

RE: PH17.1 - Community Improvement Plan for the Economic Development and Growth in Employment (EDGE) Incentive Program

December 3rd, 2024

Since 2014, the Toronto Community Benefits Network (TCBN) has supported over 2,000 people from Toronto's Black, Indigenous and diverse communities in securing quality jobs and opportunities through equitable hiring initiatives and local workforce development efforts associated with CBAs and community benefits commitments. These projects have also redirected over \$100M in spending to local Black, Indigenous and diverse-owned businesses and social enterprises through social procurement.

The TCBN commends City staff for their recommendations to coordinate the proposed City-Wide Community Improvement Plan (CIP) with the City's goals, which include commitments to sustainability, quality job creation and the promotion of equitable economic opportunities. We also acknowledge the alignment with existing provincial and municipal levers such as the Sidewalks to Skylines: An Action Plan for Toronto's Economy 2025-2035 (APTE), Toronto's Poverty Reduction Strategy and the Community Benefits Framework, among others.

Currently, the EDGE Incentive Program shows notable improvements over the previous IMIT program, including minimizing the impact on the City's revenue, broadening the program's scope to include construction opportunities and introducing sustainability requirements linked to Transform TO's Net Zero Strategy. However, we believe there is still room for enhancement concerning quality jobs and hiring targets. Our recommendations are as follows:

1. Embedding job quality metrics and ensuring good jobs through community benefits

As the intent of the program is to create quality jobs, it should incorporate job quality indicators in reporting and ensure the positions under the Community Workforce Development requirement meet the living wage standard for Toronto. This aligns with the City's commitment to prioritizing quality jobs and inclusive economic development as part of the recently approved APTE and IED Framework.

2. Ensuring Enhanced Grants achieve equitable outcomes for Toronto communities

The current 10% target for new hires under the Enhanced Grants stream should be revised to represent **10% of all construction trade or craft working hours, a TCBN standard** that we would like to see the City of Toronto adopt for this program. Alternatively, if the City chooses new hires as the key metric, this should be increased to 50% of new hires to ensure equitable outcomes and impact for the significantly enhanced grant the City would be providing.



3. Defining Community Benefit Hires

Establish a clear definition for community benefit hires to ensure they equate to a FTE annually and establish a system for tracking, monitoring and public reporting of outcomes on a project-by-project basis.

In conclusion, we recognize the City's efforts towards fostering equitable economic opportunities through the proposed Community Improvement Plan. We believe that by implementing our recommendations, particularly around living wage standards and increased hiring targets, the City can further enhance the impact of the EDGE Incentive Program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R Powell".

Rosemarie Powell
Executive Director
Toronto Community Benefits Network