Pride events.
5. City of Edmonton	17.2	The City of Edmonton scored among the top performers, reflecting its broad and institutionalized commitment to an inclusive and safe workplace. The City has explicit anti-racism and anti-harassment policies for its workforce, and it’s backed these by creating an Anti-Racism Advisory Committee and dedicated programs under its “Art of Inclusion” framework. In recruiting and talent development, the City intentionally focuses on diverse groups – initiatives target Indigenous peoples, newcomers and racialized people, youth, and reducing gender gaps in underrepresented occupations. Within the organization, employees benefit from culturally safe practices: for example, City meetings and events routinely begin with Treaty 6 land acknowledgments as a sign of respect, and there are programs to educate staff on Indigenous history and prevent cultural insensitivity. Additionally, the City enforces a strict respectful workplace policy (covering bullying, harassment and discrimination) with confidential reporting through its Safe Disclosure Office. It provides strong support for employee resource groups (such as a Women in Leadership community and an internal Pride Network for LGBTQ2S+ staff) and ensures accommodations (e.g. religious observance, gender-inclusive facilities in civic buildings). Edmonton’s civic leadership has made diversity, equity and inclusion a core value, which translates to a workplace where employees from all backgrounds feel protected and included.
6.TD Bank	17.0	TD achieved a high score by building an inclusive culture and concrete supports across all the identity groups in the framework. The bank has long-standing policies prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, origin, and more, and it reinforces these with regular employee training and awareness (for instance, TD requires all employees to complete training on preventing harassment and bias). The bank is widely known as an 2LGBTQS+ ally; it was one of the first Canadian banks to provide same-sex partner benefits and it continues to sponsor Pride events and maintain a vibrant Pride ERG (“Forever Proud”). For women and parents, TD provides top-up parental leave, flexible work arrangements, and runs a Women in Leadership program to prepare more women for executive roles. Additionally, TD’s zero-tolerance approach to harassment is backed by robust investigation processes and a confidential hotline for reporting issues. Overall, TD’s efforts to celebrate all cultures and identities and maintain a “welcoming, barrier-free culture for everyone” are evident in its workplace policies and programs

Ranking/ Company Name	Critiera 3 Score	Notes on Top 20
7. KPMG Canada	17.5	KPMG’s leadership has been vocal in acknowledging systemic barriers and is committed to actively removing those obstacles – for example, KPMG co-developed a formal Truth & Reconciliation Action Plan and mandates Indigenous cultural awareness education for its people. Land acknowledgements are standard practice at KPMG offices across Canada (including their Edmonton office), reflecting respect for Indigenous peoples and a commitment to reconciliation. KPMG also prioritizes mental health as part of inclusion: it has a Chief Mental Health Officer and offers extensive resources to ensure employees feel psychologically safe and supported. The company’s inclusion strategy explicitly names the groups it focuses on – women, Indigenous peoples, people of colour, Black people, 2SLGBTQIA+ people, newcomers, persons with disabilities, etc. For instance, KPMG has a thriving Pride network and was an early adopter of gender-neutral washrooms and transition guidelines for employees. It also set targets for diversifying its leadership (such as aiming for 33% women and significant increases in racialized and Indigenous leaders by 2025) and holds leaders accountable for progress. KPMG’s strong policies (like a firm-wide anti-discrimination policy and a robust accommodation process for religious or disability needs), combined with its culture of “belonging” and allyship, make its workforce protections among the best in the private sector.
8. Scotiabank	16.5	Scotiabank performed very well on this evaluation, reflecting comprehensive efforts to protect and empower diverse employees. In the wake of 2020, Scotiabank launched a series of bold initiatives to combat racism and increase workforce diversity. It equipped leaders and employees with guides on identifying and addressing racism or micro-aggressions, and it expanded its internal diversity surveys and reporting to specifically track race and ethnicity representation (going beyond generic “visible minority” metrics). The bank has since renewed its inclusion goals through 2025 – it publicly committed to doubling its Indigenous workforce and maintaining strong Black and people of colour representation in hiring. Scotiabank’s anti-discrimination framework includes mandatory training, confidential ethics and bias hotlines, and a task force of senior leaders working to eliminate racism internally. It has substantial programs for mentorship and advancement of underrepresented groups: more than half of its student hires already come from BIPOC communities, and it is focusing especially on recruiting Black and Indigenous students to internships and new grad roles. The bank also created safe spaces for dialogue – hosting enterprise-wide “listening sessions” for Black, Indigenous and other employees to share experiences with executives, which has informed policy changes. For women, Scotiabank monitors and reports on gender diversity (it met a goal of 40% women in senior management ahead of schedule) and provides generous parental leave top-ups and flexible work options.
9. University of Alberta	16.3	The university has a comprehensive Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Strategic Plan that explicitly addresses recruitment, retention and advancement of diverse faculty and staff. It promotes a “psychologically healthy and safe, inclusive work environment” where all employees feel a sense of purpose, connection and belonging. In practice, this means U of A has zero-tolerance policies for harassment or discrimination (reinforced by mandatory training for all employees and clear reporting mechanisms through its Office of Safe Disclosure). The institution also leads in Indigenous inclusion: it was among the first to require that all students and staff receive Indigenous awareness education, and it works closely with Indigenous-led organizations. The U of A regularly holds Indigenous cultural events for staff (such as Blanket Exercises and Elders’ teachings) and has made Treaty acknowledgement a routine part of its institutional culture (every email signature and public event often includes an acknowledgement of Indigenous territory)

Ranking/ Company Name	Critiera 3 Score	Notes on Top 20
10. PwC	16.2	PwC scored strongly by weaving diversity and inclusion into its corporate DNA and taking specific actions for each identity group. The firm openly recognizes the systemic racism and colonial oppression that marginalized communities (especially Indigenous peoples) have faced, and it commits to active allyship and solidarity as part of its values. The company has set targets and public commitments: PwC is working toward 50% gender parity in its workforce and leadership, and it joined the BlackNorth Initiative pledging to increase Black representation at senior levels. It also established a Black and Indigenous Students Mentorship and Scholarship Program to build pathways for underrepresented youth into the firm. On Indigenous workforce inclusion, PwC Canada has an Indigenous Reconciliation Advisory Committee and recently became certified at the Progressive Aboriginal Relations (PAR) gold level, reflecting its deep engagement with Indigenous hiring, retention, and cultural awareness training. PwC provides robust anti-harassment training and has confidential reporting lines through its global ethics hotline, underscoring accountability.
11. Ernst & Young	16.0	EY achieved a high ranking by virtue of its strong diversity programs and clear stance on equity. The firm runs a number of global and national initiatives to advance equity, including a formal Anti-Racism commitment, targeted development programs to empower Black professionals, dedicated Indigenous community support initiatives, and even Neurodiversity Centres of Excellence to hire and accommodate neurodivergent talent. EY has a very clear non-discrimination policy – it publicly stands against injustice, bias, and racism, and this is reinforced internally through compulsory training and leadership messages. EY provides substantial mental health resources, including on-site counselors and mental health days, acknowledging that psychological safety underpins true inclusion. Additionally, EY has set goals for diverse representation in its partnership ranks and regularly discloses its progress in sustainability and D&I reports.
12. CIBC	15.8	CIBC has made inclusion “the cornerstone” of its culture, and this is evident in company-wide initiatives aimed at five key talent segments: women, visible minorities (racialized people), persons with disabilities, Indigenous peoples, and LGBTQ+ individuals. it leveraged all 10 of its People Networks to hold dozens of virtual listening sessions – for example, sessions with Black employees amid protests against racial injustice, and with employees with disabilities and caregivers during the pandemic. These frank conversations helped CIBC identify gaps and led to actions like launching a formal Anti-Racism Policy and updating its diversity strategy with new targets. The bank has increased the diversity of its executive team (it reported notable jumps in women, visible minorities, and Black leaders in executive roles) to better reflect the communities it serves. Many CIBC branches and departments now begin meetings with a land acknowledgment, particularly around Orange Shirt Day, to honor Indigenous peoples. In terms of policies, CIBC has a robust Respect in the Workplace policy and provides anonymous reporting tools if employees encounter harassment or bias

Ranking/ Company Name	Critiera 3 Score	Notes on Top 20
13. Accenture	15.5	Accenture scored highly for its strong global and local initiatives that ensure workforce protections for diverse employees. The company has a well-publicized commitment to “equality for all” and has set aggressive diversity goals – for instance, Accenture reached its goal of 50/50 gender balance in its workforce early and continues to push women’s advancement into leadership. It also has specific hiring and mentorship programs for other groups: Accenture was an early leader in recruiting LGBTQ+ talent and supporting them. The company’s benefits and workplace accommodations are very progressive: it covers gender affirmation procedures under its health plan, it offers extended parental leave for all genders, and it has a supportive policy for employees undergoing gender transitions (such as guidance for name/pronoun changes and leave time). The company’s anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies are very stringent; it provides multiple confidential channels (including an anonymous EthicsPoint hotline) for employees to report concerns, and it enforces accountability with a zero-tolerance stance.
14. ATB	15.3	ATB has clear anti-discrimination policies covering race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, and other grounds, and it reinforces these policies through regular training for leaders and team members. In recent years, ATB made a concerted effort to embed anti-racism and anti-bias measures into its culture – for example, launching internal dialogues on systemic racism in 2020 and updating hiring practices to reduce biases (like using diverse interview panels). The company also created dedicated programs for specific groups: it runs an Indigenous Leadership Circle internally and has partnered with Indigenous communities (ATB was one of the first banks in Alberta to open branches on First Nations, and internally it recruits and mentors Indigenous employees for careers in finance). ATB is known for its support of women – it has achieved gender pay equity and regularly audits compensation to keep it that way, and the bank offers top-up benefits for maternity/parental leave above provincial norms. Flexible work options (which benefit many caregivers and parents) were part of ATB’s culture even before the pandemic. For LGBTQ2S+ inclusion, ATB actively participates in Pride events in Edmonton and has policies in place to ensure employees can express their gender identity openly at work (including all-gender washrooms in major ATB workplaces and support for employees transitioning). ATB also makes sure newcomers and immigrants feel welcome: it provides workplace materials in plain language, supports employees for whom English is a second language through mentorship/buddy programs, and even offers financial literacy programs in multiple languages that some employees volunteer to lead.
15. Canadian National Railway	15.0	CN scored high in this criterion by demonstrating strong protections and inclusion for a wide variety of employees, in what has traditionally been a less-diverse industry. CN’s policies explicitly forbid any form of harassment or discrimination, and the company backs this up with training (every CN employee undergoes regular respectful workplace training, including modules on unconscious bias). Reporting mechanisms are in place too – CN has both an Ethics hotline and an Employee Ombuds office where incidents can be raised confidentially. The railway is also known for its Indigenous engagement in employment: CN set targets years ago to increase Indigenous representation and has consistently been recognized by the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business for its efforts. CN also addresses the needs of newcomers/immigrants by providing language training – for instance, CN’s Edmonton terminal has offered ESL classes for workers whose first language isn’t English, improving safety and inclusion.

Ranking/ Company Name	Critiera 3 Score	Notes on Top 20
16. Stantec	14.8	Stantec has strong anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policies that explicitly cover racism, sexism, homophobia/transphobia and more – and it reinforces these policies through regular training and visible leadership support. Stantec has made concerted efforts to increase the diversity of its workforce: it set targets for gender diversity (the firm's workforce is now about 40% women and growing, with initiatives to encourage women's promotion into senior technical and management roles), and it is actively involved in programs to attract women to STEM careers. Stantec has hired Indigenous environmental monitors and engineers on projects and has an Indigenous internship program that offers mentorship by senior Indigenous staff. The company also works to be immigrant-friendly: as an international firm, Stantec often hires global talent and helps with immigration/visa processes for skilled newcomers; it also offers an "English at Work" program in some offices to help non-native speakers improve communication, reducing language barriers. Stantec's leadership has shown accountability by publishing its diversity statistics annually and linking manager bonuses in part to meeting diversity and inclusion goals.
17. IBM Canada	14.5	IBM has had an official equal opportunity policy since 1953, and it was one of the first companies in the world to include sexual orientation in its non-discrimination policy (back in 1984). Today, IBM Canada continues to be recognized as a diversity leader. IBM's anti-harassment guidelines are strict and global – it has a well-developed investigation process and a no-retaliation guarantee for anyone reporting incidents. Psychological safety is also a focus: IBM trains its managers in inclusive leadership and mental health first aid, aiming for a culture where concerns can be voiced freely. IBM has mentorship programs that pair junior women with senior leaders and a long-running "Women in Technology" initiative to help women technologists advance – these efforts have contributed to IBM having a strong contingent of female executives in Canada. IBM's benefits are family-friendly (it offers back-up childcare services and robust parental leave top-ups) and LGBTQ-friendly (IBM was offering partner benefits well before it was common, and today it covers gender confirmation surgery in its health plan). Another area IBM shines is support for immigrants and multicultural staff: given its global nature, IBM often facilitates intra-company transfers – new arrivals in Edmonton from abroad receive cultural orientation and a local "buddy" to help them integrate. IBM's standing policy is zero tolerance for bias or discrimination, reinforced by the CEO's regular communication on values.
18. PCL Construction	14.3	PCL has recognized that to thrive as a 100% employee-owned company building projects for diverse communities, they "need to include people of all backgrounds". The company has put in place a formal Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) policy and created a DEI Council that reports to top leadership – ensuring accountability for progress. PCL has made notable efforts to support women in its workforce: it partners with organizations like Women Building Futures to break down barriers and encourage more women to enter trades and construction careers. Internally, PCL's Women's Network provides mentoring, and the company has increased flexibility on job sites (for example, better facilities and schedule flexibility) to retain women employees. PCL enforces a strict site harassment policy – all employees and subcontractors must adhere to a Code of Conduct that forbids racist or sexist behaviour on the job, with a clearly communicated reporting process (workers can report issues to HR or even anonymously). PCL provides an Employee Assistance Program with counseling that is sensitive to different cultural backgrounds, acknowledging the mental strain that underrepresented employees might face.

Ranking/ Company Name	Critiera 3 Score	Notes on Top 20
19. Suncor Energy	14.0	Suncor has strong anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policies. In recent years, after some high-profile incidents in the corporate world, Suncor doubled down on respectful workplace training – requiring every employee (from field operators to executives) to complete an annual course on preventing bullying, harassment, and discrimination. Suncor encourages reporting of any issues through its Integrity Hotline and has made it clear that even subtle micro-aggressions have no place in the company's culture. At Suncor, women now occupy many key leadership positions, and the company performs annual pay equity reviews to close any gaps. Regarding LGBTQ+ protections, Suncor updated its policies a few years ago to explicitly include gender identity and expression, and it began offering coverage for gender affirmation procedures under its benefits. Suncor's Pride Network has grown, and notably, the company proudly flies the Pride flag at its sites (including the Edmonton refinery) during Pride Month as a symbol of support. Suncor put significant resources into mental wellness after identifying that rotational work and remote sites can cause stress – they now offer culturally sensitive counseling (including counselors who specialize in trauma relevant to BIPOC employees) as part of their EAP.
20. Shell Canada	13.8	Shell has well-established policies that explicitly protect employees from discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, and other characteristics. Shell Canada also integrates cultural recognition into its workplace: for instance, it worked with local Indigenous elders to create an Indigenous Gathering Place at the Scotford site – a dedicated space where Indigenous employees can practice ceremonies or smudge, which is a tangible sign of a culturally safe environment. The company actively supports newcomer integration as well, often hiring skilled immigrants; Shell provides language assistance on the job if needed and has a "Buddy program" where new international hires are paired with a Canadian colleague to help navigate workplace culture. On gender equity, Shell has made pay equity adjustments and champions women's advancement – globally, Shell set a goal to have 30% of its senior leaders be women by 2025, and Shell Canada has introduced flexible work arrangements, on-site childcare at some locations, and robust parental leave top-ups to retain women. The company has a strong Pride employee network and was among the early energy companies to support LGBTQ+ inclusion openly – its benefits cover partners and transition-related care
21. Alberta Health Services (AHS)	13.5	
22. ATCO	13.2	
23. Dow Canada	13.0	
24. Finning International	12.8	
25. Ledcor	12.7	
26. EllisDon	12.7	

Ranking/ Company Name	Critiera 3 Score	Notes on Top 20
27. Amazon YEG Fullfilment	12.7	
28. Bell Canada	12.3	
29. Rogers	12.3	
30. PepsiCo	12.0	
31. Canadian Western Bank	11.8	
32. Servus Credit Union	11.5	
33. EPCOR	11.5	
34. Capital Power	11.3	
35. Strathcona County	11.2	
36. City of St. Albert	11.2	
37. NAIT	11.0	
38. MacEwan University	11.0	
39. NorQuest College	11.0	
40. Alberta Blue Cross	10.8	
41. WSP Global	10.5	
42. AECOM	10.5	

Ranking/ Company Name	Critiera 3 Score	Notes on Top 20
43. Edmonton Public Schools	10.5	
44. CGI	10.0	
45. Manulife	10.0	
46. Sun Life	10.0	
47. Air Canada	10.0	
48. Starbucks Canada	10.0	
49. Edmonton International Airport	9.8	
50. Edmonton Catholic Schools	9.5	
51. Sturgeon County	9.5	
52. WestJet	9.5	
53. Edmonton Police Services	9.0	
54. Costco	9.0	
55. Loblaws	9.0	
56. Cenovus Energy	9.0	
57. Covenant Health	8.5	
58. Walmart	8.5	

Ranking/ Company Name	Critiera 3 Score	Notes on Top 20
59. Sobeys	8.5	
60. McDonald's Canada	8.0	
61. Imperial Oil	8.0	
62. DynaLife	7.5	
63. General Electric	7.0	
64. Chemtrade Refinery	5.0	
65. UPS	5.0	

CRITERIA 3 KEY FINDINGS SUMMARY

Edmonton employers have established mainly the baseline foundations of workforce protections. Nearly all of the 65+ companies reviewed maintain anti-harassment and non-discrimination policies and provide at least one reporting channel. However, these protections are uneven in depth: while general policy coverage is strong, identity-specific supports — such as culturally competent mental health services, Indigenous-led counselling, youth exploitation safeguards, or gender-transition benefits — are far less consistently implemented. This gap is reflected in the scoring, where anti-discrimination policies averaged around 70% of the maximum, but wellness and integration supports averaged closer to 50%.

Sector differences are also pronounced. Financial services, consulting, and public-sector institutions consistently outperformed private, resource, and retail employers, often because they face greater compliance expectations and scrutiny. Top performers in these industries distinguished themselves by layering stronger, identity-specific protections onto their baseline policies.

The top performers in this category distinguished themselves by providing comprehensive protection across all focus areas. These organizations go beyond the minimum legal requirements, offering robust internal policies, tailored and culturally sensitive support infrastructure, and pay transparency with published audits. Additionally, patterns that move the needle include:

- Accountability architecture: Organizations that a) link inclusion targets to executive KPIs, b) publish pay-equity or workforce diversity data, and c) fund ERGs with charters and budgets were 2- 3x more likely to score "3" across Criteria 3 sub-categories.

- Third-party anonymous reporting: The addition of an external ethics line was correlated with clearer investigation SLAs and higher staff trust in reporting (see the highest-scoring cohort).

Overall, Edmonton's employers have broadly embraced the foundations of workforce protections, but true differentiation lies in how thoroughly organizations enforce and extend those protections. Leaders combine explicit policies with accountability, transparency, and identity-specific support — turning compliance into a culture of safety and inclusion.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO STRENGTHEN WORKFORCE PROTECTIONS IN EDMONTON'S WORKFORCE

To build on these findings, we propose a set of targeted, actionable recommendations for improving Workforce Protections (Criteria 3). Each recommendation addresses a focus where organizations had gaps, and is followed by an explanation of why it matters and a concrete action plan.

- **Tie executive performance evaluations and incentives to clear inclusion KPIs.**
    - Why it matters: Without accountability at the top, workplace inclusion efforts often stall. Fewer than one in five of the evaluated 65 companies have explicit, measurable DEI KPIs tied to executive pay (roughly 12 companies, or ~15%). This underscores that explicit accountability at the top for DEI outcomes is still nascent in the Edmonton corporate landscape. When executives champion and take responsibility for DEI results, it sets a tone of seriousness and drives measurable change throughout the organization.
    - Actions: Set Specific diversity and equity targets (e.g. improving representation or reducing pay gaps) and include them in executives' performance plans. Regularly track and review these metrics at the board or senior level, and publicly report on progress. Even smaller organizations can assign a leader to monitor inclusion goals and tie modest performance rewards or recognition to reaching milestones, ensuring that leadership remains actively engaged in building a safer and more inclusive workplace.
- **Strengthen reporting mechanisms and anti-retaliation protections**
    - Why it matters: The Criteria 3 review uncovered that many companies lack trustworthy reporting systems – some had no hotline or ombudsperson, and in others, employees feared retaliation for coming forward. Firms that scored highest had strong safeguards (anonymous reporting tools, anti-retaliation clauses, third-party ethics lines, etc.).
    - Action: Create at least one anonymous reporting channel – for example, a third-party hotline or an online form – so employees can report issues without fear. Clearly communicate multiple options for reporting (e.g. HR, a designated ombudsperson, a manager, or the anonymous hotline) and reassure staff that they will not tolerate retaliation.
- **Collect, analyze, and publish workforce diversity metrics and pay equity data to identify gaps and drive accountability.**
    - Why it matters: Shining a light on inequities is a powerful catalyst for change. The Criteria 3 evaluation found that many companies were not transparently sharing data on representation or pay disparities, a missed opportunity to build trust. The few companies that voluntarily published their diversity metrics and policies (e.g. in sustainability or ESG reports) tended to score higher on workplace protections, likely because transparency correlates with accountability and progress. An illustrative case from the evaluation: the companies with the top quartile scores all publicly shared some DEI data or targets, whereas many low scorers did not release any information externally about their workplace composition or conduct.
    - Actions: Start with an internal audit of pay and representation across roles, levels, and identity groups. Share the results in an accessible format (e.g. an annual diversity report or dashboard on the company website) along with an action plan to address any inequities. Break down data by gender, race, Indigeneity, and other relevant categories to ensure intersectional gaps are visible.
- **Implement gender-affirming policies and benefits.**
    - Why it matters: Gender-diverse individuals (trans, non-binary, two-spirit, etc.) often face systemic barriers in workplaces, ranging from misgendering and lack of facilities to health plans that exclude their care. The evaluation highlighted that only a minority of companies had strong gender-inclusive provisions, leaving many 2SLGBTQS+ employees without adequate protections.
    - Actions: Start with policy. Update non-discrimination and harassment policies to explicitly include gender identity and expression, making it clear that misgendering or transphobic behaviour will not be tolerated.

CRITERIA 4: INCLUSIVE BENEFITS

CRITERIA 4: INCLUSIVE BENEFITS

Criteria 4 Overview of Methodology

We evaluated 65 companies with a significant presence in Edmonton to better understand their support for inclusive benefits across six identity groups: Black, Indigenous, Immigrant (racialized/newcomer), Women, Youth, and 2LGBTQS+. For each group, we examined the presence and strength of specific initiatives (some of which overlap slightly with criteria 3): identity-specific health and wellness support, financial and career support benefits, leave policies and flexibility, and mentorship and advancement programs.

Criteria 4 Evaluation Framework

We assessed each company's inclusive benefits using three sub-sections applied consistently across identity groups, while accounting for identity-specific criteria.

Black-Focused Inclusive Benefits

1. Health & Wellness Benefits (0-3): Plans cover culturally competent health supports (e.g., counselling for racial trauma, community-linked mental health).
2. Scholarships/Financial Supports (0-3): Scholarships, bursaries, financial literacy or wealth building efforts or targeted benefits for Black employees or their families
3. Professional/Family Support Benefits (0-3): Programs like mentoring leave, extended family benefits, or targeted advancement supports.

Indigenous-Focused Inclusive Benefits

1. Culturally & Wellness Benefits (0-3): Coverage for traditional healing, Indigenous counsellors, or access to elders.
2. Leave and Recognition (0-3): Leave to participate in ceremonies, powwows, or National Day for Truth & Reconciliation.
3. Scholarships and Financial Support for Continued Education (0-3): Offer funding for educational opportunities to support Indigenous employees.

Immigrant-Focused Inclusive Benefits

1. Language and Integration Supports (0-3): ESL/translation services, or benefit coverage for language classes.
2. Relocation/Settlement Benefits (0-3): Financial or HR assistance for immigration costs, visas, or credentialing
3. Career/Family Supports (0-3): Benefits such as credential recognition help or education bursaries for newcomer families.

Women-Focused Inclusive Benefits

1. Paid Parental Leave Beyond Legal Minimums (0–3): Equal pay policies, audits of gender pay gaps, and transparent salary frameworks.
2. Flexible Work Arrangements (0–3): Provide remote or flexible work hours to support women balancing career and caregiving roles.
3. Support for Return to Work After Maternity Leave (0–3): Programs that help women reintegrate after taking extended leave, such as part-time reintegration programs and career progression support.

Youth-Focused Inclusive Benefits

1. Student Loan Repayment Assistance (0–3): Offering financial support for repaying student loans or providing access to programs that help reduce the burden of debt
2. Fast-Track Career Programs (0–3): Developing career acceleration programs that help young professionals move into leadership or more advanced roles quickly.
3. Early-Career Mentorship (0–3): Assigning young employees mentors & executive sponsors to guide their career paths and provide advice on skill development.

2LGBTQS+-Focused Inclusive Benefits

1. Inclusive Health Coverage (0-3): Transition-related care, gender affirmation surgery, fertility/adoption benefits.
2. Inclusive Retirement & Financial Benefits (0–3): Access to inclusive washrooms and benefits (e.g. transition care).
3. Leave & Identity Supports (0-3): Transition leave, family/partner recognition, or 2LGBTQS+ scholarship programs.

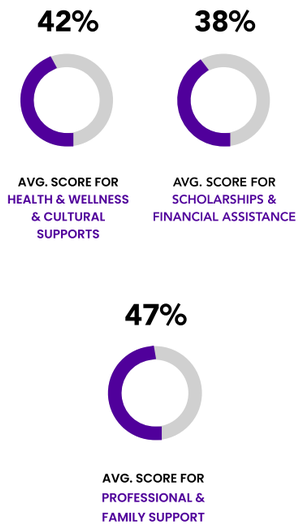
A company could receive a maximum of 54 points, and total raw scores across all six groups were normalized to a score out of 20 for dashboard comparisons. A score of:

- 0 indicates no notable evidence in that area;
- 1 point indicates minimal or ad-hoc action taken;
- 2 is moderate implementation, with some identity-specific design or tracking;
- 3 shows strong, identity-specific initiatives with measurable outcomes or structural integration.

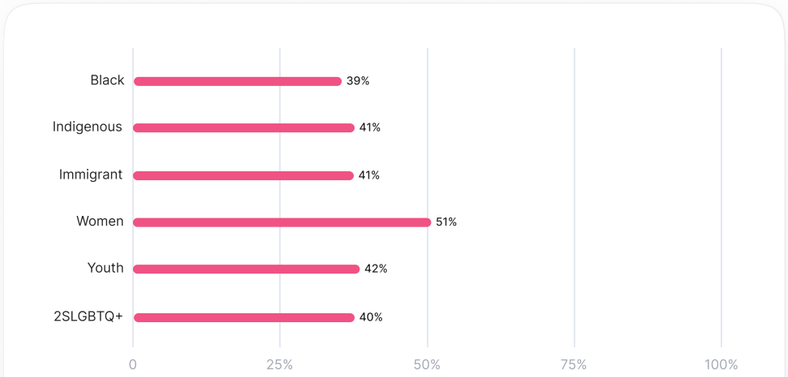
8.5/20

CRITERIA 4 OVERALL EVALUATION

Average by Dimension



Average Score by Identity Group



Criteria 4 Key Findings

The 65 companies have made material in-roads with supporting Underestimated Communities and inclusion internally, though the maturity of these efforts varies widely. Strongest coverage clusters around family-building and parental benefits (especially for women) and Indigenous cultural recognition; the thinnest coverage appears in immigrant settlement/credential supports and Black-focused health & wealth benefits.

Below are key findings and statistics from the analysis:

1. Parental, Family-Building & Care Benefits (Women / 2LGBTQS+): Roughly 45% of employers in the report go beyond statutory minimums with paid parental top-ups and/or family-building coverage. The leaders pair generous top-ups with adoption, fertility and inclusive partner definitions. Overall, family-building and inclusive parental entitlements are now a de facto standard among top scorers; the differentiator lies in the breadth (adoption, surrogacy/fertility, non-birth parent parity) and 2LGBTQS+ alignment.

2. Indigenous-Focused Leave & Wellness: About 40% of large employers in our report provide paid cultural or ceremonial leave and/or recognize traditional practices. One-quarter directly references traditional healing/counselling access in extended health (either directly or via insurer add-ons).

3. Immigrant (Newcomer) Benefits: This was the least covered area, as only 20% of employers in our report show employee-facing immigration/credential support (distinct from recruiting assistance). The University of Alberta, for example, provides faculty and staff immigration services, covering work permits, PR pathways and relocation support. It is essential to note that many firms rely on relocation vendors for visa/work permits during the hiring process, but do not frame these as ongoing employee benefits (hence lower rubric scores for immigrant indicators). Overall, newcomer support remains episodic (hire-stage only).

4. Black-Focused Benefits: Only ~12% of all employers had Black-specific benefit entitlements; when present, they were most often scholarships/bursaries rather than health or leave benefits. For example, RBC's Future Launch Scholarship for Black Youth (up to $10,000/year, with 20 awards annually) is a sustained financial support mechanism that also includes mentorship. Compared to Indigenous, Women and 2LGBTQS+ coverage, Black-specific benefits remain nascent; most companies rely on general EAPs rather than targeted wealth building or culturally-sensitive counselling support.

Leaders in the top quintile distinguish themselves by codifying identity-specific benefits across multiple groups (three or more), not just or with a broad stroke (e.g., parental, adoption/fertility, gender affirmation, Indigenous cultural leave, student loan repayment programs etc.). In conclusion, while immigrant and Black-focused benefits were lacking, the strongest performers turned targeted identity needs into core plan features that last over time.

Ranking/ Company Name	Critiera 4 Score	Notes on Top 20
1. Accenture	19.8	Accenture integrates inclusive benefits into its global people strategy, ensuring support across all six identity groups. The firm was an early leader in LGBTQ2S+ health coverage, becoming one of the first in Canada to offer comprehensive gender transition benefits covering surgeries, hormones, and counseling with no financial caps. Accenture also implements gender-neutral leave policies. For example, it introduced paid gender affirmation leave for transitioning employees, alongside equal parental and assisted-reproduction leave available to all new parents regardless of gender. Flexibility is a core tenet of Accenture's culture – approximately 83% of employees report feeling empowered to work flexibly—which benefits caregivers, younger workers and others needing non-traditional work arrangements.
2. RBC	19.5	RBC's benefits extend beyond health and dental to cover fertility, surrogacy, and transition-related care, plus generous parental leave top-ups. The bank invests in targeted career development for Black and Indigenous talent, committing 40% of internship slots to BIPOC youth (with focus on Black and Indigenous students) and setting higher executive representation goals for those communities. RBC provides robust mental health supports (including culturally competent counselling) and has pledged $50 million through its Future Launch program to create pathways for 25,000 BIPOC youth. For women, RBC offers generous parental leave top-ups beyond legal requirements and dedicated programs easing reintegration after leave. The bank was also among the first to extend benefits to same-sex partners and continues to offer coverage for gender affirmation procedures, demonstrating strong 2LGBTQS+ inclusion. Culturally accommodating policies further demonstrate breadth – employees can take up to three paid days for religious observances, and many offices feature prayer rooms and wellness spaces to respect Indigenous and multicultural needs RBC also fosters flexible work options (e.g. hybrid work and purchased vacation days) and provides extensive mental-health supports (including an annual $5,000 mental health practitioner benefit) to promote wellness for all staff
3. TELUS	19.2	TELUS embeds inclusive benefits into its core HR architecture, from gender-affirming health care and fertility/adoption supports to Indigenous cultural leave. Notably, TELUS created a dedicated Indigenous Reconciliation Action Plan that explicitly covers employee ceremonies and traditional healing, while its flexible caregiver policies are widely cited as industry best practice. The company provides flexible work options and was an early adopter of remote/hybrid work, which especially supports working parents and women returning after maternity. TELUS offers extensive mental health benefits (including $5,000 annually for counseling) and ensures benefits plans cover transition-related care for 2SLGBTQS+ employees. In 2023, TELUS introduced a pioneering Indigenous wellness benefit, providing Indigenous-identifying employees (and their families) up to $1,000 to access traditional healing practices, ceremonies, medicines and related travel costs The company also funds scholarships and partnerships for Black communities and has a dedicated Black team member network, reflecting its commitment to Black employee advancement.

Ranking/ Company Name	Critiera 4 Score	Notes on Top 20
4. ATB	19.2	ATB's top score stems from a people-first strategy that embeds inclusive benefits and belonging into every level of the organization. The bank offers an array of progressive health and family benefits designed to meet diverse needs: all employees receive flexible health plans that include mental health counseling and progressive offerings like gender affirmation treatment coverage and fertility support, demonstrating a commitment to 2LGBTQS+ inclusion and family diversity. Equitable leave policies bolster these offerings – ATB provides maternity, paternity and caregiver leaves that apply equally to all parents (birth, adoptive or partners), ensuring women and LGBTQ2S+ employees can take leave without career penalty. Youth are supported via dedicated early career programs, and newcomers receive community through ethnic-based networks To support work-life balance (important for youth and caregivers), ATB allows flexible arrangements such as buying or selling vacation time and "flex days" for personal needs.
5. Scotiabank	19.0	Scotiabank's offers a Wellbeing Account that reimburses employees for a broad range of services, inclusing culturally competent mental-health care and support for dependents. The plan specifically covers Indigenous wellbeing as employees can use funds for Indigenous ceremonies, spiritual activities and language-learning opportunities. The account also funds mental-health counselling, therapy, and support for caregivers and dependents. Inclusive family-building and parental leave – Through its Global Inclusive Standards of Care initiative, Scotiabank ensures eight weeks of fully paid leave for all parents and eight additional weeks for birth parents across its global footprint. The bank has committed to closing health gaps for LGBT+ employees by providing gender-affirming procedures and expanded same-sex partner coverage. It supplements these benefits with an "Empower Program" offering coaching and career mapping for LGBT+ employees
6. Stantec	18.0	Stantec achieved a high inclusive benefits score by providing robust support across multiple identity groups through structurally integrated programs. The company offers extensive family-friendly and gender-inclusive benefits – for example, its health plans cover fertility treatments and gender reassignment services for employees, and it provides paid parental leave for both primary and secondary caregivers (inclusive of mothers, fathers and same-sex partners). Stantec has even introduced a dedicated gender affirmation leave policy to support transitioning employees with paid time off beyond standard sick leave, demonstrating depth of support for 2SLGBTQ+ staff. Women employees are supported by breastfeeding accommodations and comprehensive maternity leave provisions, alongside targeted career development initiatives. Indigenous and youth inclusion is also strong: Stantec offers professional development (and tuition reimbursement) for all staff and reinforces advancement for Underestimated Communities via employee resource groups and external scholarships.
7. City of Edmonton	17.0	The City of Edmonton's benefits framework is largely built into formal municipal HR programs, ensuring inclusive support for a diverse workforce. Women and parents are well supported through standard maternity and parental leave benefits (with supplemental top-up provisions as is common in the public sector) and flexible leave options, as well as a work culture accommodating of family needs (e.g. gradual return-to-work and earned days off). The City provides a range of leave programs to meet individual needs – from personal leaves to self-funded extended leaves – indicating structured flexibility. Inclusive policies also accommodate employees' cultural and religious needs, allowing time off for observances outside the traditional holidays (a support particularly relevant for immigrant and diverse faith communities). Indigenous and youth employees are among the most comprehensively supported groups: the City runs dedicated Indigenous internship, summer student, and work experience programs that offer mentorship, on-the-job training, and elder guidance.

Ranking/ Company Name	Critiera 4 Score	Notes on Top 20
8. Cenovus Energy	16.5	Cenovus Energy's inclusive benefits are highlighted by strong initiatives for certain groups, especially Indigenous employees, within a framework of competitive overall benefits. The company demonstrates a deep commitment to Indigenous inclusion: it hosts an internal Indigenous Community Sharing Circle (ICSC@Cenovus) to support Indigenous staff and allies, reflecting culturally specific wellness and mentorship support. Cenovus also invests in Indigenous education and career development externally (for instance, through scholarships for Indigenous students), indicating a broader effort to build advancement opportunities for Indigenous youth. Women at Cenovus benefit from family-friendly policies and health supports; the company offers paid parental leave of up to 17 weeks for new parents – covering birth, adoption, and even foster parenting – ensuring inclusive leave for diverse family situations. While some aspects of Cenovus' parental benefits (e.g. top-up pay or duration beyond legal requirements) are aligned with industry norms, the inclusiveness in defining "family" and providing leave indicates moderate strength in this area.
9. ATCO	16.0	ATCO's inclusive benefits are rooted in comprehensive well-being and development programs that broadly cover the workforce while offering select identity-targeted supports. The company provides strong wellness benefits for all employees, exemplified by its generous mental health coverage (including an annual mental health practitioner benefit up to $3,000) and even a designated paid "mental health day" off— a level of support that signals a proactive approach to emotional health and psychological safety. Work-life balance and family support are also built into ATCO's policies: the company offers maternity leave top-up payments (100% salary for 6 weeks for new mothers) and encourages flexible work options (such as hybrid work and earned days off) to accommodate parents and caregivers, indicating moderate strength in leave and flexibility for women and family-oriented employees. Career advancement benefits are structurally integrated and inclusive of youth and diverse talent – ATCO supports paid internships, formal mentoring programs, leadership development training, and even academic scholarships for employees' children (up to $1,500 per child annually), demonstrating investment in financial support and mentorship across generations. These programs benefit groups like young employees and women (who often utilize mentoring and leadership programs) in particular, even if they are not branded for a single identity.
10. PCL Construction	15.5	PCL Construction's inclusive benefits profile shows a concerted effort to support women and build diversity in a traditionally male-dominated industry, alongside broad supports for all employees. The company has made women's advancement a priority: PCL actively partners with initiatives like Women Building Futures and has implemented comprehensive internal support systems for female employees. In practice, women at PCL benefit from focused mentorship and training opportunities, as well as family-friendly benefits (such as maternity leave coverage and flexible scheduling) that help retain and advance women in construction role. PCL supplements standard health benefits with fertility/adoption supports, paid caregiver leave, and tuition assistance. It has also piloted paid apprenticeship and bursary programs for underrepresented youth, making it one of the few construction firms with structured youth-entry supports embedded into benefits.

Ranking/ Company Name	Critiera 4 Score	Notes on Top 20
11. Alberta Health Services	15.0	Alberta Health Services offers a comprehensive benefits package covering health, dental, life/disability insurance and retirement (LAPP and group RRSP/ TFSA), supplemented by wellness spending accounts and an employee assistance program. The organization explicitly integrates diversity into its programs: it has been recognized for initiatives addressing the needs of women, Indigenous peoples, racialized employees, persons with disabilities and LGBTQ2S+ staff. For example, AHS provides standard parental leave and flexible work arrangements (with gender-neutral extensions to all new parents), and its extended health plan covers a full range of family needs, including coverage of gender-affirming care under provincial programs. Youth-oriented career supports include mentoring and internships and training for students and new graduates. In summary, AHS's strength lies in its structural integration of wellbeing and inclusion into core benefits (broad medical coverage plus mental health supports) and in offering robust development programs for young workers.
12. Canadian Western Bank (CWB)	13.0	CWB's benefits include enhanced family leave, fertility/adoption coverage, and scholarships for Indigenous and Black students. Uniquely, it operates Sharing Circles that are formally recognized within leave policies, allowing Indigenous staff to take time for ceremony without penalty.
13. EPCOR	12.5	EPCOR provides Indigenous wellness benefits such as ceremonial leave and culturally sensitive health supports. Its benefits in other categories are more generic, but Indigenous-specific accommodations (smudging, elder access, cultural leave days) anchor its score above the utility-sector average.
14. Enbridge	12.0	Enbridge includes fertility and adoption coverage and caregiver leave within its benefits, but its most distinctive feature is targeted Indigenous education support. Employees can access scholarships and bursaries tied to Indigenous student advancement, though broader immigrant and youth benefits are less formalized.
15. Pembina Pipeline Corporation	12.0	Pembina offers fertility and family planning benefits alongside cultural observance accommodations. Tuition reimbursement is available to employees and their dependents, with targeted partnerships for Indigenous scholarship funding making it stronger than many peers in its sector.
16. Canada Life / Gear-West Life	11.5	Canada Life's health coverage includes transition-related supports, fertility treatments, and extensive caregiver leave. It also provides education bursaries for dependents, positioning its benefits as particularly supportive of youth and family needs.
17. University of Alberta	11.0	The U of A provides fertility, adoption, and transition-related healthcare to staff, supplemented by tuition waivers and bursaries for employees and their families. Paid parental leave and professional development funding are embedded into its public-sector benefits framework.

Ranking/ Company Name	Critiera 4 Score	Notes on Top 20
18. Suncor	10.2	Suncor provides comprehensive coverage for transition-related health care and fertility treatments, as well as formalized Indigenous cultural leave. Education assistance programs and structured return-to-work benefits ensure women and caregivers are supported through multiple stages of career and family life.
19. Transalta	10.0	TransAlta supplements fertility and adoption coverage with flexible caregiver leave and mental health supports tailored for newcomers and youth employees. It also funds professional education and apprenticeship reimbursements, with targeted bursaries linked to Alberta Indigenous communities.
20. Alberta Health Services	10.0	AHS offers extensive health and mental health coverage, with formal caregiver leave and professional education reimbursement. Its benefits framework incorporates Indigenous cultural supports like access to elders and traditional wellness services, reflecting its province-wide workforce.
21. MacEwan University	9.5	
22. Concordia University	9.5	
23. CIBC	9.5	
24. Grant Thornton	9.0	
25. NorQuest College	8.5	
26. Civeo Corporation	8.0	
27. Finning International	8.0	
28. Edmonton Public Schools	7.4	
29. Good Samaritan Society	7.0	
30. Katz Group	7.0	

Ranking/ Company Name	Critiera 4 Score	Notes on Top 20
31. Alberta Innovates	6.5	
32. Edmonton Catholic Schools	6.5	
33. AIMco	6.5	
34. PepsiCo	6.5	
35. Sturgeon Refinery	6.0	
36. Edmonton International Airport	6.0	
37. Ledcor Group	6.0	
38. NAIT	6.0	
39. AECOM	6.0	
40. EllisDon	6.0	
41. Canadian Tire	6.0	
42. Imperial Oil	6.0	
43. WSP Global	6.0	
44. Bird Construction	5.5	
45. Shell Canada	5.2	

Ranking/ Company Name	Critiera 4 Score	Notes on Top 20
46. IKEA Canada	5.0	
47. MNP	5.0	
48. Dentons	5.0	
49. IBM Canada	5.0	
50. Jacobs	5.0	
51. General Electric	5.0	
52. Bell Canada	4.5	
53. Xerox	4.5	
54. ADP Canada	4.5	
55. Intact	4.5	
56. Women Building Futures	4.5	
57. Costco Canada	4.5	
58. WSP Global	6.0	
59. Worker's Compensation Board	5.5	
60. CGI Edmonton	5.2	

Ranking/ Company Name	Critiera 3 Score	Notes on Top 20
60. McDonald's Canada	5.0	
61. Air Canada	5.0	
62. Walmart	5.0	
63. NAIT	7.0	
64. Chemtrade Refinery	5.0	
65. UPS	5.0	

CRITERIA 4 KEY FINDINGS SUMMARY

Inclusive benefits and entitlements have emerged as a critical differentiating factor in workplace equity among employers in the Edmonton region. Based on our findings, it is clear that while many companies have begun incorporating diversity considerations into their benefits, the depth and breadth of these efforts remain minimal. A handful of top-tier employers provide robust, identity-conscious benefits (covering everything from gender-affirming health care to Indigenous cultural leave), whereas mid- and lower-tier firms tend to stick to standard packages with few to no targeted supports.

Close to one-half of the companies examined offer at least one notable inclusive benefit, and only a minority provide comprehensive suites of support for multiple identity groups. Below, we break down the findings by major benefit categories, highlighting how employers are addressing (or missing) the needs of Black, Indigenous, Immigrant, Women, Youth, and 2LGBTQS+ employees in each area.

- Fertility and family planning benefits: another area that has become a litmus test for inclusivity in health plans, particularly benefiting women, LGBTQ+ couples, and those needing assisted reproduction. 45% of the companies (mainly those publicly traded or large public sector employers) now go beyond provincial health insurance to cover fertility treatments, IVF, surrogacy or adoption expenses. For example, RBC enhanced its fertility benefit to $20,000 for treatments (with a $60,000 lifetime maximum covering fertility, surrogacy, donor and adoption costs, after years of covering fertility drug costs since 2004. Other big financial institutions have followed suit. Scotiabank, for example, offers $10,000 for IVF and an additional $10,000 for surrogacy, for a combined lifetime maximum of $20,000. These commitments make financial support for starting a family a mainstream benefit in the financial sector. Once niche, they are becoming a competitive norm among top employers. In contrast, most mid-sized and traditional firms still rely on basic extended health plans that do not include fertility or reproductive assistance beyond what government health care offers.

- Financial & career supports: Another emerging practice is to offer financial literacy and wealth-building programs geared toward Underestimated Communities. In the wake of heightened awareness around racial wealth gaps, a few organizations have piloted programs to help, for example, Black employees build financial skills or generational wealth. One global consulting company (Accenture) even hosted workshops and coaching on “Black wealth-building," providing Black staff access to financial planning resources and seminars on investing, home ownership, and other wealth-building-related topics. Such initiatives are usually internal and proprietary, so specifics are not publicly documented.

- More common are formal mentorship and career development programs, as more than 35% of employers in our Index run formal mentorship, sponsorship, or leadership training initiatives for women, BIPOC, and/or immigrant employees (a disproportionate amount of initiatives skew towards women). These programs, while not direct cash benefits, are an investment in Underestimated Communities and their careers. They provide networking, skill-building, and often a pathway to advancement that these groups might otherwise lack. This signals that the growth of their Underestimated talent is prioritized and the company is willing to devote extra resources to ensure equitable advancement.

- Inclusive benefits for immigrants: Especially noteworthy in the Edmonton region are companies addressing barriers faced by newcomers (immigrants) in their workforce. A small but significant subset of employers (20%) provide financial assistance for expenses such as foreign credential recognition, language training, or even immigration legal fees – costs that can otherwise be prohibitive for skilled immigrants. RBC, for example, has been recognized nationally for its support of newcomer employees, which includes not only specialized recruitment through programs like Career Edge internships, but also assistance to help those hires settle and advance. RBC also covers the expenses of work permits or permanent residency applications for international hires.

  Also notably, Stantec partners with the Edmonton Region Immigrant Employment Council (ERIEC) to cover licensing fees for immigrant professionals. They also funded a scholarship for an immigrant engineer to obtain their Canadian engineering designation (P.ENG). This kind of support is a game-changer for immigrant inclusion, as it removes barriers to costs unique to newcomers, equalizing the playing field for Underestimated talent.

- Youth-focused inclusive benefits: Youth and early-career programs form another facet of inclusive supports. Several public-sector and larger organizations run paid internship or fellowship programs aimed at youth from Underestimated Communities. The City of Edmonton, for instance, launched a Civic Youth Fellowship to place diverse young people in City internships in response to anti-racism and reconciliation calls. This program specifically targets Indigenous, racialized, and otherwise marginalized youth to gain work experience and mentorship in municipal government.

  Additionally, several companies indexed (just under 15%) participated in external programs to hire Indigenous summer students, newcomer interns, or young people with disabilities, often in partnership with nonprofits, universities, or government agencies. While these internships are temporary opportunities rather than permanent benefits, they represent an “inclusive entitlement” in the sense of creating pathways for Underestimated Communities to thrive in the workforce. It is also noted that industries like construction and the trades, which traditionally struggle to attract women and minority youth, disproportionately partner on such initiatives as a diversification strategy.

  Overall, the patterns suggest that meaningful financial support for marginalized employees is still more the exception than the rule, confined mainly to organizations with the will and means to invest in long-term inclusion efforts.

- Leave & Flexibility: Across 65 employers, about half have gone beyond the minimum legal requirements in some aspects of leave and flexibility. However, among the top 10 employers, there are truly comprehensive and progressive leave benefits. Differences are again apparent by industry: public sector institutions and large (mainly publicly traded) corporations tend to lead on generous leave provision, whereas sectors like construction, retail and hospitality (where operational constraints are higher) mostly stick to the basics.

  One area of notable progress is parental and family leave. For instance, TELUS provides an Employment Insurance top-up for any new parent (birth, adoptive, or partner) to 70% of salary for 17 weeks, in addition to maternity leave top-up for birth mothers. This drives equitable practices because fathers and non-birthing parents, including 2LGBTQS+ couples, get nearly equal paid time off to bond with a new child. Eighty percent of the banks evaluated in the report have similar equitable parental leave policies, and nearly 20% of the companies now offer at least 12 to 15 weeks of combined top-up for mothers, and approximately half that for fathers/secondary parents.

  By contrast, many mid-tier and smaller employers still meet only the legislative minimums (unpaid job protection leave, or modest top-ups if required by a union agreement). The divide is sharp: at a top-tier company of government department, a new mother in Edmonton might get a full salary top-up for 6+ months and the child's father could get a few months at partial pay; whereas at a mid-sized local firm, the mother might have to rely on basic EI benefits (55% wage replacement) and the father might not get any paid leave at all. This can result in less bonding time with a new child, which can have adverse effects on family dynamics and the child's upbringing.

Inclusive leave policies also extend to areas such as personal, cultural, and medical leave. A small but growing number of employers (25%) are introducing cultural leave for Indigenous employees, acknowledging the importance of Indigenous staff participating in ceremonies, feast days, or traditional practices. Enbridge's Reconciliation Action Plan, for example, includes the creation of a designated cultural leave program for Indigenous employees. These nuanced leave options contribute to an environment where employees do not have to choose between their heritage or identity and their job.

Another emerging concept is the need for leave for gender transitions and other unique medical needs. While not yet a standard practice, leading organizations have begun to explicitly support employees undergoing gender transition with time off and job protection. In many cases, this is handled under existing medical leave or disability leave policies – for example, an employee having gender-affirming surgery can use short-term disability or sick leave to cover the recovery period. However, the truly inclusive employers go further to ensure the process is smooth and stigma-free. This kind of proactive and compassionate approach, backed by a flexible leave policy, demonstrates the company's commitment to its LGBTQ2S+ staff. A few employers (jsut over 15%) have informal "transition leave" arrangements – essentially signaling that if you need weeks or months off to transition, the company will accommodate that beyond the bare legal requirements. As social attitudes evolve, we can expect more employers to formalize transition leave or at least communicate it as an option, much as parental leave was formalized in past decades.

- In many cases, this is handled under existing medical leave or disability leave policies. For example, an employee undergoing gender-affirming surgery can use short-term disability or sick leave to cover the recovery period. However, the truly inclusive employers go further to ensure the process is smooth and stigma-free. This proactive and compassionate approach, backed by a flexible leave policy, demonstrates the company's commitment to its LGBTQ2S+ staff. A few employers (just over 15%) have informal "transition leave" arrangements – essentially signalling that if you need weeks or months off to transition, the company will accommodate that beyond the bare legal requirements. As social attitudes evolve, we can expect more employers to formalize transition leave or at least communicate it as an option, much as parental leave was formalized in past decades.

- Finally, the pandemic-era shift to remote and flexible work has fundamentally changed the landscape of "benefits" related to work-life balance. Flexibility is now often seen as an entitlement, and it has particular salience for specific groups: working mothers (who still shoulder much family care), employees with disabilities or health conditions, religious minorities (who may need flexible scheduling for holy days or prayer), and younger generations who value work-life integration.

- In the Edmonton region, almost one-half of office-based employers (just over 50% of our Index) among the 65 now offer some form of hybrid work or flexible hours. Even historically inflexible sectors, such as government and finance, have adopted hybrid models to some extent. It is noted, however, that this trend is slowly reversing as more workplaces are requiring five days in the office. Workers in those sectors (which include many young people in entry-level roles, a significant number of women, and immigrants in service roles) have less autonomy over their schedules and thus benefit less from the "flexible work revolution."

- This creates a new kind of divide in inclusive benefits: flexibility has become a perk of knowledge-based and white-collar jobs, potentially leaving others behind. Some employers are trying to bridge this gap by offering alternative forms of flexibility – for instance, compressed workweeks, generous personal leave banks, or shift-swapping policies – to give even hourly workers some control. Overall, though, flexibility is one area of inclusion where context matters greatly: it is nearly universal in principle (especially after COVID-19) but uneven in practice, strongly favouring sectors that can support remote work.

Patterns in inclusive benefits often align with industry lines. Financial services and telecom/tech companies were generally the top performers, providing a broad range of benefits for multiple identity groups. These industries operate in highly competitive talent markets and under public scrutiny, which has driven them to adopt cutting-edge policies (e.g., big banks racing to enhance fertility benefits or add anti-racism programs). For example, banks like RBC and Scotia not only cover fertility and adoption costs but also invest in newcomer integration and Black mentorship programs, while telecom firms like TELUS offer comprehensive benefits for 2LGBTQS+ individuals and Indigenous support.

In contrast, public sector and educational institutions showed a mixed picture: they often have strong leave provisions (due to union contracts) and some innovative programs (like the City's youth fellowship or universities' scholarships for Indigenous students), but they can be slower to implement niche benefits like gender-affirming surgery coverage or tech-sector levels of flexibility. Many public entities are catching up, as exemplified by new policies for cultural leave or diversity scholarships; however, budget constraints and bureaucracy can limit their agility.

Industries such as construction, energy, and manufacturing – which are well-represented in the Edmonton region's economy – tend to lag in offering identity-specific benefits, even as they may provide excellent general benefits (e.g., solid pensions, health plans, and safety programs). In these sectors, inclusive efforts are often channelled through recruitment and training rather than unique entitlements for existing employees. We saw that several large construction and resource companies partner with external organizations to diversify their workforce (such as Women Building Futures for training women, or various Indigenous apprenticeship initiatives).

These efforts are commendable, but internally, the benefits packages at these firms remain quite traditional – focusing on baseline health, dental, and retirement, with little tailoring for, say, LGBTQ+ or immigrant needs. One reason could be that many of these employers are male-dominated and unionized, where benefits are standardized for all and negotiated through collective bargaining (meaning less flexibility to add special perks for sub-groups). For example, a union contract might secure excellent overall health coverage and parental leave. However, it will not necessarily include provisions such as “scholarships for Black employees" or "Elder support services," which are more common managerial initiatives in white-collar environments.

Retail, hospitality, and smaller local businesses (only a handful of which were included in the study) similarly tend to offer bare-bones benefits due to cost pressures. They meet legal requirements on leave and provide basic health insurance if at all, but one would rarely find, say, paid transition leave or anti-racism scholarships at a mid-sized retail chain. The disparity means that an employee's access to inclusive benefits can depend heavily on the industry and the size of the employer.

Importantly, the top-tier vs. mid-tier differentiation cuts across industries. In practically every field we examined, a few leading organizations go above and beyond. For example, in finance, RBC, ATB and Scotia stand out, while smaller credit unions may do significantly less. In the energy sector, Enbridge and Suncor have robust Indigenous relations programs and decent benefits, whereas smaller contractors may adhere to the minimum. Even in public service, a progressive municipality or department like the City of Edmonton might pilot new inclusive benefits, while other public sector players (Sturgeon County, for example) hold back. This suggests that leadership commitment and organizational culture drive inclusive benefits as much as industry norms do.

Companies that view diversity as a strategic priority are using benefits as a tool to attract and empower diverse talent; those that see it as a secondary matter often stick to compliance-level offerings. Another pattern is that Canadian national companies often set the tone – many employers in the Edmonton region are branches of national firms (such as banks, telecoms, and consulting firms) that have Canada-wide diversity and benefits strategies. Thus, initiatives such as covering gender affirmation or boosting fertility support often originate from head office policies that are then applied in Edmonton. Meanwhile, strictly local organizations (e.g., a local utility or college) may not feel the same pressure to innovate unless compelled by local advocacy or employee demand.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO STRENGTHEN INCLUSIVE BENEFITS IN EDMONTON'S WORKFORCE

To build on these findings, we propose a set of targeted, actionable recommendations for improving Inclusive Benefits (Criteria 5). Each recommendation addresses a focus area where many organizations had gaps, and is followed by an explanation of why it matters and a concrete action plan.

- **Expand parental and family-building benefits.**
    - Why it matters: Parental leave and family-building benefits remain one of the clearest signals of equitable practices for Underestimated Communities as a whole. However, fewer than half of Edmonton employers offer paid top-ups, and only a handful cover fertility, adoption, or surrogacy costs. Without these supports, employees face financial strain at a pivotal time, and mothers bear career penalties disproportionately. Companies that normalize equal family-building supports across genders and family types see stronger retention and recruitment outcomes in the emerging, modern-day workforce.
    - Action: Reference top-tier entities like Accenture, and organization that provides 16 weeks of fully paid parental leave to all parents regardless of gender or family status. This sets a clear precedent for equitable caregiving. Employers should also include adoption and surrogacy reimbursements as standard entitlements, as several large professional service firms and a significant number of financial institutions have adopted this in their benefits plans. Additionally, organizations like the University of Alberta are starting to address fertility and adoption needs through expanded benefits. This practice should be scaled
- **Introduce Indigenous cultural leave and healing supports.**
    - Why it matters: Indigenous employees are often forced to use scarce vacation or unpaid time to attend ceremonies, cultural events, or healing practices. Very few local employers offer designated cultural leave, and even fewer (25%) cover traditional healing or access to elders. These supports are key to reconciliation and retention of Indigenous talent
    - Action: Build on initiatives like Enbridge's Indigenous Reconciliation Action Plan, which includes access to Elders through its Employee Assistance Program and culturally specific wellness benefits. Employers should codify at least two paid cultural leave days annually and expand health benefits to cover traditional healing services. Public-sector leaders, such as the City of Edmonton, have begun experimenting with Indigenous ceremony leave for staff. This should become a baseline standard across industries.
- **Implement transition leave and gender-affirming benefits.**
    - Why it matters: 2LGBTQS+ employees continue to face barriers in accessing healthcare and time off for transition. While gender-affirming care is increasingly recognized, only a few employers explicitly include it in benefit plans, and transition leave is almost nonexistent. Without these supports, employees are forced to choose between their identity and their income security.
    - Action: Adopt policies similar to those at Accenture, which was among the first in the country to add gender affirmation surgery to its core health plan. Beyond coverage, employers should consider adding 4-6 weeks of dedicated paid transition leave and ensure HR systems recognize chosen names and pronouns. Inclusive family definitions should also be standardized, guaranteeing the same benefits for same-sex couples and adoptive parents.
- **Fund credentialing, licensing, and settlement supports for immigrant employees**
    - Why it matters: Immigrant and refugee professionals often struggle to afford costly credential recognition exams, licensing fees, and immigration legal services. Our review found this to be one of the weakest benefit areas, with only ~20% of Edmonton employers providing meaningful settlement or credential supports. This underutilizes immigrant talent, leading to lower productivity and higher attrition rates.
    - Scale the practices of employers like the University of Alberta, which provides international staff with immigration advising and visa support services, and Covenant Health, which helps cover licensing fees for internationally trained nurses. While this form of inclusive benefits can't be offered to all lines of work (mainly only high-skilled labour), employers in engineering and health should especially reimburse exam fees and professional association dues. Some firms are piloting this model through the Edmonton Region Immigrant Employment Council (ERIEC).
- **Create black-focused scholarships and wealth-building supports**
    - Why it matters: Only a handful of employers in Edmonton (12%) currently provide Black-specific scholarships, bursaries, or trauma-informed mental health benefits. This leaves economic well-being disparities unaddressed. Targeted financial educational supports are critical to closing representation and wealth gaps for Black employees and their families.
    - Action: Expand on examples such as ATB's partnership with the National Black Coalition of Canada, which funds financial literacy programs and mentorship for Black professionals. Other employers should establish annual scholarships for Black employees (both current and prospective) or their dependents, and integrate racial trauma counselling into their benefit plans. These steps signal a long-term commitment to equity and not just symbolic gestures during Black History Month.

- **Strengthen paid youth pathways and mentorship**

  - Why it matters: Youth unemployment in Canada reached 14.6% in mid-2025, the highest in over a decade. Locally, many youth still only have underemployment opportunities or ad-hoc roles (think work in the gig economy), which exploit young workers and fail to build future pipelines (let alone Canada's future workforce). Paid, structured, and fulfilling pathways ensure that youth (especially those from Underestimated Communities) can access careers on a fair footing.

  - Actions: Expand models like the City of Edmonton's Civic Youth Fellowship, which places diverse young people into paid internships with mentorship, or Women Building Futures, which supports young women entering the trades with stipends and training. Organizations like Mitacs also supplement the salaries of students (current or recently graduated) to undertake research-based projects in organizations. Employers across sectors should commit to offering more fulfilling internships that can lead to potentially fulfilling careers for young people

In closing, by embedding these recommendations, Edmonton employers can move from piecemeal inclusion to systemic and intentional equity for Underestimated Communities. Benefits are tangible, auditable, and signal fairness. They are also easier to measure, both in terms of worker productivity and their direct impact on employee lives. As witnessed with the top-tier organizations, those that scale best practices across industries not only advance equitable practices for Underestimated Communities but also enhance Edmonton's competitiveness in attracting and retaining top talent.

CRITERIA 5: CSR SUPPLIER STANDARDS & PHILANTHROPY

CRITERIA 5: CSR-SUPPLIER STANDARDS & PHILANTHROPY

Criteria 5 Overview of Methodology

We evaluated 65 companies with a significant employer presence in Edmonton to better understand their commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as it relates to supplier standards and philanthropic giving across six identity groups: Black, Indigenous, Immigrant (racialized/newcomer), Women, Youth, and 2LGBTQS+. For each group, we examined the presence and strength of specific initiatives, including business procurement, supplier development programs, diversity spend Tracking, and cultural competency in procurement. Higher scores were awarded to companies and organizations that aligned their procurement and community impact strategies.

Criteria 5 Evaluation Framework

We assessed each company's inclusive benefits using three sub-sections applied consistently across identity groups, while accounting for identity-specific criteria.

We evaluated each company's CSR-supplier standards and philanthropy using the following four sub-categories per identity group (24 total indicators per company).

Black-Focused CSR-Supplier Standards & Philanthropy

1. Black-Owned Business Procurement (0-3): Actively seeking and engaging with Black-owned businesses for procurement opportunities, with clear targets and tracking mechanisms.
2. Supplier Development Programs (0-3): Offering mentorship, training, and resources to help Black-owned businesses grow and become more competitive in the supply chain.
3. Philanthropic Giving (0-3): Financial support for community initiatives, nonprofits, or social impact programs that directly benefit Black communities.
4. Diversity Spend Tracking (0-3): Implemented systems to track and report on spending with Black-owned businesses, with regular reviews and adjustments to meet targets.

Indigenous-Focused CSR-Supplier Standards & Philanthropy

1. Indigenous-Owned Business Procurement (0-3): Actively seeking and engaging with Indigenous-owned businesses for procurement opportunities, with clear targets and tracking mechanisms.
2. Supplier Development Programs (0-3): Offering mentorship, training, and resources to help Indigenous-owned businesses grow and become more competitive in the supply chain.
3. Philanthropic Giving (0-3): Financial support for community initiatives, nonprofits, or social impact programs that directly benefit Indigenous communities.
4. Diversity Spend Tracking (0-3): Implemented systems to track and report on spending with Indigenous-owned businesses, with regular reviews and adjustments to meet targets.

Immigrant-Focused CSR-Supplier Standards & Philanthropy

1. Immigrant-Owned Business Procurement (0-3): Actively seeking and engaging with Immigrant-owned businesses for procurement opportunities, with clear targets and tracking mechanisms.
2. Supplier Development Programs (0-3): Offering mentorship, training, and resources to help Immigrant-owned businesses grow and become more competitive in the supply chain.
3. Philanthropic Giving (0-3): Financial support for community initiatives, nonprofits, or social impact programs that directly benefit women communities.
4. Diversity Spend Tracking (0-3): Implemented systems to track and report on spending with Immigrant-owned businesses, with regular reviews and adjustments to meet targets.

Women-Focused CSR-Supplier Standards & Philanthropy

1. Women-Owned Business Procurement (0-3): Actively seeking and engaging with women-owned businesses for procurement opportunities, with clear targets and tracking mechanisms.
2. Supplier Development Programs (0-3): Offering mentorship, training, and resources to help women-owned businesses grow and become more competitive in the supply chain.
3. Philanthropic Giving (0-3): Financial support for community initiatives, nonprofits, or social impact programs that directly benefit youth communities.
4. Diversity Spend Tracking (0-3): Implemented systems to track and report on spending with women-owned businesses, with regular reviews and adjustments to meet targets.

Youth-Focused CSR-Supplier Standards & Philanthropy

1. Youth-Owned Business Procurement (0-3): Actively seeking and engaging with youth-owned businesses for procurement opportunities, with clear targets and tracking mechanisms.
2. Supplier Development Programs (0-3): Offering mentorship, training, and resources to help youth-owned businesses grow and become more competitive in the supply chain.
3. Philanthropic Giving (0-3): Financial support for community initiatives, nonprofits, or social impact programs that directly benefit youth communities.
4. Diversity Spend Tracking (0-3): Implemented systems to track and report on spending with youth-owned businesses, with regular reviews and adjustments to meet targets.

2LGBTQS+-Focused CSR-Supplier Standards & Philanthropy

1. 2LGBTQS+-Owned Business Procurement (0-3): Actively seeking and engaging with 2LGBTQS+-owned businesses for procurement opportunities, with clear targets and tracking mechanisms.
2. Supplier Development Programs (0-3): Offering mentorship, training, and resources to help 2LGBTQS+-owned businesses grow and become more competitive in the supply chain.
3. Philanthropic Giving (0-3): Financial support for community initiatives, nonprofits, or social impact programs that directly benefit 2LGBTQS+ communities.
4. Diversity Spend Tracking (0-3): Implemented systems to track and report on spending with 2LGBTQS+-owned businesses, with regular reviews and adjustments to meet targets.

A company could receive a maximum of 72 points and total raw scores across all six groups were normalized to a score out of 20 for dashboard comparisons. A score of:

- 0 indicates no notable evidence in that area;
- 1 point indicates minimal or ad-hoc action taken;
- 2 is moderate implementation, with some identity-specific design or tracking;
- 3 shows strong, identity-specific initiatives with measurable outcomes or structural integration.

9.2/20

CRITERIA 4 OVERALL EVALUATION

Average by Dimension

53%

AVG. SCORE FOR PROCUREMENT & BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

41%

AVG. SCORE FOR SUPPLIER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

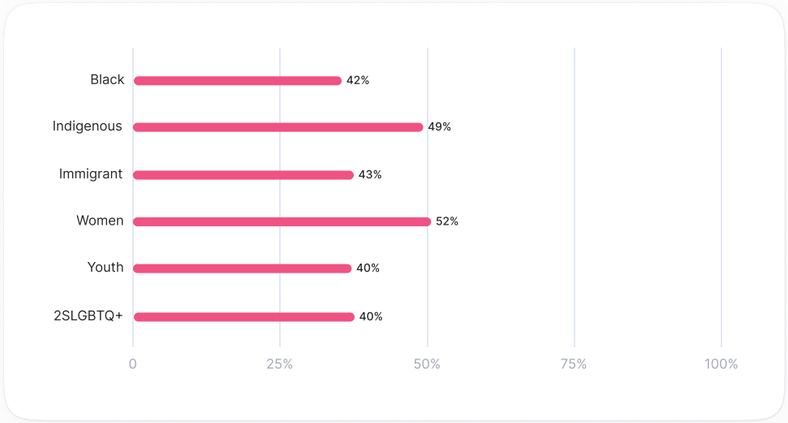
54%

AVG. SCORE FOR PHILANTHROPIC GIVING

37%

AVG. SCORE FOR DIVERSITY SPEND TRACKING

Average Score by Identity Group



Criteria 5 Key Findings

Below are key findings and statistics from the analysis of Criteria 5:

- Community investments & philanthropy: an overwhelming number of employers (~90%) engage in some form of community investment or partnership that advances diversity and inclusion for Underestimated Communities. The most common efforts focus on education and youth and women's empowerment, with a significant emphasis on Indigenous youth or women in STEM fields.

- Supplier Diversity & Inclusion Procurement: Thirty-five percent of the employers in our report demonstrate a formal supplier diversity program or policies to include diverse-owned businesses in their supply chain. This means only roughly one in three has a structured effort to purchase from suppliers owned by Indigenous peoples, women, racialized groups, 2LGBTQS+ individuals, etc. Even among large organizations, supplier diversity is still an emerging practice in the Edmonton region/Canada, in general. Leaders like TELUS and RBC have established supplier diversity strategies and actively mentor or seek out diverse suppliers.

  Only a top share (top 10%) of Edmonton's top employers have programs explicitly focused on Black-owned suppliers. Philanthropic investment in Black communities is also minimal. However, some leaders stepped up. RBC expanded its commitment to invest $150 million by 2025 in Black community initiatives, including $50 million for Black youth skills development and $100 million in loans for Black entrepreneurs. These high-profile commitments demonstrate what best-in-class support can look like, but overall, Black-focused supplier inclusion and giving remain the weakest among all groups.

Indigenous inclusion is one of the strongest supported identity groups under Criterion 5. Over 70% of employers with a formal supplier diversity program or policy have a specific Indigenous procurement policy, partnership and/or target. For example, utility company EPCOR has a dedicated procurement strategy and vendor database to increase the number of Indigenous suppliers. It is also common for large employers to join councils like the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB) or the Canadian Council for Indigenous Business (CCIB). On the philanthropic side, close to a third of top employers invest in Indigenous communities or initiatives. The emphasis on Indigenous supplier opportunity and community investment is higher relative to other Underestimated groups, driven by reconciliation commitments and the pressing need to include First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities in economic, social, and cultural prosperity.

Public sector entities are also beginning to formalize this area. For instance, the City of Edmonton introduced an Indigenous Procurement Framework to reduce barriers and increase Indigenous business participation in its $1 billion annual spend. Overall, while many companies express intent to "buy inclusive," fewer have quantifiable targets or public reporting on spend with diverse suppliers.

- Support for 2LGBTQS+ suppliers and communities is moderate, trailing the top categories (Indigenous, women) but higher than the least-supported groups. We identified ~12% of Edmonton's leading employers that explicitly include 2LGBTQ+ businesses in their supplier diversity efforts. In principle, most Canadian diversity programs include 2LGBTQS+ suppliers, but in practice, far fewer companies actively engage with them through explicit programming.

- Immigrant/Newcomer Initiatives: This remains the sparsest area of criterion 5. Just under 10% of employers demonstrate targeted efforts to include immigrant- or refugee-owned businesses in procurement pipelines or to direct philanthropic funding toward newcomer settlement and economic integration. A caveat is that minority-owned procurement is a broader subcategory, which can include immigrant business owners; this framing is more common, as 25% of the companies reported on included this in their procurement strategy. A small handful (less than 8%) of partners with immigrant-serving agencies or mentorship programs that help newcomer entrepreneurs access capital and procurement opportunities. As a result, newcomer-owned supplier inclusion and philanthropic giving to immigrant-focused initiatives remain among the least developed dimensions of CSR in Edmonton's corporate landscape.

- Women-owned initiatives: Inclusion of women-owned suppliers is a well-established priority for many large employers. Just under 25% of Edmonton's top companies and organizations that we reported on include initiatives to source from women-led businesses or are partners with organizations like Women Business Enterprise (WBE) Canada to certify or find these suppliers. Corporate philanthropic support for women is also evident, though somewhat less prevalent than supplier efforts. 20% of top employers acknowledge sponsorship programs for women's advancement or well-being. Common examples include funding for women in STEM initiatives, supporting women's health organizations or backing gender equity in education. A notable case is AIMCo (Alberta Investment Management Corp.), which recently introduced scholarships to advance gender diversity in finance in Alberta. Such targeted giving, alongside supplier inclusion, demonstrates a moderate but growing commitment to empowering women. Overall, the women's category shows relatively high maturity, with many employers addressing gender inclusion in both their supply chains and community investments.

- Youth-focused supplier diversity: Youth constitute a significant focus of philanthropic giving, but not a focus in procurement. Essentially, none of Edmonton's top employers have formal supplier diversity criteria for youth-owned businesses (young entrepreneurs are not typically a procurement category). However, on the community investment side, youth support is one of the most widespread areas, with more than 50% of major employers funding youth-focused initiatives. Many companies offer scholarships or grants. Most notable is RBC's Future Launch program: a nationwide $500 million commitment to empower young Canadians with skills and work experience. Numerous Edmonton-area employers similarly donate to programs. In short, community investment in youth is very high, reflecting a broad consensus on nurturing the next generation; however, this consensus does not translate into supplier diversity.

Ranking/ Company Name	Critiera 5 Score	Notes on Top 20
1. RBC	19.0	RBC demonstrates industry-leading commitment to diverse suppliers and communities while prioritizing thoughtful philanthropic giving. It was one of the first companies in Canada to implement formal supplier mentorship programs for women, Indigenous and minority-owned businesses. RBC actively works with supplier diversity councils (CAMSC, WBE Canada, etc) to include Black-, immigrant- and women-owned suppliers in its procurement. On philanthropic giving, RBC Foundation's Future Launch is a 10-year, C$500 million commitment supporting youth skills, mental health, and work experience, clearly aligned with equity-deserving communities. The bank also funds targeted entrepreneurship programs (e.g., Black Entrepreneur Startup Program with Futurpreneur) that complement supplier development in the ecosystem.
2. TD Bank	19.0	TD has a broad-based equity focus in tis CSR. In procurement, TD is a member of diversity supplier councils (e.g. CAMSC, CGLCC) and in 2024 launched a program to certify and support refugee-owned businesses, extending its inclusion to immigrant entrepreneurs. TD has operated a Tier-2 supplier diversity program since 2014–15, asking major Tier-1 vendors to report the dollars they subcontract to diverse suppliers. TD's supplier enablement uses SAP Ariba and includes supplier-diversity information in onboarding, which helps normalize inclusive procurement internally. Philanthropically, TD supports over 230 organizations serving 2LGBTQS+ communities and committed $3.7 million to Indigenous for language, culture and land-based programs. TD's Ready Commitment (now $1 billion committed by 2030) donations also fund Black and newcomer community initiatives and it has long-standing partnerships with Pride and Indigenous event.
3. Bank of Montreal	18.2	BMO is a leader in supplier diversity and community partnerships. BMO actively spends with and mentors diverse suppliers. It was earmarked $300 million to support businesses owned by women, Black, Indigenous, and 2LGBTQS+ entrepreneurs. BMO publicly reports more than C$77 million in Indigenous procurement from 2021–2023, surpassing a C$10 million annual target by 2023. It partners with the Native Women's Association of Canada to build economic prosperity for Indigenous women and donated $500,000 to launch an Indigenous youth leaders program. Additionally, BMO's Zero Barriers Initiative also provides grants and financial literacy programs for Black and Indigenous communities. On giving, BMO Gives reported C$108 million in community donations in 2024 (with third-party verification of giving methodology), much of it tied to equity-advancing programs. BMO's recent Indigenous Partnerships & Progress reporting frames procurement, employment, and community investment as measurable pillars
4. TELUS	18.2	The telecom giant doubled its Indigenous Communities Fund to $2 million through 2028 and actively supports Indigenous-led groups addressing social needs. Its Friendly Future Foundation donates over $8 million annually to youth charities, and TELUS regularly provides funding to 2LGBTQS+ initiatives and a program providing free phone and data to at-risk Indigenous women. TELUS also integrates equity into its supply chain with a supplier diversity program that has doubled its spend with diverse suppliers and exceeded its Indigenous spending target by 7x under its CPO's leadership. TELUS is a member of CAMSC (Canadian Aboriginal and Minority Supplier Council), CCAB (Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business, WBE Canada (Women Business Enterprises) and even mentors its large contractors to develop their own supplier diversity programs. It also launched a $100 million Pollinator Fund that's investing in Indigenous- and women-led social ventures (over 50% of its portfolio founders are Indigenous or racialized, and nearly half are women).

Ranking/ Company Name	Critiera 4 Score	Notes on Top 20
5. Suncor Energy	18.0	Suncor's Indigenous procurement is among the strongest in the private sector: ~C$3.1 billion in goods and services purchased from Indigenous suppliers in 2022, estimated as ~20% of total procurement that year. The company standardizes supplier onboarding through Ariba/Fieldglass, which supports consistent supplier management and could facilitate spend tracking. Suncor's Energy Foundation contributed $24 million in 2023 to communities, focusing its funding on Indigenous well-being and community development. The company has set a social goal to empower Indigenous youth and community development. The company has set a social goal to empower Indigenous youth — it funds scholarships and programs via Indspire and others, and champions Indigenous youth leadership through education initiatives. The company has moved beyond fixed Indigenous procurement targets and believes that working with Indigenous suppliers is now simply the way they do business. The company also supports youth (e.g. its Bridge to Tomorrow STEM camps) and has internal networks for women and LGBTQ employees.
6. Enbridge	17.5	Enbridge actively seeks certified inclusive suppliers through a formal supplier-inclusion program and Responsible Procurement framework. Community investment totaled ~C$28–32 million in 2024, including ~C$3 million directed to Indigenous communities Enbridge's Fueling Futures program prioritizes youth empowerment and Indigenous cultural support. The pipeline company directs philanthropic funding toward youth education, leadership, and life-skills programs, and honours Indigenous communities by supporting cultural preservation and reconciliation efforts. It has committed an additional $1B to Indigenous owned businesses by 2030, on top of $2B+ already spent with Indigenous suppliers since 2012.
7. Scotiabank	17.0	Scotiabank operates a Supplier Diversity Program (launched 2021) and is a corporate member of all five Canadian supplier-diversity councils, signaling broad engagement. Its Truth & Reconciliation Action Plan notes an Indigenous procurement plan with a completed benchmark to set a dollar-value increase target. Scotiabank's ScotiaRISE initiative exemplifies its contributions to Underestimated Communities. This 10-year, $500 million community investment program is aimed at economic resilience for disadvantaged groups, including newcomers, Indigenous people and youth.
8. City of Edmonton	17.0	The City of Edmonton's procurement is explicitly designed to support equity and reconciliation. Its Sustainable Procurement Policy and Indigenous Procurement Framework create "pathways for Indigenous businesses," including an Indigenous business registration and a supplier code of conduct. The City's online supplier enablement process even asks new vendors whether they are Indigenous-owned, women-owned, 2SLGBTQQIA+-owned, immigrant/refugee-owned, etc., to better understand supplier diversity. In practice the City encourages contractors to recruit and train youth, women, Indigenous people, and others in its project tenders. Its philanthropic commitments (grants and community partnerships) are similarly focused on equity and inclusion with hallmark initiatives like the Anti-Racism funding programs and a multitude of funding opportunities for women-led and Indigenous-owned businesses.

Ranking/ Company Name	Critiera 4 Score	Notes on Top 20
9. EllisDon	16.5	EllisDon states a coordinated effort to increase Indigenous procurement and is pursuing PAIR accreditation via CCIB, with a formal Indigenous Relations department to hire Indigenous employees and contract Indigenous businesses. On supplier development and pipeline building, EllisDon partners with organizations like Build a Dream and supports youth pathways into construction, which indirectly strengthens capacity among equity-deserving groups.
10. Stantec	16.5	Stantec integrates inclusion into its operations and outreach. It maintains a Supplier Diversity program engaging small, local, women-owned and minority-owned suppliers as it actively seeks out diverse vendors in its projects. The firm earned PAIR Bronze certification in 2024. Strategically, Stantec directs philanthropy to community and Indigenous causes (e.g., directing sustainability-linked loan savings to Indigenous nonprofits; annual holiday giving; broader community investments. It also established an equity scholarship to fund $200k for BIPOC and other students from Underestimated Communities.
11. ATB	16.0	ATB achieved bronze-level certification in the CCAB's Partnership in Indigenous Relations program, reflecting its formal reconciliation action plan. It has financed major Indigenous-led business ventures. For example, ATB helped structure and finance a $1 billion partnership for 23 First Nations to acquire an equity stake in Enbridge's pipeline. On giving, ATB sponsors events and programs that support Indigenous entrepreneurship, women, and other equity groups (e.g. Indigenous business contests, reconciliation events), reflecting its focus on "greater social impact and economic wellbeing of Albertans"
12. ATCO	15.5	ATCO's CSR approach combines strong Indigenous procurement with broad community giving. In 2024 ATCO reported awarding over $95 million in contracts to Indigenous and Indigenous-affiliated contractors, and generating $123M in "Indigenous net economic benefit". It has 40+ joint-venture partnerships and long-term MOUs with Indigenous communities (some lasting decades) to share ownership and benefits in projects. This includes everything from northern housing to energy services. ATCO has set and exceeded internal targets for Indigenous spend, and continually seeks to remove procurement barriers for diverse suppliers (e.g. adding Indigenous-ownership as a scoring criterion). Its supplier development programs include 67 ongoing Indigenous partnership agreements (revenue sharing, training, jobs) that build capacity. ATCO has begun focusing on broader support for Underestimated Communities (e.g. women in trades, newcomer hiring in its gas division etc.)

Ranking/ Company Name	Critiera 4 Score	Notes on Top 20
13. EPCOR	14.1	EPCOR's procurement process explicitly welcomes certified diverse suppliers which are businesses certified as women-owned, 2LGBTQS+-owned etc.). It's also a leader in supplier diversity (maintaining an Indigenous vendor database and being a CCAB Procurement Champion). Epcor also operates the Hear + Soul Fund and other programs to give back. Since 2020, it has donated over $1.8 million via matching campaigns for local charities. To add, EPCOR invests in organizations supporting Indigenous students and youth as a focus of its community investment areas. EPCOR has also funded a project to create an Indigenous-owned water utility with a First Nation partner.
14. CIBC	14.0	CIBC has made significant recent strides in equity through both funding and policy. The bank has a Supplier Diversity commitment to ensure fair access for enterprises owned by women, Indigenous and minority entrepreneurs. It backs this with community investment: for example, CIBC donated $500,000 to establish new equity, diversity & inclusion scholarships at Concordia University (targeting BIPIC, 2LGBTQS+ students) and committed $200,000 to support Indigenous students attending univeristiy. CIBC also provided $100,000 to create bursaries for Black and Indigenous students at Algonquin College.
15. Shell Canada	13.5	Shell Canada has a long history of Indigenous engagement and is ramping up community investments benefiting youth. Shell partners with Indigenous communities near its operations and supports Indigenous education and skills development programs. The company also pledged $1 million worth of computer equipment to Indigenous schools and organizations across Western Canada (over 600 computers donated so far) to improve digital access in those communities. Shell and its employees have also donated $100+ million to United Way over 30 years, and recently committed $1 million to Kids Help Phone to support youth mental health nationwide.
16. IBM Canada	12.7	IBM contributes philanthropically through initiatives like the IBM STEM 4 Girls Program and collaborate with universities in Edmonton to increase opportunities for Underestimated Communities. It has supported tech camps for youth and employs many newcomers in its services center.
17. Imperial Oil	11.5	Imperial Oil focuses its equity efforts on Indigenous economic empowerment and education. The company has spent over $900 million with Indigenous businesses in 2024 alone, as part of its commitment to "economic reconciliation." Imperial Oil partnered with Indigenous contractors like the Bouchier Group to provide long-term employment and training for Indigenous workers. Imperial also celebrates 20+ years of funding Indigenous post-secondary education by establishing the Imperial Indigenous Scholarship program with Indspire, providing annual scholarships to First Nations, Metis and Inuit students across Canada. Additionally, Imperial Oil donated $1 million to Mount Royal University to create an Indigenous science and tech education program.

Ranking/ Company Name	Critiera 4 Score	Notes on Top 20
18. PCL Construction	11.5	PCL has steadily expanded its supplier diversity and community support. PCL is a member of multiple Indigenous business organizations and is Progressive Aboriginal Relations (PAR) committed. On its projects, PCL identifies subcontracting opportunities for Indigenous contractors and includes Indigenous content requirements in big project bids. It also works to include other diverse subcontractors (e.g. women-owned trades). Philanthropically, PCL invests in youth and community development. For example, PCL regularly supports Habitat for Humanity builds (benefiting women and immigrant families) and donates to education and trade apprenticeship programs. It's head office raised $2.47 million for the United Way in 2024 alone, and company-wide PCL donated $6.5 million that year.
19. Canadian National Railway	11.3	CN Rail has a comprehensive Indigenous relations strategy and is expanding its diversity efforts including a strong Indigenous procurement commitment. CN has long-standing partnerships with Indigenous communities along its rail lines and runs an Indigenous Advisory Council (to guide policies on employment, training, and procurement). It also invests in Indigenous youth through scholarships and technical training programs (e.g. sponsoring Indspire's awards and bursaries). For other groups, CN focuses on inclusive hiring such as improving Black and women representations in its workforce.
20. Graham Construction	10.5	Graham Construction (Graham Group) is a leading Indigenous procurement champion. Its "Graham Three Nations (G3N)" initiative focuses on integrating Indigenous communities into construction projects – from subcontracting to workforce training. Graham boasts agreements that build Indigenous business capacity, with over 80% local workforce content on its projects in partnership with Indigenous groups
21. Finning	10.0	
22. Scotiabank	9.1	
23. NAIT	9.1	
24. Alberta Blue Cross	9.0	
25. Servus Credit Union	9.0	
26. Intact Financial	9.0	
27. Covenant Health	9.0	
28. Grant MacEwan University	8.0	

Ranking/ Company Name	Critiera 4 Score	Notes on Top 20
29. Civeo	8.0	
30. PepsiCo	8.0	
31. Cocoa-Cola	8.0	
32. Katz Group	7.5	
33. Ledcor Group	7.5	
34. AIMco	7.5	
35. Walmart	6.5	
36. AECOM	6.5	
37. Gilead Alberta	6.0	
38. Flour Canada	6.0	
39. Capital Power	6.0	
40. Clark Builders	6.0	
41. Alberta Motor Association	6.0	
42. Paladin Security	5.5	
43. AutoCanada	5.2	

Ranking/ Company Name	Critiera 4 Score	Notes on Top 20
44. Spartan Controls	5.2	
45. Bird Construction	5.0	
46. Bee-Clean	5.0	
47. UPS	5.0	
48. Amazon Fulfillment	5.0	
49. Edmonton Police Service	5.0	
50. Canada Post	4.0	
51. Canadian Armed Forces	4.0	
52. Chemtrade Refinery	4.0	
53. Sherritt International	4.0	
54. BioWare	4.0	
55. DynaLife	4.0	
56. Lilydale (Sofina Foods)	4.0	
57. The Brick	4.0	
58. Air Canada	4.0	

Ranking/ Company Name	Critiera 3 Score	Notes on Top 20
59. Sun Life	4.0	
60. Edmoton Catholic Schools	4.0	
61. Tetra Tech	4.0	
62. Workers' Compensation Board	4.0	
64. Chemtrade Refinery	4.0	
65. Alcanna	4.0	

RECOMMENDATIONS TO STRENGTHEN CSR-SUPPLIER STANDARDS AND PHILANTHROPIC GIVING IN EDMONTON'S WORKFORCE

Overall, Edmonton's corporate landscape shows uneven performance on Criteria 5. To build on these findings, we propose a set of targeted, actionable recommendations for improving Corporate Social Responsibility Supplier Standards & Philanthropy (Criteria 5). Clear leaders are setting inclusive procurement standards and being explicit with directing funds to Underestimated Communities, especially for Indigenous peoples, women, and youth. However, there are blind spots—notably for immigrants and Black Canadians—where many firms have room to improve by adopting the kind of targeted supplier outreach that the top performers have pioneered for other Underestimated Communities. The frameworks are there; it now comes down to adopting and executing them.

- **Mandate and publicize supplier diversity data tracking**
  - Why it matters: Without complex and transparent data, organizations cannot assess, improve or be held accountable for their inclusive procurement practices. Edmonton's corporate sector has begun this process, with many (over 25%) of vendors now asking all vendors to self-identify as Indigenous-owned, women-owned, visible minority-owned, etc. Transparent reporting on diverse suppliers is necessary across sectors to ensure progress is measurable.
  - Actions: Employers should implement procurement systems that record supplier demographics (as the City of Edmonton is doing with its Diversity Spend Reporting Framework). All major RFPs and contracts should require bidders to self-report ownership characteristics. In practice, companies can update their vendor databases to capture diversity status, and governments can tie contract eligibility to the completion of self-ID. Finally, publish summary metrics on how much is spent with equity-owned businesses to keep organizations accountable.

- **Set explicit procurement targets for three or more Underestimated Communities**

  - Why it matters: Vague commitments yield little change. Edmonton firms and public agencies should follow suit by defining concrete supplier diversity targets for Underestimated Communities.

  - Actions: Employers should adopt internal goals (e.g., 15-20% of annual subcontracting spend allocated to diverse vendors and portioned out to differentiated groups) and adjust their sourcing strategies accordingly. Procurement teams can partner with organizations like CAMSC and WEConnect to identify certified minority suppliers. Regional policymakers and business councils can incorporate supplier diversity requirements into grants and procurement guidelines. The Province or City might formally incentivize or require such targets for any large public contract, mirroring best practices in social procurement.

- **Build capacity and reduce barriers for Underestimated SMEs.**
    - Why it matters: Small and diverse firms often lack the resources to compete on complex RFPs, and onerous processes deter them. Left unchecked, this means well-qualified immigrant-, Indigenous-, or Black-owned businesses never enter the queue.
    - Actions: Best-in-class companies (those in the top 10% of the Index) offer proactive outreach and training. Companies host “how to bid” workshops that explain tender processes in plain language and in multiple languages if needed. Provide one-on-one procurement coaching or mentorship for diverse suppliers. Additionally, companies can structurally unbundle large contracts into smaller lots when possible, making them more manageable for small businesses.
- **Embed inclusive procurement criteria and social value weighting for Underestimated Communities.**
    - Why it matters: Procurement policy can reward diversity in a disaggregated manner, where disparate identity groups are actively considered and provided with equitable opportunities. The report concluded that just under 25% of companies have explicit supplier diversity language or goals, with a significant focus on Indigenous-owned businesses. By taking the next step of including more Underestimated Communities in the procurement process, decision-makers signal that inclusive procurement is a priority.
    - Actions: Employers should revise RFP scoring rubrics to allocate points for bidders whose majority stakeholders are from Underestimated Communities. By utilizing available tools, such as the Canadian Collaboration for Sustainable Procurement Framework, companies can require that all public procurements include a supplier diversity component. Additionally, companies can encourage the use of technology and supplier databases, enabling procurement teams to find diverse businesses more quickly.
- **Target philanthropic giving toward Underestimated Communities**
    - Why it matters: It is a well-known fact that charitable and CSR donations in Canada have historically underserved certain groups. In our research, less than 15% of the 65 companies direct philanthropy towards two or more identity groups prioritized in our study, without a targeted focus on diverse and disaggregated identity groups
    - Actions: Philanthropic foundations and corporate giving programs should establish similar frameworks to those already in place for Indigenous initiatives, facilitating continued philanthropic giving across other identity groups. Donors should track the demographics of recipients and set improvement targets.

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

The inaugural C-Tribe Underestimated Communities' Corporate Equality Index Report demonstrates both the progress and persistent gaps in how Edmonton-region employers cultivate equity for Black, Indigenous, Immigrant, Women, Youth, and 2SLGBTQ+ communities. Across the five criteria, a clear narrative emerges:

- **Internal culture (Criteria 1)** — Many leading employers have embraced foundational practices such as inclusion training, ERGs and cultural celebrations, yet the commitment remains uneven. Only about half of the companies provide formal ERGs, and fewer still set identity-specific goals or track progress publicly. Leadership diversity and qualitative measures of belonging lag, emphasizing the need for measurable targets and deeper accountability.

- **Community outreach (Criteria 2)** — External engagement is often more robust than internal culture. Strong partnerships with Indigenous and youth-focused organizations, as well as women's networks, are commonplace, reflecting efforts towards reconciliation and pipeline development. However, meaningful outreach to Black, Immigrant and 2SLGBTQS+ communities is rare. Sustained partnerships, target identity-specific programs and materialize over multi-year horizons.

- **Workforce protections (Criteria 3)** — Most employers have general anti-discrimination and harassment policies, but culturally competent mental-health support, race- and gender-specific protections, and reporting mechanisms with transparent outcomes are limited. Women benefit most from formal protections; youth, Black and immigrant employees have the weakest safety nets. Building trauma-informed supports and strong accountability channels is essential to transition from compliance to genuine safety and wellness.

- **Inclusive benefits (Criteria 4)** — This is the lowest-scoring area. Generous parental leave and flexible work arrangements are increasingly common, but family-building support, scholarships, health benefits, and career development tailored to specific identities are scarce. Women and Indigenous employees see the most progress; immigrant and Black employees see the least. To attract and retain diverse talent, companies must broaden benefits to address the unique needs of all communities.

- **CSR, supplier diversity and philanthropy (Criteria 5)** — Most employers donate to community causes, yet few track or set targets for spending with diverse suppliers. Women- and Indigenous-owned businesses receive some attention; Black-, immigrant-, youth- and 2SLGBTQS+-owned enterprises are rarely prioritized. Even philanthropic giving often lacks focus beyond Indigenous reconciliation. Transparent spend tracking, capacity-building for diverse SMEs, and multi-group procurement targets will unlock shared economic growth.

The top performers demonstrate what is possible: combining multi-pronged internal programs, meaningful community partnerships, strong workforce protections, expansive benefits, and inclusive procurement strategies. Their success refutes narratives that diversity, equity and inclusion are mere "charity"; instead, they are strategic levers that build stronger workforces, widen talent pipelines and open new markets.

As Edmonton enters an era of technological and economic abundance, there is no justification for perpetuating inequities. The data reveal where the city shines—especially in reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and empowering women—and where it must do better, notably in serving Black, immigrant and 2SLGBTQS+ communities. Employers, policymakers and community leaders must harness the report's recommendations: set identity-specific inclusion goals, measure belonging qualitatively, build succession pipelines, invest in ERGs, forge long-term community partnerships, design targeted talent pipelines, show up in community spaces, and adopt rigorous supplier diversity standards. Taken together, these actions can ensure that future prosperity is shared broadly and that Edmonton becomes a benchmark for inclusive growth, becoming a backbone for unlocking a more resilient and modern workforce in the region.

The C-Tribe Underestimated Communities' Corporate Equality Index is both a mirror and a roadmap. It offers an honest reflection of the region's current state and a clear path forward. Realizing the promise of abundance requires concerted effort to embed equity across all facets of work. Those who rise to this challenge will not only position themselves as employers of choice but will also play a pivotal role in shaping a more prosperous, inclusive Edmonton for all.

TRIBE

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2025

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Appendix - Survey Question Examples

Response scale:
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

1. The organization provides training that directly addresses anti-Black racism and Black inclusion.
2. All staff receive Indigenous cultural awareness or reconciliation training.
3. Training includes topics on cultural diversity, global perspectives, and unconscious bias toward immigrants.
4. The organization monitors how immigrant employees are represented across roles and levels.
5. Training includes content on gender bias, inclusive leadership, and equity in career progression.
6. Early-career development programs are available and accessible to young employees.
7. The organization provides education on sexual orientation, gender identity, and inclusive language.
8. Managers understand how systemic racism affects Black employees' experiences here.
9. The company encourages learning about local Indigenous histories and perspectives.
10. Supervisors are equipped to support internationally trained professionals in adapting and succeeding.
11. Managers are held accountable for addressing sexism or gender bias.
12. Supervisors receive training on supporting inter-generational collaboration.
13. Employees feel confident using correct pronouns and inclusive terms in the workplace.
14. The company tracks and shares progress on Black employee hiring, promotion, and retention.
15. Progress on hiring and supporting Indigenous employees is tracked and publicly reported.
16. The organization monitors how immigrant employees are represented across roles and levels.

Response scale:
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

18. The company tracks and reports gender pay equity and advancement statistics.
19. The company values the ideas, creativity, and digital fluency that younger employees bring.
20. The company measures retention and promotion rates for early-career professionals
21. The company tracks representation of 2SLGBTQS+ employees in its diversity data while respecting privacy.
22. Feedback from Black employees meaningfully informs DEI goals and policies.
23. Indigenous representation goals are communicated clearly to staff.
24. Immigrant employees' feedback is sought when shaping inclusion onboarding programs.
25. Gender representation data is used to shape tangible improvements in workplace policies.
26. Youth perspectives are incorporated into organizational planning or innovation-forward projects.
27. Employee feedback about 2SLGBTQS+ inclusion is used to shape tangible policy updates.
28. The organization meaningfully recognizes events like Black History Month or Emancipation Day.
29. The company recognizes events such as National Indigenous Peoples Day and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.
30. The organization recognizes International Women's Day or similar initiatives in a meaningful way.
31. Pride Month and other 2SLGBTQS+ initiatives are celebrated in ways that feel authentic and year-round.
32. Black voices, stories, and achievements are visibly celebrated across internal communications.
33. Indigenous cultures and contributions are visibly respected in company spaces or communications

Response scale:
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

34. I feel comfortable sharing elements of my cultural background at work.
35. Success stories of women employees are regularly highlighted internally.
36. There are visible examples of employees under 30 advancing to management roles.
37. Immigrant employees are fairly considered for leadership positions, regardless of accent or international experience.
38. Indigenous employees have equitable access to leadership, mentorship, and advancement.
39. Black employees have clear pathways to leadership opportunities.
40. Women are proportionally represented in leadership and decision-making positions.
41. The organization partners with Black-led or Black-serving community organizations.
42. The organization collaborates with Indigenous communities or Nations on projects that respect self-determination.
43. The organization supports newcomer-serving agencies or immigrant settlement programs.
44. The organization partners with groups that promote women's leadership and economic empowerment.
45. The organization partners with schools, youth groups, or innovation hubs to support young talent.
46. The organization partners with 2SLGBTQS+ nonprofits, advocacy groups, or community events.
47. The company visibly participates in initiatives that support Black entrepreneurship and innovation.
48. Partnerships with Indigenous groups are established through genuine consultation that lead to social, cultural, and economic empowerment.
49. The organization supports initiatives that help newcomer integrate into the local workforce.
50. Partnerships or sponsorships promote women's participation in business, STEM and/or leadership.

Response scale:
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

51. The organization invests in youth hubs, student competitions, or career expos.
52. The organization contributes to community Pride events or initiatives throughout the year.
53. The company regularly supports Black cultural or professional initiatives (e.g. Black History Month events, Black business expos).
54. The company actively recruits from Black student or professional networks.
55. The company runs targeted recruitment, internship, or scholarship programs for Indigenous students or early-career professionals.
56. The organization offers scholarships, mentorship, on internship programs for women in underestimated fields.
57. External outreach efforts include career development programs or workshops for women professionals.
58. Outreach or mentorship programs include pathways for 2SLGBTQS+ early-career professionals.
59. The organization supports or funds scholarships that benefit the 2SLGBTQS+ community.
60. The organization's external partnerships with community groups are long-term and collaborative rather than one-off sponsorships.
61. The company publicly reports or showcases its community impact related to diversity and inclusion.
62. Overall, I believe the organization's outreach efforts have a meaningful and measurable impact on diverse communities in Edmonton.
63. The company actively participates in job fairs or events focused on immigrant employment and inclusion.
64. Leadership publicly acknowledges and supports the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.
65. The company's leadership publicly supports racial equity initiatives beyond internal commitments.

Response scale:
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

66. Senior leaders are visibly engaged in external events or advocacy efforts that uplift Black communities.

67. Executives or senior leaders participate in Indigenous community events such as National Indigenous Peoples Day or Orange Shirt Day.

68. Senior leaders engage with immigrant or multicultural business networks.

69. The company's leadership advocates publicly for gender equity beyond the workplace.

70. Executives visibly participate in 2SLGBTQS+ community events, campaigns or panels.

71. The company's leadership consistently advocates for 2SLGTBQS+ inclusion in public communications.

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