

Diversity Plan

Date:	April 14, 2010
To:	Employee and Labour Relations Committee
From:	City Librarian

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide an update and overview of the actions taken to date in the development of a Diversity Plan for Toronto Public Library (TPL), and to identify the next steps in creating the plan.

The development of a Diversity Plan is part of the TPL Strategic Plan, 2008 – 2011. The Diversity Plan will support a sustainable Library through the development of its staff resources. The plan will develop the diversity and expertise of library staff to ensure the delivery of excellent and responsive library service now and into the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Librarian recommends that the Employee and Labour Relations Committee:

1. recommends to the Toronto Public Library Board that two members of the Board be appointed to serve as advisors on the development of the Diversity Plan.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The cost of developing a Diversity Plan is included in the proposed 2010 Operating Budget.

The Director, Finance and Treasurer has reviewed the financial impact statement and is in agreement with it.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on June 16, 2008, the Library Board approved the TPL Strategic Plan, 2008 - 2011.

One of the six areas of focus in the Library's Strategic Plan, 2008 – 2011, is to build support for a sustainable Library in its budget, infrastructure and staff resources.

One of the actions to ensure that the Library achieves this goal of sustainability in its staff resources is the development of a Diversity Plan. The plan will develop the diversity and expertise of library staff to ensure the delivery of excellent and responsive library service now and into the future.

The development of the Diversity Plan is in the 2010 Strategic Plan Work Plan.

COMMENTS

The first action taken to develop a Diversity Plan was the hiring of a temporary Manager, Diversity in September 2009.

The Manager, Diversity began work on the Diversity Plan by conducting a preliminary environmental scan relating to diversity at TPL. The comments below provide a summary and overview of the findings of the environmental scan, and later discuss the next steps in developing the Diversity Plan. The environmental scan is not completed, and is on-going, and final analysis and conclusions will follow. The discussion of findings in this report provides initial feedback about the issues and themes emerging from the interviews.

Why Do a Preliminary Environmental Scan?

The questions about how best to achieve and foster the goal of diversity in the workforce at TPL are complex, and the answers are rooted in the unique culture of the organization. One of the main reasons to do a preliminary environmental scan is to get information from a diverse perspective about the culture of TPL.

In this regard, a preliminary environmental scan is a critical first step in the development of a diversity plan. An environmental scan reviews the organization and its policies and practices through a lens focused to identify diversity issues, including both the past achievements and existing supports for advancing diversity, and also the challenges and barriers to diversity and equity within the organization.

How was the Preliminary Environmental Scan at TPL Conducted?

The preliminary environmental scan at TPL was conducted through interviews about diversity and equity issues with a cross-section of management, exempt and union staff and with the staff of other public and private sector organizations.

The purpose of the preliminary environmental scan, both the external and internal dimensions, is threefold:

1. to learn about the organization - its services, workforce and overall operations - and to identify, where possible, any historical and current information relating to whether and how diversity and equity have been incorporated, or not, in the mandate, operations and strategic direction of the organization;
2. to understand what is happening at the City level and other City agencies and boards in the area of diversity; and
3. to identify and connect with other library systems in the sector, and the broader public and private sectors that also are pursuing diversity and equity initiatives, particularly within the workforce.

Internal Information Gathering

To date, interviews have taken place with forty six (46) exempt and management staff in both the public service and support departments across the organization. Also interviewed were three (3) members of the executive of the Toronto Public Library Workers Union (TPWLU), Local 4948. There are a number of other interviews that are pending and will be completed in the next quarter.

External Information Gathering

The data gathering on external organizations, both within the library sector and the broader public and private sector, provides additional insight on what other employers and organizations are doing in this area, their experiences and lessons learned.

General Findings – External Scan

Contacts were made with many public libraries from across Canada including the Vancouver, Calgary, Halifax, Brampton, and Mississauga public libraries, and others. Responses have been varied. Most of the library systems have some level of programming that incorporates diversity in the service delivery activities. However, most of the systems do not have a focused diversity program that is aimed at their workforce. Vancouver has a diversity committee which is in the early stages of work. There is some focus that is being given to recruitment of Aboriginals, including targeted outreach to Aboriginal communities to promote the library and employment opportunities. Vancouver successfully implemented a Worker Experience Program which resulted in the hiring of Aboriginal employees in auxiliary positions.

The research and outreach work in this area is ongoing, including connecting with public library systems in similar jurisdictions, such as the USA.

In the broader public and private sectors, contact was made with representatives from the City of Toronto, the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC), the Toronto Police Services, RBC Financial Group, Ernst and Young, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) and the Ontario Public Service. Some of these organizations

have more evolved diversity programs focusing on the workforce and workplace including a diversity policy and/or statements, administrative mechanisms to lead or direct the diversity portfolio and specific programs to meet the organization's diversity goals and objectives.

General Findings – Internal Scan

To begin the discussion of the early results of the preliminary internal environmental scan it is important to make a few comments about the findings. The results of the internal scan reflect generally expressed insights and concerns and are not attributable to any one individual, in particular. As well, these results do not comprise the full extent of employee comments. Further, the issues and gaps identified from this preliminary environmental scan are more anecdotal in their content and are not the result of quantitative data gathering and analyses.

The purpose of the conversations with Library employees was to gather information on how staff are seeing and understanding diversity in the Library; to gain insight on some of the issues in the organization that have implications for the development and implementation of the Diversity Plan; and to seek their input on the challenges, gaps, supports and opportunities that have potential implications for advancing diversity in the workforce at TPL. Further, their perspectives were sought on the implementation of a workforce survey and the top three issues that the Diversity Plan should address, as a priority.

The information was sought from the interviewees along the following key dimensions: to share their views on how diversity should be reflected at the TPL; to identify key issues relating to the representation of diversity, inclusiveness and accessibility at the TPL; to identify challenges to advancing a diversity and equity strategy at the TPL; and to identify existing measures and initiatives at the TPL that would support a diversity strategy.

A Summary of Findings:

The findings from the preliminary environmental scan are summarized under four categories: (A) Identification of Diversity Issues for TPL; (B) Critical Factors in Advancing Diversity in the Library; (C) Existing Measures and Approaches that Support a Diversity Strategy; and (D) the Way Forward – Next Steps.

A. Identification of Diversity Issues for TPL:

Based on the feedback from interviewees, the top four (4) issues to be addressed in a Diversity Plan for TPL are as follows:

1. That the TPL workforce reflects the diversity of the City of Toronto and its communities throughout its hierarchy;

2. An examination of policies, practices and systems in the organization to identify and remove systemic barriers to access and full participation;
3. Provide training and development in diversity, equity and anti-racism to all staff, including management and leadership, to ensure a common understanding of diversity and equity and their meaning within the TPL context, and to understand, identify and address systemic barriers; and
4. To gather reliable information about the TPL workforce composition and diversity.

B. Critical Factors in Advancing Diversity in the Library:

The interviews included discussions of some critical factors which need to be in place in order to successfully advance a diversity strategy at TPL. The Diversity Plan and its implementation must build in support for these critical factors. Staff identified the following key factors for the success of the diversity strategy at TPL:

1. That there be a strong commitment from the Library leadership to follow through and advance diversity as a sustainable objective for TPL;
2. That resource constraints (e.g. financial; human resources, including leadership; volume of work, competing priorities) have implications for the effective implementation and progress of this initiative;
3. That TPL staff be given the support and opportunities to participate meaningfully in the diversity initiative;
4. That Managers be given adequate support and opportunities to participate meaningfully and effectively in the diversity initiative; and
5. That TPLWU, Local 4948 CUPE participate in the diversity initiative.

C. Existing Measures and Approaches that Support a Diversity Strategy:

This section records the feedback of staff about the current practices and programs of TPL that support and foster a diversity strategy:

1. The service delivery model of TPL, including programs aimed at diverse communities and the diversity of library collections;
2. The diversity of the current workforce, especially among younger employees in the entry level classifications; and the number of staff from diverse backgrounds who are enrolled in Master's, Information Science;

3. The composition of the Library Board is considered to be a strong support for the diversity agenda;
4. The leadership of the Library, both at the Library Board and senior management level, has expressed a strong commitment to the diversity agenda, and included it in the Strategic Plan, 2008- 2011;
5. The step taken to hire the Manager, Diversity to begin focused work in this area;
6. TPLWU, Local 4948 CUPE is receptive to being engaged in the consultations and discussions as the work on the Diversity Plan develops and progresses.

D. The Way Forward – the Next Steps:

This section reflects not only the comments from staff on what work needs to be done on the diversity initiative, but also the experience and insights of the Diversity Manager relating to the development of a Diversity Plan:

1. Complete the internal environmental scan and collection of data on diversity plans and implementation strategies from other public and private sector organizations; and review full results with an emphasis on best practices;
2. Establish an internal Diversity Steering Committee and begin a schedule of meetings;
3. Develop and implement diversity and equity training and a development program for TPL leadership, management and staff;
4. Develop system-wide introductory communications to TPL employees, service users and other stakeholders, that among other messages, articulates why and how the diversity agenda is moving forward at this time;
5. Develop methodology for gathering reliable information about the TPL workforce and its diversity (a draft Workforce Survey document is attached for your information – see Attachment 1);
6. Conduct an Employment Systems Review of TPL policies and practices to identify and address barriers to participation in the Library workforce for members of Toronto’s various communities;
7. Facilitate the opportunity for a broader cross-section of staff to participate in the diversity strategy.

Conclusion:

The development of the Diversity Plan is an important support to the sustainability of TPL's staff resources now and in the future.

The Library Board will receive information about the Diversity Plan as it progresses, through reports made to the Employee and Labour Relations Committee.

CONTACT

Sandra Carnegie-Douglas; Manager, Diversity, Tel: 416-395-0771;

Email: scarnegiedouglas@torontopubliclibrary.ca;

Dan Keon, Director, Human Resources; Tel: 416-395-5850; Fax: 416-395-5925;

Email: dkeon@torontopubliclibrary.ca.

SIGNATURE

Jane Pyper
City Librarian

ATTACHMENT

Attachment 1: Draft Workforce Survey