



**City of Kingston
Report to Council
Report Number 19-280**

To: Mayor and Members of Council
From: Lanie Hurdle, Interim Chief Administrative Officer
Resource Staff: Craig Desjardins, Director, Strategy, Innovation & Partnerships
Date of Meeting: November 19, 2019
Subject: City of Kingston Endorsement of Workplace Inclusion Charter

Executive Summary:

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's approval to endorse the recently launched Workplace Inclusion Charter in the Corporation of the City of Kingston.

The Workplace Inclusion Charter was officially launched on October 3, 2019 and is designed for businesses and organizations of all sizes and at all stages to provide strategies for advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in their workplace. The Charter aims to establish a mechanism to help employers and service providers work collaboratively on intercultural inclusion, settlement in Kingston and retention of diverse local talent. By signing the Workplace Inclusion Charter Declaration, organizations are taking an important step towards supporting, encouraging and becoming a more inclusive and diverse employer.

All signatories of the Charter commit to developing and implementing an action plan for their organizations which will advance specified inclusion goals over the course of one year. The first phase of implementation will focus on providing assistance to workplaces that are looking to improve inclusion for visible minority newcomers. This work is being facilitated by funding received by KEYS Job Centre. As of October 18, 2019, five local employers have signed the Workplace Inclusion Charter Declaration with an additional five in the process of endorsing it.

Within the City of Kingston, an interdepartmental working group focused on Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) has been created to share understanding and acknowledgement of current activities and policies relating to inclusion and ensure the City's workforce reflects the ever changing diversity of the City.

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Recommendation:

That Council endorses the Workplace Inclusion Charter for the Corporation of the City of Kingston; and

That staff work on the development of an inclusive workplace plan for the City; and

That staff report back within 12 months on the outcomes of the implementation of the inclusive workplace plan for the City.

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Authorizing Signatures:

**Lanie Hurdle, Interim Chief
Administrative Officer**

Consultation with the following Members of the Corporate Management Team:

Peter Huigenbos, Acting Commissioner, Community Services

Brad Joyce, Acting Commissioner, Corporate Services

Jim Keech, President & CEO, Utilities Kingston Not required

Desirée Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer Not required

Sheila Kidd, Commissioner, Transportation & Public Works Not required

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Options/Discussion:**Background**

The Workplace Inclusion Charter is an initiative of Kingston's Workforce and In-Migration Strategy. Developed by the Inclusive Workplaces working group (with representation from 10 organizations across private, public and not-for-profit sectors), the Workplace Inclusion Charter entered the implementation phase in early October 2019 and has already seen strong support from the local business community.

Innovative and proactive workforce development was first identified as a priority in the 2011 - 2014 Kingston Strategic Plan and has been endorsed twice since, most recently by this Council in the 2019–2022 Strategic Plan. The 15-month long process to develop Kingston's Workforce Development & In-migration Strategy launched in early 2016 and involved more than 150 participants who represented a cross-section of the community. This group collectively contributed to the design of a comprehensive workforce development and in-migration strategy that addresses Kingston's unique needs and leverages local resources to create a productive, sustainable, and skilled workforce.

From the onset, the Strategy was built on cross-community partnerships by focusing specifically on actions that would be undertaken at the community level rather than by organizations on their own. Endorsed by Council in April 2017 and by several major community partners since, the Strategy has resulted in several innovative initiatives which collectively set out to address the current and future needs of the local workforce.

Since the project has entered its implementation phase, the Strategy Implementation Office (SIO) has secured over \$675,000 in grant funding to support the development and implementation of the Workforce Development and In-Migration Strategy. This includes approximately \$90,000 in funding for the implementation of the Workplace Inclusion Charter initiative in partnership with KEYS Job Centre.

Kingston's Workplace Inclusion Charter

A 2017 Kingston survey found that a majority of Kingston residents (88%) feel our community is enriched by having a diverse and inclusive population. These results are in line with significant evidence that demonstrates the benefits of diversity in the workplace. Inexplicably, members of marginalized communities continue to face racism and discrimination as evidenced by a 2019 KEYS Job Centre study on immigrant recruitment and retention in Kingston:

- 7 out of 10 survey participants reported witnessing racism and discrimination in the community.
- Nearly 50% of newcomers have experienced racial or cultural discrimination at work.

The purpose of the Charter is to promote employment practices and provide strategies that will improve inclusion, diversity, and equity in the workplace. The following definitions clarify the Charter's areas of focus and intended impact on participating workplaces:

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- **Diversity** is the presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes, both visible and invisible, within a group, organization, or society.
- **Equity** is a condition or a state of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment that recognizes and acknowledges the accommodation of differing needs and expectations. Equity acknowledges that equal treatment does not always yield equal results.
- **Inclusion** is what happens when diversity and equity meet. It involves creating an environment where people have both the feeling and reality of belonging and are able to grow and develop their potential. It is a situation where disadvantaged communities and designated group members share power and decision making at all levels in projects, programs, and institutions.

The Workplace Inclusion Charter is designed for businesses and organizations of all sizes and at all stages of advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion. By signing the Charter Declaration, organizations are taking an important step towards becoming more inclusive. All signatories commit to develop and implement an action plan for their organizations that will improve inclusion for a particular population over the course of one year. Kingston's Inclusion Charter aims to create and promote safe workspaces for marginalized populations including:

- newcomers
- marginalized populations including newcomers,
- people who are racialized/visible minorities,
- people with disabilities,
- Indigenous people,
- linguistic minorities (i.e. Francophones),
- women,
- youth,
- older workers, and
- people from LGBTQ2S+ communities.

Charter members will have access to the following supports:

- An assessment process that helps identify key opportunities and areas for improvement
- An action plan, developed with organizational priorities in mind and with tangible benchmarks that the organization can work towards
- Intercultural intelligence training that is customized to each workplace
- Public recognition

By collaborating with local employers and supporting inclusion initiatives, the Charter will contribute toward building equitable and prosperous workplaces. In 2018, recent immigrants to Canada experienced nearly twice the unemployment (9.4%) of the general population (5.8%). At over 12%, both youth and Indigenous people have double the unemployment rates of the general population and people with disabilities face a 35% unemployment rate.

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By incorporating inclusive practices into the workplace, Kingston businesses (including the City of Kingston) will be well-positioned to attract and retain highly skilled, underutilized talent. Inclusive practices in a diverse workplace are more than ethical – they present significant business advantages and opportunities for organizations that are willing to embrace them including:

- **The relationship between diversity and business performance persists.**

The statistically significant correlation between a more diverse leadership team and financial outperformance demonstrated three years ago continues to hold true on an updated, enlarged and global data set.

- **Reinvigorate productivity.**

A team of diverse employees is able to problem-solve from a wider lens and make better decisions. These organizations yield higher net income growth than homogenous workplaces.

- **Tap into new markets.**

Improved cultural awareness and communication can help you tap into new markets, near and far.

- **Take employee retention to the next level.**

In a competitive labour market where employers are concerned about finding and keeping quality talent, employees do not stay in situations where they feel disconnected or unwelcome. Staff turn-over is not only costly in terms of recruitment and training, but it also leads to an unsettled team environment and fractured supplier and customer relations. Implementing inclusive policies promotes consistency, career development and morale, as well as empowering team members to bring forward their concerns and resolve problems.

- **Build the reputation of your company and your city.**

An open commitment to Inclusion & Diversity has significant reputational advantages for individual organizations. Ride the wave of momentum as local employers continue to build up Kingston's reputation as an inclusive and appealing place to live, work, play, learn and do business.

- **Uphold adaptable recruitment practices.**

With many industries facing labour market shortages, businesses that are able to recognize and utilize the skills and talents from a truly diverse workforce will have a distinct advantage over businesses that lose time and resources when they are unable to hire or retain experienced and diverse talents in their sectors.

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- **Broaden your reach.**

A team of diverse employees is naturally a team with a wide variety of backgrounds, levels of knowledge, skill sets and talents.

- **Boost employee morale and improve wellness.**

A workplace that is inclusive helps diverse employees recognize that they are valued. This helps build teamwork within the workplace and promote a sense of belonging for all employees. Promoting inclusion in a workplace and helping to reduce the barriers and challenges that newcomers and minorities face improve the overall wellness of your organization. Helping your team to access support for health and well-being in and outside of work also leads to increased productivity and fewer sick days.

Existing Policy/By-Law:

Council Strategic Priorities 2019-2022

Kingston Workforce Development & In-Migration Strategy

Notice Provisions:

Not applicable

Accessibility Considerations:

Not applicable

Financial Considerations:

The resources required will come from existing operating budgets.

Contacts:

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Dajana Turkovic, Workforce Development Analyst 613-546-4291 extension 3248

Other City of Kingston Staff Consulted:

Cheryl Hitchen, Social Policy & Strategic Community Development Manager

Deanne Roberge, Director, Human Resources & Organizational Development

Exhibits Attached:

Not applicable