

Municipality of Chatham-Kent

Department Name

Division Name

Information Report

To: Mayor and Members of Council

From: Rebecca Haskell-Thomas, Coordinator, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice

Date: June 13, 2023

Subject: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Strategy Update 6

This report is for the information of Council.

Background

On June 29, 2020, the Municipality of Chatham-Kent's Council passed a motion requesting recommendations to mitigate the negative unintended human and social impacts of COVID-19

As a result of the recommendations made by administration, on April 26, 2021, Council approved a motion to establish and implement a Municipal Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategy. The intention of the Strategy was to embed equity and inclusion throughout the corporation and target multiple departments, services, and organizational practices like recruitment and retention, customer service, and community planning.

In November 2021, a Coordinator and Intern, housed in Corporate Services/HROD, began work to develop the Strategy.

Council received quarterly updates on the development of the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Strategy on the following dates:

- **February 7, 2022:** Described the framework to develop the Municipal DEIJ Strategy and areas of focus. Outlined benefits of promoting DEIJ and risks that could impact the development and implementation of the Strategy.
- **June 20, 2022:** Detailed the establishment of a DEIJ Committee, Champions Network, and internal and public-facing websites. Assessment work to understand our strengths and opportunities had begun.
- **September 26, 2022:** Detailed the assessment work completed.
- **December 12, 2022:** Detailed findings of the assessment, including areas of strength and opportunities to promote DEIJ.

- **March 27, 2023:** Described some of the early actions taken while developing the DEIJ Strategy with DEIJ work groups.

Based on assessment findings, the DEIJ team worked with the DEIJ Committee, Champions Network, and other colleagues to develop the DEIJ Strategy. The purpose of this report is to share the Municipality of Chatham-Kent's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Strategy.

Comments

The Rationale

Work to promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) supports the Municipality to address inequities and meet our legislated duties under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and Ontario Human Rights Code to:

- protect specific groups from discrimination
- prevent direct or indirect exclusion
- prevent preference of a specific group of people
- provide substantive equality of treatment (i.e. equality of outcomes) in employment and services
- create a climate of understanding and mutual respect for the dignity and worth of each person so that each person feels a part of the community and can contribute fully to the development and well-being of the community.

Organizations that invest in DEIJ, outperform those that do not. Chatham-Kent is growing – working to promote DEIJ will help us to keep up with the growing diversity in our community, compete with other employers, and communities. Communities that are inclusive and equitable have a greater ability to attract people and businesses.

According to the 2021 Census, 4.5 percent of Chatham-Kent's population identifies as Indigenous, higher than the provincial average (less than 3%). Indigenous populations are growing at twice the rate as non-Indigenous communities. Chatham-Kent neighbours Eelūnaapèwii Lahkèewiit (Delaware Nation at Moraviantown) and Bkejwanong Territory (Walpole Island First Nation).

Healing, creating pathways to justice for Indigenous communities, and reconciliation overlaps with work to promote DEI but has distinct features. It involves understanding diverse First Nation, Inuit, and Métis communities, building relationships with sovereign Nations and understanding varied traditional and cultural knowledge and practices, including the legislation that protects them. This work will support the Municipality to better understand and meet our responsibilities, including those related to:

- the above-mentioned Human Rights legislation
- appropriate Treaties (including numbered and Wampum Treaties)
- Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action
- Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Calls for Justice

- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Working to promote healing, justice, and reconciliation will support relationship building and ensure the Municipality has access to future funding opportunities that will support communities in Chatham-Kent.

Assessment and Findings

The DEIJ team, working with colleagues in HROD, completed the first ever organization-wide DEIJ survey, consulted with over 130 stakeholders including colleagues, Unions, and community organizations, analyzed quantitative workplace data, exit interview themes, and completed a review of best practices. Some of the key themes gleaned from the assessment of strengths and opportunities include:

- General support for:
 - a) The DEIJ Strategy, prioritization, and resourcing of work to promote DEIJ;
- Some areas of concern including:
 - a) The Municipality's policies, processes, and services, broadly speaking, are not perceived as reflective of the diversity in our community or supportive of equitable outcomes;
 - b) A general feeling that the Municipality's workforce is not representative of the community, especially at leadership levels and that better representation would support more inclusive and equitable services;
 - c) People who need time away from work regularly, people with disabilities, women, 2SLGBTQ+, people, and racialized colleagues report less positive experiences in the Municipality;
 - d) A sense that a culture of sexism exists in the Municipality, with women under-represented in leadership positions, women's perspectives, opinions, and work in female-dominated industries less-valued. For example, more than twice as many women are in contract or part-time positions compared to men (439 vs 145 at the time of the report) and more than twice as many men are in positions in pay grades 11 and above compared to women (39 vs 17 at the time of the report).

DEIJ Strategy Areas of Focus

During consultations, the DEIJ team heard that it is important that the DEIJ Strategy continue to focus internally, initially, to:

- Address the April 26, 2021 Report to Council recommendations and intention to ensure Municipal policies, processes, and services are supporting equitable outcomes;
- Ensure the Municipality is representative of the community it serves, especially at a leadership level;
- Be a leader and example in the community related to DEIJ;
- Build credibility before doing work in the community to promote DEIJ.

Based on information gathered during the assessment phase of the Strategy development, the DEIJ Strategy has **4 areas of focus**:

- 1) Workplace and Workforce
- 2) Council and Committees of Council
- 3) Policies, Processes, and Services
- 4) Healing, Justice, and Reconciliation

The bulk of work related to the DEIJ Strategy in the next two years will be internal facing, with some work happening to support DEIJ-related work in the community.

Vision Statement

The vision for the DEIJ Strategy is:

The Municipality, as a workforce and service provider, is an active leader committed to prioritizing equitable opportunities, promoting diversity, and building a strong sense of belonging.

Principles

The DEIJ Committee identified several principles to underpin all work in the DEIJ Strategy:

- Relationship building and collaboration
- Continuous learning and improvement
- Diversity
- Equity
- Intersectionality
- Anti-oppression
- Accountability

Types of Initiatives

Generally, the actions recommended as part of the DEIJ strategy can be categorized as:

- **Education:** To promote understanding of DEIJ, equity-deserving groups, and the role of the Municipality in promoting DEIJ.
- **Policies and Core Functions:** Create new or update existing policies to define roles and responsibilities and integrate DEIJ into core Municipal processes.
- **Tools, Resources, and Coaching:** Create and/or share tools and resources and provide coaching to support colleagues to consider DEIJ in Municipal policies, processes, and services.
- **Pathways to Participation:** Review HROD policies, processes, and practices from a DEIJ lens and implement strategies to build a diverse and inclusive

workforce with equitable opportunities for participation across the organization and at all levels, but especially at leadership levels.

- **Inclusive and Accessible Physical Spaces:** Ensure the Municipality continues progress to have inclusive, welcoming, and accessible physical spaces.
- **Healing, Justice, and Reconciliation:** Support a more strategic approach and capacity building towards healing, justice, and reconciliation.
- **Measure, monitor, and communicate our progress:** Build capacity to gather and use data to better understand and monitor indicators related to DEIJ; Set KPIs and communicate our progress towards them.

The specific actions that will be taken as part of the DEIJ Strategy are outlined in **Appendix A**. Although actions are outlined by focus areas, some of the work overlaps; one action may support more than one focus area.

Next Steps

Implementing the Strategy

The DEIJ Coordinator is working with appropriate divisions to develop a detailed workplan to implement the DEIJ Strategy. The Coordinator will work with the DEIJ Committee to develop Key Performance Indicators and a plan to monitor and communicate progress towards the objectives outlined in the DEIJ Strategy.

Sustainability

Promoting diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice is not a time-limited activity; it requires ongoing effort, dedicated resources, and knowledgeable support. Consultations with single-tier Municipalities indicated that the work suffers when rolled into existing portfolios or is not properly resourced.

Currently, the funding for the DEIJ Coordinator position ends on December 31, 2023. The DEIJ team will submit a budget proposal to support ongoing efforts to promote DEIJ and implement the DEIJ Strategy.

Areas of Strategic Focus

This report supports the following areas of strategic focus:

			
Economic Prosperity	Healthy & Safe Community	People & Culture	Environmental Sustainability

	2.1, 2.2, 2.3	3.1, 3.2	
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Consultation

The objectives of the DEIJ Strategy, along with those contained in the Human Resources and Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategies, were vetted by leaders, Union representatives, and appropriate Municipal Committee members, including the DEIJ Committee.

Communication

The DEIJ team provides regular updates about the DEIJ Strategy to the organization through the Champions Network and internal DEIJ Employee portal. Progress updates are provided to Council quarterly, and to community organizations and the public through our involvement on various DEIJ-related Committees and through the [Municipal DEIJ website](#).

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice (DEIJ)

This report and work centers on DEIJ. The goal of the DEIJ Strategy is to ensure that the Municipality is a welcoming, inclusive, fair, and safe workplace and service provider for everyone.

Financial Implications

The funds allocated from the Ontario Works Corporate Initiatives Reserve through the 2021 budget process will support implementation of some of the early activities in the DEIJ Strategy.

A budget proposal to support ongoing staffing and program costs will be submitted through the 2024-2027 budget process.

Prepared by: Rebecca Haskell-Thomas, Coordinator, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice

Reviewed by: Cathy Hoffman, MPA, CHRL, Chief Human Resources Officer and General Manager, Corporate Services

Consulted and confirmed the content of the consultation section of the report by: N/A.

Attachment(s): Appendix A: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Strategy Objectives and Actions