

**Report to / Rapport au:**

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

**24 January 2022 / 24 janvier 2022**

**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 ENVIRONMENT ANNUAL REPORT**

**OBJET: ÉQUITÉ EN MILIEU DE TRAVAIL — RAPPORT ANNUEL**

**REPORT 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 (Board), alleging discrimination in employment on the basis of sex and family status. 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, with regular reporting at each phase of the project.

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 OPS' commitment to providing an environment that is inclusive, and free of barriers related to protected 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 EWE Policy established the following leading policy statement that, along with other Board and OPS human rights policies, continues to guide Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) work at the OPS:

The OPS will serve the community and create and maintain an equitable and adaptive work environment that ensures every employee can make a valuable contribution, free from systemic barriers and discrimination, throughout their OPS career. The OPS is committed to fostering a work culture that actively promotes equity, diversity and inclusion.

The EWE Policy commits the OPS to removing systemic barriers that cause discrimination in the employment relationship by identifying and eliminating discriminatory policies and practices. This includes all stages of the employment relationship, including recruitment, hiring, competitions, promotions, job placements, and training.

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 EWE Policy supports the Service's commitment to fostering a work culture that actively promotes equity, diversity and inclusion. The policy encourages a workplace where all members are valued for the unique contributions they bring to their respective roles and supports members in this regard, through equitable treatment in all aspects of the employment relationship and the elimination of barriers to the contrary.

The policy is supported by a number of internal, related policies, practices and programs including the Service's Accessibility Policy; Accommodations Policy; Civilian Job Competition Policy; Human Rights and Race Relations Policy; Official Language Policy; Respectful Workplace Policy; Sworn Promotion Policy; Violence

and Harassment in the Workplace Policy; Process and Procedure on Maternity, Parental Leave and Prevention of Discrimination and Accommodation based on Sex (including Pregnancy); Process and Procedure on Prevention of Discrimination and Accommodation based on Gender, Gender Identity and Gender Expression; Process and Procedure for Prevention of Discrimination and Accommodation based on Family Status; Process and Procedure for Prevention of Discrimination and Accommodation based on Disability; and the Employee Assistance Program.

Additionally, the Service's 2020-2022 Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Action Plan, tabled in January 2020 and approved by the Board the following month, not only supports the EWE Policy but also provides the blueprint to implement change and address inequities. The strategic three-year plan is focused on improving equitable opportunities within the Service, as well as improving service delivery and police relations - particularly with marginalized communities.

The EWE Policy Report provides the Board with an account of activities and initiatives undertaken in 2021 to further advance equity within the OPS.

### **Continued implementation of the 2020-2022 EDI Action Plan**

The 2020-2022 EDI Action Plan, a major deliverable of the Board's Strategic Plan in the priority area to make "meaningful progress on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion," was approved by the Board in February 2020.

The Plan is focused on creating meaningful and measurable progress towards a workplace culture that embraces EDI, and leverages significant police and community input, as well as survey and report recommendations – including recommendations drawn from the [Ottawa Police Service 2019 Diversity Audit Report](#) conducted by Graybridge Malkam (presented to the Board on November 25, 2019).

The 2020-2022 EDI Action Plan includes the following ten priority action items, of which just over half are internally focused on equity within the workplace (actions items focused on improving equity within the organization are bolded below):

1. **Create an EDI Office to enhance EDI efforts and coordination across the OPS.**
2. **Provide EDI coaching and mentoring to equip our leaders with culture change and EDI tools.**
3. **Develop an EDI Lens Toolkit to improve our decision-making for internal and external systems and responses – i.e. missing**

**persons/Indigenous women, and internal transfers, promotions, and developmental rotation processes.**

4. Reintroduce the Hate Crime Section to improve response and support to impacted communities.
5. Enhance community policing including expansion of Neighbourhood Resource Teams.
6. Continue anti-racial profiling efforts on addressing over- and under-policing concerns, using a multi-stakeholder approach to policy, procedures, and accountability measures.
7. **Update Outreach & Recruitment and Background Check Processes to remove unintended barriers and increase competitive applications.**
8. Initiate community dialogue and work with stakeholders for more effective mental health response (including training) with an interagency and intersectional approach that addresses gaps, improves service delivery, builds collective action, and contributes to community safety and well-being.
9. **Enhance member wellness supports and inclusion efforts - accommodations, early intervention, and formalizing Employee Resource Groups (ERGs).**
10. **Improve the complaint resolution process for members and supervisors– including a special project focused on addressing sexual violence and harassment in the workplace.**

The Service continues to implement its EDI Action Plan and provides a fulsome account of the status of each action item to the Board through separate reporting (the EDI Action Plan Update Report). With respect to supporting a more equitable work environment, the OPS provides the following updates to related action plan items and other initiatives undertaken in 2021.

### **EDI Coaching and Mentoring**

OPS leaders participated in Intercultural Development Inventory assessments and received personalized development plans to effectively increase their respective skills in intercultural competence. EDI staff were also trained and licenced as IDI Qualified Administrators in Q1 2021.

Additionally, in an effort to develop the intercultural skills of all members, the OPS delivered a number of mandatory foundational courses in 2021 - with additional learning opportunities to follow in 2022:

- A five-module online learning series titled The Path: Your Journey Through Indigenous Canada featured foundational learning material, with content aimed at meeting various Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action. All OPS members were required to complete this course.
- All members were also invited to complete the Ontario Human Rights Commission's Call it Out – Understanding Systemic Racism course, which offers foundational learning about race, racial discrimination, and human rights protections under the Ontario Human Rights Code. This learning module is an important prerequisite to additional learning material on anti-Black racism, currently being developed.
- Members were also required to complete an online learning module titled Using a Trauma-Informed Approach, which introduces the concept and impacts of trauma, the different range of reactions to trauma, and how to conduct investigations using a trauma-informed approach.

To further develop awareness and understanding of EDI within the Service, relevant case law summaries were drafted and shared through briefing note format as well as direct training to officers. Senior Management and Field Training Officers also received training on the fundamental concepts of EDI, and a dedicated content stream was developed on the Service's new learning platform (Degreed) for access by all members.

### **Development of a customized OPS EDI Lens Toolkit**

In partnership with Global Affairs Canada's Centre for Learning in Intercultural Effectiveness and International Assistance Policy (CIL), a customized EDI Lens Toolkit was drafted in an effort to weave EDI considerations into the work of all functions at the OPS. CIL leveraged the Government of Canada's Gender-Based Analysis+ process and tool, adapting the material in consideration of the OPS work environment. The robust tailored Toolkit facilitates the application of EDI considerations to a wide variety of initiatives and processes and will be integrated into strategy and planning going forward.

### **Application of EDI Lens to HR processes**

Development of the Service's new EDI Lens provided the OPS with opportunity to pilot the Lens template with several HR-related initiatives and decision-making processes in 2021.

The EDI Lens was applied to the Sworn Transfer process and served to address a number of systemic barriers noted within the process through greater transparency

in decision-making and more clearly defined and documented assessment criteria to reduce potential inequities. Additionally, both Sworn and Civilian Acting Assignment Guidelines were reviewed from an EDI perspective to support equitable opportunity to all qualified candidates, with EDI considerations added to the processes in order to incorporate human rights and EDI best-practices. The EDI Lens was also applied on an ad hoc basis to other HR-related issues and selection processes, including review of several candidate assessments, potential interview questions, and various job descriptions. The EDI Lens is also being applied to an ongoing review of the current promotions process at the OPS.

### **Enhanced Member Wellness supports and inclusion efforts**

The Service is dedicated to a duty of care for its members as well as the public, and maintains numerous supports for member wellness including, but not limited to, both internal and external supports, a comprehensive Wellness Strategy, the Employee Assistance Program, and a peer support program. Additional supports developed in 2021 include:

- The Early Intervention Program, which launched April 1, 2021. The purpose of the OPS Early Intervention program (EIP) is to identify members who may be in need of support, and to provide resources to assist the member at the earliest stages of an issue. EIP is a confidential and non-disciplinary process to identify members using specific criteria and offer assistance by identifying members who may need assistance as a result of work-related and/or personal stressors in a timely, supportive and non-disciplinary manner. The EIP is only one of the methods available by which members are identified as possibly needing assistance. It is intended to serve as a data-driven systematic approach to highlighting members that might need assistance that might otherwise have been missed. The intent of the program is to provide support to members through their supervisors.
- A new Reintegration Program was introduced with training in Q4 2021. This new program is designed to assist members with a healthy and safe return to work, utilizing Exposure Therapy in collaboration with the participant's clinician. This is an individualistic program developed with the member's input to aid in the elimination of any identified triggers. The exposures can include entering a police building, exposure to lights, sirens, uniform, taser, gun, police radio or any other situation that may be mutually agreed to be beneficial. The goal is to assist officers who have been off work for any period of time to return to the normalcy of work settings by providing supports

and training that are outside the scope of what they have received from their healthcare provider. The sessions are at the member's pace and are individually tailored to their needs to support a safe and successful return to work. The short-term program will be utilized following a critical incident. The primary goal is to get the officer back to work shortly after a critical incident while diminishing the potential for long-term psychological injury.

- A Peer Support Team of 38 members remains in place, representing active sworn and civilian members, family members and retirees. Peer support involves connecting with another person who has lived experience of their own and can relate to what an individual is going through – for example a divorce, an illness in the family, or a difficult call. It is completely confidential.
- A new Wellness Portal is also being developed, which will support OPS members, retirees and their families. The portal has been designed in collaboration with internal and external stakeholders and is planned for launch in 2022.

To further support a diverse and inclusive workplace, the OPS continues to share information about the availability of accommodations for applicants with disabilities during its recruitment process. Applicants selected for interview 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 Code protected grounds, the OPS recognizes that, despite these efforts, members may continue to require individual accommodations. All accommodation requests are considered fairly and in good faith. No employee is penalized for making an accommodation request, and such requests are provided to the point of undue hardship, as defined by the Code.

In 2021, the OPS continued to provide accommodations for needs related to Ontario Human Rights Code grounds, including Family Status accommodation requests related to the continued spread of COVID-19 and related restrictions.

### **Revised Workplace Sexual Violence and Harassment complaint resolution process**

In December 2020, the OPS engaged the services of Rubin-Thomlinson LLP (a Toronto-based Canadian law firm with expertise in investigations, workplace harassment and misconduct) to conduct a six-month comprehensive review of the

OPS Sexual Violence and Harassment program, as well as related policies and procedures. During this time, Rubin-Thomlinson confidentially received and investigated complaints about workplace harassment, discrimination, violence and reprisal. Results of the RT report will inform the OPS' strategy and approach going forward.

### **Additional awareness-raising efforts**

While annual events and activities to celebrate and raise awareness of Ottawa's diverse communities could not be held again in 2021 due to COVID-19 restrictions, the OPS continued to virtually recognize several dates of cultural or religious significance, including Black History Month (February), International Women's Day (March 8), and International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (March 21). A week-long campaign also ran from June 21-25 in recognition of National Indigenous Peoples Day (June 21) and Canadian Multiculturalism Day (June 27). The OPS also recognized Capital Pride Week (August 22-29), with messaging on internal OPS computer login screens and externally on social media platforms throughout the week. Additionally, the Progress Pride Flag was raised at three OPS locations for the duration of the week, including Elgin Street, 10<sup>th</sup> Line and Huntmar locations.

The OPS also commemorated the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30, 2021, encouraging all members to wear orange to acknowledge the history and legacies of the residential school system. Orange ribbons were also made available to OPS members, and members were encouraged to attend the many events taking place throughout the City. Also, in recognition of the day, the OPS Executive Boardroom was renamed The Tunnganarniq Boardroom in Honour of Annie Pootoogook. Annie was a prominent artist from Kinngait, Nunavut who lived in Ottawa prior to her tragic death in 2016. The word Tunnganarniq, translates to "fostering good spirits by being open, welcoming, and inclusive," and was chosen after consultation with the Community Equity Council's Indigenous Relations SubCommittee. This newly named boardroom will serve as a daily reminder to continue our efforts and remain committed to building an inclusive workplace and community for all.

In continued effort to build EDI capability in support of policing practices that will improve community safety and well-being, demonstrate a duty of care, and improve trust with all residents (and in particular members of our Indigenous and racialized communities), the OPS launched a regular newsletter called the "RVI Spotlight." The Spotlight provides members with insights into the world of Equity, Diversity and

Inclusion and why it plays an important role in policing. Articles featured in Spotlight editions are meant to increase awareness of EDI to reinforce the pillars of equal opportunity and the full inclusion of all OPS members, as well as duty of care in service delivery, through equitable and value-based decision making, policies and practices.

## **CONSULTATION**

The OPS is committed to ongoing collaboration and consultation with both internal and external stakeholders. The EDI team continued to seek input from relevant functional teams and community groups on various initiatives in 2021, including policy revisions, updates to training material and strategic planning. Meaningful and collaborative engagement with police and community members is fundamental to successfully fostering an equitable and inclusive police service.

## **CONCLUSION**

The OPS is committed to providing an equitable work environment for all members. This means ensuring that opportunities are open and accessible to all qualified 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 their respective expertise and the talents they bring the organization.

To this end, the Service will continue seek out and address systemic barriers, increase equitable access to opportunities, and foster a culture of respect that leverages the talents of all individuals who join and are a part of the Service.