

---

# Meeting Minutes

## **Anti-Black Racism Working Group**

Wednesday, October 8, 2025, 6:30 pm

Location: Online via Teams

**Attendees:** Charmain Brown (Notetaker), Nicole Facey, Romina Diaz-Matus, Samantha Adebiyi, Scerena Officer, Teronie Donaldson

**Library Staff:** Shobha Oza, Sabrina Yung

**Absent:** Salome Odeny

---

1. Land Acknowledgement and Ancestral Acknowledgement
  - Read by SY and RDM.
2. Conflict of Interest Declaration
  - No, conflicts declared.
3. Review Meeting Minutes
  - August meeting minutes were reviewed
  - No edits or changes were expressed.
4. Anti-Black Racism Community Preliminary Summary Review
  - SY shared an overview of the ABRWG survey results, including general information about 'who participated' and focused results. Staff are working on a deeper analysis, so the information shared is only a high-level summary of the preliminary analysis.
  - Overall, participation wise:
    - Total surveys completed: 220 (up from 109 in 2020)
    - 102 out of 220 (46%) respondents self-identified as Black (up from 34% in 2020)
    - 40 out of 220 respondents were in the 'high school student' age group (up from 1 in 2020)
    - 79% of all respondents are current library card holders
    - Respondents identified from across the whole age spectrum and we saw respondents from across the spectrum of new users to clients who have been active users with PPL for 10+ years.
  - Focused insights: looking at results from the 102 respondents who self-identify as Black across the 4 main themes evaluated:
    - Client Experience
      - Most common reason for visiting:
        - Borrowing and reading Materials (40%)

- Technology use (30%)
  - Studying, schoolwork and research 20%)
  - Programs, events and clubs (15%)
  - Social and community engagement (10%)
- Overall – positive sentiments (and improved responses when compared to 2020 results. Respondents often used words such as helpful, friendly, and welcoming to describe staff and services. In recent visits, respondents felt calm, peaceful, relaxed, comfortable, and had positive staff interactions.
- There were some comments noting discomfort or safety concerns with certain clients, the maintenance of the building/spaces, and inconsistent experiences with front line staff.
- People and Culture
  - Respondents reported a strongly positive sentiment, when asked if they viewed Pickering Public Library as a good place to work. Frequent keywords: welcoming, quiet, friendly, community, helpful staff, comfortable, positive environment.
  - There remains (when comparing to the 2020 results) sentiments that the library's workforce lacks diversity and representation, and limited access to access job opportunities.
- Collections
  - Compared to 2020 results, there is a visible shift to a more positive response, however opportunities for enhancement remain in improving representation across the collections (stories and authors). We also saw a desire for more French and other world-language books.
- Events
  - Compared to 2020 results, there is a shift to a more positive response. Opportunities for growth remain in the areas of representation and belonging, when it comes to the topics/experiences offered and the promotions of events.
- Discussion took place throughout the review regarding the survey results.
  - Overall, the survey noted some areas of growth including noise control, programming and events that reflect the Black experience, diverse representation in front facing staff along with library decision-making.
  - Reach of the survey was improved. Several initiatives implemented (e.g., a booth at the PABRT International Day for People of African Descent, online and paper versions of survey) were successful in gaining more completed surveys than ever before.
- Each department will be working on reviewing the results in greater detail to further refine the current recommendations and work plans.

## 5. September In-Library Visits Debrief

- Members shared their personal experiences with Pickering Library services over the last few months.
- Members shared their experiences using online room bookings, accessing Ovee, bookable study spaces, placing books on hold, CreatorCon, etc.
- Discussion took place regarding members experiences.

6. Board Presentation – Determining ABRWG Representation to Speak at the October 23 Meeting
  - SY invited ABRWG members to attend the upcoming Board meeting to share highlights from group's work and impact over the last year along with the coming year's plans.
  - SA and RDM will confirm with SY their availability to attend on behalf of ABRWG
7. PABRT International Day for People of African Descent
  - SY and TD shared about the community event and the strong response to completing the ABRWG survey.
  - SY shared that many in attendance were interested in the work of the ABRWG based on the resources available and then conversation with TD and library staff. Printed copies of the ABRWG overview and progress reports were available for community and well received.
8. Prepare for ABRWG Year End Self-Evaluations
  - SY will send a copy of the 2024 evaluation form for everyone to review.
  - Edits and changes will be completed via email.
  - Pending no major changes, SY will send the updated form link for everyone to complete prior to the November meeting. Results will be shared and discussed at the November meeting to inform 2026 planning.

**Next Meeting: Wednesday, November 12, 6:30 pm (in-person at the Central Library)**