

HALIFAX

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Item No. 7
Halifax Regional Council
31 July 2018

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed

Catherine Mullally, Director, Human Resources &
The Office of Diversity and Inclusion

Original Signed by



Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: July 19, 2018

SUBJECT: Employment Systems Review (ESR)

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

Halifax Regional Council request a staff report on December 17, 2017 to provide an update regarding the 2016 HRM Employment Systems Review and that the report also include the following:

1. Provide an update on current initiatives and changes that stemmed from the reviews 90 recommendations;
2. Recognize future initiatives and changes that the Municipality can undertake; and
3. Recognize recommendations that the Municipality has not actioned.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Council and Chief Administrative Officer relationship

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

The Halifax Regional Municipality's Employment Equity Policy was adopted by Halifax Regional Municipality in June 1997. To determine the effectiveness of this policy, HRM extended an RFP for a consultant to conduct an Employment Systems Review (ESR) to examine employment policies, practices and systems to identify barriers to the employment, advancement and full participation of members of the designated groups. The consultant was to prepare draft and final reports and make presentations as required that would include conclusions and recommendations to guide HRM to remove the identified barriers.

The objective of the ESR was to conduct an in-depth assessment of all formal and informal employment systems, policies and practices and the way they were implemented. This included attitudes, decision making and behaviors to identify barriers to full employment of under-represented designated groups - By occupational group and category in the former Municipal Operations (MOPS) of HRM's Transportation and Public Works Business Unit (TPW).

In April of 2015 TPW - Municipal Operations underwent a realignment with the Road Operations and Construction functions/staff remaining with TPW and the Parks functions and staff transitioning to Parks and Recreation. In June 2015, an Internal Committee was established to oversee the ESR project and implementation. The committee worked closely with the consultant, Tana Turner, to conduct the review which included focus groups, communications planning and rolling out the findings of the project. The following dates represent the timelines for Employment System Review:

- April 2015 – RFP for the Employment Systems Review (ESR)
- June 2015 – Turner Consulting (<http://www.turnerconsultinggroup.ca/>) contracted to conduct work
- July 2015 – Establishment of the ESR Oversight Committee consisting of representation from Human Resources (5), Office of Diversity and Inclusion (2), DCAO office (1), Racially Visible Employees Caucus (RVEC) which is primarily composed of CUPE Local 108 members (3) and Corporate Communications (1)
- July - December 2016 – Consultant's work including:
 - Policy review
 - Surveys, focus group sessions and individual interviews. Seven (7) focus group sessions were held with the largest being with RVEC, 22 participants
- January 2016 A final report was prepared by Turner Consulting Group and provided to HRM. The report included 90 recommendations.

DISCUSSION

With the completion of the consultant's work, it was determined that there needed to be an ESR Implementation Team that would be responsible for project management and monitoring. Terms of reference were established for the Implementation Team and project sponsors were identified: DCAO; Director, Transportation & Public Works; Director, Parks and Recreation; and the Director of Human Resources. In 2018, following realignment within HRM, the Project Sponsors became Director of Corporate and Customer Services; Director, Transportation & Public Works; Director, Parks and Recreation; and the Director of Human Resources and the Office of Diversity & Inclusion.

The ESR Implementation team was established with representation from Human Resources (3 members), Office of Diversity and Inclusion (2 members), Road Operations and Construction (1 member), Parks (1 member) and RVEC (2 members). The implementation team met bi-monthly during the first year (2016) and not as frequently in 2017 and 2018.

Eight (8) roll out sessions were held in May of 2016 in partnership with the Director, TPW and Director, Parks and Recreation for all staff in those business units. Sessions were held in various locations and allowed staff the opportunity to ask questions about the ESR and identify items they felt were a priority.

In July of 2016, a Road Operations and Construction /Parks Internal Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee was established. This committee consisted of eight (8) members and ran until January 2018. Following a call for new membership to the committee, there were not enough employees interested and the committee is currently being reviewed.

Updates on the progress of the ESR were provided to staff with the most recent updates being provided in January/June 2018. Some of the key outcomes of the ESR to date, specifically related to work with Road Operations and Construction and Parks, include:

Training



- **190** employees have participated in *The Reaching Out from an Afrocentric Place: Community Engagement for Communities of African Descent* workshop. This is one of the tools developed to begin addressing anti-black racism.
- **40** TPW and Parks supervisors have completed Diversity & Inclusion Training.
- **83** TPW and Parks employees attended a Cultural Proficiency overview session.

Employee Engagement



- **13** secure communications boards have been installed across TPW and Parks worksites.
- An employee engagement survey was conducted in the spring of 2018 and the data from this is currently being analyzed.

Hiring Policy & Practice



- Updated Criminal Record Check processes have eliminated unnecessary Criminal Record checks.
- More accessible exit interview process.
- Interview debrief sessions are available for unsuccessful candidates.
- Mandatory interview questions on diversity when hiring for all positions.
- Employees can apply for job opportunities through email jobs@halifax.ca.
- More diverse workforce – 27 per cent of 2017 summer seasonal hires in Parks and Road Operations and Construction were persons who self-identified as racially visible and 11 per cent self-identified as Aboriginal.

Current Initiatives being undertaken to support the recommendations of the report include:

- Designated recruitment for an M1 position within Transportation and Public Works.
- A designated African Nova Scotian cohort for the HRM Aspiring Leaders Program. Information sessions are currently being conducted and the program will be implemented in October 2018.
- Commitment to more diverse hiring panels is being implemented. An expression of interest for diverse staff to sit on hiring panels will be issued by the end of August 2018.
- Launching a mandatory Hiring Manager Certification Training program to ensure fair hiring decisions that are based on bias-free hiring, the principles of merit and that foster a workforce that is representative of the public it serves.
- Revised Employment Equity Policy – This Policy identifies groups of persons who may have experienced employment disadvantages and aims to increase the representation of these groups by identifying and eliminating barriers to employment opportunities.

Staff acknowledges that there are still components of the ESR that need to be reviewed and actioned. Many of these items are linked directly to the areas of the Employment Equity Policy, Hiring Policy Review and Manager Training. Leadership in HR and the Office of Diversity are focusing on the following as priorities:

- Hiring Managers Certification Program – This training is designed to educate the panel on the dos and don'ts during the hiring process. It includes merit based hiring, bias free hiring, focus on increasing diversity in the workplace, accommodations, etc. with a target to have all training completed in early 2019.
- Reference checks – We have created unique references for front-line team members and leaders. The Human Resources Business Partners collected feedback from the customers and the updated version is currently being rolled out at Manager meetings.
- Managers Toolkit – will be utilized as a self-serve solution for other requirements. The HR Organizational Effectiveness and Learning team is currently leading a project to revise the toolkit to better serve our customers. Projected date for roll out to HRM leaders is October 2018.
- Employment Equity Policy – has been reviewed by staff, unions and Legal Services. Final editing is being completed and the policy will be brought to Council in the Fall 2018.
- Staff Self-identification Survey – To move forward with an Employment Equity Program we would need to proceed with four stages:
 - Educating the HRM workforce on the value of diversity. This would be done through the content of the Hiring Manager Certification training and extensive internal marketing.
 - Complete the self-identification survey (2019) to determine variance between community and HRM demographics.
 - Establish employment equity targets and practices.
 - Evaluate progress and adjust where necessary.

Addressing these five (5) items will move us toward finalizing the actions needed to address the 90 recommendations presented in the 2016 HRM Employment Systems Review.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

N/A

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

N/A

ATTACHMENTS

1. Employment Systems Review Report, January 19, 2016
2. Employment Systems Review Action Plan – Updated July 2018

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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