
REPORT TITLE: BlackNorth Initiative

FROM: Gary Kent, Chief Financial Officer and Commissioner of Corporate Services

RECOMMENDATION

That the Region of Peel further demonstrate its commitment to combat anti-Black racism by pledging support for the BlackNorth Initiative;

And further, that the Regional Chair sign the BlackNorth Initiative Pledge on behalf of Regional Council;

And further, that the Cities of Brampton and Mississauga and the Town of Caledon be encouraged to pledge their support of the BlackNorth Initiative;

And further, that a copy of the report of the Chief Financial Officer and Commissioner of Corporate Services, listed on the May 27, 2021 Regional Council agenda titled “BlackNorth Initiative” be provided to the Cities of Brampton and Mississauga and the Town of Caledon.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- On June 11, 2020, Regional Council passed resolution 2020-448 to recognize anti-Black racism as a crisis within the Region of Peel.
 - The BlackNorth Initiative is on a mission to end anti-Black system racism throughout all aspects of life.
 - Collaborating with the BlackNorth Initiative can provide a framework to guide actions to address anti-Black racism and strengthen the Region’s commitment to this work.
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DISCUSSION

1. Background

On June 11, 2020, Regional Council passed resolution 2020-448 (see Appendix I) to recognize anti-Black racism as a crisis within the Region of Peel. Regional Council committed to address systemic discrimination by supporting policies and programs that address the inequities that the Black community and other marginalized groups continue to experience within Peel.

To address anti-Black racism in Peel, the Region is leading and collaborating on initiatives such as (but not limited to):

- Community Safety and Well-Being Systemic Discrimination Table
- Community Equity Engagement Advisory Committee focused on addressing inequities related to COVID-19 and vaccine prioritization

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- Community Investment Program providing funding to Black-serving and Black-run organizations
- Organizational activities, such as a Workforce Census and Courageous Conversations to gain demographic data and insights on how diversity affects the employee experience

2. BlackNorth Initiative/Pledge

The BlackNorth Initiative (BNI) is led by the Canadian Council of Business Leaders Against Anti-Black Systemic Racism. Its mission is to end anti-Black systemic racism throughout all aspects of life by using a business first mindset. They state, *“We believe that if corporate Canada can boldly take on the challenge to add gender diversity to Canadian boardrooms and executive suites by declaring policies, setting specific targets and holding itself accountable, it can do the same work to create better representation for Black Canadians.”*

BlackNorth started as an initiative to engage “corporate Canada” but has now expanded to call on the non-profit and public sectors to make the same commitments to combat anti-Black systemic racism.

The BlackNorth Initiative Pledge focusses on seven actions which will move organizations toward ending anti-Black systemic racism and creating opportunities for underrepresented groups. The BNI Pledge provides a framework to guide efforts to address anti-Black racism, including accountability systems, reporting and measurement practices (see Appendix II).

3. Proposed Direction

The Region of Peel is committed to building a community for life where everyone feels a sense of belonging. As an organization, the Region also prioritizes building a diverse and inclusive workforce. Doing so not only benefits its workforce, but also the community it serves through increased diverse thinking and inclusive service delivery.

Working with the BNI, joining the over 450 signatories who have committed to the pledge, and signing the BNI Pledge will strengthen the Region’s commitment to combating anti-Black racism and ensuring accountability, reporting and measurement practices continue to show progress and gains towards a more equitable organization and community.

In an effort to address anti-Black racism throughout the Region and the local level, the Cities of Brampton and Mississauga and the Town of Caledon are invited to show their support, commitment and partnership to addressing anti-Black racism and systemic discrimination by signing the BNI Pledge.

RISK CONSIDERATIONS

As anti-Black racism and systemic discrimination continue to affect employees and the community, it is imperative that the Region continue work to become more diverse and inclusive. Collaborating with the BNI provides a framework to address ongoing issues and accountability measures to ensure progress. A lack of rigor, discipline and accountability mechanisms may limit the impact the Region has in addressing anti-Black racism, which may ultimately result in continued inequities for the Black community and other marginalized groups.

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CONCLUSION

The Region is continuing its efforts to create a community and workplace that is equitable for all. In signing the BlackNorth Initiative Pledge, the Region affirms its commitment to combating racism and systemic discrimination for the Black community and for all marginalized groups.

APPENDICES

Appendix I – Resolution Number 2020-448

Appendix II – BlackNorth Initiative Pledge – Public Service

For further information regarding this report, please contact Juliet Jackson, Director – Culture & Inclusion, Ext. 6741, juliet.jackson@peelregion.ca.

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Reviewed and/or approved in workflow by:

Department Commissioner and Division Director.