

Report to / Rapport au:

**OTTAWA POLICE SERVICES BOARD
LA COMMISSION DE SERVICES POLICIERS D'OTTAWA**

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Submitted by / Soumis par:

Chief of Police, Ottawa Police Service / Chef de police, Service de police d'Ottawa

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SUBJECT : EQUITABLE WORK ENVIRONEMNT – ANNUAL REPORT

OBJET: ÉQUITÉ EN MILIEU DE TRAVAIL — RAPPORT ANNUEL

REPOR RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Ottawa Police Services Board receive this report for information.

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

Que la Commission de services policiers d'Ottawa prenne connaissance du présent rapport a titre d'information.

BACKGROUND

On August 16, 2012, a female Ottawa Police Service (OPS) officer filed a human rights application with the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario against the Ottawa Police Services Board (OPSB or Board), alleging discrimination in employment on the basis of sex, marital status, and family status (protected grounds under the Ontario Human Rights Code). The Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) intervened as a party under section 37 of the Ontario Human Rights Code (Code).

As part of the 2015 settlement reached through the OHRC, the OPS agreed to undertake a series of actions to address inequities related to gender within the organization.

In the Fall of 2017, the OPS concluded its obligations under the Minutes of Settlement in accordance with the prescribed deadlines. Out of the deliverables of the Minutes of

Settlement, the OPS developed and implemented the Equitable Work Environment (EWE) Policy.

The EWE Policy reaffirmed the Service's commitment to providing an environment that is inclusive, reflective of the community it serves, and free of systemic barriers that cause discrimination in the employment relationship as related to protected Human Rights Code grounds (age, race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex (including pregnancy), gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, record of offences, marital status, family status, and disability).

The Policy commits the OPS to ensuring equitable workplace processes and practices at all stages of the employment relationship, including but not limited to recruitment, hiring, competitions, promotions, temporary/acting assignments, job placements, and training/development opportunities.

The EWE Policy establishes the requirement for regular audits and reviews to measure the performance of the policy and to monitor and evaluate progress toward achieving an equitable workplace. The policy also establishes a requirement for the Chief of Police to provide an annual report to the Board.

DISCUSSION

The Equitable Work Environment Policy supports the Service's commitment to fostering a work culture that actively promotes equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). The policy defines the expectations, accountabilities, and monitoring requirements to support a diverse workforce through equitable opportunities and decision-making at the OPS. The policy reinforces equitable and inclusive workplace practices that demonstrate all members are valued for the unique skills and contributions they bring to their respective roles. Furthermore, the policy provides the opportunity for all OPS members to advance their careers through equitable treatment in all aspects of the employment relationship.

The EWE Policy supports Ottawa Police Services Board legislative obligations as defined through OPSB policies AI-003 Equal Opportunity, Discrimination and Workplace Harassment Prevention, CR-1 Positive Workplace, and CR-14/GA-14 Accessibility Policy, as well as a number of OPS policies, practices and programs including but not limited to the Service's Accessibility Policy; Accommodations Policy; Civilian Job Competition Policy; new Human Rights Core Policy; Official Language Policy; Sworn Promotion Policy; Workplace Harassment, Violence and Discrimination Policy; and multiple accommodations related procedures including those related to Maternity, Parental Leave and Prevention of Discrimination and Accommodation based on Sex (including

Pregnancy); Prevention of Discrimination and Accommodation based on Gender, Gender Identity and Gender Expression; Prevention of Discrimination and Accommodation based on Family Status; and Prevention of Discrimination and Accommodation based on Disability.

Additionally, the Service's new DRIVE² (Diversity, Respect, Inclusion, Values, Equity and Engagement) Strategy, approved by the Board in April 2023, provides a number of tangible actions for continuous improvement to address workplace inequities within the OPS. The three-year strategy focuses on improving equitable opportunities within the Service as well as fostering a more inclusive environment both within the OPS workplace and in service delivery to Ottawa communities.

The Equitable Work Environment Policy Annual Report provides the Ottawa Police Services Board with an account of activities and initiatives undertaken by the OPS in 2023 to further advance equity within the Service.

Implementation of 2023-2025 DRIVE² Strategy and Other Workplace Initiatives

The Service's DRIVE² Strategy provides a roadmap for the Service's continued journey of transformative change. The strategy includes defined and actionable deliverables that fully support the Board's ongoing strategic priorities which focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) and human rights as key elements to improving both workplace culture and service delivery.

The DRIVE² Strategy incorporates EDI and human rights considerations across functions and initiatives at OPS. The three-year strategy was developed in collaboration with the Community Equity Council (CEC) and is reflective of numerous inputs from both community and OPS members, as well as multiple stakeholder engagements and third-party reviews and audits that identified needed changes to improve culture and service delivery. The strategy embeds EDI as a shared responsibility across the Service and sets the organization in the direction of continued teamwork, growth, and progress.

Among the commitments within the new strategy are the following key equitable workplace-related deliverables:

- An Employment Systems Review (ESR)

Implementation of an ESR across Human Resources to identify and address systemic barriers to improve equity for all members.

Self-Identification Data Collection Implementation of a method for regular collection and reporting of member self-identification information to better assess workplace equity and inform future initiatives.

- Safe Workplace Program (SWP)

Includes strengthening subject matter related policies, procedures, tools, and training, along with the creation of a new policy approach to align related human rights and EDI policies together within a unified framework.

- Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)

Expansion of ERGs, and formalized processes to support awareness-raising events and other member inclusion activities.

- Interfaith Prayer Spaces

Creation of interfaith prayer spaces in the workplace for members.

The Service made considerable progress in 2023 to deliver on the above-mentioned initiatives. The Employment Systems Review is a large-scale undertaking, innovative in the policing field and designed to be implemented in a multi-phased approach - with Phase 1 (assessment of recruitment, selection and hiring practices) currently underway. An ESR examines Human Resources systems from an employment equity perspective, assessing current processes and practices across nine employment systems¹ to ensure equity in employment opportunities for all employees. The end result will be changes to, and/or removal of, policies and practices that negatively impact employment-related equity within the Service.

OPS is also working closely with City of Ottawa counterparts to implement internal functionality to collect member self-identification data, which will better inform EDI-related initiatives through current and autonomous data capture and analysis capabilities. This functionality will allow the organization to identify potential systemic issues through examination of employment equity related representation rates to better guide employment initiatives and address employee needs.

Additionally, in alignment with continued progress on the Safe Workplace Program (for which the Board will receive updated information through separate reporting), the OPS implemented significant policy changes to support its commitment to upholding employment equity and respect for human rights throughout its employment and service delivery practices. Along with an updated Workplace Harassment, Violence,

¹ The nine employment systems reviewed as part of an ESR include: Recruitment, Selection, Hiring, Promotion, Retention, Training, Development, Termination, and Accommodation.

Discrimination and Reprisal Policy which both streamlines and strengthens content previously contained within two separate workplace-related policies (the former Respectful Workplace Policy and the previous Violence & Harassment in the Workplace Policy), the Service also updated its Equitable Work Environment Policy to more effectively address legislative obligations and support the goals of the Board's [new strategic plan](#) (draft approved at the Nov.27/23 OPSB meeting). To support this important work, the OPS also introduced a new Human Rights Core Policy, which ultimately defines the Service's commitment, as both a public service organization and an employer, to upholding the fundamental rights of all persons as enshrined in various legislation by which the organization is governed, including the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the Ontario Human Rights Code. The policy work undertaken in 2023 also better positions the OPS to meet upcoming obligations under the new Community Safety and Policing Act, which will come into force in the Spring of 2024.

In alignment with DRIVE² Strategy deliverables, the OPS also continued to support Employee Resource Groups in 2023, providing the three existing groups (Women's Internal Network & Support, LGBTQ2+, and Ethno-cultural & Religious Diversity) and a new ERG (the Asian Association) with the supports, structure, and funding needed to deliver on ERG group specific initiatives including awareness-raising events, growth opportunities, and other opportunities to impact change within the organization.

In June 2023 the OPS also introduced its first dedicated Interfaith Prayer Space for employees, with additional dedicated spaces planned across OPS locations. The rooms recognize and support employee needs based on Creed (a protected ground under the Ontario Human Rights Code) and promote more inclusive workspaces by respecting individual needs and the diversity of OPS's workforce as an asset to the organization.

In addition to DRIVE² Strategy related initiatives, significant work to improve employment equity within the organization continued to unfold in 2023. EDI related subject matter expertise was incorporated into promotional processes at all ranks as well as to revised performance management processes, candidate assessments, acting assignments, and other employment related opportunities. The Service continued and in fact expanded use of its tailored EDI & Engagement Lens into strategy, planning, major initiatives, policy revisions, and various Human Resources processes including employee movements and other candidate selection processes, further ensuring equitable processes and decision-making practices within the OPS workplace.

Coaching, Mentoring, and Training

OPS continued to deliver its anti-Black racism learning sessions for all members in 2023. Developed with police and community input, the sessions explore the social construction of race and how systemic racism affects an organization's policies, processes, and business practices. Participants are provided with an opportunity to reflect on anti-Black racism and how historical and current context can impact interpersonal relationships and service delivery.

The Service also continued to deliver Active Bystandership for Law Enforcement (ABLE) training to all members. ABLE training was developed by Georgetown University with the objective of creating inclusive law enforcement cultures that support peer intervention and provide skills to intervene successfully, regardless of rank, to prevent harm. The course is designed to enhance self-awareness, as well as explore the science behind bystandership, and builds skills to move from passive to active bystandership.

Additionally, as part of the Service's Operational Leadership Course, subject matter experts participated in open panel discussions to increase operational awareness at mid-management levels.

Throughout 2023, employment equity and human rights related subject matter expertise was also provided on an ad hoc basis to guide more equitable and inclusive practices and decision-making throughout the organization.

Enhanced Member Wellness Supports and Inclusion Efforts

In support of an inclusive work environment the OPS maintains a comprehensive Wellness Strategy, Employee Assistance Program, and Peer Support Program. Critical elements of Wellness initiatives at OPS include supporting and coordinating the delivery of the Peer Support Program for members and their families. Other elements include, following critical / traumatic incidents, promoting wellness initiatives within the OPS as a key part of resiliency for both active and retired members and their families, and promoting a positive environment for open discussion about mental health through strategies to reduce stigma.

To further support a diverse and inclusive workplace, the OPS continues to share information about the availability of accommodations for applicants during its recruitment processes. Applicants are notified that accommodations are available upon request, and successful applicants are advised of OPS accommodation policies.

As the Service continues to identify and remove barriers that cause inequities in various aspects of the employment relationship, most notably those related to Ontario Human Rights Code protected grounds, the OPS recognizes that despite these efforts members may continue to require individual accommodations based on Code related needs. All accommodation needs are considered fairly and in good faith. No employee is penalized for making an accommodation request, and Code-related accommodation needs are provided to the point of undue hardship, as defined by the Code.

In 2024 the OPS will be conducting a review of all Wellness programs currently offered to employees, in an effort to identify any potential gaps as well as to ensure efficiency and effectiveness of the services provided.

Improved Member Complaint Resolution Process

As part of a joint strategy between OPS and the Board to address all forms of harassment and discrimination within the workplace, the OPS continued to refine complaint processes for members while prioritizing member wellness, safety, and confidentiality. In 2023, further changes were implemented to support independent investigations as needed and to build confidence in the program. Continued program enhancements included third-party sourcing for complaint investigations and implementation of the associated policy and procedures for greater clarity and adherence to approved processes. There remains a continued emphasis on independent investigations as warranted and an internal multi-stakeholder approach to resolution and restoration processes.

Additional Awareness-Raising Efforts

In a concentrated effort to foster a more equitable and inclusive environment at OPS that included continually raising awareness of EDI-related matters, the Service recognized a number of commemorative days in 2023 including but not limited to Black History Month (February), International Women's Day (March 8), International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (March 21), National Indigenous Peoples Day (June 21), Capital Pride Week (August 22-29), National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (September 30), International Inuit Day (November 7), and International Human Rights Day (December 10). Events and messaging celebrated the rich diversity within our city as well as within the OPS workforce and culminated with the Service's eighth annual Human Rights Learning Forum on December 7th, to coincide with the upcoming International Human Rights Day. The Forum provides attendees with the opportunity to gain insights into human rights issues impacting communities and offers a discussion platform to encourage positive change.

Additionally, in continued effort to build EDI capacity in support of policing practices that will improve community safety and well-being, demonstrate a duty of care, and improve trust with all residents, the OPS issued a number of internal EDI-related cultural awareness materials to improve employee knowledge and understanding of community and subject matter related issues and concerns.

The OPS recognizes that matters related to equity, diversity, and inclusion are constantly evolving and the Service must continually adjust to remain current and responsive to OPS member and community needs. To this end, the Service provides dedicated resources and opportunities for continual growth.

CONSULTATION

The OPS is committed to ongoing collaboration and consultation with both internal and external stakeholders. The organization continued to seek input from relevant functional teams and community groups on various initiatives throughout 2023, including data capture initiatives, training materials, and strategic planning. Meaningful and collaborative engagement with police and community members is fundamental to successfully fostering an equitable and inclusive police service.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

N/A

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

N/A

CONCLUSION

The OPS remains committed to providing an equitable and inclusive work environment for all members. This means ensuring that opportunities are open and accessible to all members, that diversity in all aspects and forms is encouraged and valued for the benefits it provides, and that each and every member is respected for the individual expertise and talents they bring to the organization.

The Service continues to identify and address systemic barriers, increase equitable access to opportunities, and foster a culture of respect that leverages the talents of all individuals who join the Service. In 2024 the OPS will be conducting a review of all Wellness programs currently offered to employees, in an effort to identify any potential gaps as well as to ensure efficiency and effectiveness of the services provided.

The OPS remains committed to ensuring an equitable and inclusive work environment that not only reflects and values the great diversity within Ottawa but also provides

opportunity to all OPS members to contribute meaningfully to the Service and to the community.