

# 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

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### **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.
  - 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

ABRWG 2021 Recommendations & 2022 Work Plan			
Topic/Focus	Actionable Goals How might we (HMW) address the priorities identified?	Measure of Success HMW measure outcomes and impacts?	Update
On the topic of enhancing the interviewing process to include measures of an applicant's DEI and anti-oppression experience and perspective, the ABRWG recommends:	1. Picking Public Library should make it mandatory for all hiring interviews (internal and external) to include interview questions that measure the applicant's insight into their lived DEI and anti-oppression experience and training. This should include situational questions regarding various instances of prejudice and how the applicant responds with a DEI-centered approach.	Create a scoring chart or framework that defines assessment guidelines. This should include success criteria. Scoring should weigh in favour of candidates with measurable and tangible applications of their training or lived experiences. Looking for more than just participation level completion of training.  Situational questions should challenge bias and prejudice, and scoring should reflect the candidate's ability to demonstrate DEI-centered and anti-oppression-centered response.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Included DEI related interview questions. Questions measure lived experience and anti-oppression lens.</li> <li>• 5-8 pre-determined answer keys/guidance provided to measure candidates' responses.</li> <li>• Process - Provide the questions to the hiring manager for their input and review; they provide changes to fit the context of the position being recruited for.</li> <li>• Questions are finalized and then the exact questions are asked in the same order for each candidate for consistency.</li> <li>• Example: Can you provide an example where you had to engage with someone who was demonstrating racially discriminatory behaviour(s)? What was the behaviour, how did you address it, what were the outcomes? What would you do differently if the situation was to occur again?</li> </ul>

  

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On the topic of enhancing the interviewing process to include measures of an applicant's DEI and anti-oppression experience and perspective, the ABRWG recommends:	People and Culture to research online job posting platforms most frequently used by the BIPOC community and advertise external job listings on those platforms as standard practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement a checklist and tracking mechanisms to document which BIPOC-centered job posting sites are used for each external job posting.</li> <li>• Record and review how many times these platforms being used to advertise the jobs annually. Evaluate the reach and number of interviewed candidates from these sites.</li> <li>• Long term goal: Gather race-based data around applicants. For example, what number of Black candidates and/or People of Colour are applying for positions at the library each time an external opportunity is posted? Note: It is recognized that the library does not currently collect race-based data during the recruitment process. The ABRWG recommends exploring methods for inviting voluntary, self-identification and feedback from BIPOC interviewees. For example, consider a voluntary "post-interview consent" that enables applicants to opt-in.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently increasing the use of unpaid BIPOC job posting sites.</li> <li>• Working towards a standard practice.</li> <li>• 17 external jobs posted, 13 posted on BIPOC job boards.</li> <li>• Examples of DEI sites used:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ BIPOC Jobs</li> <li>○ Black HR Professionals of Canada</li> <li>○ EDIN - Equity Diversity &amp; Inclusion Network</li> <li>○ Culture Works</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Barriers:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limit to one posting at a time.</li> <li>• Packaged &amp; Paid Memberships makes it challenging for small organizations with limited ongoing recruitment.                                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Example - BIPOC Jobs - \$29/month</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Next steps:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research memberships to sites and decide which one(s) to invest in for maximum impact:                                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ BIPOC Jobs</li> <li>○ Black HR Professionals of Canada</li> <li>○ EquiLink Employment Equity Solutions - (\$3000.0/year)</li> <li>○ WIndspeaker.com</li> <li>○ IndigenousWorks</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 2022 Plan - send an anonymous onboarding survey to include question on where candidates heard about the job.</li> <li>• Include it as a standard question during interviews.</li> <li>• Start using recruitment tracker to keep track of where jobs were posted.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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On the topic of enhancing the interview process to include measures of an applicant's DEI and anti-oppression experience and perspective, the ABRWG recommends:	The interviewing panel for all positions (internal/external) needs to show diversity. Every interviewing panel should consist of an interviewer who has DEI and anti-racism training experience (DEI and anti-racism lived experience or extensive training).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop qualifications for Leadership Team members and/or Interview Panelists. Determine and maintain a list of interviewers that qualify.</li> <li>Develop interviewer and/or Leadership training and develop on-going training upkeep tracking methods/records.</li> <li>Develop procedures to ensure each interview aligns with this practice. Develop and perform an annual review.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some interview panels have BIPOC represented.</li> <li>HR is present on all interviews.</li> <li>Leadership Team has DEI training and are continuing the training.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focusing on bias and real scenarios that affect the Library's work/environment.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Next Steps:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DEI recruitment training for leadership and HR needs to be held.</li> <li>Training to include                                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How to build consistency in assessing DEI responses from applicants for all leadership team.</li> <li>How to deal with red flags?</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
On the topic of enhancing the evaluation of staff training/learning outcomes from an anti-Black racism lens, the ABRWG recommends:	DEI and anti-oppression questions should be included within performance review assessment to ensure staff are accountable to demonstrating DEI-centred and anti-oppression-centred job performance.	Develop and implement DEI-centred and anti-oppression-centred staff self-reflection surveys and goal setting, alongside the annual performance review discussions. The survey should yield: Where are you at? Do you need any resources? Change in staff language and attitude in discussing DEI and anti-oppression learnings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some staff have specific goals related to the ABRWG recommendations and those will be captured and evaluated in Performance Agreement.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based on ABRWG recommendations and workplan.                                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Example - Implement People &amp; Culture Anti-Black Racism Working Group Strategies - with a weight and deadline attached to the goal.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>2022 Year End Review - Aligning the Year-End Performance review to incorporate reflections.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reflect on how we utilize our DEI learning outcomes to guide our behaviours and actions.                                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reflect on how you have applied your DEI learning outcomes this year.</li> <li>Provide one example of how you are contributing to the organization with your co-workers and one example for how you are contributing to the client experience and stakeholders.</li> <li>Include your thoughts on your individual opportunities for growth in DEI. Consider what tools or training you feel you need.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>2023 Performance Planning &amp; Year-End Performance Review                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussing how to include specific goals and measurements that will be evaluated at the end of the year.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
On the topic of enhancing the evaluation of staff training/learning outcomes from an anti-Black racism lens, the ABRWG recommends:	General public info session with the staff who are currently in the exact, similar, or related positions, so the public can ask questions about their experiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct a post info session survey with attendees.</li> <li>Collect, types of analytics from online job posting efforts, such as reach of digital newsletters, job posting page clicks. Note: it was discussed and recognize that data privacy considerations must be prioritized, but overall, more data to inform the outcomes and impacts are needed.</li> <li>Randomly selecting people who have been interviewed for every posting for a survey. How did they find out about the position? How can the Library enhance job posting transparency?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participated on Sept. 2021 - City of Toronto - Toronto Employment and Social Services Case Worker Info Session                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not realistic for small library with minimal recruitment activities.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Next Steps:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop customized strategy on how to build transparency around job postings and providing more information about the Library to potential job applicants.</li> <li>Plan could include:                                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employee video testimonials</li> <li>Short employee experience statements (with their pictures)   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feature on website (<a href="#">Link to the Library Page</a>)</li> <li>Feature on social media with a determined frequency/when openings are advertised.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Potential barriers: Budget and capacity.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Next Steps on collecting data (as mentioned previously)</li> <li>2022 Plan - send an anonymous onboarding survey to include question on where candidates heard about the job -&gt; how Library can enhance job posting transparency.</li> <li>Include it as a standard question during interviews.</li> <li>Start using recruitment tracker to keep track of where jobs were posted.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

- **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)