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## **Inclusive Hiring**

Presented by: Ryan Stovall, Director, Human Resources & Safety Department

## **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

That the attachment to the October 28, 2019 agenda report entitled "Inclusive Hiring" be received as information.

## **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

Per City Council Policy C-HR-03 Inclusive Hiring administration shall "Provide a progress update to Council, once every 3 years on the implementation and achievements related to this policy to determine its overall effectiveness." This report details the implementation efforts and achievements to date.

## **ALIGNMENT TO PRIORITIES IN COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PLAN**

N/A

## **ALIGNMENT TO LEVELS OF SERVICE DELIVERY**

Internal Service Level - Employee Recruitment & Selection

Programs and procedures shall be implemented to ensure Persons with Disabilities have access to employment opportunities.

Employment opportunities will be provided in an Accessible Format upon request.

Reasonable efforts shall be made to the point of Undue Hardship, to identify and remove barriers to employment, career development and promotion of Persons with Disabilities.

## **ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL DIRECTION OR MANDATORY STATUTORY PROVISION**

N/A

## **BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION**

Following Council's approval of City Council Policy C-HR-03 Inclusive Hiring, the City of St. Albert has approved Administrative directives aligned to guide the administration of programs designed to educate hiring managers and ultimately to increase the prevalence of persons with disabilities in the workplace. The City has implemented the Cultivating Abilities Program (See attachment) and built partnerships with a number of agencies that support persons with disabilities in St. Albert and the Capital Region. Agency partners have been key resources that can also be utilized to educate City staff and to ensure the City's needs are aligned and appropriate for the persons with disabilities that they support. Unfortunately, the needs in the community continue to exceed what the City of St. Albert can offer and many persons with disabilities remain unemployed or underemployed. While prevalence information specifically for St. Albert is not available, the Province reports the following statistics relating to adult Albertans living with a disability:

2.9% - Percentage of persons aged 15 and over who reported a developmental disability

13.4 % - Percentage of persons aged 15 and over who reported a learning disability

11.3% - Percentage of persons aged 15 and over who reported a psychological disability

12.6% - Percentage of persons with disabilities who reported that their condition limited their ability to work

*Source: "What Works: Career-building strategies for people from diverse groups" Government of Alberta Employment & Immigration"*

Ultimately these programs and relationships have increased temporary employment of persons with disabilities under project funding since 2017, and has meant ongoing temporary employment with 4 employees. This employment has provided significant value to the City, as well as to employees, as identified in corresponding testimonials (attached). Further to project funded roles, the City has provided temporary and permanent accommodations to employees that became disabled from non-occupational related reasons, or in some cases, during their employment. Approximately 10% of employees are supported through temporary (which accounts for greater than 90% of situations) or permanent accommodations annually.

In addition to department advocates and resources that exist in Human Resources and Community Services Departments, the City has held information sessions to educate over 65 permanent staff on employing persons with disabilities. These sessions also sought to educate on opportunities for persons with disabilities to roles beyond entry level or administrative functions and illustrate creative ways that work and tasks can be changed or bundled to provide more opportunities. Beyond those attendees at an education session many more staff have fostered work experiences as a team member that works with a person that has a disability, and through this process, many have become advocates to eliminate barriers for their colleagues. However, at 650 permanent employees within the City there is considerable room to educate and enhance learning in the corporation and build capacity in recruiting and employing persons with disabilities to all leaders and eventually all staff.

The largest barrier and point of feedback to the City's program is that dedicated funding has been temporary in nature. Department hiring managers are concerned that with no budget growth and project type funding, eventually they will be placed in a position of ending term employment where an employee does not voluntarily transition to alternative City positions. For employees, similarly, they are concerned that temporary funding will be depleted and with no alternative that provides the flexibility and accommodations needed, that their employment will come to an end. Also, due to disability, people will seek positions of a part time nature. As most permanent roles within the City are

full-time, it is rare that a person employed within a City program will apply on the permanent position. This is a structural barrier that could mean splitting of full-time roles to part time, or additions of part time positions, has a positive correlation with our percentage of employment of persons with disabilities.

On September 6, 2019, the City conducted a focus group with agency partners to understand from their perspective the successes and gaps of the City's policies and programs. In summation the agencies were appreciative of the City's efforts but identified the need in the community is large and continued efforts and resources are desired. A more permanent commitment and more opportunities is preferred for persons with disabilities versus temporary relationships. Agencies also identified that the City has programming designed for all persons with disabilities. This can result in situations where persons with intellectual and cognitive disabilities remain disadvantaged over others that have non-intellectual or cognitive disabilities. It was recommended to the City that a proportion of opportunities should be designed and targeted towards persons that specifically live with an intellectual or cognitive disability.

The City has an internal service level related to inclusive hiring however lacks a target or goal in terms of identifiable metrics or quantitative demographics of employing persons with disabilities. A corporate goal would guide administrative actions and decision making to more consciously determine opportunities to employ persons with disabilities.

Although the City maintains simple metrics on staff that are accommodated or employed within project funding there remains gaps in collecting data of self identification of employees with disabilities. The voluntary nature of demographic information within the City's applicant tracking system has resulted in the City being unable to report on percentage of applicants that identify as having a disability and the percentage ultimately hired. The City could improve its collection of demographic data to better understand the representation of persons with disabilities in its workforce.

Moving forward the City will continue to work with agencies to find and implement the best possible approach(es) to align the needs of the corporation with the needs of the community. The next update to council would occur in approximately 3 years time unless a motion or request is made to amend the progress update timeline.

## **STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATIONS OR ENGAGEMENT**

A focus group with agency partners that support persons with disabilities took place on September 6th, 2019.

## **IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)**

### Financial:

Currently the Inclusive Hiring program operates within a) operating budget for ongoing or temporary positions and b) project funds of \$50,000 per year in 2016, 2017, and 2018. These funds continue on a carryforward basis and are utilized to provide opportunities to persons with disabilities that are aligned with departmental or corporate needs. Upon use of all project funds, which is anticipated to occur by 2021, opportunities for persons with disabilities would exist only within the operating budget of the City unless program funding is extended.

Legal / Risk:

None at this time.

Program or Service:

None at this time.

Organizational:

None at this time.

## **ALTERNATIVES AND IMPLICATIONS CONSIDERED**

N/A

Report Date: November 12, 2019

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