

TORONTO POLICE SERVICE NEWS RELEASE

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TPS to Launch Race-Based Data Collection Initiative on January 1, 2020

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Unit(s): Equity, Inclusion & Human Rights

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On January 1, 2020, the Toronto Police Service (the Service) will collect an individual's race as part of a revised Use of Force report and Level 3 Search (physical strip search) records. The initiative is the first phase of the Service's Race Based Data Collection initiative, intended to identify, monitor and eliminate potential systemic racism within the Service.

The implementation plan was presented during the Toronto Police Services Board (Board) meeting on Monday, December 16, 2019, with comments from Toronto Police Service Chief Mark Saunders, Deputy Chief Barbara McLean and Equity, Inclusion & Human Rights Unit Commander Sueelyn Knight.

The Service currently averages 1,500 reportable use of force incidents and 15,000 strip searches annually.

"The Toronto Police Service is not immune to bias and racism, and we have been working diligently over the past several years to make positive changes to address both overt and implicit bias within the Service," said Toronto Police Service Chief Mark Saunders.

"However, we recognize that we cannot fully understand or change what we do not measure. The Race-Based Data Collection initiative will help the Service recognize how bias and racism might influence how we interact with racialized communities within Toronto, and help us eliminate systemic racism."

In 2017, the Government of Ontario passed the Anti-Racism Act, which mandated the collection of race-based data by organizations in the public sector, specifically child welfare, education and justice sectors for the purpose of "targeting systemic racism and ensuring people in Ontario benefit equally from public policies, programs and services".

On Thursday, September 16, the Board approved a Race-Based Data Collection, Analysis and Public Reporting Policy (Policy). The purpose of the new policy, and Board's strategy, is to both satisfy the legislative requirements of the Anti-Racism Act, and to identify, to monitor, and to eliminate potential systemic racism within the Toronto Police Service.

In addition to meeting the provincial requirements for data collection, the policy aligns with the Service's commitment to the modernization of policing services, as outlined in The Way Forward.

The data collected will be anonymized and eventually made available on the Service's Data Portal, available to the media and public in 2021. The portal contains current and historical calls for service and occurrence data, arrest data and other key public safety data sets. Through this portal and open data initiative, the Service is committing to greater openness and transparency.

On January 1, Service Members will begin collecting race-based data based on their own perception as part of a phased approach to collecting Race Based Data. The Service will return back to the Board in 2020 with a mid-year feasibility report on self-identification after broad community consultation.

The Board's Anti-Racism Advisory Panel and the Toronto Police Service Diversity and Equity team have been working closely with members of the community to design the initiative in a way that respects human rights and dignity.

A newly formed Community Advisory Group (the Group) will work to develop and identify benchmarks that are relevant to police interactions and will assist in objectively identifying bias. The Group will report on any trends identified through the data, evaluate compliance with the policy on the part of the Service, comment on training needs and opportunities and identify possible key performance indicators.

There will be ongoing monitoring and analysis of the data and the findings will be reported in an action plan that will aim to address issues that arise from the findings.

For more information on the Race-Based Data Collection, Analysis and Public Reporting Policy, please visit www.tps.on.ca/race-based-data.

Interview opportunities with Deputy Chief Barbara McLean or Suelyn Knight, Unit Commander, Equity, Inclusion & Human Rights are available upon request.

For more news, visit TPSnews.ca.

Meaghan Gray for