

HALIFAX

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Item No. 1
Halifax Regional Council
July 20, 2021

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed

Caroline Blair-Smith, Executive Director, People, Communications & IT

Original Signed by 

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: March 23, 2021

SUBJECT: Annual Workforce Report 2020-21

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

The Executive Standing Committee passed a motion January 22, 2018 to direct staff to provide an annual workforce report to the Executive Standing Committee following fiscal year end which would include information on workforce demographics and trends, staffing and workforce planning, absenteeism, Grievance Activity by Issue/Association as well as an update on HRM's *People Plan* goals including, Leadership, Talent, Culture & Performance, Diversity & Inclusion, Safe Workplaces & Healthy Workforce.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, SNS 2008, c. 39

34 (1) The Chief Administrative Officer is the head of the administrative branch of the government of the Municipality and is responsible to the Council for the proper administration of the affairs of the Municipality in accordance with the by-laws of the Municipality and the policies adopted by the Council.

BACKGROUND

Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) spans approximately 5,500 square kms, and is comprised of diverse urban, suburban and rural communities. As the largest municipal government in Atlantic Canada, Halifax Regional Municipality employs over 3,500 permanent full-time and part-time staff to provide our citizens with a wide range of services.

DISCUSSION

The HRM Annual Workforce Report provides a high-level overview of the HRM workforce at the close of the fiscal year on March 31, 2021. The annual workforce data provides information on how key workforce initiatives are progressing and informs the strategic direction for Human Resources in the upcoming fiscal period.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No financial implications at this time.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

No community engagement was required.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Annual Workforce Report Attachment 2020/21

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

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Halifax Regional Municipality

Annual Workforce Report 2020/21

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Overview

The intent of the report is to provide Halifax Regional Council with a 'state of the union' of the workforce that delivers the Halifax Regional Municipality's (HRM's) services to its citizens. The data provided is at March 31, 2021, the final day of the 2020/21 fiscal year. This report will look at data reflective of our workforce demographics as well as activities associated with the 'lifecycle' of our workforce from recruiting to departing.

It is a key objective that the HRM's workforce is both reflective of the communities it serves and is inclusive. Where possible, the information presented in the report will focus on indicators which reflect the Municipality's progress towards making the workforce more diverse and inclusive.

Distribution and Demographics

Workforce Distribution

Workforce Distribution	Permanent Full Time and Permanent Part Time	Other*
2016/17	3,232	1,400
2017/18	3,334	1,621
2018/19	3,404	1,501
2019/20	3,464	1,645
2020/21	3,504	1,162

The total number permanent full time and part time staff is defined as the total headcount of active employees as of March 31, 2021.

Over the last five years, the percentage increase in permanent full time and permanent part time is trending down. From a high of 3% increase between 2016/17 and 2017/18 to an increase of just 1% from 2019/20 to 2020/21.

Total other includes temporary part time, recreation programmers, students and seasonal positions. It does not include volunteer firefighters, Halifax Regional Library staff, Halifax Regional Council, inactive employees (those on a leave of absence), and other temporary part time employees within the Halifax Forum and Sackville Sports Stadium or any staff with Agencies, Boards or Commissions.

*An audit and clean up of employee information in 2020/21 contributed to the reduction in the number of Other employees as well as some reduction in hiring some casual positions due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Demographics of All Permanent Employees

Workforce Demographics	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Number of Permanent Employees	3,232	3,334	3,404	3,464	3,504
Average Employee Age	45.74	46.67	46.03	45.84	45.91
Average Employee Years of Service	11.67	12.3	11.85	11.45	11.46
Percentage of Male/Female*	71/29	71/29	71/29	71/29	70/30

*This is based on information as recorded in SAP upon hire. SAP only offers male or female options to capture sex assigned at birth required for benefit administration.

Demographics by Employee Group

Union Groups	Total Full Time Employees	Male	Female	Average Age	Average Years of Service
ATU 508	847	740	107	47.69	8.32
CUPE 108	259	231	28	48.79	12.84
HRPA	639	427	212	42.79	13.47
IAFF 268	469	430	39	44.41	14.40
Non-Union	711	363	348	47.13	11.36
NSUPE 13	579	246	333	45.19	10.98
Total Organization	3,504	2437	1067	45.91	11.46

In the fiscal years, 2017/18 to 2019/20, a downward trend in the overall average age and years of service in our workforce demographics was noticed, as our workforce moved through its lifecycle and retiring employees were replaced with new, younger employees. However, a very slight increase in the average age in 2020/21 was seen.

The trend also indicates that the ratio of female to male identifying employees remains static and less than the overall female to male ratio in the NS working population. The largest percentage variances in the female to male ratio is noted in International Association of Firefighters (IAFF), Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE108) and Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) groups. We continue to build recruitment and retention strategies to increase representation of females in our workforce. In 2019/20, we partnered with a number of agencies, such as Women's Unlimited, who focus on employment opportunities for women, and with our own Corporate Communications team to develop promotional materials to reach more female candidates who may not have previously known that employment opportunities with the organization were available. Our operational business units are responding as well, giving preference or designating positions for women in non-traditional roles, such as mechanics, hostlers, compliance officers, and engineering focused roles.

Recruitment

Recruitment	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Number of Candidates from Employment Equity groups	3,539	5,587	10,337	7,898
Total Number of Hires	1,267	1,253	1,426	1,271
Number of Hires from Employment Equity groups	238	219	399	305
Percentage Hired from Employment Equity groups	18.78%	17.47%	27.98%	23.99%

Since June 2017, candidates have had the ability to self-identify as a member of an Employment Equity group at the time of application. The initial options were limited to larger over-arching categories, such as Racially Visible Persons. Candidates also had the ability to select not to self-identify. In April 2019, the self-identification process was further refined to allow candidates to provide additional self-identification information, if they chose to do so. The number reported in the Number of Candidates from Employment Equity groups is a distinct count of candidates who have chosen to self-identify in the application process, as a candidate may self-identify as a member of more than one employment equity group.

There has been a net increase of just over 5% in the Percentage Hired from Employment Equity groups from 2017/18 to 2020/21. Efforts to increase recruitment of candidates from Employment Equity groups continue in the current fiscal year, including:

Employment Equity Program Implementation

Human Resources (HR), in partnership with The Office of Diversity & Inclusion/ANSAIO, will lead the development of an employment equity program which will be implemented over the next three to five years. This program will have three overarching goals in year one:

- to develop and implement an awareness campaign focusing on communicating the foundational concepts of Employment Equity, our position as an organization and dispelling myths and misconceptions with respect to Employment Equity;
- to finalize the details regarding the HRM’s organizational stance on designating and preferred positions and postings for those in underrepresented groups; and
- to create a fulsome plan focusing on increasing diverse representation, with a focus on the 5 equity groups, in leadership positions within the organization.

Hiring and Community Engagement Strategy

The Hiring and Community Engagement Strategy seeks to build trust and establish relationships with employment equity groups and other underrepresented groups in our community. Despite the challenges presented in the context of COVID-19, HR attended many virtual employment related events and participated in a significant number of meetings with community partners,

reaching over 800 people, in our continuing efforts to ensure our workforce is representative of the community we serve and to promote HRM as an employer of choice. Our work in three key focus areas: Community Outreach and Engagement, Job Fairs and Employment Partnerships, Employer Branding, Communications and Social Media, will continue through the 2021/22 fiscal year. The Strategy will further support the Municipality’s diversity, inclusion, and equity goals as well as gender parity.

Departures

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Percentage Employee Turnover*	6.03	5.16	5.69	5.51	4.28
Number Employee Retirements	120	98	106	113	100
Number of Employee Resignations	75	74	88	78	50

*Percentage Employee Turnover is based on the total number of employee resignations and retirements divided by the number of permanent and permanent part time employees as of March 31st each year.

Turnover continues to be low. Retirements and resignations decreased in the past year. This may reflect the economic uncertainty due to the COVID-19 pandemic rather than signalling a change in the overall trend.

Other Workforce Data

Absenteeism

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact absenteeism in the workplace. Employees who are feeling unwell have been advised to stay home and follow the guidance of Public Health. This may increase the use of sick time. The global pandemic is also changing how sick leave usage is perceived. We recognize the need for employees who are unwell to stay at home and not risk spreading their illness in the workplace.

With these considerations, we will not be reporting absenteeism data for the 2020/21 fiscal year. Rather, we will continue development of the Corporate Health and Wellness Strategy, focused on developing a greater understanding of the patterns of absenteeism and how we can align the programs and supports offered to employees to leading health indicators. We are optimistic that

this may provide a more effective long-term approach to dealing with the underlying causes of absenteeism and impacts to productivity.

Grievance Detail

Grievances Filed	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
ATU Local 508	12	17	21	19	20
CUPE Local 108	40	33	14	16	12
CUPE Local 4814	0	2	1	1	0
NSUPE Local 13	2	9	9	10	1
IAFF Local 268	6	2	4	0	11
HRPA	8	11	2	9	6
Total	68	74	51	55	50
Grievances Resolved					
Resolved in grievance process	51	40	41	55	72
Resolved with third party (mediation, arbitration)	3	0	1	0	3

Over the past five years, the average number of grievances filed annually is 60, with the number of grievances filed in the last three fiscal years well below that average. Most grievances are resolved internally, without requiring third party involvement.

A grievance filed in one fiscal year may still be active at the start of the following year. At March 31, 2021, there were 61 total active grievances.

Conclusion

HR collects key data to help inform our strategic initiatives in support of the organization. Some trends and observations of the data for 2020/21 are noted below:

- Demographics have not changed significantly since the previous fiscal year. As noted above, we continue to work with internal and external stakeholders to impact positive change in this area.
- Turnover remains relatively low and is consistent with trends in other public sector organizations.

In response to these trends and observations HR has several initiatives in progress. Two other initiatives of note include:

Wellness Strategy – This multi-year initiative reflects a whole-person approach to health and wellbeing, and will inspire policies, information and resources designed to encourage employees to feel empowered and supported to meet their wellness needs, in all areas of life.

Strategic Human Resources Planning – Collaborating with Business Units to identify current and future human resource needs to achieve operational goals and strategic plans. Key priorities include Recruitment Initiatives, Hiring and Community Engagement Strategies, Supporting Employee Leadership Development, Employee Engagement, Employee Learning and Development, Flexible Working Environment and Succession Planning.

We will continue to align our work with the 2021-25 Strategic Priorities Plan as we move forward.

Definition of Terms

- **FTE (Full Time Equivalent)**
Used for budget purposes to quantify the number of positions approved by the Executive Management Team and Council. The FTE count records only permanent positions (both full time and part time). One FTE is equal to one annual work year as defined by the applicable Collective Agreement and/or Non-Union Terms of Employment.
- **Employee Headcount**
The actual number of employees (people not positions) employed at HRM at a specific point in time.
- **Permanent Employee**
An employee who has been hired in a position on a permanent basis without a predetermined time limit.
- **Temporary Employee**
A temporary employee means an employee who is hired (a) for up to eighteen (18) continuous months in any one temporary position, or (b) for the period for which an employee is absent from her/his permanent position where the Employer has chosen to cover off that permanent position for a period.
- **Seasonal Employee**
An employee who is hired in a position designated to perform duties on a seasonal basis. The employee is hired with a predetermined termination date.
- **Student Employee**
“Student” is a person who is engaged in a recognized work/study program at a school or university whose course of study requires or permits the student to participate in study related work programs as an integral part of the certificate, degree or diploma, co-op students, students working in seasonal jobs, and students working in jobs where at least some of the funding is obtained from outside agencies.