



**Canadian Union of  
Public Employees**

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- Nurses & Paramedical  
Units  
- Service Units

*City of Toronto*  
- Full-Time  
- Long-Term Care Homes  
& Services Part-Time  
- Recreation Workers  
Part-Time  
- Unit B Part-Time

*Toronto Community  
Housing Corporation*

**DELIVERED BY E-MAIL AND REGULAR MAIL**

May 27, 2014

Deputy Mayor Norm Kelly, Chair  
And Members of the Executive Committee  
10<sup>th</sup> floor, West Tower  
City Hall  
100 Queen Street West  
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Deputy Mayor Kelly and Members of the Executive Committee:

**RE: EX42.33 - Restoration of Funding for Youth Employment Toronto  
Program**

I am pleased the Executive Committee is considering taking action to restore funding for the Youth Employment Toronto program, currently housed in Social Development, Finance and Administration.

CUPE Local 79 is proud of the services our members offer across the City. We also believe that a vibrant city with inclusive communities depends on extending opportunities for meaningful, rewarding economic participation to all residents.

Youth Employment Toronto is a particularly striking example of how working together – City Council, together with our members and community agencies – can foster strong communities by promoting economic inclusion. For that reason, I am here to ask you to give your strong support to these recommendations.

Youth Employment Toronto is a unique program in Toronto and has helped thousands of young Torontonians overcome multiple barriers to education and employment for over thirty years. Until this year, the program was funded through a Federal grant administered through an agreement between the City of Toronto and the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development. The grant paid for 85% of Youth Employment Toronto's operating costs, with the City paying for the remaining 15%.

This year, that grant was cancelled with almost no notice and no indication why.

Losing Youth Employment Toronto would sideline members of the demographic we usually associate with creativity and innovation at exactly the time when creativity and innovation are driving economic growth. Further, because the affected youth already face multiple barriers to employment, long-term economic exclusion will lead to greater social disengagement, which means the City will have to step in with other costly municipal services and support systems. That is why Council passed the Youth Equity Strategy!

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MEMBERS  
SINCE  
1942**

In short, Youth Employment Toronto supports key principals Council has already adopted.

Two key features of the program deserve special mention.

First, the Youth Employment Caseworkers develop working relationships with youth by going where the youth are. They go to malls, community centres and other youth hang-outs to make direct connections.

This leads to the second feature: Youth Employment Toronto's caseworkers provide intensive, one-on-one supports. Keep in mind that the participants in this program face complex and often overlapping barriers to employment, including family violence, substance abuse, homelessness, mental health issues, lack of education and lack of previous work history. Rather than relying on boilerplate, one-size-fits-all strategies, caseworkers work with community agencies to help youth stabilize their immediate situation and develop specific strategies for moving toward jobs and careers.

I could certainly give you statistics about the program's success: In 2013: **1772** youth were contacted, of those, **895** were case managed, **111** returned to school, **184** enrolled in skills enhancement programs and **255** gained employment.

I could also point to some of the sobering employment numbers arising from the Economic Dashboard presented to the May 21<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Economic Development Committee: unemployment in Toronto is 2% higher than rates in Ontario or Canada. We also know that youth unemployment is considerably higher than overall unemployment, with estimates up to 22%. In fact at 43.5%, Toronto has the worst youth employment rate of any region in Ontario.

Those statistics are important, but I want to emphasize again Youth Employment Toronto's central contribution: working collaboratively with youth and youth-serving agencies to treat unemployment as a problem facing real people – not statistics – and developing one-on-one strategies to overcome multiple, complex barriers to employment.

We are not asking for the City to fund this program indefinitely. Local 79 is committed to working with the City and with Local MPs to get federal funding restored for next year.

What we are asking is for the City to provide bridge funding, because if this program is lost it could take considerable time and resources to resurrect it. We think the mechanism recommended in the motion before you is reasonable, but certainly would defer to your collective wisdom to find alternative temporary funding mechanisms.

Yours truly,



Tim Maguire  
President