

Appointment of Members to the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Advisory Committee

Date: May 16, 2023

To: Civic Appointments Committee

From: Executive Director, Social Development Finance and Administration

Wards: All

REASON FOR CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

This report deals with personal matters about identifiable persons who are being considered for appointment to the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Advisory Committee.

SUMMARY

The report recommends the appointment of 14 community members to the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Council Advisory Committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Director, Social Development Finance and Administration recommends that:

1. City Council appoint the 14 individuals listed in the Confidential Attachment 1 to the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Advisory Committee, at the pleasure of Council, for a term of office ending on November 14, 2026, or until the completion of its mandate, whichever comes first.

2. City Council direct that the balance of information in Confidential Attachment 1 remains confidential as it relates to personal matters about identifiable individuals who are being considered for appointment to the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Advisory Committee.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting held on September 30, October 1 and 2, 2020, City Council approved the establishment of the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Advisory Committee:

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2020.EX16.1>

At its meeting on February 7 and 9, 2023, City Council approved the re-establishment of several Council Advisory Bodies, including the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Advisory Committee, for the 2022 to 2026 Council term and adopted the continued use of their original Terms of Reference included in [the report](#) (January 17, 2023) from the City Manager.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.EX2.1>

COMMENTS

Taking Action Against Anti-Black Racism

Anti-Black racism has been found to have significant negative impacts on the life chances and opportunities of Black Torontonians. Across the areas of health, the criminal justice system, education, child welfare, and employment, Black Torontonians, and their families continue to experience persistent bias and barriers that impede their efforts to attain their aspirations, meet health and happiness goals, and fulfil their career potential.

In December 2017, the City responded to this systemic challenge by launching North America's first municipal anti-Black racism strategy - The Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism. Now in its' fifth and final year, the Plan outlines 22 recommendations and 80 actions to address anti-Black racism in child and youth development; policing and the criminal justice system; health and community services; employment and income supports; and community engagement and Black leadership.

As the Action Plan continues to drive community impact and institutional change, there is a need for expanded capacity and pathways to meet new and unexpected challenges that grow out of the COVID-19 pandemic's racialized impacts and after-shocks. Initiatives and approaches must evolve to meet the dynamic nature of systemic anti-Black racism which is not static. This need has been acknowledged and outlined in the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism in a full section of recommendations and actions entitled, "Community Engagement and Black Leadership."

City Council's decision to establish a Confronting Anti-Black Racism Advisory Committee addresses critical community need for timely guidance on emerging issues.

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Black communities have indicated a clear desire to be supported to create innovative responses to a series of complex challenges from the compounded impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, from strained access to healthcare, wage stagnation, and an increasing rate of Black displacement in neighbourhood development areas. The vision to have Black leadership embedded in City governance structures, and at the highest levels of decision making, ensures Black communities are engaged to provide advice at timely and critical junctures.

The Impact of the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Advisory Committee: Year 1

The first term of the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Advisory Committee has already left an important mark on the City, by delivering significant impact to improve the lives of Black Torontonians. The first of its kind - anywhere in Canada - this Council Advisory began its first meeting on May 21, 2021. It was Co-Chaired by former Deputy Mayor, Councillor Michael Thompson, and community member, Justice Betty. The Committee convened 7 virtual meetings with more than 41 agenda items and 24 substantive presentations. In its first 8 months, the Committee developed an ambitious workplan and engaged the City's most senior leadership in its work, including the Mayor, the City Manager, the City Treasurer, the Provincial Anti-Racism Directorate, and the Federal Anti-Racism Secretariat, as well as trusted Black community leaders.

The Committee advanced the strategic vision to improve outcomes for Black communities at the City and at other orders of government. Members also provided critical feedback to shape city-wide plans, policies, and initiatives, including the City's Digital Infrastructure Plan, The Little Jamaica Initiative, The Housing TO Action Plan, and the Official Plan Review. It has pushed for strategic interventions to transform city-wide change, including support for Black-led affordable housing initiatives, convening intergovernmental tables to strengthen employment planning and health response coordination for COVID-19, and recovery for Black and Indigenous communities. The Committee also invited presentations from Black parents and families to identify important recommendations to improve targets, tracking, and reporting on Black student success and wellbeing in the Toronto District School Board.

Culture change was also advanced through the work of the Committee. Public presentations were requested from the City Manager's Office, which helped to increase the transparency of funding allocations to advance anti-Black racism informed budgeting; highlighted the importance of having Black staff in the Treasurer's Office to embed anti-Black racism approaches; and raised important opportunities to better track disaggregated race-based data to effectively tell the story of delivering on the City's commitment to the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent. Although much work has been accomplished, there is still considerable work to do to push for the short- and long-term changes that are needed across the City. As the Committee prepares for another term, it will continue to add value to City Council decisions and city-wide processes, supporting a continued commitment to centre equity for the most marginalized communities, ensuring that Toronto is a better city for all.

Mandate of the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Council Advisory Body

The Confronting Anti-Black Racism Council Advisory Committee provides expert advice to City Council and serves as a convening table to advise on inter-governmental and institutional work on anti-Black racism in the sectors of education, child-welfare, policing
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and the justice system, housing, and employment and entrepreneurship. The Committee also identifies, amplifies, and provides direction on new and emerging issues faced by Black communities to ensure the City remains responsive to shifting needs and challenges. This may also include inviting Black community leaders, agencies, and groups to present at Committee in order to spotlight and understand promising community-led interventions to address systemic barriers. In doing so, the Committee can further build on the objectives of the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism and other aligned and targeted corporate equity strategies and approaches, providing a benefit to all Torontonians.

By delivering this mandate, the Committee also helps the City to realize its commitment to advance themes identified in the United Nations' International Decade for People of African Descent. This includes the advancement of three central principles: "Recognition, Justice, and Development".

As identified in its initial Terms of Reference approved by Council in October 2020, the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Council Advisory Committee has a mandate to:

- Support the implementation of the principles of the International Decade for People of African Descent articulated through the United Nations;
- Advise on approaches to eliminate and reduce barriers faced by Black communities that are city-wide; and respond to emergent issues that are not addressed in the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism;
- Recommend City engagement strategies to help improve access to municipal, provincial, federal, and community services and programs;
- Ensure the interests and needs of Black communities are reflected in City programs and service delivery; and
- Identify and address emerging issues and trends of significance to Black communities, especially as they relate to City services and programs.

In addition to these areas of work, the Committee is encouraged to enjoy a collaborative, cooperative and cohesive relationship with the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit's Partnership and Accountability Circle to ensure complementarity and alignment between recommendations and feedback provided to advance the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism, and advice on other city-wide issues.

Composition of the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee is composed of 14 public members, who live in the city of Toronto with lived experience as a Black person, and one member of City Council. The public members will include the following:

- 8 representatives of organizations or working in key fields of housing, healthcare, education, employment and entrepreneurship, child welfare, policing and the criminal justice system. Other allied or related fields will also be considered.
- 3 elder members, who self-identify as such and represent the cultural wisdom/legacies of particular Black communities.
- 3 youth members, self-identifying as youth between the ages of 18 and 30 years old.

Eligibility and Qualifications

In addition to the general eligibility criterion set out in the Public Appointments Policy, membership should be comprised of community and policy leaders with lived experience and/or expertise in issues of Black communities'; and should reflect the diversity of Black communities, including:

- A range of intersectional identities and lived experiences, with a priority focus on persons representing 2SLGBTQ+ populations, people living on a low income, residents living with a disability, immigrants and newcomers, Black women, and youth.
- Professional expertise, and/or lived experience in one or more of the following areas: housing, healthcare, education, employment and entrepreneurship, child-welfare, policing and the criminal justice system.
- Experience working toward the elimination of barriers experienced by Black communities and the enhancement of access to provincial, federal, and community agency services and programs.
- Demonstrable and effective efforts to recognize and celebrate the contributions of Black Torontonians and/or mark the International Decade for People of African Descent.
- Knowledge of emerging issues and trends of significance to Black communities as they relate to City services and programs.
- Interest in community advocacy, with specific experience in advancing the interests and needs of Black communities to deliver better programs and service delivery.
- Knowledge and understanding of anti-Black racism, and strategies to combat and redress it, in policy, practice, services, programs, and institutional decision making.

Term of Office

Public members are appointed for a term coincident with the term of City Council. The Advisory Committee will meet until the completion of its mandate or the end of the current City Council term, ending on November 14, 2026, whichever comes first.

Candidate Selection Process

The Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit provides secretariat support to the Advisory Committee and supports the Public Appointments recruitment. In this capacity, the Unit led the 2023-2026 selection process. To ensure the rich diversity of the community leaders and elders were reflected in this Council Advisory, a thoughtful and intentional approach was taken to engage in extensive outreach through community agencies, partners, and social media. This included providing a lengthily application period of four (4) weeks. These efforts were reflected in the overwhelming response of qualified, diverse applicants, with more than 110 applications submitted.

There are three distinct stages of the candidate selection process. First City Clerk's conducts an initial screen of qualified candidates to eliminate ineligible applicants. This

is followed by a review by a Selection Panel, comprised of Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit staff. The Panel reviews qualified applicants, based on the eligibility criteria outlined, with a priority to ensure a diversity of Black experiences and identities are represented among applicants selected for an interview. 30 applicants were selected to participate in a 20-minute interview, where they were ranked based on responses to questions provided in advance. Among those interviewed, the top 14 candidates are brought forward for consideration to serve as Advisory Committee members.

Public Release of Names of Recommended Candidates

The names and biographies of the recommended candidates will be publicly reported once the Civic Appointments Committee forwards its recommendations to City Council.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Confidential Attachment 1 - List of Recommended Candidates, Qualifications, and Confidential Voluntary Diversity Information Summary, and Submitted Applications for Appointment to the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Advisory Committee