

“A more diverse elected office will strengthen decision-making and restore confidence in our public institutions.”

Ratna Omidvar and John Tory, Co-Chairs,
DiverseCity: The Greater Toronto Leadership Project

- 1 Make diversity a strategic priority.**
A public commitment to diversity from the party leader and party president can help attract new members and potential candidates from under-represented ethnic and racial groups. This commitment can be expressed in ways that emphasize the benefits of diversity to party financing, policy development and electoral success.
- 2 Formalize the party's commitment to diversity.**
Establish a Diverse Representation Committee to lead the party's diversity efforts. This committee should be chaired by the party's senior leadership to demonstrate commitment to the issue.

- 3 Review rules and procedures.**
Review nomination rules and processes to facilitate the candidacies of traditionally under-represented groups. This would include how candidate nomination campaigns are funded, conducted and voted upon.
- 4 Expand the party's network into under-represented communities.**
Devote more party resources to developing the leadership capacity of under-represented groups. Use social media, technology and local constituency offices as hubs of political education, skill-building and networking.
- 5 Press for electoral reform.**
Some urban centers have fewer seats than their population warrants, and this has the effect of reducing the voting power of the immigrant and visible minority electorate.¹ Addressing this vote dilution could encourage more participation among these communities.

Parties should consider the potential benefits of proportional representation because research suggests countries with this system have a more diverse elected office.

These 10 Tips were adapted from: Myer Siemiatycki, *The Diversity Gap: The Electoral Under-Representation of Visible Minorities*, 2011. www.diversecitytoronto.ca/counts

¹ For more information on vote dilution read the October 2011 Mowat Note, "Voter Equality and Other Canadian Values: Finding the Right Balance" by Michael Pal and Sujit Choudhry, available at www.mowatcentre.ca.

"This isn't about special treatment. It is about good candidates, a good political system, and what we need to do as a society."

Indira Naidoo-Harris, former MPP candidate, Halton

6 Mentor new candidates.

Mentor candidates and staff to help ensure that the sometimes unspoken rules of running for office are well understood by all party members. This can also help transfer knowledge from incumbents to new diverse candidates.

7 Train new political staff and volunteers.

Provide formal training opportunities for political staff and volunteers to help develop the capacity of visible minorities and immigrants to assume leadership positions within the party. Offering formal training strengthens the skills of all staff and volunteers.

8 Set targets for diversity.

By setting targets, political parties can be more deliberate in seeking diverse individuals when staffing their offices, running candidates and making political appointments. For example, parties can aim to field a candidate from an under-represented group in half of all seats vacated by incumbents.

9 Measure progress.

Political parties can track the diversity of their candidates and political staff through surveys. This will help parties to understand the demographics of their organization and track the progress of their diversity efforts.

10 Report on your results.

While goals and targets are important, they are most meaningful when they are transparent and progress is reported to the electorate.

"Things are getting better. But we have to talk about how to make things better still. What works well is leadership from the top down in a political party."

John Matheson, StrategyCorp

"Parties need to understand that this isn't an obligation, but a positive political opportunity that someone will have the wit to exploit. So don't be last."

Robin Sears, Navigator Ltd.

For more on DiverseCity: The Greater Toronto Leadership Project go to diversecitytoronto.ca.

DiverseCity: The Greater Toronto Leadership Project is a partnership of Maytree and the Greater Toronto CivicAction Alliance



Maytree promotes equity and prosperity through leadership building.



Catalyzing collective leadership on tough issues and big opportunities facing the Greater Toronto region.



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