Meeting Minutes

Anti-Black Racism Working Group

Wednesday, September 14th, 2022, 6:30 pm Online – Zoom Web Call

Attendees: Stephen Linton (Chair), Marsha Hinds-Layne (Vice Chair), Shaibu Gariba, Titi Katibi, Teronie Donaldson, Samantha Adebiyi

Library Staff: Sabrina Yung, Shobha Oza, Shahin Dashtkian

Absent: Nicole Facey, Charmain Brown, Bernadette Hood-Caesar, Romina Diaz

1. Welcome, Land and Ancestral Acknowledgements

- Sabrina introduces Shobha Oza the Director Engagement & Client Experience
- Land acknowledgement by Sabrina and Ancestral acknowledgement by Stephen the Chair.
- Shobha shared a little about around her previous work around community
 programs and initiative and her work with DEI framework. She is grateful for the
 opportunity in supporting the ABRWG in the work that we are doing

2. Conflict of Interest Declaration (Standing Agenda Item)

- Sabrina provided an update regarding Stephen's conflict of interest question tabled at the August ABRWG meeting, pertaining to his campaign for School Trustee in Pickering. There is no conflict of interest determined at this time.
- Group agreed that there no concerns or other conflicts of interest to declare.

3. Review August meeting minutes

No edits or omissions identified.

4. Reference Check Question Follow Up

- Shahin provided a PowerPoint presentation around the application process for volunteers at the library and provided an update with respect to the reference check question tabled by the ABRWG.
- PowerPoint will be share with members of ABRWG. Highlights include:
 - What types of volunteer opportunities are offered at the library.
 - o Volunteer application intake windows (Fall & spring and twice a year).
 - Process of the application process (which involves selection and interviewing).
 - Where potential candidates can access the volunteer application form and information.
 - Administrative steps once selected for volunteer work (onboarding welcome package, completion of online training, Criminal Reference Check and Vulnerable Sector Check, Health and Safety tour).

- What an active volunteer means, and the tasks involved.
- How the ABRWG volunteers fit under the current volunteer SOP, particularly noting that the appointment process as captured in the Terms of Reference differs compared to the other offered roles.
- **Sam:** For individuals who might have a negative CRC, it will be nice to still find a way to include them. These people are part of the community and want to give back and be part of the impact, so we can have them volunteer in different ways other than working with children. Perhaps something that can be done virtually, non-client facing. Think about how you deny/decline when there is a failed CRC/VSC. How may you be contributing to the traumatization when you decline their interest for volunteering?
- Stephen: Can a youth challenge the findings from his/her criminal records? Sam: Once the library receives a negative CRC, who, and how will the outcome of not having the opportunity to volunteer be related to the person? Sabrina noted that the library has had limited experience with receiving and responding to a negative CRC. With that said, during the conversation about reference checks, staff discussed identifying potential tasks and roles that would not require direct engagement with a client, and therefore potentially allowing us to remove a vulnerable sector requirement for those specific volunteer opportunities. One example of an activity we've started to explore is a volunteer 'sensitivity reader'. For example, if we were creating a survey for a particular audience such as youth, perhaps we could have volunteer youth to help proofread and given feedback on the questions. We had great success working with community partners when developing the anti-Black racism community survey.
- The group agreed that we want the tasks to still be a meaningful volunteer role, even if it doesn't involve direct interaction with the public.
- Marsha: We still want to make sure that users of the library are safe, and that
 includes other volunteers that the role may encounter. For example, sexual base
 offenses should be deal breakers. Also, we have to make sure that we are
 supporting them through the process, as some may have unique needs as they
 transition into the role.
- Sam: Think about how you will support individuals who are working on rehabilitating and reintegrating into society. Social worker? Staff support?
- **Shaibu:** How accessible are volunteer opportunities Black youth? Do you have data on that? Shahin/Sabrina shared that the library does not have a database on these identifiers for volunteers (or staff). We would not be able to offer a measure at this time the proportion of current active volunteer who self-identify as Black for that reason. Something to consider, as we learn more about race-based data collection and applications. In terms of accessible to the program, as in whether Black youth can access the opportunities as they open, the application process is conducted through the library's website and once an applicant is accepted, we communicate by email.

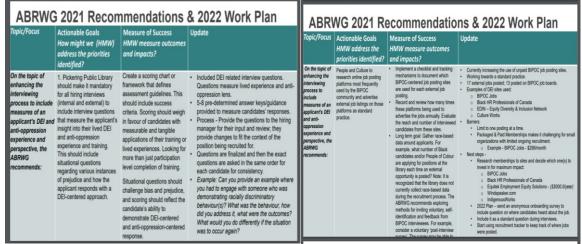
 https://pickeringlibrary.ca/volunteer-opportunities/. We could certainly support other formats if needed. Shahin also noted that staff facilitate outreach at local high schools and community events to promote volunteering at the library.
- **Stephen:** If we are successful in what we are doing, then we are creating opportunities for the youth to engage more. There was a time when carding

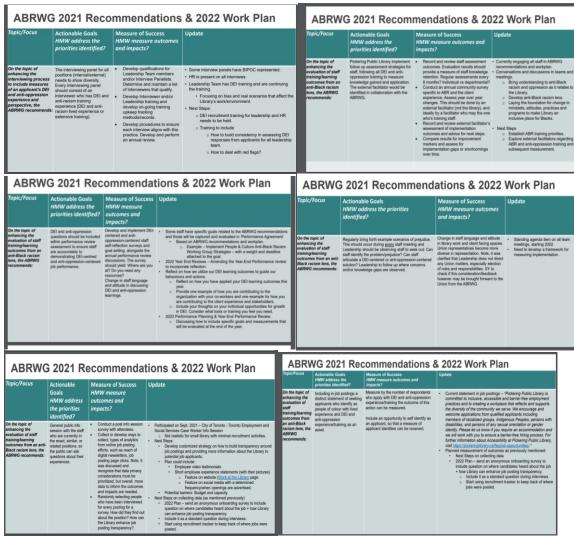
would put youth in the database and a flag would come up for CRC, they would have a negative CRC. So I would like the library to think about how these youth may get unfairly denied a volunteer opportunity. Some organizations give an opportunity for a deeper dive about the nature of the criminal charge flagged. So, is there a way to do a deeper dive or have a conversation with the person who has been flagged, to see what happened?

- Can we think of ways to communicate to the client that we hope they will discuss with us, regardless of the outcome of their reference check.
- Is there an FAQ we can provide to promote knowing that you may not be rejected.
- We can think about setting thresholds and create opportunities that do not trigger a need for a CRC/VSC. Example of sensitivity reader opportunity.
- The group agreed that we still want the community (clients) to see safe and cannot remove the requirement for that reason.
- **Teronie:** Is there a way to connect them (youth) to police services? There may be a resolution available for some youth, when it comes to clearing some of the records. Sam noted that it is possible to suggest youth seek support from a local a legal aid clinic.

5. People and Culture – ABRWG Recommendations Progress Update

- Actions were put in place in accordance with the recommendations from the ABRWG for People and Culture.
- Themes included:
 - Lack of visible diversity in the workforce, particularly front lines
 - Negative employee and client experience
 - Lack of visibility or access to job postings
 - Staff training and accountability





- **Sam**: This is intense work and I love that they will be including diversity on the interview process.
- Sabrina noted that the library will continue to circle back with the ABRWG to create a more detailed progress report for all deliverables in 2022.

6. ABRWG (Only) Events Discussion Debrief & Rescheduling of Events Team Follow Up

Sabrina's update: A second meeting with the event team was planned for October 12. However, the team has requested a postponement to the November meeting.

- Some of the November plans will be difficult to bump to the October meeting, as they require the events follow up conversation first.
- There was a discussion about library tours and having the group meet in person for the first time. Sabrina suggested for October, the ABRWG could meet at the library for a tour, meet and greet, and to conduct the group only events debrief in preparation for the November meeting. The group agreed to this work plan change. Additionally, the group is interested in some additional tours at George Ashe and Central Library at different times of the day to see the clientele and spaces.

- The group requested that the October in person meeting take place on a Saturday.
- Sabrina will send out a few dates for the October meeting as well as for the additional optional tours.

7. UN International Decade for People of African Descent Proclamation Follow Up

- Stephen noted there are no new updates at this time. Now, it is a conversation that we may need to have with Jaclyn for the City's process to move some of the other asks (ontop of the proclamation) forward.
- **Teronie:** The proclamation is approved, but the portion on identifying the flag raising is still to be discussed. Also, would need to have a design competition and determine the available funding support.
- Sabrina will follow up with Jaclyn for those details and arrange for her to meet the group (perhaps at the November meeting).

8. Youth Subcommittee Update

• **Stephen:** The young people that were supporting the committee, their schedule changed a little, so I will be circling back around with Elaine on that.

Next meeting date: October, in person - TBD (based on the availability to be submitted to Sabrina)