



City of Kingston
Information Report to Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee
Report Number MAAC-23-013

To: Chair and Members of the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee

From: Craig Desjardins, Director, Office of Strategy, Innovation & Partnerships

Resource Staff: Dajana Turkovic, Workforce Development Analyst

Date of Meeting: September 7, 2023

Subject: Workplace Inclusion Charter Update

Council Strategic Plan Alignment:

Theme: 4. Foster a Caring and Inclusive Community

Goal: 4.5 Promote and support diversity.

Executive Summary:

This report summarizes the recent activities related to the Workplace Inclusion Charter Project. Specifically, it provides a status update on the most recent phase of the project which is focused on the regional expansion of the Workplace Inclusion Charter.

Recommendation:

This report is for information only.

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Authorizing Signatures:

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY DIRECTOR

**Craig Desjardins, Director, Office
of Strategy, Innovation &
Partnerships**

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

**Lanie Hurdle, Chief
Administrative Officer**

Consultation with the following Members of the Corporate Management Team:

Paige Agnew, Commissioner, Growth & Development Services	Not required
Jennifer Campbell, Acting Commissioner, Community Services	Not required
Neil Carbone, Commissioner, Corporate Services	Not required
David Fell, President & CEO, Utilities Kingston	Not required
Peter Huigenbos, Commissioner, Major Projects & Strategic Initiatives	Not required
Brad Joyce, Commissioner, Infrastructure, Transportation & Emergency Services	Not required
Desirée Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer	Not required

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Options/Discussion:

The City of Kingston launched the Workplace Inclusion Charter in October 2019, establishing a system for employers, service providers and groups underrepresented in the labour market to work together on creating more inclusive work environments. The Charter's primary aim is to improve employment practices for general inclusion. Since it launched four years ago, the Charter has established a resilient ecosystem of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) practices and practitioners in Kingston and has successfully contributed to the creation of more inclusive work environments. This has helped address two pressing skills development challenges – increased participation of systematically excluded groups in the economic life of the community and the expansion of the labour pool for employers who are struggling to find talent.

The first phase of the Charter was focused on supporting the workplace integration of newcomers to Canada. A dedicated team of inclusion experts at KEYS Employment and Newcomer Services worked in partnership with community partners and those with lived experiences on developing the first set of tools and resources to help employers make greater strides towards diversity and intercultural inclusion in the workplace. The second phase of the project started in April 2020. It adapted the existing blueprint developed for newcomers to support the successful integration of three additional systematically excluded groups identified under the Charter: racialized people, persons with disabilities and Indigenous people.

The Charter has proven to be a highly agile tool that was successfully adapted to the unique demands imposed by COVID-19. It continues to serve as a support system for both employers recovering from the pandemic and systematically excluded workers whose economic well-being has been disproportionately affected by it.

Current Project

Throughout the lifecycle of the Charter project, the City received numerous inquiries from surrounding communities about expanding its catchment area. In response, the City successfully applied to the Future Skills Centre in November 2022 for additional funding to support 3 rural and small communities in the Kingston region in the integration of equity, diversity and inclusion practices.

The need for the support was particularly high at that time since many small communities in Eastern Ontario had seen an influx of new residents during the pandemic. The impact of diverse urban in-migrants on the culture and economy of the communities in which they settle has been significant and the Charter project has the potential to support municipalities and employers in successfully welcoming and integrating new residents in the community and in the workplace. At that time, the City was in the process of launching its first EDI plan that was rooted in the recommendations made during the Charter implementation. The Charter project team saw the opportunity to expand the work that was being done at the City into the region by working with municipal corporations first; this would serve as an example to businesses in the community. For example, when the City endorsed the Charter for its workforce on November 19, 2019, it

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encouraged local employers to follow suit. As the City tackled the EDI workplan and implemented tools specific to the needs of complex municipal corporations, a plan was developed to share learnings and resources with 3 small and rural municipalities in the region.

Since the launch of the most recent phase of the Charter project in early 2022, three regional municipalities (South Frontenac, Gananoque and Brockville) have signed the Workplace Inclusion Charter and are at various stages of implementation. In addition to working with municipal corporations, the Charter project team is also engaged with one small business in each municipality to further embed Charter principles in the selected community. In addition, the team is developing a community of practice that will allow all participants in the Workplace Inclusion Charter to continue engaging with each other when the lifecycle of the project concludes at the end of this year.

Existing Policy/By-Law:

None

Notice Provisions:

None

Accessibility Considerations:

None

Financial Considerations:

None

Contacts:

Craig Desjardins, Director, Strategy, Innovation & Partnerships, 613-929-1758

Other City of Kingston Staff Consulted:

Dajana Turkovic, Workforce Development Analyst, Strategy, Innovation & Partnerships

Exhibits Attached:

None