

## **Diversity Youth Fellowship Program**

**Date:** September 5, 2024

**To:** Economic and Community Development Committee

**From:** Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration

**Wards:** All

### **SUMMARY**

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This report responds to Council direction, EC26.7, by providing details on the outcomes of the enhanced Diversity Youth Fellowship Program for 2022-2024 endorsed by City Council and advising on the feasibility of co-developing targeted Diversity Youth Fellowship programming for Indigenous youth.

The Diversity Youth Fellowship is a leadership and career development program for young people 18 to 29 years old from equity-deserving communities to gain hands-on experience working with Toronto's elected officials at City Hall. The Fellowship includes training, mentorship, placements in Council Members' offices and financial support to undertake a community project. The program currently serves approximately 30 youth annually. The program began in 2018 as the Muslim Youth Fellowship in partnership with the Urban Alliance on Race Relations. The Fellowship has since expanded to include the Black Youth Fellowship, Tamil Youth Fellowship, Filipino Youth Fellowship and Chinese Youth fellowship. The program ensures 50 percent of the fellows are women or identify as women. The Fellowship provides equitable access to opportunities for equity-deserving communities by supporting young people with career navigation, job experience and professional network development. It amplifies the experiences and needs of equity-deserving communities in municipal decision-making spaces and ultimately, enhances representation in municipal government and politics.

Moving forward, this report recommends enhancing the Diversity Youth Fellowship with a Newcomer Youth Cohort, and the implementation of an Indigenous Youth Fellowship beginning in 2025 in partnership with Eshkiniigjik Naandwechigegamig – A place for healing our youth Aabiish Gaa Binjibaaying? – Where did we come from? -Youth Program", known as ENAGB Indigenous Youth Agency.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council authorize the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to negotiate, enter into, and amend any service and funding agreements with the Urban Alliance on Race Relations to co-fund and administer the Diversity Youth Fellowship Program, and implement recommendations for improvements based on the 2024 program evaluation.
2. City Council authorize the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration and the City Clerk to work with Eshkiniigjik Naandwechigegamig Aabiish Gaa Binjibaaying (ENAGB) Indigenous Youth Agency to administer a full-time Indigenous Youth Fellowship program, subject to approval of funding for the program through the 2025 Budget Process.

## FINANCIAL IMPACT

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This report provides an update on the program outcomes of the Diversity Youth Fellowship Program 2022-2024, and recommends program improvements including adding a Newcomer Youth Cohort and a new Indigenous Youth Fellowship Program.

City funding for the Diversity Youth Fellowship Program for 2022-2024 is an annual contribution of \$0.250 million and is included in the 2024 Operating Budgets for Social Development, Finance and Administration and City Council. The Urban Alliance on Race Relations co-funds the program through their fund-raising efforts.

The total annual City contribution to implement the expanded Diversity Youth Fellowship Program is \$0.317M (gross and net), and will be funded through reallocation within the 2025 base budget for Social Development, Finance and Administration and City Council as detailed below:

Expected annual contribution from the City for the Diversity Youth Fellowship Program (2025-2030)	2024 Approved Budget (\$ million)	2025 Base Funding Re-Allocation	2025 Proposed Base Budget (in \$ million)
Social Development, Finance and Administration	0.233	0.067	0.300
City Council	0.017		0.017
Total Cost (Gross & Net)	0.250	0.067	0.317

The total annual City contribution to implement the proposed Indigenous Youth Fellowship Program, providing annual fellowships for Indigenous youth on a full-time basis is expected to be \$0.339 million (gross and net).

Social Development, Finance and Administration will include a new funding request of \$0.339 million (gross and net) in the 2025 Budget for the proposed Indigenous Youth Fellowship program for 2025 and future years for consideration along with other City priorities, subject to the City's financial and resource capacity against other critical City-wide operating impacts.

The Diversity Youth Fellowship Evaluation recommends that going forward, the duration of placements may be increased along with enhanced compensation rates. This may lead to future financial implications for the City since co-funding from the Urban Alliance on Race Relations is through their fund-raising efforts.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has been advised of the financial impacts associated with this program to be considered along with other priorities in 2025 and future budget processes.

## **EQUITY IMPACT**

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The Diversity Youth Fellowship program and the proposed Indigenous Youth Fellowship program have been analyzed for potential impacts on Indigenous, Black and equity-deserving groups in Toronto. The program will have a positive equity impact for youth facing structural inequities, particularly Indigenous, Black, racialized and newcomer youth. Program participants will gain access to meaningful training and employment as well as opportunities to build leadership skills. The program will also prioritize applications from 2SLGBTQ+ youth.

The Diversity Youth Fellowship program also requires 50 percent of the participants to be young women. This commitment ensures that young women from equity-deserving backgrounds have the opportunity to build relevant skills, increase their leadership capacity and improve access to support networks that include women Council Members and City staff.

The Diversity Youth Fellowship program advances the City's commitments to the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism, the Reconciliation Action Plan, the Toronto Newcomer Strategy and the TO Prosperity: The Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

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### **EC26.7 - City of Toronto Diverse Youth Fellowship Program**

On December 15, 2021, City Council endorsed the enhanced Diversity Youth Fellowship Program for 2022-2024 to be co-funded and administered in partnership with

the Urban Alliance on Race Relations. City Council requested Social Development, Finance and Administration and the City Clerk to advise on the feasibility of co-developing targeted programming for Indigenous youth and to work in collaboration with Urban Alliance on Race Relations to report back on the outcomes of the Diversity Youth Fellowship Program to the Economic and Community Development Committee in 2024.  
<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2021.EC26.7>

### **MM34.43 - Standing Against Islamophobia**

On June 8, 2021, City Council requested the City Manager to report to Executive Committee before the 2022 Budget Launch on permanent funding sources for the Muslim Youth Fellowship program and to decrease the reliance upon community fundraising for these positions.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.MM34.43>

### **MM28.2 - Funding a Youth Fellowship in Council Members Offices for 2021**

On February 2, 2021, City Council authorized the City Clerk to enter into an agreement with the Urban Alliance on Race Relations to receive funding in 2021 for up to 30 Councillor Aide positions in Council Members offices. City council also requested the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration, in consultation with the City Clerk, to report before the end of the third quarter of 2021 on an enhanced workforce development model for the Youth Fellowship program for full implementation in 2022.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.MM28.2>

### **MM9.42 - Muslim Youth Fellowship Internship Program in Council Member's Offices for 2020**

On July 16, 2019, City Council authorized the City Clerk to enter into an agreement with Urban Alliance on Race Relations to receive funding for up to fifteen Councillor's Aide positions in Council Member Offices and directed staff to explore possibilities of expanding the program with the Urban Alliance on Race Relations to youth from other diverse, under-represented communities with the goal of expanding the program as a year-round initiative at City Hall starting Fall 2020 and to report back on progress before the fourth quarter of 2019.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.MM9.42>

## **COMMENTS**

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### **Background**

In 2017, City Council approved a partnership with the Urban Alliance on Race Relations to create the Muslim Youth Fellowship, a leadership development program with a mission of building the next generation of Muslim public servants. Building on the success of the Muslim Youth Fellowship, City Council voted in July 2019 to expand the program to other racialized communities and make it a year-long initiative. As a result, the Black Youth Fellowship launched its inaugural cohort in January 2021. In April 2021,

the program was expanded by launching the Filipino Youth Fellowship and Tamil Youth Fellowship. These specific communities advocated and fundraised in order to create and implement the fellowships. The Diversity Youth Fellowship Program consolidated all the existing youth fellowship programs under one umbrella.

With City Council endorsement, an enhanced Diversity Youth Fellowship program was delivered in partnership with the Urban Alliance on Race Relations from 2022-2024. Over this period, 108 youth have participated, with 81 of the youth participants identifying as women. The Diversity Youth Fellowships include the following cohorts: Muslim Youth Fellowship, Black Youth Fellowship, Tamil Youth Fellowship, Filipino Youth Fellowship and Chinese Youth Fellowship.

The Diversity Youth Fellowship is delivered through a partnership between the Urban Alliance on Race Relations, a non-profit charitable organization that has sought racial equity since 1975, City Clerks and the Youth Development Unit and Confronting Anti-Black Racism Units in Social Development, Finance and Administration Division.

### **Diversity Youth Fellowship Program Outcomes**

In Winter 2022, the Social Development, Finance and Administration Division worked with external consultants, Blueprint, and program partner, the Urban Alliance on Race Relations to complete an evaluation of the Diversity Youth Fellowship program. This evaluation drew on interviews with program alumni, Council member office staff, mentors, steering and advisory committee members and cohort coordinators, and reviewed program administrative data. The purpose of the evaluation was to determine to what extent the program is achieving the desired outcomes, where program strengths lay and opportunities for improvement.

The evaluators found evidence that all the anticipated outcomes for the youth fellows were being achieved with the Diversity Youth Fellowships Program:

<b>Outcome Category</b>	<b>Outcomes Achieved for Youth</b>	<b>Alumni Comments</b>
<b>1. Career navigation and professional network development</b>	Increased knowledge of career options in the government and political sector as well as a refinement of career goals Increased professional networks	“When you're an outsider looking into government, you anticipate it being one way [...] And then you actually get into this space and you realize that things are things are different and I think it kind of grounds me in my expectations. [...] It's also kind of affirmed the type of person and leader I want to be.” – DYF alumni

Outcome Category	Outcomes Achieved for Youth	Alumni Comments
<b>2. Employment experience and representation</b>	<p>Access to employment opportunities within City Council offices among youth from equity-deserving groups</p> <p>Increased representation of equity-deserving groups among political and government staff</p> <p>Increased confidence among youth from equity-deserving groups that they deserve to be in and are welcome in municipal government offices;</p> <p>Declined stigma of taking up space in certain political environments</p> <p>Increased sector work experience</p>	<p>"You have a group of people that are backing you. You have people in your fellowship. [...] You have the executive team and you have the admin team [...] there to support you and check in with you make sure everything's OK. It's a completely different experience when you're going through the [experience] within the program versus on your own [...] They make sure that you're prepared and you're ready, and then they send you off."</p> <p>– DYF alumni</p>
<b>3. Sector-based skills and knowledge gains:</b>	<p>Increased knowledge of municipal government, the role of Councillors, decision-making processes and municipal services</p> <p>Increased sector skills</p>	<p>"I think for so many of us, there is no way into a system as powerful as the City of Toronto. We don't have parents who are in this field. My parents are immigrants. They don't do anything related to what I'm interested in. And there was like nobody they could connect me to." – DYF alumni</p>
<b>4. Leadership development and civic engagement:</b>	<p>Increased knowledge of connection to and desire to advocate for/or bring benefit to one's community</p> <p>Increased civic engagement among fellows and increased promotion of civic engagement by fellows to their family and friends</p> <p>Increased personal and leadership development</p>	<p>"After being in a Councillor's office I've been more active during the elections, phone banking, being able to explain processes to friends and family, this is why this matters. Before just didn't know or didn't think it mattered. Being in a Councillor's office, knowing every email is read by a human being. It felt good to know that." – DYF alumni</p>

The evaluation found that Councillor Offices viewed the Diversity Youth Fellowship placements as a recruitment channel, and several offered contract extensions or full-time jobs to their fellows. This has contributed to the desired outcome of greater diversity among Council Members' office staff. However, the evaluation found limited evidence that the presence of fellows contributed to changes in the number of relationships with community groups, or changes in interest in, knowledge of or decisions made based on the experiences of racialized communities.

To achieve these desired outcomes, the Diversity Youth Fellowship Program will be working with partner, the Urban Alliance on Race Relations to incorporate the recommendations made within the evaluation to strengthen the program, including:

- Enhancing the formality of the program through greater consistency and clarity of expectations.

- Achieving greater value for Council Members' Offices and fellows through longer placements, an in-person cohort experience and employment supports for participants.
- Enhancing program access and participation through higher pay rates.
- Providing additional support for younger fellows.

### **Addition of a Newcomer Cohort**

It is recommended by City staff that the Diversity Youth Fellowship program add a Newcomer Youth Cohort to address the needs of newcomer youth and align with the Toronto Newcomer Strategy. Newcomer youth face unique barriers to securing meaningful employment including limited professional networks and discriminatory hiring practices such as the request for Canadian work experience. The proposed addition to the program builds social capital for newcomer youth that will directly improve their access to the labour market.

The Newcomer Youth Cohort would be offered on a rotational basis, along with the existing Diversity Youth Fellowship cohorts, including the Muslim Youth Fellowship, Black Youth Fellowship, Tamil Youth Fellowship, Filipino Youth Fellowship and Chinese Youth Fellowship.

### **Feasibility of an Indigenous Youth Fellowship**

Social Development, Finance and Administration staff completed a series of consultations with Indigenous-led organizations, internal stakeholders, and Indigenous youth, including Eshkiniigjik Naandwechigegamig Aabiish Gaa Binjibaaying (ENAGB) Indigenous Youth Agency, People and Equity Division, City Clerk's Office, Indigenous Affairs Office, and two Indigenous youth previously employed in City Councillor offices. The development of an Indigenous Youth Fellowship program received support by all those involved in the consultation process. The outcomes of an Indigenous Youth Fellowship will contribute to increased Indigenous representation in City Council Members' Offices and build the skills and outcomes of Indigenous participants as outlined in the Diversity Youth Fellowship program outcomes described above.

From these consultations, staff are recommending the implementation of an Indigenous Youth Fellowship program for First Nations, Inuit and Métis youth aged 18-29 starting in 2025 with ENAGB Indigenous Youth Agency as the Program Lead. Eshkiniigjik Naandwechigegamig – A place for healing our youth Aabiish Gaa Binjibaaying? – Where did we come from? -Youth Program", known as ENAGB Indigenous Youth Agency, provides culturally relevant employment, education, wellness, mentorship, housing, and recreational opportunities, programs, and supports for Indigenous youth (12-29). ENAGB is the only youth led indigenous organization providing services in Toronto and the surrounding Greater Toronto Area. The work is led and directed by a 9-member youth council meeting monthly.

To meet the specific needs of Indigenous young people, it is recommended that the Indigenous Youth Fellowship program:

- Provide fellowships for six to eight Indigenous youth as full-time Constituency Assistants with three to five members of City Council over an eight-month placement

period. This includes the option to pair two Indigenous youth in one Council Member's Office.

- Ensure placements are culturally responsive and include mentorship, training, wrap around supports, regular group and individual check-ins with City program staff and ENAGB Indigenous Youth Agency.
- Support fellows with exploring alumni pathways including referrals to additional employment, training, and mentorship opportunities.
- Establish an Advisory Committee to oversee the progress of the program to make recommendations and be accountable to the youth and desired program outcomes, including the Reconciliation Action Plan.
- Implement recommendations from the evaluation of year one of the program in year two and complete a final evaluation report with recommendations to ensure continuous improvement of the Indigenous Youth Fellowship.

The Indigenous Youth Fellowship is aligned with recommendation 20 of the Reconciliation Action Plan to improve Indigenous economic development, specifically Action A: Create Indigenous-focused workforce development, training and, employment opportunities to be leveraged through City programs and initiatives.

## City-Community Collaboration

The effectiveness of the Diversity Youth Fellowship is in part due to the collaboration between community and City divisions to support young people's leadership and career development. Listed below are the community and City partners for the Diversity Youth Fellowships Program and the new Indigenous Youth Fellowship.

### Diversity Youth Fellowships Program

Partner	Role
<b>Urban Alliance on Race Relations</b>	Urban Alliance on Race Relations oversees the coordination and implementation of the Diversity Youth Fellowship program, including recruitment of Youth Fellows, curriculum/training development and placement matching.
<b>City Clerk's Office</b>	The City Clerk's Office provides administrative support for Members of Council and liaises with the Urban Alliance on Race Relations, ENAGB and Council Members to determine which Council offices will participate in the program and prepares employment contracts for all Youth Fellows.
<b>Social Development, Finance and Administration</b>	The Youth Development Unit provides support to the Diversity Youth Fellowship and Indigenous Youth Fellowship program management. The Youth Development Unit also supports contract development, reviews the monitoring and evaluation activities of the Fellowship and provides employment supports to Youth Fellows through the Unit's existing partnerships with community agencies.



Partner	Role
	The Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit provides support to the Diversity Youth Fellowship program management and supports the Black Youth Fellowship with outreach and strategic advice. The Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit also supports with recruitment of mentors and trainers.
	The Newcomer Office will provide support to the Diversity Youth Fellowship program management and supports the Newcomer Youth Fellowship with outreach and strategic advice from program design to implementation. The Newcomer Office also supports with recruitment of mentors and trainers.

### Indigenous Youth Fellowship

Partner	Role
<b>The Indigenous Affairs Office</b>	The Indigenous Affairs Office will support with outreach for the proposed Indigenous Youth Fellowship program. The Indigenous Affairs Office could provide access to mentors and culturally relevant supports for Indigenous youth fellows. Indigenous Affairs Office would also be invited to participate on the Advisory Committee and act as a resource for the program through training and advice on best practices.
<b>People and Equity</b>	People and Equity will support with outreach and recruitment of youth for the proposed Indigenous Youth Fellowship program. People and Equity could refer youth who have completed the Indigenous Youth Research Associate Program and the Employment Essentials Program to the proposed Indigenous Youth Fellowship program as an alumni pathway. People and Equity would also support with recruiting mentors.
<b>ENAGB Indigenous Youth Agency</b>	ENAGB Indigenous Youth Agency will be the program lead for the proposed Indigenous Youth Fellowship program and provide culturally relevant supports through outreach, recruitment, mentorship, pre-placement training, individual case management, and wrap-around support for participants. ENAGB Indigenous Youth Agency would convene an Advisory Table to support the development, implementation and evaluation of the program.

### Next Steps

The Diversity Youth Fellowship program will continue to implement an outcomes-based evaluation through the administration of a Youth Outcomes Framework survey for participants developed by Social Development, Finance and Administration. External consultants will continue to monitor and evaluate the program to ensure it is achieving desired outcomes for participants and Council Members' Offices. Recommendations

will be reviewed and implemented by City staff and the Urban Alliance on Race Relations to ensure continuous improvement of the program.

A process and outcomes-based evaluation of the Indigenous Youth Fellowship program will be completed by ENAGB Indigenous Youth Agency and external consultants. Recommendations from the evaluation will be implemented in year two of the program.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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