

For Information

REPORT TITLE: **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Status Update**

FROM: Gary Kent, CPA, CGA, ICD.D, Chief Financial Officer and Commissioner
of Corporate Services

OBJECTIVE

To provide the Diversity, Equity and Anti-Racism Committee with an update on the activities and achievements related to diversity, equity and inclusion efforts at the Region of Peel.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) is a priority for the Region of Peel and is working towards DEI outcomes for its community and workforce.
 - In addition to supporting Peel residents through the pandemic response, several initiatives were started or completed in 2021 with an intentional focus on improving diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace and identifying and addressing systemic barriers in programs and services.
 - The COVID-19 pandemic brought much uncertainty and disruption to the organization. The continued focus on the pandemic response impacted the advancement of some DEI activities and timelines for 2022.
 - Several activities, including a DEI policy review focused on recruitment, promotion and pay activities, development of the Region of Peel's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy and targeted community consultations have been identified as priority activities in 2022
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DISCUSSION

1. Background

The Region of Peel is on a journey to become a more diverse and inclusive workplace and community where everyone feels a sense of belonging and has opportunities to succeed. Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) is a priority for the organization.

The Region is working towards achieving the following DEI outcomes, focused on both its workforce and community.

Workforce Focus:	Community Focus:
Outcome #1 – The Region has a diverse and inclusive workforce where everyone is supported and respected, and where workforce-related decisions are enabled by data	Outcome #1 – Peel residents have access to Regional programs and services that meet their needs in order to succeed and achieve their full potential

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Outcome #2 – As an employer, the Region of Peel utilizes inclusive practices that respects and values diversity, equity and inclusion	Outcome #2 – Influence the identification and removal of barriers within community systems/structures through cross-collaboration and advocacy
Outcome #3 – All employees can practice inclusion as a core competency and experience a feeling of belonging in the workplace	Outcome #3 – The Region of Peel has a leadership role in influencing socio-demographic data standards, quality and linkage, and utilizes community data to drive positive outcomes for the community

Efforts have been undertaken to:

- Identify and remove systemic barriers that limit the ability of marginalized groups to participate and thrive
- Foster a sense of personal safety, well-being and belonging and address incidents of hate, racism, discrimination and harassment
- Build knowledge and skills of the workforce to practice inclusion as a core competency
- Gather socio-demographic data to better understand the state of DEI as it relates to the workforce and to Region of Peel programs and services
- Influence the adoption of DEI practices to better serve the community

2. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion – Workforce Efforts

In April 2021, DEI Recommendations which were informed by data from the Workforce Census and Courageous Conversations, were approved by the Executive Leadership Team. These recommendations primarily focused on workforce related outcomes and were presented to the DEAR committee in June 2021.

Despite the Region of Peel's need to pivot and respond to the pandemic, Phase One implementation of the DEI recommendations commenced in 2021 and is anticipated to be completed in December 2022.

Workforce related activities include, but are not limited to:

- Development of an Inclusive Organizational Development Framework comprised of a DEI learning program that covers a variety of learning topics, such as DEI Fundamentals, Inclusive Leadership and advanced topics such as Unconscious Bias, Indigenous History and Anti-Black Racism
- Inclusive Succession Management Framework to build diversity and promote fairness and transparency into its leadership and talent pipeline and, ensure the sustainability of service excellence to Peel residents
- Review of the organization's investigation process related to reporting incidents of discrimination and harassment and a plan to increase awareness of the employees about available reporting mechanisms
- Procurement of a vendor to conduct a review of all policies and practices related to recruitment, pay and promotion activities

Phases Two and Three of the DEI recommendations are planned to be implemented in 2023 to 2025.

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a) Diversity, Equity and Inclusion – Community Efforts

Throughout 2021, the Region continued to lead Peel's pandemic response. As a result, several resources were redeployed in various areas, including mass vaccination planning and long-term care. Despite the redeployments, several DEI related activities and initiatives, which demonstrate an intentional focus on addressing systemic barriers experienced by diverse or marginalized groups have progressed:

- A Public Works Diversity Internship Program focused on hiring diverse, qualified students and new graduates in the areas of planning and engineering
- Creation of a socio-demographic question bank to be used as appropriate in external surveys
- Collection of race-based data in Human Services programs such as Housing and Early Years and Childcare and Health programs and services such as Seniors Services Development to better understand socio-demographic make-up of staff who deliver programs in the community and their clientele
- Training staff in areas of mental health and addictions and empathetic strain, to better provide inclusive services
- Efforts to improve access and safety of Queer and Trans communities to Healthy Sexuality Program and clinics
- Co-design supportive clinics as part of mass vaccination planning for specific populations, including:
 - Black, African and Caribbean
 - 2SLGBTQ2+
 - Homebound Individuals
 - Latin-American
 - Undocumented/international students

A list of DEI activities and accomplishments aligned to Community Outcomes is available as Appendix I.

3. DEI Priorities for 2022

In order to effectively implement the DEI recommendations, a review and reprioritization of activities was completed to identify activities that can be completed in 2022.

DEI policy review focused on recruitment, promotion and pay activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A review of policies, processes and practices related to recruitment, promotion and pay activities
Workforce Census	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The second Workforce Census will be administered in Q4 2022
<i>Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy Development</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development of the Region's DEI Strategy, including community consultation which will provide an opportunity for diverse groups to voice their needs and concerns
Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development of ERGs to increase engagement, learning and continued conversations related to DEI throughout the organization

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Targeted Community Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pursue an Indigenous-focused approach to building relationships with Indigenous communities with the goal of working together to improve health and social outcomes and advance truth and reconciliation• Explore and identify gaps in health care experienced by Peel's 2SLGBTQ+ communities• Community consultation with diverse groups (related to ability, gender identity, race, religion, sexual orientation) to support the development of the organization's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy
Socio-Demographic Data Collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collection of socio-demographic data within programs and services through external-facing surveys

CONCLUSION

The Region of Peel has prioritized diversity, equity and inclusion in the organization and will continue to move forward with activities that move towards desired outcomes for the workforce and community. In doing so, the Region of Peel will continue to build a community for life where everyone feels a sense of belonging and has the supports and opportunities to succeed.

APPENDICES

Appendix I – 2021 DEI Accomplishments

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