

# YOUR FUTURE, YOUR VOICE

What Albertans Told Us About  
Racism and Being Anti-Racist



# LETTER FROM LEADER



**In 2017**, Alberta's NDP Government asked all of you for your help in building real solutions to fight racism. We heard from thousands of people and more than 100 community groups who offered their expertise in supporting diversity and inclusion. Out of that work, we were proud to establish the Alberta Anti-Racism Committee and the Anti-Racism Community Grant program, fund a support program for immigrant entrepreneurs, and create an inclusive curriculum.

A lot has changed since then, including the conversations around race and racism. As we learned in 2017, meaningful and real change is possible when we all work together, and those in power can genuinely and empathetically listen to the needs of communities. For that reason, we went back to the table.

Over several months, we had heartfelt and honest conversations about the state of racism in our communities. It is not easy to share experiences of racism and trauma, and I am thankful to all participants for their courage to share them with us. Your feedback and insights are invaluable to this process. Moreover, I am moved and motivated by the hope and optimism of participants who engaged in this project.

I invite you to monitor our progress and continue to share your ideas at [www.AlbertasFuture.ca](http://www.AlbertasFuture.ca).

We want to make sure we've got it right, so we can develop policies and practices that ensure every single Albertan is treated with dignity and respect. I sincerely hope that you will continue to work us on how to not only be against racism but to build policies that put a stop racism.

**Rachel Notley**  
*Leader of the Opposition  
& MLA for Edmonton-Strathcona*

# LETTER FROM MULTICULTURALISM CRITIC JASVIR DEOL



I believe we are all stronger when united. Much work remains to build Alberta into a province that is truly anti-racist, but Alberta's NDP looks forward to taking the next steps with all of you.

As Alberta navigates its own challenges in the march for social justice we must remain committed to each other. We are all better off when our streets are safer, healthcare is more effective, and when our schools prepare our students for the future. To do this, we must centre the humanity of each member of society and work to uphold that intrinsic value.

I want to encourage all Albertans to provide us with feedback on our strategy and contribute their ideas on building a more inclusive and equitable community. Alberta is in tough times, but we need to have these tough conversations to move forward.

Thank you for the journey so far.

**Jasvir Deol**  
*NDP Critic for Multiculturalism*



# PROCESS



**In the wake of anti-racist protests in 2020**, we called on organizations, advocates, community leaders, Indigenous and racialized Albertans from varying backgrounds to participate in a series of conversations on the reality of racism in Alberta. Based on their initial input, we began work on anti-racism in six issue areas: healthcare, education, public safety, community support, economic participation, and democratic participation.

Starting in December of 2020, we engaged with over 600 people over six weekends to have heartfelt and honest conversations on each of those topics. These discussions operate in parallel to work already underway by Edmonton-Rutherford MLA and Indigenous Relations Critic Richard Feehan to establish relationships with indigenous communities and push for the implementation of the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

Following our consultations, we took insights from those conversations and condensed them into straightforward suggestions on ways to address racism. This document intends to be a record of those conversations and to ignite new ones. We don't have all the answers, but these recommendations are a starting point for discussions.

After reflection on our conversations many of the comments received both directly and indirectly included anti-racism in post-secondary.

We recognize the need for more discussions on anti-racism in post-secondary education and look forward to hosting a consultation in the near future.

Respondents also indicated a deep need for an intersectional approach to issues like community support. Having heard from community members we believe that the topic of community support may more adequately be addressed in our future anti-poverty strategy discussion paper and consultations. As such, it has been omitted from this document.

Our process was oriented around areas of government jurisdiction, but we recognize the rise of anti-Muslim hate here in Alberta. In 2021, the National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM) held a summit to address anti-Muslim hate. We defer to the document of 93 recommendations on ways and means to address anti-Muslim hate, that came out of this summit. Many of these recommendations mirror our own, and we will diligently work with impacted communities to action them. More information on this report can be found here: <https://www.nccm.ca/islamophobicsummit/>

Lastly, we recognize that language is constantly changing and informed by new perspectives. The language choices in this document reflect those of the community and invite folks to continue to have conversations about how to have more inclusive and empowering conversations.

# WHAT ALBERTANS TOLD US ABOUT BEING ANTI-RACIST:

**Participants made it loud and clear** — they want substantive change, and they want it now. Communities told us they need ownership over change, and accountability from all those tasked with implementing it.

An overwhelming number of respondents advocated for the collection of race-based data and government wide anti-racism training. We recognize the role these policy measures play in dismantling racism, and are fully committed to implementing these steps. Having heard from hundreds of Albertans we feel confident that we have thoroughly examined these issues, and would like to focus on the other insights listed below.



# HEALTHCARE

**Albertans believe** that equitable access to healthcare is a fundamental right. As such, we must work to identify and remove barriers to access for Indigenous and racialized people.

Community members told us they want to ensure they have a healthcare system that can communicate with them and has resources to help them navigate the medical system's complexities. This must include medical professionals who have the skills to treat patients in respectful and culturally relevant ways and ensure that all healthcare components are accessible and affordable.

**Specifically, participants advocated** for education, training and financial support. These are essential tools for improving health outcomes for Indigenous and racialized people.

## Actions to support this critical area include

- Adjusting healthcare professional initial training and ongoing professional development to include:
  - Knowledge and diagnosis of health conditions specific to Indigenous and racialized populations;
  - Understanding of how health conditions present differently in Indigenous and racialized people;

Increasing the diversity of professionals throughout the system by better recognizing international credentials;

Improving representation in the healthcare system through providing financial and professional support for Indigenous peoples and those from racially diverse populations in pursuing careers in healthcare;

Requiring cultural awareness and sensitivity training for all professionals;

Improving communication of, education and locations of healthcare services through increased language and translation delivery online, in person and on the phone;

Increasing communication and collaboration with community-based services and supports such as places of worship or community centres to increase access to medical services;

Removing financial barriers to accessing mental health services;

Ensuring Indigenous practices and knowledge around mental health are supported



# EDUCATION

**Alberta's NDP believes** that education needs to prepare our students to be engaged, critical, and well-rounded members of society. Contributors told us that our education system must also be a safe, inclusive, and growth-orientated environment.

They said that there is an immediate need for a curriculum that is fulsome in its presentation of Canadian history and equips students to understand,

recognize, and address racism.

Beyond the curriculum, participants are concerned that the current structure of our education system does not provide for a common and focused mechanism of accountability and engagement to racialized and Indigenous communities. In particular, neither school boards nor high-level administrative decision-makers have the structural lines

of accountability to racialized and indigenous people.

As such, participants at a high level want to see more support for training at a high level, support for communities underrepresented in post-secondary institutions, and culturally relevant resources for both staff and students.

## Actions to support this critical area include:

- Developing a progressive anti-racism curriculum across subjects and age-appropriate ways;
- Adjusting all education professional initial and ongoing training and development to require: Intercultural and anti-racism training; Knowledge of the history of racism in Canada that:
  - It is fulsome in relaying the experiences and accounts of Indigenous and racialized people;
  - a definition of what anti-racism is
  - skills and tools to:
    - identify racist actions, ideas and occurrences;
    - support individuals experiencing racism;
- Ensuring that kindergarten classrooms to post-secondary campuses are safe spaces free of racism and maintain secure, respectful support systems for victims of racism;
- Mandating clear guidelines and consequences for what constitutes racism and clear consequences for racist actions

\*Note: Stay tuned for our separate consultation on anti-racism in post-secondary





# PUBLIC SAFETY

**Contributors believe** all Albertans have the right to feel safe in their communities and be treated with dignity.

Participants told us they want to take an approach to public safety that extends beyond policing. Participants suggested this should include consideration for how social determinants and health impact public safety, more wrap-around services, and community-centred approaches to law enforcement.

When they need police, communities want to ensure that the police and those overseeing the police understand their culture. This includes security in knowing that the system will take them seriously if there are issues and concerns.

This also means having a clear and consistent definition of hate crimes and hate incidents, including adequate support for victims, and engagement across levels of government to mobilize resources to prevent and investigate these crimes or incidents.

## Actions to support this critical area include

- Mandating ongoing anti-racism, cultural knowledge and sensitivity education, and trauma-informed training for law enforcement;
- Adjusting hiring, promotion and recruiting policies to ensure the justice system is representative of the population it serves;

- Creating and funding cultural and diversity liaison positions to reflect better the needs of communities in policing;
- Creating and strengthening citizen oversight processes or bodies to address and investigate complaints against law enforcement;
- Designing the civilian oversight process to include expertise on addressing racially motivated crimes;
- Creating and funding a Provincial Hate Crimes Unit within law enforcement, including crown prosecutors, to deal with the full scope of hate crimes by coordinating services, sharing information in addition to direct investigative and prosecution services;
- Enhancing the capacity of the Human Rights Commission, and the Alberta Hate Crimes Committee;
- Working with the Federal Government to strengthen hate crimes legislation;
- Creating clear and robust support systems for victims of hate crimes and hate incidents;



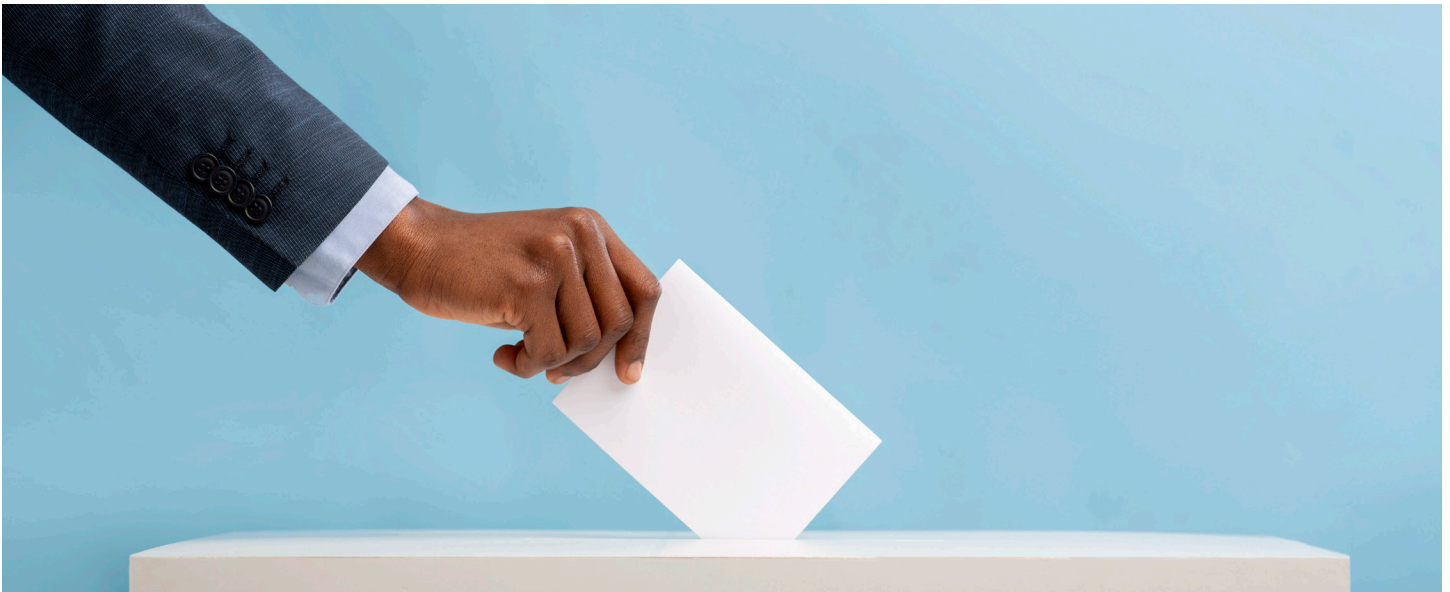


# ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

**Participants recognize** the need for Indigenous and racialized communities to have equitable access to social and economic skills and knowledge to participate in the economy. We also note that this must include ensuring employer practices lead to inclusive environments.

## Actions to support this critical area include

- Reducing barriers for newcomers accessing newcomer support programs including:
  - Increasing the number of high-level language training programs;
  - Increasing clarity on certification processes and program availability;
  - Enhancing resources for entrepreneurship in bridging programs;
  - Increasing the hours of availability for programs;
- Increasing access to labour market information and improving the navigation of the labour market through expanding translation services;
- Increasing work experience opportunities for racialized Albertans who are less likely to have access to networks and social capital;
- Supporting, promoting, and encouraging community lead mentorship programs to develop and build skills, economic, and social capital of racialized communities;
- Working with the Government and financial institutions to develop and increase accessibility to loans and other financial capital to support entrepreneurship in racialized communities;
- Streamlining the process for submitting complaints and increasing supports for workers facing discrimination, harassment, and racism in the workplace, including during termination from a job;
- Supporting resources for mediation and arbitration process;
- Supporting mediation services to address issues, concerns, and comments of a religious, cultural, or racial nature for employees and employers;
- Providing arrangements for religious/cultural holidays accommodations;
- Reinstating the NDP tax credit to hire racialized and underrepresented folks in emerging and developing industries



# DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION / PUBLIC SERVICE

**Albertans we consulted believe** that our democracy, government, and institutions are at their best when all Albertans can fully and meaningfully participate in them. However, Indigenous and racialized individuals face multiple barriers in participating in the democratic process.

**These barriers go beyond polling day and elections, and addressing them will require will require actions that include**

- Addressing representation throughout systems of governance by:
  - Changing the training, hiring, promotion and recruiting policies to ensure the government is representative of Alberta through:
    - an audit of current hiring practices and standards;
    - A panel and blind hiring process to limit the potential impacts of implicit biases;
- Establishing guidelines, best practices, and quotas for agencies, boards, and commissions;
- Working with post-secondary institutions to develop and maintain programs that provide educational opportunities to engage in government, including:
  - credited work experience placements in the GoA;
  - Summer and seasonal employment opportunities;
  - Networking and shadowing opportunities;
- Working with Indigenous, racialized, marginalized, and ethno-cultural communities to develop community engagement programs that provide the skills, knowledge, and opportunities to take part in the democratic process, including:
  - Increasing transparency and accessibility of policy documents and democratic processes through increased language translation and inclusive formatting;
  - Supporting, mentoring, and funding local journalism and media that provide access to community-relevant information, storytelling, and analysis;
  - Working with Elections Alberta to produce an accessible civics curriculum;
- Ensuring adequate access to polling stations on reserve including: access to information in indigenous languages

# CONCLUSION

**We will continue to consult and gather feedback** to ensure we are on the right track and look forward to hosting several more consultations in the new year on:

- Anti-Muslim hate
- Anti-Semitism
- Gender, Intersectionality, and Racism
- Anti-Racism in Post-Secondary Education

We also look forward to taking the next steps in actioning what you told us. That is why NDP MLA David Shepherd will be tabling legislation, similar to that in Ontario and British Columbia, for the Government of Alberta to collect Race-Based data and form a comprehensive Anti-Racism strategy.

The collection of Race-based data is a crucial first step to allow Alberta to comprehensively identify and respond to issues of systemic racism across Alberta's institutions. This legislation will be the foundation of our continued fight against injustice.

We will also be meeting with stakeholders and community organizations to begin working with our institutions to adopt those recommendations that do not need to be legislated. However, we cannot do this without all of you. We will need your support, advocacy, and insights to work with stakeholders, communities, organizations, and institutions to action these recommendations. We hope that you all will continue with us along this journey.

Thank you to everyone who worked with us on this project, including our speakers, participants, and community members- Together, we can make an Alberta for all.



# Give Us Feedback

---

## WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK

**Alberta's Future** is an initiative to build a new economy that benefits every person in our province. We want you to share your thoughts and ideas on proposals like this one.

We welcome you to submit your own proposals too!

All of our proposals and those contributed by Albertans like you can be found at **AlbertasFuture.ca**. On that website, you can also register for in-person and online conversations happening right across Alberta.

We are also hosting this conversation on social media, using the hashtag **#ABFuture**

**Engage directly with NDP Leader Rachel Notley on YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook**



**Alberta's**  
**FUTURE.ca**