



2024-2027

# Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan

People Helping People  
[www.wrps.on.ca](http://www.wrps.on.ca)



People - Partnerships - Professional Excellence





WATERLOO REGIONAL  
**POLICE**

## Territorial Acknowledgement

Waterloo Region is situated on treaty land that is steeped in rich Indigenous history and home to many First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people today.

We acknowledge that this land is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee, Anishnaabe, and Chonnonton peoples. We recognize the enduring presence of the Indigenous people with whom we share this land today, their achievements, and their contributions to our community.

We offer this acknowledgement as an act of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples of Canada.

*"Aboriginal languages are a fundamental and valued element of Canadian culture and society, and there is an urgency to preserve them..."*

Truth and Reconciliation: Call To Action #14



Aanii Boozhoo Biindigen  
Tawnshi  
Shé:kon  
Shekoli  
Sgë-nö  
Segoli  
Sgé:nq  
Cwé:'n  
Tawow  
Oki  
Halu Tunngasugit  
Kwey Kwey  
Tansi  
Pusu'l  
Wachay  
Greetings





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On behalf of the Waterloo Regional Police Service (WRPS), we are proud to present the 2024-2027 Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Strategic Plan.

This Plan was developed in consultation with various community groups, organizations, and internal stakeholders. It also includes a thorough examination of best practices in policing across the province. The Plan reflects WRPS' commitment to intentional and holistic engagement with the community and with our members as we strive for continuous modernization, learning, and growth.

In 2024, we welcomed the new Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019, which highlights the importance of diversity in policing practices. It outlines specific diversity goals that remain the focus of this Plan and that emphasize WRPS' commitment to providing effective service delivery and operational excellence to the community it serves.

The EDI Plan also acknowledges the complexities of modern policing. As such, we will continue to leverage evidence-based policing practices, academic partnerships, and collaboration between our members and the community to ensure the recommendations outlined result in meaningful and lasting change.

The EDI Strategic Plan (2024-2027) places a priority on amplifying the voices of equity seeking groups, improving accessibility, increasing representation, and integrating lived experiences into Service initiatives. Furthermore, the Plan is strengthened through consistent evaluation and measurement, allowing us to comprehensively document challenges, barriers, and successes. This systematic approach provides a clear roadmap for our journey ahead.

Your trust and partnership are invaluable in fostering open dialogue, meaningful action, and lasting change. We invite you to join us in embracing the EDI Strategic Plan, working collaboratively towards building a stronger, safer, and more vibrant Waterloo Region.



**Ian Maclean**  
Chair, WRPS Board



**Mark Crowell**  
Chief of Police, WRPS



**Geraldine Stafford**  
Manager, Equity, Diversity,  
and Inclusion, WRPS



**"Lived experience is valued experience."** – Geraldine Stafford, Manager, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

## Vision

Every person in Waterloo Region  
is safe and feels safe.

## Mission

To uphold public trust and confidence,  
safety, and community wellbeing  
through police service excellence.





# Our Values



## People

People are at the centre of everything that we do. We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of the community and our members.



## Partnerships

Through ongoing community and member engagement, we foster collaborative partnerships to achieve exceptional service delivery.



## Professional Excellence

Our professional excellence is driven by trust, accountability, and innovation. We are caring, compassionate, and committed.

The WRPS EDI Strategic Plan and the Strategic Business Plan (2024-2027) are aligned strategies that share fundamental principles, creating a synergy between both plans.



2024-2027

## Strategic Plan

**2024–2027**

## **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Organizational Commitments**

The five EDI organizational commitments build upon the foundation of predecessor plans and reaffirm key priorities for the next four years:

### **1. Total Community Engagement**

### **2. Diversity Competent Members**

### **3. Access to the Diversity of Available Talent**

### **4. Leadership Reflecting the Region**

### **5. A Secure and Supportive Workplace**



The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Strategic Plan (2024–2027) serves as the guiding framework that ensures an intentional approach to identifying and achieving Service-wide equity, diversity, and inclusion priorities and goals.

Five prevailing commitments are reaffirmed in the 2024–2027 Plan, representing an ongoing commitment and recognition of the work required to address systemic barriers, integrate lived experiences, and strengthen efforts towards fostering a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive police service.

Through expert consultation, the model was thoughtfully developed to delineate measurable service commitments, supported by a deliberate framework for identifying strategic priorities, goals, and actions. Additionally, the ongoing best practice of seeking input from internal members, including the continuous review of internal policies and procedures, as well as input from external community stakeholders, continues to be an integral part of our approach today.

This Plan is intentionally designed to inspire members to individually recognize and embrace their own diversity and potential to positively shape both the work environment and the service delivered to Waterloo Region. Through collaboration with stakeholder partners and communities, we will be better positioned to navigate through complex and challenging environments to effect positive change, both within the Service and the Region.



## Snapshot of Waterloo Region

Waterloo Region covers approximately 1,600 square kilometres located in the heart of Southwestern Ontario's greenbelt. Waterloo Region is part of the Haldimand Tract, which encompasses 10 kilometres on either side of the Grand River.

The use of this land was promised to the Haudenosaunee Confederation in recognition of their loyalty to the British Crown during the American Revolutionary War.

The Region is comprised of three cities, Waterloo, Kitchener, and Cambridge, and the townships of Woolwich, Wilmot, Wellesley, and North Dumfries.



## Languages Spoken

The Immigrant Survey is a biannual, multilingual survey of immigrants who live, work and/or study in Waterloo Region.

- 91% speak more than one language
- 46% speak more than two languages

Source: 2023 Waterloo Region Immigrant Survey  
Immigration Partnership of Waterloo Region



**647,540** Population of  
Waterloo Region (2022)

The Province's Growth Plan projects that Waterloo Region's population will reach 923,000 by 2051.

Source: Region of Waterloo, 2022

## Top Five Languages Spoken at Home

(after English & French 80.3%)

1. Punjabi
2. Mandarin
3. Arabic
4. Spanish
5. Portuguese

Source: Statistics Canada, Census, 2021

## Top Five Languages Requested for Interpretation

1. Arabic
2. Tigrigna
3. Spanish
4. Persian (Farsi)
5. Turkish

Source: Immigration Partnership Waterloo Region, 2023

## WRPS Members Speak 40 Languages

- |                          |              |                               |
|--------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|
| • English                | • Gujarati   | • Russian                     |
| • French                 | • Hindi      | • Serbian                     |
| • Albanian               | • Hungarian  | • Singhalese                  |
| • American Sign Language | • Italian    | • Slovak                      |
| • Arabic                 | • Korean     | • Spanish                     |
| • Bosnian                | • Laotian    | • Taglog                      |
| • Cantonese              | • Mandarin   | • Thai                        |
| • Croatian               | • Norwegian  | • Turkish                     |
| • Czech                  | • Pashto     | • Ukranian                    |
| • Dutch                  | • Patois     | • Urdu                        |
| • Farsi                  | • Polish     | • Vietnamese                  |
| • Filipino               | • Portuguese | • West African Pidgin English |
| • German                 | • Punjabi    | • Yoruba                      |
|                          | • Romanian   |                               |

6.



## Our Members



**851**  
Sworn



**400**  
Civilian



A woman in a Waterloo Regional Police uniform is shown from the chest up, speaking into a microphone. She is looking slightly to her right. The background is a blurred interior of a vehicle. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

# Our Commitments

Total Community Engagement

Diversity Competent Members

Access to Diversity of Available Talent

Leadership Reflecting the Region

Secure and Supportive Workforce

## Commitment #1:

# Total Community Engagement

### WRPS is committed to:

- Engaging and fostering relationships with community; particularly diverse communities in the region, prioritizing efforts that build trust and confidence.
- Working strategically with community stakeholders to jointly develop collaboration opportunities. Creating and facilitating opportunities for dialogue about police-community relations and community priorities.
- Establishing measurable goals for monitoring community trust and establishing community and Service objectives. Reporting through the Strategic Business Plan (SBP) communication strategy on outcomes related to community engagement, trust, and confidence in WRPS.
- Reducing violence and victimization when addressing hate against diverse communities.
- Identifying ways to increase access to police and police services.
- Addressing and preventing systemic discrimination in Service programs, policies, projects, operations, and decisions; identifying and responding to barriers to community engagement.



Strategic community engagement and close police-community relations are essential to maintain WRPS' efficiency and effectiveness across the Region, and to ensure the ongoing safety and wellness of the community.

It is imperative that WRPS policies and practices that affect the community, where practical, are informed and led by the community, incorporating culturally appropriate communication channels for collaboration and offering critical feedback to the Service.

The Region of Waterloo's Community and Safety and Wellbeing (CSWB) Plan will be an important catalyst to bridging engagement and communication. The CSWB Plan sets out how community partners, including police, work to improve the safety, health, and wellbeing of the Region.





Diversity competency involves recognizing and valuing differences, fostering respectful and inclusive interactions, and actively working to dismantle barriers and promote belonging for all individuals.

It encompasses the proficiency in which members effectively understand, engage with, navigate, and value diverse perspectives, experiences, and identities.

This proficiency requires ongoing learning, self-reflection, and commitment to continuous improvement in addressing diversity-related challenges and fostering an inclusive culture; resulting in improved operational ability and agility in addressing calls for service and investigating crime.

## Commitment #2:

# Diversity Competent Members

### WRPS is committed to:

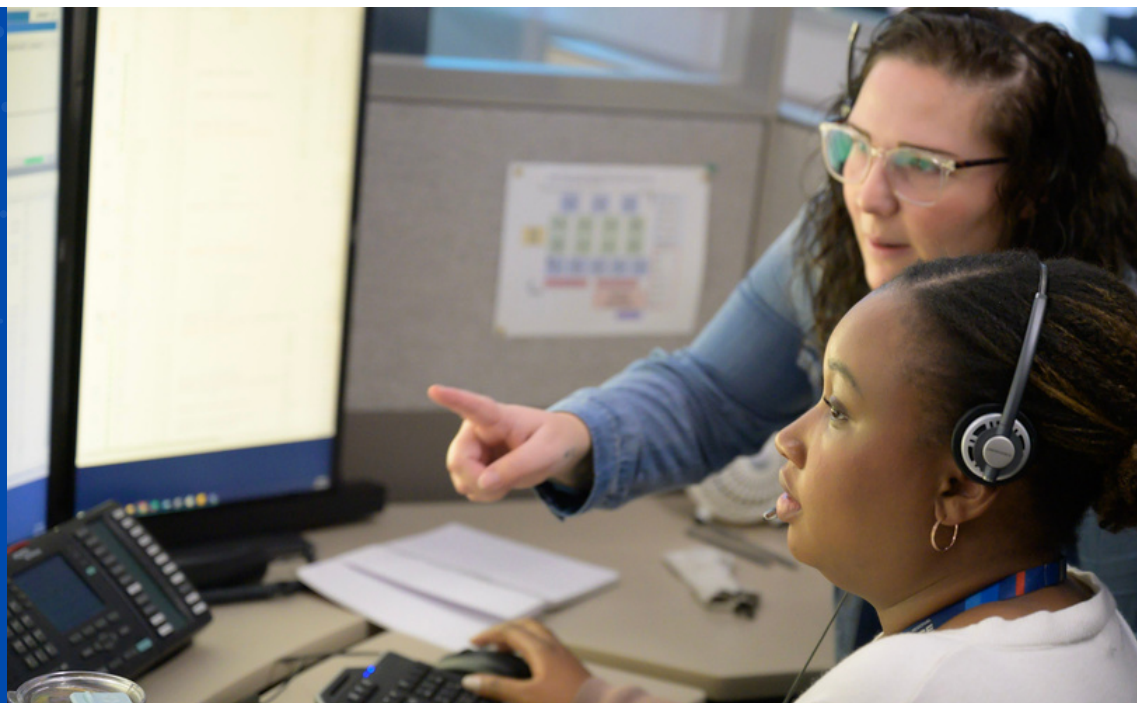
- Developing EDI learning plans tailored for various roles and levels within the Service and identify gaps where further training may be required.
- Fostering an internal culture with an intersectional approach that values diversity and the unique skills, experiences, and contributions of every member.
- Facilitating opportunities for members to cross-culturally and interculturally interact with community.
- Encouraging the participation of community to co-design and co-deliver facets of equity, diversity, and inclusion training.
- Supporting diversity competency through member knowledge of social issues, inclusive behavior, adaptability in diverse environments, and the impact of actions; identifying areas for growth and improvement in promoting diversity and inclusion.

### Commitment #3:

## Access to Diversity of Available Talent

#### WRPS is committed to:

- Adhering to the Guiding Principles of the Community Safety and Policing Act (2019).
- Addressing systemic barriers by reviewing the recruitment and selection process to identify and address systemic barriers that may hinder attracting talent from diverse communities.
- Creating meaningful awareness opportunities for diverse communities to learn about joining WRPS.
- Examining diversity organizational need for every employment competition to ensure diversity and inclusion in hiring decisions.
- Establishing community liaison opportunities to create new sources of viable job candidates, fostering collaboration and inclusivity in recruitment efforts.



WRPS prioritizes recruiting qualified applicants from broadly diverse backgrounds, bringing together individuals with different viewpoints and ideas. A diverse membership will offer innovative and creative solutions to complex problems and adapt to changing market demands.

Through intentional recruitment and outreach efforts, WRPS strengthens community partnerships and positions itself as an employer of choice. It aims to showcase WRPS as an organization where representation matters, and where the membership demographic aligns with the Region's demographics.

Improved representation enhances the delivery of effective, culturally sensitive service in Waterloo Region and fosters trust and confidence among residents. Diversity is a strength that enriches the Service and allows the membership to thrive in today's diverse and interconnected world.





The diversity of members at all levels and ranks within our Service is a cornerstone of our strength. It not only enriches our organization but also benefits the community we serve. To ensure that leadership reflects the region, it is essential to prioritize diversity and inclusion in recruitment and promotion processes.

Embracing diversity in leadership is pivotal for our success. It opens doors to a multitude of perspectives, approaches, and innovations, enabling us to lead effectively and achieve outcomes that resonate with community; creating a more inclusive and responsive police service that mirrors the diverse needs of those we serve.

When individuals see themselves represented in leadership positions, it fosters trust and strengthens their sense of connection and belonging. This enhances the sense of accessibility to the Service and its resources, shaping expectations for its future direction, accountability and personal offerings.

## Commitment #4:

# Leadership Reflecting the Region

### WRPS is committed to:

- Adhering to the Guiding Principles of the Community Safety and Policing Act (2019)
- Developing strategies to ensure all members have equitable opportunities to build leadership capacity, with intentional efforts to retain, and promote qualified leaders.
- Attracting top talent, as an employer of choice, due to the commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion.
- Enhancing member engagement by establishing feedback mechanisms to identify and mitigate structural barriers within the promotional process.
- Establishing equitable professional mentorship and sponsorship programs to support the professional development and advancement of members.
- Placing value in institutional knowledge within the Service.



## Commitment #5:

# Secure and Supportive Workforce

### WRPS is committed to:

- Prioritizing the mental health and wellbeing of members by offering access to culturally appropriate counseling services, peer support programs, and wellness initiatives.
- Promoting community engagement to cultivate a shared understanding of needs, thereby facilitating collaborative efforts to address local challenges.
- Identifying targets and employing data-driven tools to advance equity and representation, while advocating for the inclusion of all members.
- Mentorship through formal internal service support programs, as well as leveraging mentorship opportunities within provincial police support networks (i.e. Serving With Pride, Association of Black Law Enforcers (ABLE), Ontario Women in Law Enforcement (OWLE)).
- Fostering a culture of continuous learning and improvement. Encourage regular feedback from members.



Prioritizing the safety and support of members fosters increased morale within the Service. This demonstrates that WRPS values the welfare of its members, which engenders a positive atmosphere, leading to higher job satisfaction and motivation.

A supportive Service enables members to perform at their best. When members feel safe and supported, they can focus more effectively on their duties, leading to improved performance in crime prevention and response efforts.

The fostering of trust and cooperation between members and the community is significantly enhanced when the Service demonstrates the same level of support to its members. This mutual trust is essential for effective policing and greatly improves the overall effectiveness of maintaining public safety and fortifying the relationship between WRPS and the community.



## **Current Environment and Calls for Change**

National and global events greatly impact the work we do as we strive to provide effective and adequate policing service to the citizens of Waterloo Region.

We acknowledge the impact on local communities and are committed to working together towards understanding and positive change.

As the Region of Waterloo continues to grow and evolve, so must WRPS. Community collaboration is important to meet community needs and build sustainable and lasting relationships to effectively address concerns and improve the safety and wellbeing of all residents, visitors and newcomers (new immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers).

The 2024 - 2027 EDI plan is the roadmap to support continued transformative change. In collaboration with stakeholder partners and communities, we will be better positioned to navigate through complex and challenging environments to affect positive change - together.



# Priority Areas of Focus to Build Sustainable, Respectful, and Trusting Relationships

## Reconciliation

WRPS acknowledges the historical and persistent injustices inflicted upon Indigenous peoples, and how the enduring legacy of colonialism continues to affect them today. Themes of separation, cultural suppression, and femicide have deeply harmed Indigenous communities, families, and cultural ties across generations; today, adversely impacting interactions with police.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) was created to document the experiences and impact of families of the residential school system, as well as speak to repatriation against the historical harms that have contributed to the high levels of incarceration, systemic discrimination, and socio-economic marginalization.

The human rights crisis of violence against Indigenous women in Canada was documented through the National Inquiry into the Missing Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG), highlighting the persistent and deliberate violations and abuses against Indigenous women, contributing greatly to Canada's staggering rates of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people.

Through a critical and intentional review of the TRC's 94 Calls to Action (CTA) and MMIWG Recommendations, WRPS is committed to advancing reconciliation and to working collaboratively with Indigenous organizations, communities, and stakeholder groups to ensure comprehensive and meaningful action.

Community-focused initiatives will be conducted from 2024 to 2027 as an extension to the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) plan. This will entail outlining specific and well-defined actions, outcomes, and milestones. These initiatives will identify essential policing aspects crucial for achieving concrete progress towards authentic reconciliation.





## Addressing Systemic Racism and Discrimination

Neglecting to adequately address racial discrimination can result in widespread systemic repercussions. WRPS is committed to advancing human rights discussions and reducing systemic discrimination by mandating accountability and institutional change while also recognizing systemic challenges within the community and the importance of supporting lived realities of diverse communities in Waterloo Region.

WRPS' Race and Identity Based Data Collection Strategy (RIBDC), provides insight into the legislative framework surrounding the collection of race and identity-based data, including collection principles, reporting procedures, and progress made to date. We cannot fully understand, or change, what we do not measure. This work underscores the imperative for increased awareness, transparency, and will also allow us to identify ways we can better support our members in the delivery of fair and equitable service.

WRPS remains committed to engaging with all members of our community, guided by the findings of the RIBDC, to collectively address concerning trends and employ community-centered solutions. The RIBDC Strategy serves to strengthen trust and confidence in police interactions.


## Combatting Hate

Hate not only affects individual victims, but the entire Waterloo Region community. In 2023, through the Waterloo Region Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan (CSWB), *Combatting Hate* was deemed a key priority.

The framework encourages community leaders, organizations, and groups to engage in greater collaboration to build an effective and trusted network for a safe and well community. Overcoming reporting barriers remains a priority to the service.

Strategies to combat hate are data-driven to effectively address root causes and ensure every person is safe and feels safe in Waterloo Region.





Looking for a career where  
you can make a difference  
in your community?

**WE'RE  
HIRING!**

**JOINWRPS.CA**



The Waterloo Regional Police Service is actively recruiting police constables and civilian professionals.

*Lived experience is valued experience.*

We offer recruiting information sessions for members of the public who are interested in a police constable position with the Waterloo Regional Police Service throughout the year.

Visit **www.joinwrps.ca** or follow us on social media for upcoming dates and more information.