

Municipality of Chatham-Kent
Human Resources and Organizational Development
Corporate Services
Information Report

To: Mayor and Members of Council

From: Rebecca Haskell-Thomas, Coordinator, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Justice
Amrit Khaira, Intern, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Justice

Date: June 1, 2022

Subject: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Justice Strategy Update #2

This report is for the information of Council.

Background

On April 26, 2021, Council approved a motion to establish and implement a Municipal Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategy. In November 2021, a Coordinator and Intern, housed in Corporate Services, began work to develop the Strategy. The purpose of this report is to provide an update of completed and upcoming activities related to the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Justice Strategy.

Comments

The images on the following page show the planning framework the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Justice (DEIJ) team are using to develop the DEIJ Strategy (Figure 1) and the anticipated timelines for the work to develop and implement the DEIJ Strategy (Figure 2).

Figure 1: Planning Framework

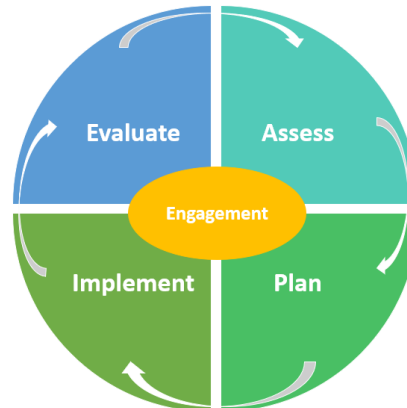
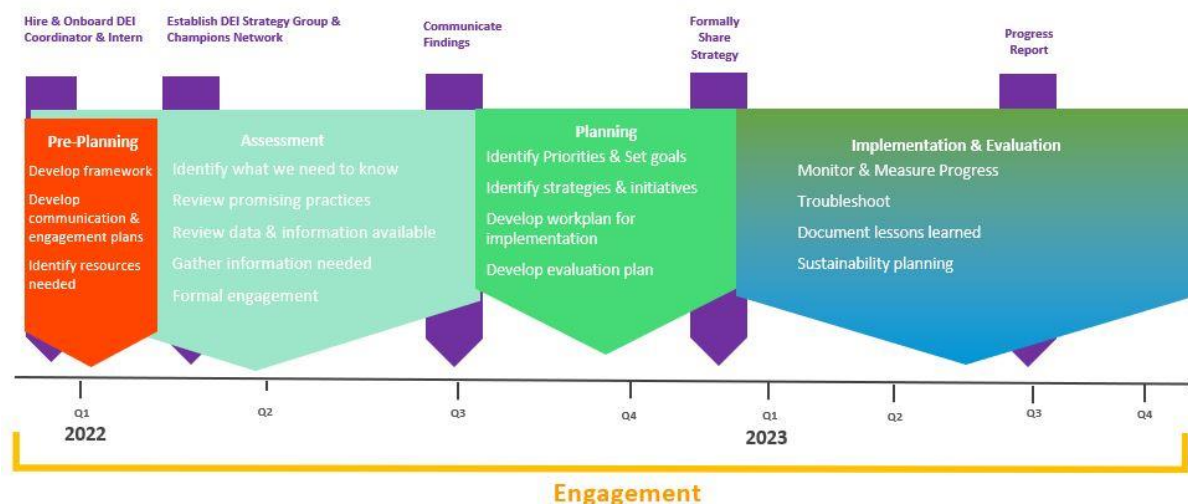


Figure 2: Timeline of DEIJ Strategy Development



Currently, the DEIJ team is in the 'assessment' phase of developing the DEIJ Strategy. This involves gathering information to understand our current strengths, opportunities, best practices, potential challenges, and how to mitigate them.

Work Completed on Strategy Development to Date

Since November, the DEIJ team has:

- Conducted a review of best practices and resources for developing a municipal Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Justice strategy
- Authored and presented a paper for the Regional Single Tier Municipal CAO group [on best practices for developing and implementing a DEIJ Strategy](#)

- Identified [3 areas of focus](#) for the DEIJ Strategy and early opportunities to promote DEIJ in each area
- Developed a communication and engagement plan to support DEIJ Strategy development
- Established and begun meeting with the DEIJ Committee (10 members) to support the development and implementation of the Strategy, a Champions Network (55 members) to build capacity related to DEIJ across the Municipality, and identified Advisors who will provide input related to the Strategy
- Developed and implemented baseline surveys to assess knowledge levels and comfort with DEIJ among DEIJ Committee and Champions Network members
- Developed an Employee DEIJ Portal and Community [DEIJ website](#) to share information about the Strategy and DEIJ-related resources and information
- Authored and shared 12 DEIJ related informational posts with internal and external audiences
- Met with over 100 internal and external colleagues, partners, and stakeholders to learn about current strengths and opportunities
- Gathered quantitative information available related to DEIJ and our 3 areas of focus
- Coordinated with leads of the Human Resource and Mental Health Strategies to select a vendor for internal staff surveys

Early Actions to Promote Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Justice

Although the formal DEIJ Strategy will not be in place until late 2022/early 2023, staff and Council are actively identifying and acting on opportunities to promote DEIJ, integrate best practices, and adapt based on feedback received. Examples are outlined below.

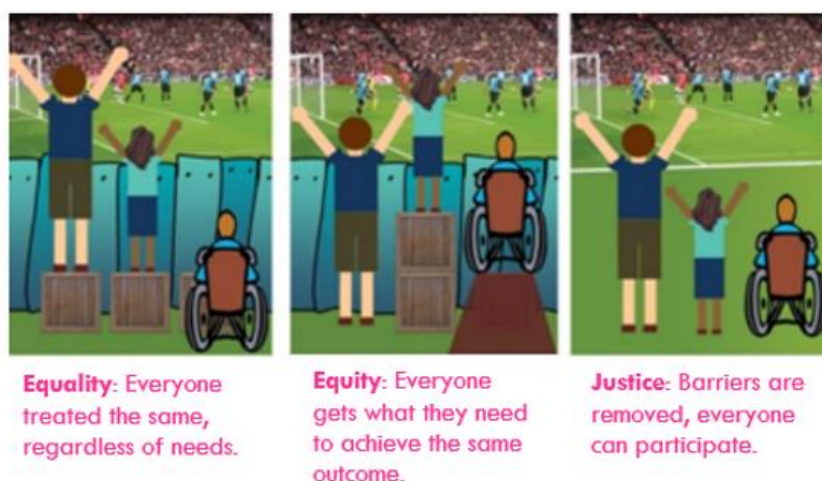
Added 'Justice' to Strategy and Job Titles

To reflect emerging best practices and feedback from community partners, the DEIJ team adopted the term justice, which has several meanings:

- Creating a diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization – a just and fair organization gives everyone opportunities to authentically be themselves, to contribute, and to thrive.
- Creating pathways to justice for Urban Indigenous and First Nations people.

- Identifying and addressing the root causes of inequities – or differences in opportunities people have based on their various social identities. Figure 3 below depicts the differences between equality, equity, & justice.

Figure 3: Equality, Equity, & Justice



Outreach to Communities Currently Under-Represented on Council & Committees

On February 7, 2022, Council passed a motion directing Councillors to identify themselves to the DEIJ Coordinator or Clerk if willing to act as a resource to support prospective candidates in under-represented groups. The motion also directed staff to share information about running for Council or Committees of Council within under-represented communities.

Seven Councillors identified themselves as a resource for prospective candidates from currently under-represented communities. In April 2022, the DEIJ team conducted outreach by sharing information about the nomination process through relevant networks. Six Councillors also participated in an information session with members of the CK Local Immigration Partnership Immigrant Advisory Group. Two members of the Immigrant Advisory Group expressed interest in running for Council or participating on a Committee of Council because of the information session.

The DEIJ team will conduct outreach activities again when the nomination period opens for Committees of Council. The DEIJ team is also working with the Clerk's office and Corporate Communications to develop information products that will help community members understand municipal governance and opportunities to be involved.

Hiring Processes

The committee responsible for hiring for the Municipality's new Chief Administrative Officer integrated questions related to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Justice into the recruitment process.

The DEIJ team is working with colleagues in Human Resources and Organizational Development to learn about ways to gather voluntary information about the demographics of people applying for jobs in the Municipality. Along with a census of staff, this data will help to understand the demographics of staff along the employment spectrum.

Land Acknowledgements

Since October 2020, Municipal Council have started Council meetings with a formal Land or Territory Acknowledgement, read by the Municipal Clerk. Recently, Council members have begun to rotate reading the Land Acknowledgement to give members an opportunity to reflect on the meaning of the acknowledgement to Council work, get comfortable with land acknowledgements, and practice pronunciation of local First Nations.

Supporting Departmental Work

The DEIJ team has created an Outlook calendar to share days of observance and religious holidays related to DEIJ. The calendar has been shared with the DEIJ Champions Network, DEIJ Committee, Communication leads, Administrative Assistants, Executive Assistants, Senior and Executive Management, and Council. A summary of upcoming days of significance is also circulated at the beginning of each month. The DEIJ team has received positive feedback about the calendar, with colleagues using it to plan communications, integrate days into programming, and to spark discussions among colleagues. One Department planned an Eid-at Fitr celebration for the first time.

In April and May, the DEIJ team received requests and supported 13 Municipal initiatives, from reviewing and providing feedback on communication materials to advice on policy development. The DEIJ team is also actively participating in and supporting the development of Mental Health and Human Resources Strategies.

Upcoming Activities

Complete the DEIJ Assessment & Begin Planning

The DEIJ team is working with the DEIJ Committee and DEIJ Champions Network to identify additional information needs and means of gathering the information to round out the DEIJ assessment. To avoid duplication, leverage resources, and coordinate communication, the DEIJ team is working with the leads of the Human Resource and Mental Health Strategies who are gathering information at the same time.

The DEIJ team will survey staff and Council with DEIJ-related questions to understand the current diversity among our workforce and feelings related to equity, inclusion, and belonging in our workforce and services. The team will also continue to engage with colleagues, external partners, and community members to learn about current strengths, opportunities, and to collaborate as appropriate.

Once the assessment is completed, the DEIJ team will share key findings and recommendations with the DEIJ Committee, Champions Network, the Executive Management Team, Council, colleagues, community partners, and the community. Feedback will be garnered to help set priorities to inform the planning phase of Strategy development, which will happen over the Summer of 2022.

Learning and Training Opportunities

Based on information gathered during the assessment so far, the DEIJ team has developed learning plans for the DEIJ Committee and DEIJ Champions Network. The Executive Management Team and Municipal Council have also opted to engage in learning together, and the DEIJ team is supporting this learning. Some of this training will act as a pilot that can be implemented across the Municipality. The DEIJ team is currently sourcing appropriate training materials and/or trainers to begin implementing this training within the allocated budget.

The DEIJ team regularly attends meetings of Maawnjidiimi, the Urban Indigenous Social Planning & Action table and are integrating learnings into Strategy development. The DEIJ team is also seeking to engage local Indigenous Knowledge Keepers to support education and integration of Indigenous knowledge systems into the DEIJ Strategy.

Consultation

No consultation was required in preparing this report.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications. The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategy is funded through the 2021 budget process.

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Attachment(s): None