



## **TCHC’s Confronting Anti-Black Racism Strategy Development**

Item 6

November 20, 2020

Board of Directors

**Report:** TCHC:2020-57

**To:** Board of Directors (the “Board”)

**From:** President and Chief Executive Officer

**Date:** October 15, 2020

### **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this report is to provide the Board with an update on TCHC’s Confronting Anti-Black Racism Strategy and work undertaken to-date.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the Board receive this report for information.

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION:**

### **BACKGROUND:**

The murder of George Floyd in the United States on May 25, 2020 and the ensuing global protests against racial injustice and anti-Black racism, along with the death of Toronto Community Housing (“TCHC”) tenant Regis Korchinski-Paquet on May 27, 2020, led Black staff to reflect and begin discussions around anti-Black Racism at TCHC. In response to concerns raised by Black staff, TCHC reached out to the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit at the City of Toronto (the “City”) and initiated Anti-Black Racism training with the Executive Leadership Team (“ELT”) and made

arrangements for all people managers to complete this full day training session. Ongoing communication and meetings have continued with Senior Black Operations Staff and ELT members on a bi-weekly basis.

### **ACTIONS TO DATE:**

In the last five months, we have made Confronting Anti-Black Racism (“CABR”) a priority for the company and have undertaken the following actions to date.

#### **June**

- A communication was sent to tenants on June 5, 2020 reiterating TCHC’s commitment to tackling Anti-Black Racism and providing resources for tenants to access support during this very difficult time.

#### **July**

- A total of five Healing Sessions led by the Black Staff Caucus were held in July for staff. Four sessions for Black staff and one for all staff were held to share their experiences and thoughts/recommendations around Anti-Black Racism at TCHC.
- Close to 100 black staff attended the first four sessions and a further 88 participants, including Black employees, attended the all staff session.

#### **August**

- A thorough report of the Healing Circles feedback was compiled. The report was shared with ELT, and members of the Black Staff Caucus.
- Confronting anti-Black racism training delivered by the City of Toronto’s CABR unit with Directors commenced, the training encompasses a full day in person session which features a historical view the Black experience in Toronto while challenging staff to have some critical moments of discourse and self-reflection.
- CABR positions were posted and the hiring process was completed.

## **September**

- A dedicated CABR Strategy Development Team (Manager and a Policy Development Staff) was put in place as of September 14, 2020.
- Director training was completed and Manager training commenced.

## **October**

- Six Interns were hired to support the CABR Strategy Development process.
- Managers training was completed.
- Tenant and staff consultations and outreach will begin.
- Working with HR and Health and Safety to amend the current Employee and Family Assistance Program (“EFAP”) RFP seeking a service provider for TCHC. The amended RFP was revised to align with CABR priorities and a CABR lens to ensure current or new provider is able to meet the needs of Black staff including increased black service provider representation.

## **ISSUES ARISING:**

After collating the feedback and recommendations from staff, it is clear changes can be made to improve TCHC’s interactions with Black staff and tenants. It was recommended that the CABR strategy include both tenant and staff input and recommendations.

With the feedback and recommendations to date, the following 6 themes emerged:

## **Representation**

- Review of representation and diversity from division to division with a goal of diversifying staff makeup;
- Succession planning, training and mentorship for Black staff; and
- Increase job development opportunities for Black staff recruitment and advancement.

## **Engagement**

- Conduct a review of current policies, practices and procedures using a CABR lens (e.g. Hub Manual); and
- Develop a CABR framework to ensure Black staff and tenant participation in the creation of the strategy.

## **Culture**

- CABR training for all staff, including ELT and Board Directors around the impacts of micro-aggressions on Black staff and the overall impact on the organization;
- Black staff need safe spaces to unpack and discuss their experiences together; and
- Expand the Employee Family and Assistance Program to include Black therapists and clinicians.

## **Accountability**

- Establish a confronting anti- Black racism/Human Rights unit reporting to ELT or the Board who can help address issues of racism within the organization;
- Develop a mechanism for reporting Anti-Black Racism, ranging from micro-aggressions to blatant discrimination;
- Review and analysis of vendor records/complaints by region, including collecting disaggregated race based data;
- Develop/apply a vendor code of conduct with specific reference to Anti-Black Racism; and
- Strengthen accountability for anti-Black racism in the workplace.

## **Investment**

- Implementation of a Social Procurement/Community Benefits Policy with an emphasis on employment in areas plagued with violence;
- Review spending for security and tenant support to identify opportunities to increase social service programs and tenant training and development;
- Review of development contracts in Revitalization Projects to ensure Community Benefit principles are embedded and
- Investment in staff training and development.

## **Reform**

- TCHC must be an advocate around systemic barriers for our tenants; and
- Review and reinforce policies and procedures to strengthen trust between Black employees, tenants and the organization.

## **NEXT STEPS:**

We are working with the TCHC CABR strategy team to identify priority areas that can be implemented immediately, including the roll out of staff training, review of our Employee Family and Assistance program and developing a potential staffing model to create a TCHC staff group to review and address issues of anti-Black Racism for tenants and staff.

The CABR strategy team is also working to complete the strategy in Q1 2021 with the below timeline:

- November: Staff/tenant sessions continued
- December: Feedback collation/review and data review/plan development
- January: Draft presentation and review for ELT
- February: Final report completed and presented to the Board.

## **SIGNATURE:**

*“Kevin Marshman”*

---

Kevin Marshman  
President and Chief Executive Officer

## **ATTACHMENT:**

1. Confronting Anti-Black Racism at Toronto Community Housing PowerPoint Presentation

**STAFF CONTACT:**

Nadia Gouveia, Director, Programs and Partnerships

416-981-4090

Nadia.Gouveia@torontohousing.ca