

Awareness & Education Working Group Quarterly Report – November 2021

Working Group Members

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Celebrating Accessibility Awards

The Working Group discussed the format for the 2021 Celebrating Accessibility Awards. It was determined that with the uncertainty of COVID-19 and the elevated health risks for persons with disabilities, staff should plan to hold the awards in a virtual format, with the understanding that a smaller in-person celebration may be organized if the public health situation allows for such a gathering.

The Working Group discussed the format of a virtual awards ceremony. It was determined that a similar approach may be held to last year's awards, but that consideration should be given the following:

- Integrating recognition of the award winners throughout the year as part of other City accessibility and non-accessibility communications.
- Incorporating artistic performances from persons with disabilities into the virtual awards ceremony.
- Partnering with other organizations in the accessibility field to amplify the ceremony.
- Partnering with media organizations such as YourTV to increase the profile and visibility of the ceremony.

The Working Group discussed the criteria to be used for determining award recipients. Concern was raised about distinguishing between persons and organizations that go

above and beyond the minimum accessibility requirements versus recognizing those who have a business interest in accessibility. Staff responded that this determination is left up to the discretion of the awards selection committee, but that it could be considered a factor when selecting a potential award recipient.

The Working Group discussed the best method for the appropriately categorizing nominees and/or award recipients in the three award categories (Individual, Business and Community Organization). Staff suggested that the nominees continue to self-select their award category, and that if there is a question of whether or not a potential award recipient is in the correct category, the awards selection committee would choose which category was appropriate based upon further investigation. Staff advised that multiple awards could be given in the same category and that an award did not need to be given out in each category each year.

Business community outreach and education

Staff presented the Working Group with an opportunity regarding educating the local business community on providing services and goods in an accessible manner. The Kingston Economic Development Corporation (KEDCO) runs an Ask the Expert program which offers business planning and coaching through one-on-one time with local specialists to assist small businesses on planning for the future.

It was agreed by the Working Group that staff should approach KEDCO to see if a business offering accessibility consultation could be added to the Ask the Expert program. Staff requested that working group members share any potential business consultants that could be used for this project.