

Aboriginal Employment Strategy

Date:	January 21, 2014
To:	Executive Committee
From:	City Manager
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

This report recommends an Aboriginal Employment Strategy for the City of Toronto, to ensure that the representation of Aboriginal people in the Toronto Public Service (TPS) reflects the representation of Aboriginal people in the population of the City of Toronto.

The development and implementation of the Aboriginal Employment Strategy responds to a Council approved motion and supports the City's on-going commitment to equity and diversity in general, and specifically its commitment to the Aboriginal community as articulated in the City of Toronto's Statement of Commitment to Toronto's Aboriginal Communities adopted in 2010.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Manager recommends that:

1. The Executive Committee and City Council adopt the Aboriginal Employment Strategy for the Toronto Public Service outlined in the attachment to this report (Appendix A).
2. The Executive Committee and City Council direct staff to implement the specific actions outlined in the Aboriginal Employment Strategy and to provide semi-annual updates to the Aboriginal Affairs Committee on the progress made towards achieving the implementation of the strategy.

Financial Impact

The financial implications of implementing the strategy and recommendations will be accommodated through the existing 2014 budget and will result in no net impact for the 2014 Approved Operating Budget. Any potential impacts to subsequent years' Operating Budgets for the Human Resources Division and/or the Office of Equity, Diversity & Human Rights to implement the strategy will be addressed through the annual budget submission process.

Decision History

In June of 2010, City Council adopted the Statement of Commitment to the Aboriginal Communities of Toronto.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2010/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-30866.pdf>

Within the Statement of Commitment is the following:

The City of Toronto commits to implement employment practices that ensure that opportunities for employment are accessible to Aboriginal people and increases the number of Aboriginal employees at all occupational levels.

In June 2013, the Aboriginal Affairs Committee through Councillor Layton made a motion at Council to have an Aboriginal Employment Strategy created. The motion stated that:

"the Executive Director, Human Resources Division, in consultation with the Director, Equity Diversity and Human Rights to prepare, for Council's first meeting of 2014, an Aboriginal Employment Strategy with the purpose of ensuring more Aboriginal people are employed at the City of Toronto and that the increase mirrors the distribution of Aboriginal people in the population of the City of Toronto based on the best available data in the 2011 Toronto Aboriginal Research Project report. The plan should include very clear steps and timelines to achieve this goal, developed in consultation with the Aboriginal Affairs Committee."

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2013/mm/bgrd/backgroundfile-59174.pdf>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The City of Toronto's Employment Equity policy, adopted in 2000, articulates the commitment to a policy of fairness and equity in employment for four designated groups (identified in the policy as: Women, Visible Minorities, Aboriginal Peoples and persons with a disability).

City Council, at its meeting of October 8, 9, 10 and 11, 2013 adopted the City Manager's 26 Strategic Actions, to guide the Toronto Public Service from 2014 and beyond in the City's service planning, multi-year budgeting and performance planning process, and among the actions are two in particular that relate directly to achievement of the City's diversity goals:

Strategic Action #17: Enhance the City's Capacity to Serve Toronto's Diversity

Strategic Action #18: Develop and Implement a Workforce Plan

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2013/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-61590.pdf>

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2013/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-61593.pdf>

The development and implementation of an Aboriginal Employment Strategy (Appendix A) is directly aligned with these strategic actions and with the soon to be launched ***Toronto Public Service Talent Blueprint*** which articulates how the City intends to build the public service it needs to serve the City.

Among the key goals of the City of Toronto as an employer is to reflect the diversity of the communities the City serves at all levels of the workforce and to achieve a positive workplace based on equity and human rights principles and practices. Through anecdotal and observational evidence, it has been stated that Aboriginal representation in the City workforce is low and does not reflect the representation in the City of Toronto's general population.

COMMENTS

A key component of the City of Toronto's Employment Equity policy is the requirement to conduct voluntary employment equity workforce surveys with the goal of measuring representation of the four designated groups in the workforce and to track progress within the TPS in achieving a workforce that reflects the community that is served. For the Toronto Public Service, this is achieved by comparing the representation within the workforce to the labour market availability of the designated groups who are qualified for jobs within the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (CMA). According to Human Resources Skills Development Canada, labour market availability refers to the share of designated group members in the workforce from which the employers could hire.

<http://wi.toronto.ca/intr/hr/policies.nsf/9fff29b7237299b385256729004b844b/755a03e5d9c008fd85256927004b786c?OpenDocument>

<http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/hlt/97-550/Index.cfm?TPL=PIC&Page=RETR&LANG=Eng&T=207&CMA=535&S=0&O=A&RPP=25>

http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/labour/equality/employment_equity/tools/annual_reports/2009/page02.shtml

Workforce data provides a benchmark for the City to track representation of designated group members within the TPS workforce over time. The data is used to develop and implement programs and activities to close gaps between representation in the workforce and the Toronto CMA estimates of the labour pool availability of designated groups.

The City has carried out two workforce surveys, one between the years 2003-2005 and a second one in 2011. Despite significant effort to promote participation in the survey, the first survey resulted in an overall response rate of 33.1% rendering the interpretation of data unreliable. The Human Rights Commission recommends a response rate of 80% to ensure the statistical validity of the data analysis. Through further effort promoting the value of survey participation and in strengthening foundational elements of the Employment Equity program, progress was made in the 2011 survey with an overall 46.4% response rate of the active workforce, representing a notable increase from the original survey. While notable progress was achieved, as the response rate still falls well below the benchmark of 80%, the data collected is not deemed to be statistically valid. Plans are underway to re-survey the workforce in the 3rd quarter of 2014, and through a comprehensive education campaign and sustained focus, staff from the Office of Equity, Diversity and Human Rights believe that participation rates will increase substantively and provide meaningful benchmark data against which to measure current workforce representation.

In 2011, the Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council released a survey called the Toronto Aboriginal Research Project (TARP). According to this report, the Aboriginal population in the GTA is up thirty-three percent since 2001. Census Canada states the population to be 31,900. Toronto Aboriginal Agencies supporting Aboriginal people estimate the total population of Aboriginal people living in Toronto to be closer to 70,000. This is the largest concentration of Aboriginal people in any urban centre in Ontario.

Aboriginal people are underrepresented in the workforce in general. According to the TARP report, the unemployment rate for Aboriginal people is 8% and for youth it is 16.2% for First Nations, and 18.1% for Métis.

Notwithstanding the insufficient data currently available depicting representation of Aboriginal People in the Toronto Public Service, City staff believe an opportunity exists to demonstrate its commitment to the Aboriginal community through implementation of an Aboriginal Employment Strategy (Appendix A) that would ultimately strive to ensure a representation in the TPS workforce that mirrors representation in the City of Toronto's general population.

The development and implementation of a Toronto Public Service Aboriginal Employment Strategy is intended to address any gaps between general population representation and representation across all levels of the TPS workforce, and is in keeping with the City's Employment Equity policy and its Statement of Commitment to Toronto's Aboriginal peoples of Toronto.

The Aboriginal Affairs Committee has been consulted in the preparation of the Aboriginal Employment Strategy. Regular updates will be provided to the Aboriginal Affairs Committee throughout the implementation process to track and monitor the achievement of the actions outlined in the strategy.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENT

Appendix A – Toronto Public Service, Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2014-2018



Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2014- 2018

Creating an Aboriginal Inclusive Workforce

Context

In June 2013, the City of Toronto's Aboriginal Affairs Committee through Councillor Layton made a motion at Council to develop an Aboriginal Employment Strategy:

"The Executive Director, Human Resources Division, in consultation with the Director, Equity Diversity and Human Rights to prepare, for Council's first meeting of 2014, an Aboriginal Employment Strategy with the purpose of ensuring more Aboriginal people are employed at the City of Toronto and that the increase mirrors the distribution of Aboriginal people in the population of the City of Toronto based on the best available data in the 2011 Toronto Aboriginal Research Project report. The plan should include very clear steps and timelines to achieve this goal, developed in consultation with the Aboriginal Affairs Committee."

This motion is a natural extension of one of the seven commitments in the City of Toronto's Statement of Commitment to Toronto's Aboriginal Communities adopted in 2010:

"The City of Toronto commits to implement employment practices that ensure that opportunities for employment are accessible to Aboriginal people and increases the number of employee's at all occupational levels."

Goal

The Aboriginal Employment Strategy's goal is to ensure that the City of Toronto's workforce reflects the representation of Aboriginal peoples of Toronto.

Guiding Principles:

The strategy was developed in the context of the following guiding principles:

- The City recognizes the unique status and cultural diversity of the Aboriginal communities in Toronto and their right to self-determination;
- The City of Toronto is committed to fairness and equity in employment and services in recognition of its obligations and responsibilities as an employer and of its leadership role in the community;

- The goals and actions of this strategy are aligned with City of Toronto strategic actions and workforce planning goals.

The Aboriginal Employment Strategy was developed in consultation with representatives of Aboriginal agencies and City staff and will address three focus areas:

<p>Outreach</p>	<p>Objective:</p> <p>Collaborate with Aboriginal employment agencies and agencies serving the Aboriginal population to strengthen existing outreach activities to connect Toronto’s Aboriginal communities to City jobs.</p>
<p>Employment</p>	<p>Objective:</p> <p>To ensure that the representation reflects the Aboriginal peoples in the City through the development and implementation of recruitment and employment programs and initiatives.</p>
<p>Development and Retention: Internal Programs</p>	<p>Objective:</p> <p>Embed an Aboriginal focus in all City of Toronto employment programs to attract and retain skilled, high performing employees.</p>

Aboriginal Employment Strategy: Actions

Outreach

Objective: Collaborate with Aboriginal employment agencies and agencies serving the Aboriginal population to strengthen existing outreach activities to connect Toronto’s Aboriginal communities to City jobs.

Action	Timeline
1. Increase senior staff attendance at Aboriginal community events and job fairs to demonstrate the City’s commitment to Aboriginal communities and staff.	ongoing
2. Educate Aboriginal agency staff about City hiring practices to assist them in providing supports to their clients.	2014
3. Broaden and deepen the number of partnerships with Aboriginal agencies and agencies serving Aboriginal populations to assist with recruitment and retention strategies.	2014

Employment

Objective: To ensure that the representation in the Toronto Public Service workforce mirrors the representation of Aboriginal peoples in the City through the development and implementation of recruitment and employment programs and initiatives.

Action	Timeline
4. Identify opportunities to develop "Special Programs", as defined by the Ontario Human Rights Code, for Toronto Aboriginal residents and city staff that result in City of Toronto employment opportunities. These may include but are not limited to designated opportunities in existing employment programs (e.g., Gateway programs such as Urban Fellows, paid internships, targeted hiring etc.)	Q2 - 2014
5. Dedicate specific vacancies for Aboriginal applicants as a Special Program according to the Human Rights Code and promote these positions at Aboriginal Employment events. Consider adapting a model similar to Partnership to Advance Youth Employment (PAYE).	2014

Action	Timeline
6. Investigate the feasibility of “Special Programs”, as defined by the Human Rights Code, for training or accreditation for Aboriginal residents to meet qualifications for specific City of Toronto jobs. Training my include skill training for specific roles, apprenticeships or funding to receive professional accreditation for City jobs.	2015
7. Review of City hiring practices with an equity lens, for example, consideration for life skills verses credentials.	2014

Development and Retention: Internal Programs

Objective: To create employment programs that ensure the City is an employer of choice in the Aboriginal community and that helps retain skilled, high performing employees.

Action	Timeline
<p>Establish retention and professional development Programs for Aboriginal employees that may include:</p> <p>8. Aboriginal Employee network: An employee initiated and led network mandated to implement programs and activities that are aligned with the City’s strategic objectives. The network’s activities will be supported through the Equity, Diversity and Human Rights Division and will report to senior management through an executive champion selected by the network.</p> <p>9. New Aboriginal specific professional development programs (e.g., mentoring, job rotations etc).</p> <p>10. Embed an Aboriginal focus on existing professional development programs (e.g. Webinars, Classroom, e-learning tools as well as Urban Fellows, Management and Executive Development programs that are appealing to Aboriginal employees).</p>	2014

Implementing the Strategy

An education and communication plan will be critical to implementing the strategy, along with establishing a process for evaluating successes and challenges from a qualitative and quantitative perspective. An outline of the education and communication plan is highlighted below.

Education and Communication

Objective: To understand barriers to employment and how to overcome them through the actions outlined in the three focus areas of the strategy. (i.e. Outreach, Employment and Retention and Development: Internal Programs)

Action	Timeline
11. Develop and implement a communications strategy to inform City of Toronto senior management and all staff about the Aboriginal Employment strategy and its accompanying actions. This will establish: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. An understanding of why we have an Aboriginal Employment Strategy. b. That all stakeholders, including Division Heads, hiring managers and Strategic Recruitment Consultants should understand their roles and responsibilities through the implementation of the actions that result in hiring and retaining Aboriginal staff. 12. Leadership and project management provided by the Human Resources and Equity, Diversity & Human Rights divisions.	Q1 - 2014
13. Create training programs for the Toronto Public Service to learn about Aboriginal issues from the perspective of Aboriginal elders and residents in Toronto. This would include the history and relationship between Canada and its Aboriginal Peoples and understanding barriers to employment.	Q2 & 3 - 2014

Evaluation

The establishment of baseline data that will be monitored and reported through the Aboriginal Affairs Committee is an essential component of this Strategy. The data will be used to measure progress in meeting the Strategy's goals and objectives and will assist in making programming decisions.

Data on the representation of Aboriginal employees is collected by the City according to the City's Employment Equity policy. In 2012 City Council received a Staff Report on an Employment Equity survey conducted in 2011. The report noted that a response rate of 46.4% is a significant increase compared to the previous survey, but that this response rate still cannot produce statistically reliable data. Plans are underway to resurvey the workforce in 2014 and every effort will be made to engage and educate employees on the importance of participating so that a much higher response rate is achieved. Once robust data on the representation of Aboriginal employees is obtained, the City will compare these results to current population data available in the TARP Report to determine the level of under-representation and where specific action needs to be taken.

In addition to establishing quantitative benchmarks the city will include qualitative evaluations such as formal and informal feedback sessions with key stakeholders such as the Aboriginal Affairs Committee, the Aboriginal Employee Network, senior and other managers and representatives of the community.