



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Toronto Fire Services – A Path to Diversity

Date:	June 17, 2013
To:	Executive Committee
From:	J.W. Jim Sales, Fire Chief and General Manager
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	p:\2013\ClusterB\FIR\ex130020

SUMMARY

At its meeting of January 15, 2013, City Council directed the Fire Chief/General Manager, Toronto Fire Services consult with the Chief of Police regarding the framework, structure and successes of the Toronto Police Diversity hiring program; to prepare an update to the Toronto Fire Diversity hiring program; and to report to the Executive Committee by the end of the second quarter of 2013 with a plan on how to increase the diversity within Toronto Fire Services to better reflect the population of Toronto.

This report outlines Toronto Fire Services' (TFS) plan to increase workforce diversity, which includes an increase in the number of women and racially diverse personnel in TFS, by ten per cent by the end of 2014. This report also addresses steps taken by TFS to increase diversity in recruitment, employment and to assist employees in overcoming identified barriers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Fire Chief and General Manager, Toronto Fire Services, recommends that this report be received for information.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications associated with this report at this time. However, any resource requirements identified in the future will be included in Fire Services future operating budget submissions.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of January 15, 2013, City Council directed the Fire Chief consult with the Chief of Police regarding the framework, structure and successes of the Toronto Police Diversity hiring program; to prepare an update to the Toronto Fire Diversity hiring program; and to report to the Executive Committee by the end of the second quarter of 2013 with a plan on how to increase the diversity within Toronto Fire to better reflect the population of Toronto as it pertains to the new hires approved by this Operating Budget and future Operating budgets.

Information regarding the motions can be viewed at:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.EX27.1>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

In response to council's direction, TFS Senior Staff, Recruiting and Community Outreach Staff, and members of the Toronto Professional Firefighters Association have met with an Advisory Committee assembled by Councillor Thompson. The committee consists of professionals with significant expertise in the area of diversity in employment. In consulting the committee, TFS gained valuable insights regarding improving processes, exploring partnerships and maximizing available resources. Outcomes related to this consultation are outlined in further in the Comments section of this report.

In previous years, TFS was involved in various initiatives geared to promoting and increasing diversity. A summary of these initiatives is provided below.

Toronto Police Services

Recognizing the efforts and progress made by the Toronto Police Service (TPS) in promoting diversity in their workforce, TFS consulted with TPS in 2010. Meetings were held with Senior Staff from both TPS and TFS and also between Recruitment and Community Outreach officers from both organisations. Best practices were examined resulting in the following findings which helped to shape TFS' approach to increasing diversity in the workplace:

- the cost of the Pre-Service Firefighter Education and Training Community College Program was acting as a barrier to potential candidates;
- the Pre-service Program did not have sufficient diversity intake;
- TFS need to increase our internal cultural capacity to create a better understanding of cultural differences and how they can impact delivery of services
- Physical Abilities testing presented a barrier to female applicants;
- partnerships with other City divisions could be used to support and further diversity initiatives;
- Written Aptitude testing presented a barrier to all applicants.

Hiring lists

TFS changed its practice of creating lengthy candidate hiring lists with no expiration to creating hiring lists renewed annually to maintain the pool of candidates. Hiring lists are further sub-divided into visible/racial minorities and Caucasian men. When approval is given to hire a new recruit class of Operations Firefighters, the candidates are chosen alternately from the two pools. Over the past four years, this practice has resulted in classes averaging approximately 40% diversity intake.

Community input

In early 2011, TFS created the Fire Chief's Council on Access, Equity and Diversity. This Council pulled together representatives from target demographic groups, including youth from those communities. This was done with a view of gathering input and advice as to how TFS could better reach out to these communities and present a career with TFS as a desirable career alternative. TFS will re-launch this initiative and identifying strategies for further improvement.

Community Outreach

As outlined in Table 1 – 2012 Outreach Contacts, TFS made over 17,589 outreach contacts in 2012. In total, contact was made with 7910 potential female candidates and 5065 males (aboriginal or racial minorities) representing 74% contact rate with diverse target groups.

Table 1 - 2012 Outreach Contacts

Totals	Males	Females	Total
Aboriginal	355	358	713
Racial Minorities	4710	3965	8675
Sub total	5065	4323	9388
Caucasian	4614	3587	8201
Total	9679	7910	17,589

Training

A short training course was developed for recruit firefighters aimed at increasing cross-cultural awareness. This course focused on cultural biases in delivery of services to the public, including an understanding of how aspects of culture may impact firefighter health and safety. In the fourth quarter of 2013, this cross-cultural awareness training will be delivered to all staff through online training.

As a response to the challenges presented by the Physical Abilities Test for female candidates, TFS partnered with a female applicant who had failed the physical testing numerous times despite a high level of fitness and athleticism. TFS provided her with physical training equipment, a supervised training program and coaching to ensure improvement (subsequently, she was able to be successful in the CPAT testing). Progress in the physical testing was monitored in partnership with Brock University. This was documented in video format and packaged as a resource for all candidates to better prepare them for success at the physical abilities and clinical testing stage. The video will be offered as a streamed video on the recruitment web page by the fourth quarter of 2013.

Partnerships

Barriers presented by the Written Aptitude test were mitigated by locating an outside agency which specialises in preparing candidates for the firefighter aptitude tests. We then began offering this service on a candidate pay basis as an extension of the TFS Career Awareness Program. This program offers both theoretical and practical insight into a career in the Fire Services.

TFS partnered with Toronto Employment and Social Services, and Parks Forestry & Recreation. Program participants were offered a combination of Career Awareness Program courses, transferable skills training (i.e. First Aid, CPR, DZ licence driving lessons) to ensure they had minimum qualifications for a career with TFS. Participants also had unlimited access to Parks, Forestry & Recreation athletic facilities to train for the Physical Abilities testing. All of the partner divisions are very proud to have been recognised in 2011 with The City Manager's Award for Public Service Excellence.

The Community College Pre-Service Firefighter curriculum as mentioned was identified as both a barrier, and not having the demographic intake in the program. TFS partnered with Centennial College, whose catchment area includes a number of the City's Priority neighbourhoods, to deliver a Pre-service Firefighter Program with an enhanced curriculum and a guarantee of 65% diverse intake. To date, three class intakes have resulted in cohorts exceeding that guarantee (68% diversity intake). As a result of this initiative, TFS was the very proud recipient of the 2011 inaugural Toni Pini Diversity and Inclusion Award from the International Association of Fire Chiefs and Fire 20/20.

Best practice in fire services

Other departments such as Richmond B.C., Brampton, ON and Dallas, TX have consulted with TFS for hiring advice. Brampton Fire Senior management and Human Resources staff have met with TFS staff for advice in creating a Recruitment and Community Outreach Division.

In September of 2012, TFS hosted a workshop on Diversity in the Fire Service, giving Fire Chiefs and staff from across the Greater Toronto Area and throughout Ontario an avenue to learn how to build and support a diverse, inclusive culture and to foster proactive relationships with their multicultural communities.

In 2012, TFS attended close to 900 community events and similarly, hosted over 500 organised tours of fire halls and facilities. This is over and above contacts made with school groups and community groups by the Fire Prevention and Public Education Division.

COMMENTS

TFS has set a goal of ten per cent increase in diversity for females and visible minorities by the end of the fourth quarter of 2014, with a five per cent increase target for the end of the fourth quarter of 2013 as illustrated in Table 2 – 2012 to 2014 targets.

With an annual attrition rate of approximately 3%, attributable almost entirely to retirements, and staffing levels are actually lower than pre-amalgamation levels, any significant change in demographics will be gradual.

Table 2 – 2012 to 2014 targets
(Based on total of 2012 TFS population of 2950)

	Women		Visible Minorities		Aboriginal Peoples		Persons with Disability	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Current at 2012	153	5.2	123	4.2	25	0.8	56	1.9
5% increase	161	5.4	129	4.4				
10% increase	168	5.7	135	4.6				

TFS is dedicated to the creation of a diverse workforce, and will report out on our diversity goals through our Annual Report.

Table 3 – Goals and Timelines outlines the TFS plan for success.

Table 3 – Goals and Timelines

Goal	Target Completion
1. Re-launch Fire Chief's Council on Access, Equity and Diversity with Quarterly meetings being held	Q3 2013
2. Constitute Senior Staff Committee on Access, Equity and Diversity and TFS culture held quarterly (review of policies and practices with regard to our diversity initiatives)	Q4 2013
3. Conduct an employment systems review	Q2 2014
4. Continue reviewing and tracking Exit Interview Questionnaire	Ongoing
5. Launch 2014 hiring campaign and effective management of hiring lists	Q3 2013 and ongoing
6. Survey TFS staff re diversity and second languages, with a view to match staff diversity to community diversity and to assist in reaching out to their community	Q3
7. Deliver cultural competency awareness training to all TFS staff	Q4
8. Market TFS CPAT mentoring video more aggressively to female demographic and offered as an online streaming video	Q4

Goal	Target Completion
9. Continue to offer Aptitude testing and Career Awareness courses. Strengthen partnerships with TESS, and seek new partnerships with YMCA. Offer to Community Colleges as Adult Education Course	Ongoing
10. Continue diversity intake of Centennial College Program and Meet with CC's to look at new path forward for TFS training and professionalization of the Fire Service with a view of reducing costs	Ongoing
11. Continue to seek out opportunities within the Province/Country/ North America to showcase TFS diversity programs	Ongoing
12. Continue targeted outreach contacts - maintain 2012 level of 12975 EDHR contacts	Ongoing
13. Continue to promote Firehall tours for organised groups, and TFS Fire Truck participation at local community events - maintain 2012 level of 528 organised firehall tours and participation at 881 community events	Ongoing
14. Revise TFS Recruitment and Outreach tools to place more emphasis on careers outside of the Operations Division	Q3, Q4
15. Continue TFS Senior Staff involvement on Fire Services diversity oriented Boards and Commissions	Ongoing
16. Review Collective Agreement policies and practices regarding promotions to ensure processes are fair and equitable	2014
17. Include in budget submissions to commit resources to community outreach	Q3
18. Participate in Career Fairs and community gatherings. Leverage partner support through printed material distribution and posting (eg. Toronto Community Housing, Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation Centres, Toronto Employment and Social Services Centres).	Ongoing
19. Seek out a partnership with the Y.M.C.A. in order to best leverage their demographic and utilize their resources to attract candidates.	Q4
20. Manage communications (both internal and external) through the TFS website and social media presence.	Ongoing
21. Continued partnerships with City of Toronto Divisions, other Emergency service providers	Ongoing
22. Continued partnerships with community advocates for a diverse workforce change	Ongoing

CONTACT

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