



City of Kingston
Information Report to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee
Report Number EDI-24-004

To: Chair and Members of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee

From: Jennifer Campbell, Commissioner, Community Services

Resource Staff: Vanessa Mensah, Manager, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

Date of Meeting: April 29, 2024

Subject: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Office Report Q1 2024

Council Strategic Plan Alignment:

Theme: 4. Foster a Caring and Inclusive Community

Goal: 4.5 Promote and support diversity.

Executive Summary:

This report provides updates on the activities of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Office (EDI) throughout the first quarter of 2024. This includes internal and community engagement updates as this office reassesses and realigns its focus and efforts and other ongoing deliverables.

Additionally, this report outlines work underway by staff to seek feedback from members of the community on how the City's special events can continue to reflect more cultural diversity and help work towards reconciliation, while helping to build the capacity of the community to deliver events that are culturally significant.

Lastly, this report provides an overview of the leadership composition of the City as previously requested by a member of the committee.

Recommendation:

This report is for information only.

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Options/Discussion:

2024 Goals and Deliverable

Staff are currently assessing proposals from consultants to support the City in crafting the strategy and framework for the EDI office that will inform EDI/IIDEA workplans moving forward. This responds to Council’s Strategic Priority 4.5.2 Advance Indigenization, Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Accessibility (IIDEA) in the community - Develop an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy/Framework to inform the Work Plan. As this work moves forward, the EDI office remains primarily focused on two goals: internal engagement and community engagement. These goals' deliverables will be completed in Fall 2024 and include:

Internal Engagement

1. To integrate equity principles in the hiring process. This goal can be realized through the rollout of mandatory training for all hiring leaders, revision of the hiring evaluation/competencies and hiring process.
2. To revise and advise on policies and procedures with an Indigenization, Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IIDEA) lens to address gaps in the corporation's commitment to IIDEA.
3. To support the City 360 (City’s Talent Management Strategy) activities and tasks with an IIDEA lens.
4. To support, diversify and increase membership of the City’s employee resource group. This goal will be realized through awareness and demonstrated support to create space for these groups.

Community Engagement

5. To recognize and celebrate several annual events and cultural days of significance throughout the year. This includes Emancipation Day, Intercultural Arts Festival and Newcomers Welcome Day. This goal can be realized through collaborating and consulting with various community groups to gather their input and champion their ideas on these and other dates of cultural significance.
6. To support the mobilization of self-forming community and ethno-groups. This goal can be realized through creating a communication platform for these “forming” groups. This would be a space to connect, collaborate and amplify the works of these groups.

Ongoing Deliverables

Job Post Opening Statement

In collaboration with the recruitment and selection team, the City’s job posting opening statement was revised to demonstrate our growth and understanding of IIDEA principles. This change ensures alignment between recruitment efforts and the broader corporation’s goals

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related to IIDEA principles. Staff welcomes the committee's feedback on the new opening statement below:

We acknowledge that the City of Kingston is situated on traditional Anishinabek (Ah-nish-in-ah-bay), Haudenosaunee (Ho-den-o-show-nee) and Huron-Wendat (huron-wen-dat) territory and thank these nations for their care and stewardship over this shared land. Kingston is a smart, livable city in the heart of eastern Ontario. Its stable and diversified economy includes global corporations, innovative start-ups and all levels of government.

At the City of Kingston, we believe that diversity and inclusion are essential elements of a thriving workplace. We value the unique perspectives and experiences that each individual brings to our team. As we continue to grow, we are dedicated to creating an environment where all employees feel welcomed, respected and empowered to contribute their best work. The City of Kingston views diversity as its strength and we encourage applications from individuals of all backgrounds, including those from underrepresented communities.

As staff, you play a pivotal role in enhancing people's lives by delivering exceptional, customer-centered services while working for an organization known for excellence and innovation.

Quiet Room

In an effort to reflect the corporation's commitment to creating a more inclusive and supportive workforce, the EDI Office, in collaboration with the Facilities Management & Construction Services team, is actively working to establish quiet rooms in each City building to be used for a variety of wellness needs. This includes prayer, meditation, resting, a place for nursing people to pump breast milk and much more. The targeted date for the completion of this project will vary based on the requirements for each building.

Confederation Basin Flagpoles Installation

Through [Report Number 24-126](#), Council has directed staff to update the existing Flag Display Policy, which currently directs that the Anishinaabeg, the Haudenosaunee, the Huron-Wendat and the Métis flags are to be displayed in Confederation Park alongside the National Flag of Canada, the Province of Ontario flag, the City of Kingston flag and the Franco-Ontarian flag.

During discussions with affected groups regarding the City's intentions to install the suggested flags, staff learned of a preference to display the four Indigenous flags separately from other flags. Based on an assessment of the space in Confederation Park and in Flora MacDonald Confederation Basin, staff recommended displaying the Anishinaabeg, the Haudenosaunee, the Huron-Wendat and the Métis flags as a group beside the waterfront pathway. Council has directed staff to re-engage with the Francophone community to ensure a deliberate and respectful future placement of the Francophone flag within the broader Confederation Park redesign in 2025. The targeted date for the completion of this project is scheduled for Summer 2024.

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City Events

Emancipation Day

On March 24, 2021, the House of Commons voted unanimously to officially designate August 1st Emancipation Day. It marks the actual day in 1834 that the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833 came into effect across the British Empire. Canadians, and Kingstonians, are not always aware that Black and Indigenous Peoples were once enslaved on the land that is now Canada. Emancipation Day celebrates the strength and perseverance of Black communities and invites the community to reflect, educate and engage in the ongoing fight against both anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination.

As part of the City's ongoing commitment to acknowledge Canada's history of enslaving individuals of African descent and Indigenous people, staff invited Black Kingstonians to participate in an informal working group focused on exploring ideas to recognize and celebrate Emancipation Day on August 1, 2024. Through several consultations, the community identified three goals Emancipation Day should reflect including education and awareness, community and business promotion, and entertainment and celebration. In collaboration with community groups, partners and various City departments, activities and programming are being planned to recognize this day. In 2024 and beyond, the City will continue to support Emancipation Day as a feature event, in alignment with EDI priorities, and this designation will help to ensure sufficient resources are allocated.

Intercultural Arts Festival (ICAF)

This free and family-friendly event is a celebration of the community's diverse and inclusive culture which includes food, music and art. Previously led by the Kingston Immigration Partnership (KIP), the Intercultural Arts Festival was on hiatus for two years due to the pandemic. In 2022 the City led the event, in consultation with the cultural community, after KIP was no longer able to lead the delivery.

In 2024, staff will continue to engage ethno-cultural groups to understand their vision for the event this year and will start to explore options to transition the event back to the community, based on interest and capacity.

Kingston Newcomer Welcome Day

Council Strategic Priority, 4.5.1 Help facilitate the integration of newcomers and international students includes direction to initiate an annual Newcomers Welcome Day event. This event will be City-led, in collaboration with key partners, and will welcome and inform newcomers on how to access a range of services and celebrate and showcase their contributions to the City. Newcomers will be invited to meet representatives from local organizations and learn about services that will support their settlement in Kingston.

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Based on the community consultations to help determine the future of the ICAF, the City will explore in 2025, and beyond, the opportunity to integrate a showcase of cultural performances and diverse foods in the annual Newcomer Welcome Day.

Leadership Composition

Per the committee members' request, staff is providing an overview of the City's leadership composition. The data presented in this report is sourced from information gathered in 2022. At that time, 22 directors were surveyed. Of the 22 directors surveyed, 90.9% (20) identified as white, 4.5% (1) identified as black and 4.5% (1) identified as other. All members of the corporate management team identified as white.

Of note, the City has attained gender parity in its leadership composition, with women occupying all statutory positions mandated in municipal government. While this achievement is noteworthy, there remains room for enhancing representation across diverse identities. A subsequent equity census scan is scheduled for 2024 to offer an updated perspective on the composition of leadership across the organization – this will include consideration of representation across supervisors, managers, directors and the corporate management team.

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