

REPORT TO COUNTY COUNCIL

Internal Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Action Plan 2024-2025

To: Warden and Members of County Council

From: Director of Human Resources

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council receive Report HR 2023-08 entitled “Internal Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan 2024-2025” as information.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- The purpose of this report is to present the County's internal DEI Action Plan for 2024 to 2025 (Attachment 1), which outlines our organizational commitment to several strategic actions under 4 key priorities – a diverse workforce, an inclusive workplace, increased understanding through education and awareness, and inclusive and accessible internal communications.
- The plan was developed based on consultation with and input from the internal DEI staff committee, including our DEI Officer, as well as overall DEI organizational best practices.

IMPLEMENTATION POINTS

Implementation work is underway on some of the strategic actions outlined in the plan, with all strategic actions to be advanced over the coming years.

Financial Impact

The recommendation contained in this report has no financial impact. Any strategic actions that require financial resources, will be proposed through our annual budget and business plan process.

Communications




The Strategic Communication and Engagement team will support the development of an effective communication strategy so that all employees are aware of the internal DEI action plan.

2023-2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

Oxford County Council approved the [2023-2026 Strategic Plan](#) on September 13, 2023. The Plan outlines 39 goals across three strategic pillars that advance Council's vision of "Working together for a healthy, vibrant, and sustainable future." These pillars are: (1) *Promoting community vitality*, (2) *Enhancing environmental sustainability*, and (3) *Fostering progressive government*.

The recommendation in this report supports the following strategic goals.

Strategic Plan Pillars and Goals

PILLAR 1	PILLAR 2	PILLAR 3
		
Promoting community vitality	Enhancing environmental sustainability	Fostering progressive government
		Goal 3.3 – Attract, retain and engage staff

See: [Oxford County 2023-2026 Strategic Plan](#)

DISCUSSION

Background

Diversity, equity, and inclusion has become a key priority for all progressive organizations. Oxford County established an internal DEI committee in July 2021 and is comprised of 16 staff members from all departments. This committee has coordinated several DEI opportunities and

initiatives already but recognized the need for a focused and cohesive overall action plan to guide their work over the coming years.

The County's recently approved Strategic Plan, identified DEI as a value and specifically references Goal 3.3, as developing and implementing an internal DEI framework and action plan for the County. The work on this action plan was well underway upon adoption of the strategic plan, resulting in immediate advancement of this strategic goal. However, plan development is only the first step, with implementation to occur over the coming years.

Comments

As our communities become more diverse, it is crucial that Oxford County, as an employer, work towards recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce, and creating a work environment where diversity, equity, and inclusion are reflected, valued, and embedded in policy and practice.

To work towards achieving this goal, the internal action plan sets out 4 key priorities – 1. A diverse workforce, 2. An inclusive workplace, 3. Increased understanding through education and awareness, and 4. Inclusive and accessible internal communications. Under each priority are several strategic actions, for example, reviewing applicable County policies to ensure practices are fair, equitable, and inclusive; consider DEI and accessibility needs in the design or re-design of County spaces, such as reflection rooms; determine education related to DEI and provide necessary education; and developing an internal DEI website with links to relevant information, training, and resources.

It is recognized that we have much work to do in our DEI efforts, and this is our first action plan that must be accomplished within our current resources. As we work to accomplish the actions set out in this initial plan, we know new priorities will emerge and we expect another iteration of this plan in a few years, which sets out new goals and necessary actions.

CONCLUSIONS

The Internal DEI Action Plan represents a crucial step in outlining our organizational commitment to DEI by setting out strategic actions to be achieved over the next few years to work towards being a diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization. This work will positively impact our ability to attract, retain, and engage staff.

SIGNATURES

Departmental Approval:

Original signed by Amy Smith

Amy Smith
Director of Human Resources

Approved for submission:

Original signed by Ben Addley

Benjamin R. Addley
Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT

Attachment 1 - Internal Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan 2024-2025, November 8, 2023