
2023 OPERATING BUDGET BRIEFING NOTE

TPL Staffing, Recruitment and Retention

Issue/Background:

This briefing note responds to Budget Committee's motion, adopted on January 13, 2023, requesting the City Librarian, Toronto Public Library, to prepare a briefing note on:

- Toronto Public Library (TPL) staffing, recruitment and retention plan for 2023; and
- The current (2022) and expected (2023) vacancy rates across departments, and level of staffing required to support the Open Hours expansion in 2024.

Key Points:

- TPL maintains an active recruitment and staffing program designed to fill new and vacant positions in TPL's approved staffing complement.
- TPL typically has 75-100 vacant positions at any point in time, representing 55 to 75 Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) or 3.0-4.1%. Contributing to these vacancy rates are ongoing staff churn as existing staff are promoted or transfer into new positions, and natural attrition including retirements.
 - TPL's collective agreement gives preference to internal qualified candidates for open positions, and as such approximately 75% of postings are filled by internal candidates, which increases the rate of internal churn.
 - TPL is a career-oriented employer with an average staff tenure of 14 years and average age of 42. TPL's annual attrition rate is approximately 7%, half of which represents staff electing to retire and commence receipt of their OMERS pension.
- Recruitment slowed during the pandemic, resulting in an increase in the vacancy rate in 2020 and 2021. An accelerated recruitment program was undertaken in 2022, which included streamlining processes and refocussing resources to better support recruitment. This successfully reduced vacant positions from 170 in January 2022 to 102 at year-end 2022. The accelerated recruitment program will continue in 2023 to continue to manage vacant positions.
- A comprehensive review of TPL's recruitment and staffing processes is underway, with plans to implement a new applicant tracking system in 2023-24 to accelerate the pace of recruitment and to provide an enhanced candidate experience for both internal and external candidates.

- TPL currently has 102 vacant positions, representing 77.5 or 4.3% of total FTEs. The vacancy rate in public service divisions is 3% and the vacancy rate in support divisions is 8%.
- As part of TPL's talent attraction, engagement and retention plan, TPL conducted a comprehensive staff survey in 2022, with strategies and action plans being developed to further enhance the employee experience of staff at TPL.

Staffing for Open Hours Plan

Increased open hours at the Library responds to the changing patterns of work, study, education and leisure in Toronto, and drives strategic outcomes such as greater digital inclusion opportunities through increased access to the internet, wifi and computers; increased early childhood literacy programming; and reduced barriers to access for equity-deserving groups, seniors and youth.

Adding capacity through increased open hours effectively leverages the City of Toronto's investment in the Library's existing infrastructure, while helping to advance and increase the impact of key City strategies. The estimate for full implementation of the Open Hours Plan is \$17.4 million, and 117.5 FTEs. A phased implementation of the Open Hours Plan would provide TPL the opportunity to assess and configure each element of the plan for maximum efficiency and optimum service.

- The open hours expansion in the 2024 outlook includes 31.0 FTEs and adds hours in 8 branches at a cost of \$1.2 million (annualized costs of \$2.4 million). The unfunded enhancement is costed with the assumption that the service is introduced in the middle of the year, in order to allow time following budget approval to plan the hiring of staff and implement the additional open hours.
- The hiring for so many new positions at once will increase the rate of churn, as a majority likely will come from internal candidates, and it will take some time before all positions – new and vacancies created through churn – are filled with both internal and external candidates. The TPL Board acknowledged that this would create further challenges for TPL as it continues to address staffing challenges and higher-than-usual vacancy rates that have carried into 2023. As a result, the Board, at its meeting on December 5, 2022, decided to defer its request for open hours expansion to 2024 so that staff could continue their focus on the filling of existing vacancies and the return of library service to pre-pandemic levels.
- The Open Hours Plan will be brought back to the TPL Board before submission through the 2024 budget process and the enhancement request may change.

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