



# AMO's Healthy Democracy Project

# The starting point—challenges and hope in municipal democracies

## Shared challenges

- Growing incivility and toxicity in local politics
- Decline in candidates running or seeking re-election
- Decline in voter turnout

## Objective

- Growing numbers of democracy champions—look at this room
- More and more partners surfacing who are doing important work
- Resources and solutions exist with more on the way

# Where we started

*Healthy Democracies are everyone's responsibility*

2021

AMO's Board strategic objectives included advancing diversity, equity and inclusion in municipal governance, including the *We All Win* campaign to attract more diverse candidates to municipal office.



2022

Following the success and interest in the We All Win campaign, in November 2022, the AMO Board approved a 4-year strategy with a \$1 million investment to promote and build healthy democracy in Ontario.



# AMO's Response: Healthy Democracy Project

## A project built on collaboration and optimism

- AMO's Healthy Democracy Project promotes the value and importance of municipal governments in Ontario's political system, including the importance of diversity of leadership and perspectives.
- The Healthy Democracy Project builds on AMO's 2021—2022 **We All Win** campaign and works to:
  - Attract more diverse candidates to municipal office.
  - Support elected officials to be equity-informed leaders.
  - Promote more respect for the people engaged in democratic processes.
  - Encourage greater participation in local democracy and an increase in voter turnout.
  - Promote greater civic engagement and greater awareness of the role of municipal government.

# Healthy Democracy Project

## Foundations, Engagement & Partnerships

- Advisory Group provides strategic advice on Healthy Democracy Project direction, research, and initiatives. The Group includes previous and current elected officials, AMCTO, OPSBA, candidate support organizations, national equity-focused organizations
- Through the HDP, AMO engages with a growing variety of aligned partners:
  - Toronto Metropolitan University's Democratic Engagement Exchange, Apathy is Boring, Monumental Projects, CIVIX, Canadian Municipal Barometer, electHER Now, Politics NOW, Proud Politics, Equal Voice, Nominee, The Jean Collective, Ontario Library Association, Ontario Public School Board Association, Young Politicians of Canada, Rideau Hall Foundation, Future Majority, Tamarack

# AMO **Healthy Democracy Project**

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## **We All Win**

- Representative councils
- Resources, tools, and training
- Equity-informed leadership
- People running for office don't feel alone and have recourse

## **Respect for Democracy**

- Increase trust in local government
- Improving the tone of discourse
- AMO as a thought leader on participatory democracy

## **Engagement & Education**

- Civic education and youth engagement
- Civic engagement support for AMO members
- AMO member engagement in Healthy Democracy work