

CIVIC YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

ANNUAL SHOWCASE

2026

July 9, 2026
City Hall

The logo for the City of Edmonton, featuring the word "Edmonton" in white text on a dark blue square background.

Edmonton

Table Of Contents

03

Agenda

04

Land Acknowledgement

05

About the Fellowship

06

How the Fellowship Works

07

Message from 2026 Program Lead

08

Message from the Program Partner

09

Meet the Fellows

12

Photos

16

Stay in Touch



Agenda

Explore the Civic Youth Fellowship Showcase

10:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Meet the 2026 Civic Youth Fellows and discover the projects they developed through their work with the City of Edmonton. Visit their project tables, ask questions and hear directly from the fellows about their ideas, experiences and recommendations.

Speaking Program

Start Time: 11:50 a.m.

Sandra Moreno

Strategic Project Advisor

2026 Civic Youth Fellowship Program Lead

Mayor Andrew Knack

City of Edmonton

Eddie Robar

City Manager, City of Edmonton

Zehra Talib

Canadian Race Relations Foundation,

Omar Yaqub

Servant of Servants (Executive Director), IslamicFamily

Following the speaking program, guests are invited to enjoy refreshments and continue connecting with the fellows at their project tables.

Land Acknowledgement

The City of Edmonton acknowledges that we gather in Treaty Six Territory, on lands that Indigenous Peoples have cared for, travelled and shared since time immemorial.

We honour the diverse Indigenous Peoples whose ancestors' footsteps have marked this territory for centuries, including the nêhiyaw, Dene, Anishinaabe, Nakota Isga and Niitsitapi peoples. We also recognize Edmonton as part of the Métis homeland and as home to one of the largest Inuit communities south of the 60th parallel.

This acknowledgement calls us to more than recognition. It calls us to listen with humility, learn from Indigenous knowledge and lived experiences, address the continuing impacts of colonialism and build relationships grounded in respect, reciprocity and meaningful action.



As we create opportunities for young people to experience municipal government and help shape the future of their city, we recognize that reconciliation must be reflected in whose voices are heard, who has access to opportunity and how decisions are made.

Through this program, we commit to creating space for Indigenous youth leadership, supporting meaningful participation and carrying this responsibility forward through the relationships we build and the work we do together.

About the Fellowship

The Civic Youth Fellowship began in spring 2023 as a pilot built on a simple but powerful idea. Young people from communities that have historically faced barriers to municipal government should have direct access to the people, systems and decisions shaping their city.

The first cohort welcomed 13 fellows into Council and Administration offices. Participants received paid work experience, mentorship, community partner training and opportunities to contribute to City priorities. Six members of the first cohort later secured part time or full time employment, including positions in Council offices, City Administration and other government policy offices.

The pilot demonstrated that the Fellowship benefits both participants and the City. Fellows gain confidence, skills, professional relationships and a deeper understanding of public service. In return, the City gains new ideas, lived experience and perspectives that strengthen its work. Following its early success, City Council recognized the Fellowship as a permanent program.

The program has continued to grow. By the beginning of its third cohort in 2025, 50 young people had participated. Their work has contributed to policy research, community engagement, communications, public safety, reconciliation, infrastructure, economic development and other priorities affecting Edmontonians.

Edmonton's approach is also gaining attention beyond the city. In 2026, the Civic Youth Fellowship was selected for presentation at the Strong Cities Global Workshop in Reggio Calabria, Italy, as part of an international discussion about young people, inclusion and public spaces. Edmonton joined representatives from cities in Italy, Spain and the United States to exchange ideas about giving young people a meaningful role in building safer and more inclusive communities.

The Fellowship is also part of Edmonton's broader work on anti racism, inclusion and community safety. This work has been shared through regional, national and international Strong Cities forums, including the Strong Cities North America Conference, the Strong Cities Global Summit and a United Nations special dialogue in New York.

What began as a local pilot has become a lasting investment in youth leadership and an example Edmonton is sharing with cities around the world. It shows what becomes possible when young people are not only invited into civic spaces, but trusted to help shape them.

How the Fellowship Works

The Civic Youth Fellowship is a paid, 10 week learning and employment experience that connects young people with municipal government.

Fellows are matched with City Council or Administration offices based on their interests, experience and learning goals. With support from mentors, City staff and community partners, they gain practical experience, build professional relationships and develop a stronger understanding of how decisions are made and services are delivered.

Throughout the program, fellows participate in learning sessions, attend meetings and events, contribute to meaningful City work and complete a project connected to their placement. Each project gives participants an opportunity to explore an issue, apply their skills and bring their own perspectives to the work of the City.

The Fellowship concludes with a public showcase where participants share their projects, reflect on their experiences and celebrate their growth with mentors, partners, colleagues, friends and family.

At every stage, the program is designed to help young people build confidence, expand their networks and recognize that their voices and experiences belong in public service.



Message from the 2026 Program Lead

Congratulations to the 2026 Civic Youth Fellowship cohort.

Over the past 10 weeks, you have demonstrated what is possible when young people are trusted, supported and empowered to lead. Through your research, community engagement, innovative ideas and thoughtful contributions, you have helped shape conversations that will continue to influence our city long after this program concludes.

What makes this cohort so remarkable is not only what you have accomplished, but how you have accomplished it. You have shown resilience, compassion, curiosity and a deep commitment to making Edmonton stronger. You have reminded us that leadership is not defined by age or title. It is defined by the willingness to listen, to learn, to serve and to create positive change.

One of the greatest strengths you bring to public service is your unique story. Never feel that you must leave your culture, your history, your language or your lived experiences behind in order to belong. Those parts of who you are are among your greatest strengths. They bring new perspectives, deepen understanding and help create institutions that better reflect and serve the communities around us.

As you move forward, I hope you continue to ask thoughtful questions, embrace new opportunities and lead with courage, kindness and integrity. The future of public service depends on people who are willing to think differently, build bridges and ensure that every voice has the opportunity to be heard. I have every confidence that each of you will continue to make a meaningful difference wherever your journey leads.

To our mentors, supervisors and partners, thank you for believing in the potential of young people and for creating opportunities for them to learn, contribute and grow. Your mentorship has helped shape the next generation of leaders, and I hope the impact of this cohort inspires even more opportunities for future fellows.

To the Class of 2026, thank you for your passion, your dedication and your belief in a better future. It has been an honour to be part of your journey. Congratulations on all you have accomplished. I hope you leave this program knowing that you belong, that your voice matters and that Edmonton is stronger because of you.

Sandra Moreno
Strategic Project Advisor
2026 Civic Youth Fellowship Program Lead

Message from our Program Partner

This is Edmonton building its future, getting the best of its citizens by being the best for our citizens. I am intensely proud of the Civic Youth Fellowship: broadened perspectives and deeper learning. It shows that young people do not need to be convinced to care about their city. They need to be trusted with it.

Islamic Family is proud to stand alongside the City of Edmonton and the Canadian Race Relations Foundation as a founding partner of the Civic Youth Fellowship. When this program was first imagined, we believed deeply in one idea: young people from underrepresented communities do not need to be told they belong in civic leadership. They need doors opened, mentorship in place and a support system built around them so they can walk through and succeed.

That is where community organizations come in. Programs like this do not work through good intentions alone. Islamic Family brings trust earned over years in community and relationships with families and youth who might never otherwise see a City fellowship as something meant for them.

Alongside our financial contribution, matched by investment from the Canadian Race Relations Foundation and the City, we bring cultural competency and lived understanding to help fellows navigate spaces that may feel unfamiliar. We provide the follow through to make sure no one is left to figure it out alone.

What is crucial is making sure youth are equipped to bring real value to the City, not just as participants but as contributors. They study what makes a good briefing note, practise innovative engagement strategies and gain a working understanding of how the City operates so what they offer officials is immediate and practical, not theoretical. This is the full value a community partner adds: not just funding or referrals, but resources, mentorship, preparation and support through the parts of this experience that never appear in a job description.



IslamicFamily
created to serve

This program was never meant to be led by the City, community or funders on their own. It has always required all of us together.

We are proud of every fellow in this year's cohort and prouder still of what this collaboration proves: when municipalities and community organizations meaningfully share ownership, investing dollars, time and expertise, the outcomes reach further than either could achieve alone.

To the 2025 Civic Youth Fellowship cohort: we see you, we are invested in you and we look forward to watching where you lead next.

Omar Yaqub,
Servant of Servants (Executive Director),
Islamic Family

Meet the 2026 Fellows



Jean-Michel Garzon Mahecha
Office of the Mayor



Kairan Dhillon
Office of Councillor Elliott



Nour Salhi
Office of Councillor Janz



Moataz Al Oklah
Office of Councillor Morgan



Adeoluwa Adebayo
Office of Councillor Parmer



Wassim Altawashi
Office of Councillor Salvador



Layla Alhussainy - ليلى الحسيني
Office of Councillor Stevenson



Bia Siddiqui
Office of Councillor Tang



Mohit Makhija
Office of Councillor Wright

Meet the 2026 Fellows



Flora Nguyen
City Operations



Tazakka Adie
Community Services - Anti-Racism



Aimen Khan
Edmonton Fire Rescue Services



Phoenix Delijam
Housing Action Team



Suhana Samshood
Safe and Healthy Communities



Munachiso Nwanisobi
Employee and Legal Services



Uel Nsofor
Financial and Corporate Services



Camilo Cortes-Vargas
Integrated Infrastructure Services

Meet the 2026 Fellows



Nathan Perez
Corporate Public Engagement



Rufine-Tyfaine Tompe
Office of the City Manager -
Chief of Staff



Khalil Kessewan
Urban Planning and Economy

First Day at City Hall



Training with our Partners



Federation of Canadian Municipalities



Events



Stay in touch



antiracismstrategy@edmonton.ca



www.edmonton.ca/CivicYouthFellowship



City of Edmonton
17th Floor, Edmonton Tower
10111 – 104 Avenue NW
Edmonton, AB T5J 0J4