



Town of Newmarket
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Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Advocacy Group Annual Report for 2021-2023

Information Report

Report Number: INFO-2024-015

Department(s): Human Resources
Office of the Chief Administrative Officer
Information Technology Services
Legislative Services

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Kiran Saini, Manager of Legislative Services/Deputy Clerk

Date: July 23, 2023

In accordance with the Procedure By-law, any member of Council may make a request to the Town Clerk that this Report be placed on an upcoming Committee of the Whole agenda for discussion.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update on the work completed by the Town's internal Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Advocacy Group between 2021 and 2023.

Background

The Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Advocacy (IDEA) Group (formerly the DEI Working Group) was formed in July 2018 and is comprised of staff from across the organization who volunteer their time on the Group. The Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) and Operational Leadership Team (OLT) are sponsors of the IDEA Group and have designated at least one member of SLT and OLT to sit on the Group. As Sponsors, they champion the program by supporting initiatives by communicating and promoting them

to staff as well as being an active participant, and advocating for funds and resources when possible as requested by the Group.

The purpose of the IDEA Group is to develop, support implementation, evaluate, and update the “DEI Plan” which supports the Town’s mission of “Making Newmarket Even Better” and the Employee Value Proposition of “Building our community together”.

Some of the activities include:

- Implement various Diversity, Equity and Inclusion activities that align with Corporate objectives (priorities);
- Build awareness, educate, advocate and sustain a positive working environment;
- Establish regularly convened forums to announce (or change) initiatives that promote Equity, Diversity and Inclusion;
- Promote the “Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Lens” to identify and make recommendations to remove existing, potential or systemic barriers in policies and procedures;
- Review current processes through a DEI lens – such as performance management, employee complaint process, succession planning and recruitment and selection among many others;
- Create resources and tools for staff around the various elements of workplace diversity and inclusion; and,
- Provide guidance and feedback to corporate leadership as appropriate.

The goals the IDEA Group aims to achieve through the activities in the DEI Plan are:

1. Foster an open, inclusive, safe environment for employees that will contribute to an enhanced sense of cohesiveness and belonging. A welcoming culture will enable employees, who come from all backgrounds to feel comfortable bringing their authentic self to work.
2. Identify and address systemic barriers within the Corporation.
3. Have a diverse, talented workforce that is reflective of our community.
4. Strengthen the Corporation’s capacity to work with diverse communities and ensure our programs and services meet the needs of everyone.

IDEA Group Membership

While membership on the IDEA Group is voluntary and is subject to change, as of the time that this report was written and distributed the membership was as follows:

- Elisa Berdusco
- Amber Blackburn
- Melanie Cerritos
- Erin Christopher

- Samantha Eek
- Marsaydees Ferrell, HR Representative
- Temi Fashina
- Tania Ferus
- Matthew Haggerty
- Elizabeth Hawkins
- Azeema Husain
- Jeremy Inglis
- Nicholas Koopman, Chair
- Robin Nadorozny
- Karen Reynar
- Ian McDougall, SLT Sponsor
- Jennifer Rose
- Kiran Saini, Vice Chair
- Karthik Venkataraman, OLT Sponsor
- Heather Weaver
- Rob Wilson
- Jennifer Wiseman

Discussion

In 2020, the IDEA Group revised its Terms of Reference to include an annual report to Council to provide information on the Town's diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives.

This report serves as an update on the work completed between 2021 and 2023:

- Supported the Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Task Force and the development of their [Final Report](#)
- Provided input to EMPOWER Strategy Group on the Dismantling Anti-Black Racism [Action Plan](#) and supported the development of the Town's Dismantling Anti-Black Racism [Implementation Plan](#)
- Participated in the [Engaged, Inclusive Communities project](#) and provided training to staff on the themes identified in the [Final Report](#)
- Launched the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion webpage on the Town's website newmarket.ca/diversityandinclusion
- Completed training of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan and Lens for all employees
- Coordinated and implemented Diversity, Equity and Inclusion foundations training to all staff
- Initiated and promoted an Orange Hat fundraiser which raised \$2,445 for [Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag, Child and Family Services](#)
- Provided education sessions related to Centering Black Experiences, Indigenous History, as well as a three-part speaker series on Exploring Indigenous Culture & Anti-Indigenous Racism.
- Changed the internal group name from Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Working Group (DEIWG) to Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Advocacy (IDEA) Group.

- Explained the importance of gender pronouns to staff and encouraged the option of including them in Town e-mail signatures.
- Participation in Culture Days for onboarding new staff.
- Input provided on the Inclusive Language Guide developed by the York Region Municipal Diversity and Inclusion Group. Guide was subsequently promoted and shared at all-staff events. Incorporated into the Staff report templates as a tool to encourage inclusive writing.
- Participated in the End Hate Campaign developed by MDIG, and shared information and resources on the Town's social media channels.
- Provided feedback and advice to Corporate Communications on several communication or campaigns.
- Provided feedback and advice to Legislative Services on Boards and Committee Recruitment to help expand reach and engage diverse applicants.
- Central York Fire Services facilitated or participated in a number of successful events in 2023, such as International Women's Day, Pride Flag Raising at Station 4-5, Human Trafficking Awareness Day, and a Career Day held in partnership with the Newmarket African Caribbean Canadian Association.
- Helped organize the Town's involvement in the annual York Pride parade.

As the IDEA Group is now an established group, over the last six years, there has been a noticeable upwards trend towards this Group being consulted on for advice from different departments. This has not taken away from the advocacy work that the Group does to facilitate an environment where everyone in Newmarket feels like they belong.

2024 Work Plan

Education and Awareness

The IDEA group supports the Town's initiatives in education and building awareness for diversity, equity and inclusion. Some of the initiatives for 2024 include a webinar on Building Better 2SLGBTQIA+ Allyship and Workplace Support, Dismantling Anti-Asian Racism, Pride Month Participation, and National Indigenous History Month.

Policies under Review

As policies and by-laws are up for review or update, the Town is taking a proactive approach to applying the DEI Lens. Examples of these policies that are being reviewed include the Harassment and Discrimination Free Workplace, Violence-Free Workplace Policy, and Recruitment Policy.

Data Analysis

The IDEA Group will develop and track Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which will be reported on in the 2024 annual report. The Census data released in Fall of 2022 will provide some benchmarks to begin the review. KPIs have been built into the Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Implementation Plan, which support metrics being tracked.

Representation on other groups

The Town's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Specialist is the staff liaison on the Newmarket Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Advisory Committee. Staff are also part of the York Region Municipal Diversity and Inclusion Group, and the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Community of Practice where best practices, resources, events, and information are shared. The Town is also a member of the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion, which provides staff access to resources, webinars and other information. Some members also sit on the Wellness Committee, and the Joint Health and Safety Committee.

Conclusion

The Town's IDEA Group will continue to report annually to Council and the public to provide updates on the Town's diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives.

Business Plan and Strategic Plan Linkages

One of Council's five Priorities for 2022-2026 is: Diverse, welcoming, and inclusive community – Building a strong, healthy and equitable community where everyone feels an unwavering sense of belonging.

Consultation

The Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Advocacy Group members were consulted as part of this report.

Human Resource Considerations

None.

Budget Impact

None.

Attachments

None.

Contact

For more information contact:

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Current IDEA Group Vice Chair, Kiran Saini at ksaini@newmarket.ca; or

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Specialist, Marsaydees Ferrell at mferrell@newmarket.ca

Approval

Tricia Quinlan, Director, Human Resources

Jeff Payne, Commissioner, Community Services

Esther Armchuk, Commissioner, Corporate Services

Peter Noehammer, Commissioner, Development and Infrastructure Services

Ian McDougall, Chief Administrative Officer