



## Staff Report

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**Report To:** General Government Committee

**Date of Meeting:** January 10, 2022

**Report Number:** CSD-003-22

**Submitted By:** George Acorn, Director of Community Services

**Reviewed By:** Andrew C. Allison, CAO

**By-law Number:**

**File Number:**

**Resolution#:**

**Report Subject:** Leading Equitable and Accessible Delivery in Clarington

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### Recommendation:

1. That Report CSD-003-22 be received for information.

## Report Overview

In the Fall of 2020, staff were approached by the Abilities Centre in Whitby to participate in the Leading Equitable and Accessible Delivery (LEAD) initiative. This initiative guides organizations through a facilitation process that results in an action-oriented work plan to assist the organization to embed accessibility and inclusion into their processes, programs, services, and organizational culture. This process moves Accessibility and Inclusion away from being a “check box” exercise. Looking at Accessibility and Inclusion from a consistent approach and being included in long term strategies and policies ensures the long-term sustainability and strategic approach to this important issue which removes the risk of inconsistency in its application.

Staff, with the help of the Abilities Centre, have identified nine strategic themes with actionable work plan items in each area. This work plan document has been prioritized with broad timelines to guide the work associated with this important initiative. By participating and implementing this LEAD initiative, the Corporation will be well positioned to embed accessibility and inclusion at every level of our organization and ensure that we promote an inclusive and welcoming environment for everyone.

## 1. Background

- 1.1 In Fall 2020, the Abilities Centre in Whitby offered the Municipality of Clarington the opportunity to participate in the Leading Equitable and Accessible Delivery (LEAD) process. The Abilities Centre is a national LEAD facilitator and has worked with organizations across Canada. The Municipality of Clarington embraced the process as the first government entity to participate in this initiative.
- 1.2 The LEAD project in Clarington began in Spring 2021. A LEAD Working Group was formed, which included representatives from the Diversity and Inclusion Staff Team, Senior Leadership Team, Council Liaisons to the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) and Diversity Advisory Committee (DAC), and two community representatives – both who are members of the AAC and DAC.

## 2. Methodology

- 2.1 The LEAD Working Group was guided through a facilitation process to identify focus areas, support a rationale for the work that we are doing, and develop action items to support the work plan. The facilitation process took a close look at the nine themes of the LEAD toolkit. These are Leadership, Structure, Governance, Strategy, Financial Management, Supplier-Partnership Management, People Management, Program and Service Delivery, and Facility and Technology Supports.

- 2.2 A draft Improvement Plan was developed and sent to the LEAD Project Group, made up of members of the Client Services team within the Community Services Department. The Abilities Centre reviewed the Improvement Plan with the Working Group to provide clarification and a full understanding of the recommendations.
- 2.3 The LEAD Project Group took the Improvement Plan and prioritized and set a time frame for the work to be completed. Each item was provided with a high, medium, or low priority. Each was then categorized in a time frame, long term (over 5 years), medium term (3 to 5 years), short term (1 to 3 years) or quick win (less than 1 year to implement.) Action items were prioritized based on their correlation and dependency on other items in the plan. Links to relevant resources and relevant staff have been identified to support each action item.
- 2.4 An overview of this Improvement Plan was presented back to the members of the LEAD Working Group in November 2021. The Abilities Centre provided an Executive Summary (Attachment 1) of our facilitation sessions where some of the priority areas are highlighted. This information was subsequently shared with the Department Head team, who agreed a report to Council was a good opportunity to share the great work with this initiative.
- 2.5 The Improvement Plan identifies a guiding principle related to each of the nine themes. There are recommended projects to support the principle, with outcomes and supporting action items that will help us to reach success in each of these themes.

### **Implementation**

- 2.6 While there are a large number of action items contained in the plan, many of these can be implemented at little or no cost to the organization. These action items involve recommendations such as policy enhancements, increased staff engagement, targeted community consultation and intentional strategy development.
- 2.7 One critical action item that supports work on many subsequent priorities is the completion of a Workforce Demographic Survey. This survey will provide a baseline for our organization so we can track our progress over time. This progress tracking will assess the impact of our other corporate-wide changes, inform additional action items where needed and will help us report on initiatives taken through LEAD and our Diversity and Accessibility portfolios.
- 2.8 The Workforce Demographic Survey has been submitted as part of the 2022 budget request. If approved, the survey will be conducted through a third party. The survey will provide us with quantitative and qualitative data that would assist us in a number of areas like comparing our workforce composition with the demographics of the community we serve, identifying gaps we may have in attracting employees from demographic groups which are represented in our community, identify inclusion and

diversity metrics including disability and gender to develop recruitment and succession planning strategies, understanding the nature of our workforce to see where different demographics of employees are within the organization in work areas, job types and levels, develop pathways for employees with disabilities and intersecting identities to advance their careers.

### **3. Concurrence**

3.1 Not applicable.

### **4. Conclusion**

4.1 Staff look forward to the implementation of the LEAD Improvement Plan and the benefits of a consistent and intentional incorporation of accessibility and inclusion in our processes, programs, services and ultimately our organizational culture.

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Attachments:

Attachment 1 – Executive Report - LEAD Improvement Action Plan - Prepared by Abilities Centre

Interested Parties:

There are no interested parties to be notified of Council's decision.