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Halifax Regional Council  
May 6, 2003

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:

  
George McLellan, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: April 29, 2003

SUBJECT: Fire Service Recruitment - Out-Reach Initiative

## INFORMATION REPORT

### ORIGIN

As part of our Business Planning process, diversity has been identified as an important initiative for the Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency Service. One goal of this initiative is to attract more candidates from the designated communities to seek careers as Firefighters within the Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency Service.

### BACKGROUND

Since 1996, Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency Service has made efforts to attract African Canadians to the position of firefighter. Information sessions were held at the Black Cultural Centre, assistance and support was provided by the African Canadian Employment Clinic, a list of black communities and a contact list was developed and utilized to promote the career of firefighting, a school-work place program was implemented and an innovative hiring process was utilized in 1997. Despite these efforts there are currently only 7 African Canadian firefighters employed by Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency Services.

### DISCUSSION

In order to comply with the spirit of Halifax Regional Municipality's Employment Equity Policy and create a workplace which is representative of the communities we serve, it is necessary to take special measures to address systemic attitudinal barriers and increase representation.

As a result, Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency Services is very excited about its initiative to offer career opportunities as firefighters to African Canadians.

A partnership has been developed with members of the Black Community Workgroup of Halifax Co-operative Limited, Watershed Association Development Enterprises, the African Canadian Employment Clinic, and the YMCA Enterprise Centres to develop and promote this initiative, in conjunction with current black firefighters and other HRM representatives.

African Canadian candidates will be pre-screened to attend the Nova Scotia Fire Fighter's School in 2004. Once they have successfully completed their training, Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency Service has guaranteed to hire them as firefighters. Financial support to attend the Fire School will be provided by HRM and will be repaid by the candidate through payroll deductions once hired. All pre-screening costs will be absorbed by Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency Service.

Our current black firefighters and representatives of management will be going out into the black communities in the Spring and Fall of 2003 making presentations to outline the entrance requirements and the job responsibilities. Other outreach initiatives such as open houses will also be offered.

A press release will be issued and a press conference held in May to promote this initiative.

Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency Service will also be conducting a general recruitment process in October, 2003.

### **BUDGET IMPLICATION**

This initiative has been planned and is reflected in the 2003-04 Business Planning process.

### **FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN**

None

### **ALTERNATIVES**

None

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Additional copies of this report, and information on its status, can be obtained by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

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