



To: Toronto Public Library Board – March 4, 2002

From: City Librarian

Subject: **Employment Equity Policy**

Purpose:

To establish an Employment Equity Policy for the employees of the Toronto Public Library (Attachment 1).

Funding Implications and Impact Statement:

The Employment Equity Policy is being put forward for approval. There are no budget implications for 2002. Implementation will begin in 2003, including preparation to conduct a voluntary employment equity survey. Position and material funding requirements to develop, implement, and monitor a comprehensive employment equity program include two staff at an annual cost of \$103,000 including salaries and benefits as well as materials and training at an annual cost of \$5,000.

The establishment and maintenance of a confidential employment equity database will have further funding implications for the Library. The budget impact of this activity will be identified and incorporated in the 2003 budget submission. The implementation program will be adjusted as needed, dependent upon budget approval.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Toronto Public Library Board adopt the Employment Equity Policy for Toronto Public Library employees and that it replace all equity policies of the former Toronto area public library systems.

Background:

The *Employment Equity Act* of 1993 was repealed by the Ontario government in 1995, and the Employment Equity Commission's administrative infrastructure was disbanded. In place of the previous legislation, the Provincial Government strengthened the ability to deal with employment equity issues through a complaints-based system under the Ontario Human Rights Code and introduced the Equal Opportunity Framework. The Ontario Human Rights Code promotes equity in employment (Section 5), and the Code also allows employers to implement special programs and requires them to accommodate protected groups.

Prior to amalgamation the former Toronto area public library systems had instituted Employment Equity or Employment Opportunity Policies or were in the process of developing such policies, with the exception of East York.

Toronto City Council established the Task Force on Community Access and Equity on March 4, 1998. In December 1999, Council adopted an Action Plan on Access, Equity and Human Rights based on the recommendations of the Task Force. The Action Plan reaffirms the City's commitment to:

- extend access and equity best practices across the City;
- continue its leadership in government and as employer, contractor and provider of services;
- support mechanisms for effective and inclusive community participation in all aspects of civic life;
- establish five city-wide policy advisory committees: Aboriginal Affairs, Race and Ethnic Relations, Disability Issues, Status of Women, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Issues.

On July 4, 2000, Council approved a new City of Toronto Employment Equity Policy (Attachment 2). Council also requested a report in 2002 on progress made towards implementation of Employment Equity Policy recommendations.

Conducting a workforce survey is considered a key component in measuring progress in achieving employment equity and to be able to respond to Ontario Human Rights Commission complaints. As part of the 1999 Minutes of Settlement with the Ontario Human Rights Commission, Toronto Fire Services were required to conduct an employment equity survey of its workforce. Employment equity survey packages were distributed to Fire Services employees on October 22, 2001. The results of the survey are currently being compiled. The City is required to report back to the Commission by January 2002 with information collected from the survey. Building on the experience and information gained from the Fire Service's workforce survey, planning is underway to begin to survey the rest of the corporation beginning in the spring of 2002.

The City Employment Equity Policy provides a comprehensive approach that indicates special programs will be developed to support the achievement of equitable representation. The City's commitment to working with community organizations in the development of strategies and initiatives to promote equity in the workplace is emphasized. The overriding principles of the policy are:

- hire and promote based on merit and potential;
- set objectives for equitable representation, measure progress and publicly report on results (e.g. annual reports);
- develop a proactive equity plan;
- create a climate of understanding and mutual respect for all.

The specific commitments of the Employment Equity Policy include working with the employees, their associations, unions and the community to:

- provide equality of opportunity, remove barriers to full employment with respect to employee groups (total of 14 groups as defined by the Ontario Human Rights Code plus 2 identified by the City Human Resources policy);
- commit to principles of potential and merit as key criteria for hiring and promotion; make use of talents of all workers regardless of gender, sexual orientation, disability, racial or Aboriginal status;
- ensure equitable compensation practices;
- develop strategies and special initiatives to promote equity in workplace.

*Clause No.6 of Report No. 14, Administrative Committee, City of Toronto Employment Equity Policy (July 4, 2000)*, indicates, “that all Agencies, Boards and Commissions and Special Purpose Bodies be requested to implement policies consistent with the provisions of this policy and be required to report back on employment equity initiatives through council”.

The City established a Human Resources Network of Employment Equity Contacts to implement the equity policy and survey the workforce. A representative from the Toronto Public Library (TPL) Human Resources Department has participated as a member of the City's Network since September 2001.

In compliance with the City requirement, TPL has developed an Employment Equity Policy that is modeled on the City policy and is reflective of its overriding principles. With respect to information requirements, the Library policy mirrors that of the City. To support the implementation of the Employment Equity Policy and specific components, the Library will engage in the following activities:

- conduct a voluntary employment equity survey;
- establish and maintain equity-related information databases; and
- compile and periodically verify data for accuracy and changes, particularly with respect to disability status.

Also, the Library's policy includes responsibility for providing advice and support to TPL departments on the development and implementation of special initiatives; barrier removal (accommodation measures); supportive measures (retention, retraining, deployment); and positive measures (outreach). While the scope of the Library's policy is narrower in its definition of program components than the City policy, it is anticipated that TPL will play a partnership role in City public education initiatives. The Library provided the Union with a copy of the Employment Equity Policy at the January 17, 2002 Labour Management meeting and discussed it at the February 21, 2002 meeting. Staff will consult with the Union regarding implementation.

Comments:

The adoption of an Employment Equity Policy for Toronto Public Library employees will allow a complete database to be assembled to determine and monitor the participation of designated groups in the Library's workforce. It will provide for the development of strategies and special initiatives to promote equity in the workplace and ensure fairness in hiring, promotion and retention of all employees.

Conclusion:

This policy forms part of the Library's ongoing efforts to harmonize the different policies of the former Toronto area library systems in accordance with the City's approval of staff policies.

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List of Attachments:

Attachment 1: Toronto Public Library Employment Equity Policy

Attachment 2: City of Toronto Employment Equity Policy