

North End Business Association
Written by: Patricia Cuttell and Marika Parris
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E. info@gonorthhalifax.com
W. www.gonorthhalifax.com



WORKSHOP REPORT

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BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the “Diversity in the North End Business Community Workshop” was to determine actionable ideas and commitments that will a) increase employment opportunities, b) support career development, and c) develop business ownership for members of the local North End black community. The need for addressing employment issues in the North End emerged from a series of conversations with community leaders over the past 4 years, discussions with employment agencies, and engagement with North End business leaders and owners. Despite a collective desire by many to address issues of local employment, the reality is employment and business development within the local black community has only made incremental progress.

This workshop was designed to bring together the key players responsible for jobs, job development, employment, employment support, and community leadership to determine a shared vision, discuss employment realities, and determine actions that will change the status quo. The workshop was a call to action for those ready and able to take responsibility for shaping the future of the North End community.

This report is summary of the workshop including the pre-work, the discussions and the ideas for action. It is a record of what took place, and will become a foundational piece for subsequent work on this initiative.

Although employment for marginalized communities is an issue that spans beyond the North End, this workshop was focused specifically on the North End and the sphere of influence and ability of the North End Business Association. It was intended to look at local solutions to local issues.

NORTH END BUSINESS NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Given the local focus of this work, the North End Business Association conducted a needs assessment survey with its business members on diversity practices. The information gathered from this survey was meant to assess the level of need and awareness in terms of inclusion practices, as well as readiness to be active participants in leading change. With 50 responses, the survey provided a snap shot of what kind of businesses are located in the North End, what kind of employment opportunities exist, and what the level of readiness is in terms of supporting local hiring, career development, and diversity training.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM SURVEY

PROFILE:

- 42% of businesses hire 1-5 employees.
- 43% of businesses hire 2 – 20 employees.
- A large variety of types of businesses and skills required, including food industry, massage therapy, tech, construction, retail, media, and support roles like book-keeping, reception and cleaning.
- Work at North End Businesses ranges from contract part-time to full-time.

RECRUITMENT:

- In terms of hiring local, getting employment opportunities out to the community specifically tends to be a challenge due to time, effort, lack of knowledge of where to post ads to reach local talent. Many use bulletins, social media and word of mouth.
- 85% said they would consider posting in a wide variety of local hubs if there was a streamlined process for doing so.
- 71% of businesses said they would support internships.

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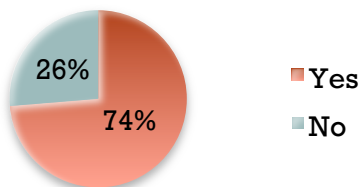
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TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT:

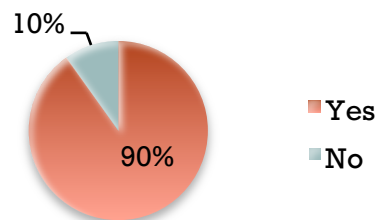
- In terms of training on diversity and inclusion, more than 25% provide some form of training, but 87% said they would be interested in tools and support for diversity training and support.
- 73% of respondents said they would be interested in a local hiring program.

While many business are interested in local hiring and addressing issues related to gentrification, making the connection between an available job, and an available and qualified local person in a timely and efficient way has proven to be a challenge for some.

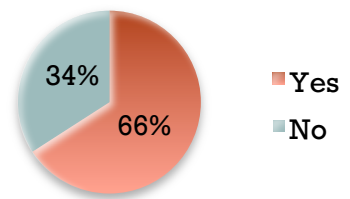
Would you be interested in participating in a local hiring program?



Do you consider local hiring and diversity in identifying and developing employees?



Are efforts made to advertise in a wide variety of places?



SETTING INTENTION

As a means of introducing the people in the room and establishing our collective intentions for being there, participants were asked to share their interest in attending the workshop, describe what their ideal north end looks like, and define what success for the workshop would look like. The discussion was captured on the white board where 5 themes emerged:

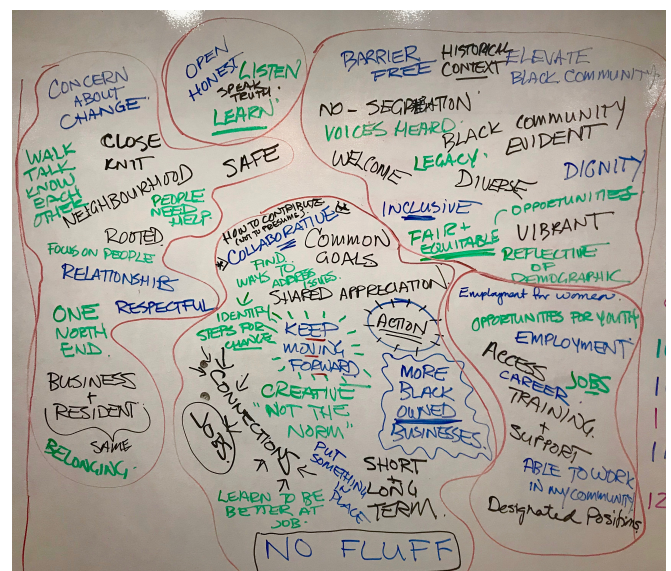
1. Openness & Honesty

2. Belonging & Community

3. Access & Equity

4. Recognition & Respect

5. Urgency & Action



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REALITY VS. DESIRED FUTURE

Once the collective intent for the day was established, participants were asked to organize themselves in groups of 5 or 6 that included a mix of business representatives, community leaders, and employment agency folks. This allowed for mix of perspectives at each table, and an opportunity to consider different points of view on the issues and challenges related to increasing the participation of members from the local black community in north end business activities. As a step prior to identifying ideas for action, groups were tasked with describing the current reality, and then their desired future reality. The point was to map out where action was required, and what we were looking to achieve. As the groups presented, patterns began to emerge in terms of issues and challenges. The summary of findings below is intended to reflect the current playing field we are operating within; and that we must acknowledge if we are sincere in finding solutions that are going to make a real impact on intended objectives. The words and statements have been grouped into overarching themes as a means creating a framework for the outcomes of the discussions. They are meant to reflect the honest and openness of the workshop that was required to get to the heart of barriers that are impeding real progress.



CURRENT REALITY

Gentrification issues

Lack of diversity in local businesses, food desert, lack of affordable housing, increasing rents, and community members feeling unwelcomed.

Exclusion from opportunities being driven by external and internal realities

Racism, discrimination, negative stigma, cynicism, ignorance, trauma, violence, mental health, literacy challenges, poverty, lack of education.

Lack of participation

Not enough black business owners, high unemployment, and stagnation for black and indigenous people.

Disconnect between business and community

Takes a long time to establish relationships, posting ads but no response, short pile of (local) resumes, small business jobs - wages unlivable, finding capacity to fill jobs, not enough applicants, limited visible interest, lack of awareness of ANS hires within the businesses.

No plan of action

People not knowing how to help, finding capacity to fill jobs, problems swept under the rug, lack of engagement, lack of communication, community job board at library (ad hoc?), lots of organizations but not changing to meet the needs, lots of turnover and knowledge lost.

DESIRED FUTURE

Job Creation and Connection

Mentorships, capital investment fund for young entrepreneurs, apprenticeships, social business incubator, lists for hiring, entry points needed, employment with community due to growth within businesses, roots to fruits (i.e. contractors, to suppliers, to employees), diversity in supply chain, retention, more black businesses, opportunities.

Programs and Supports

Connections to colleges and universities, financial literacy programs, therapeutic outlets, youth outlets, career development, structure and supports for employees, North End job website.

Community Building

Attract engagement, make connections between community and business, networking, equity and inclusiveness, creating space, working together, communication between business and community, greater involvement through a "Community Board", stronger connective tissue, welcoming, break the chain of pre-conceived stigmas.

Politics and Policy

Community benefit agreement on all constructions contracts for the community, political involvement, ANS hiring laws for med-large businesses, social policy lens, tax incentives, stop "School to Prison Pipe Line."

Meeting Local Needs

Affordable products and services, local and affordable food options, home ownership program, MRHA accountability.

IDEAS FOR ACTION

So how do we get there? Participants were asked to share their ideas for action. All ideas have been recorded below, and grouped to like-minded categories to provide a foundation for further developing the concepts, intentions, and objectives.

NORTH END INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY BUSINESS NETWORK (Needs a catchy name!)

- Business - Community Network
- Listing, Local/ Black Supply Chain, Businesses
- Next time I need to find an employee, I will work with NEBA to find applicants from the community
- Communication with business network of intent to create change
- Taking all and any phone calls for a better Business/ owner connection
- Utilize connections made within the room
- Connect with academic chairs to create website and work with N.E
- Job website work with NSCC, Funding program Navigator
- Create lasting relationships/ partnerships/ working relationships

NORTH END EMPLOYMENT AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

- Create a network of partners to develop a mentorship program,
- Commitment from businesses to employ/ work with youth to develop skills/ attitudes that allow them to grow/ be capable of moving ahead in their careers - achieve goals, own businesses
- Mentorship program to work with people who want to explore opportunities (career, business, etc.) to see what the process, skills etc. to get them to that goal
- Work on website to address the issue of employability in the North End with focus on African NS youth
- Entrepreneurial capital fund
- North End designated hiring practices

NEXT STEPS

So what is it going to take to move the North End from Current Reality to the Desired Future, and to implement these Ideas for Action? We need to recognize that it is those of us who were in the room who hold the power for co-creating the desired future. If not us, then who? By bringing together this collective intent, knowledge, desire for change — and using our connections and influence — we can make a difference.

Most important, we can start now.

While some ideas and actions require more discussion, we don't need to wait for an all-encompassing plan to begin. Through our own initiative and daily actions, we can:

- Have conversations about this at the tables we sit at.
- Connect with the folks you met or shared an idea with at the workshop.
- Take action in your small way to advance an idea, or help prepare for an idea to be taken to the next level through things like research or finding additional partners required to make an idea happen.

Another workshop will be planned for September/October with the intent of advancing this work. At the May 9th workshop a show of hands indicated that everyone was interested in returning to continue with this initiative. If each of us could come prepared with additional information required to move these ideas forward, or a story of an action taken, that would be great. It is also noted that there is an opportunity to grow this network, and grow this movement. The next Workshop Planning Committee can look at ways of doing that as part of the next step.

Thanks again to everyone who participated. Your input is appreciated.



APPENDIX 1: List of participants

DIVERSITY IN NORTH END BUSINESS COMMUNITY WORKSHOP		
Contact List MAY 9th 2018		
Name	Organization	Email
Christine O	The Coast	christineo@thecoast.ca
Natalie Dugie	The Foggy Goggle	thefoggygoggle@gmail.com
Jenna Mooers	Edna	jenna@ednarestaurant.com
Jane Hopfner	RBC	jane.hopfner@rbc.com
Andrew Murphy	NEBA	ajmurphy02@gmail.com
Jason Joseph Arab	Vapor Plus	vaporplushfx@gmail.com
Lara Cusson	Don't know yet!	laracusson@gmail.com
Amber Efford	CTV	Amber.Efford@bellmedia.ca
Evelyn Hornbeck	Propeller	marketing@drinkpropeller.ca
Mike Allen	Propeller	Michael@drinkpropeller.ca
Ruth		
Derrico Symmonds	HRM	symondd@halifax.ca
Mike Duggan	NSCC	Mike.Duggan@nsc.ca
Sarah MacLaren	LOVE	love@eastlink.ca
Dennis Adams	LOVE	dennisadams_@hotmail.com
Patricia Mercer	Phoenix	pmercer@phoenixyouth.ca
Finlay Tolliver	CEED	ftolliver@ceed.ca
Emma Brokner	BBi	bbi@bbi.ns.ca
Suzy Hansen	Phoenix	s.hansen@phoenixyouth.ca
Courtney	Youthlive	
Alicia McDonald	Phoenix	a.mcdonald@phoenixyouth.ca
Melinda Daye		lyney@bellaliant.net
Rodney Small	Common Good Solutions	rodney.small@commongoodsolutions.ca
Lance Perry		cy3fer@icloud.com
Marcus James	Library/Man Up	jamesma@halifax.ca
Tunde Babatunde	Man Up	bb820790@dal.ca
Sylvia Paris	BDLI	sylvia.parris@dbdli.ca
David Uptown	Common Good Solutions	david.upton@commongoodsolutions.ca
Keisha Campbell		
Sobaz Benjamin	iMOVE / NEBA	sobazb@yahoo.com
Ditta Kasdan	Dee Dee's Ice Cream	dittak@gmail.com
Evan Carrol	Relator	evan@evancarroll.ca
Patti Cuttall Busby	NEBA	patty@gonorthhalifax.com
Marika Paris	NEBA	marika@gonorthhalifax.com
Carolann Wright	Halifax Partnership	cwrightp@halifaxpartnership.com
Njabulo Nkala	BBi	nkala.njabulo@bbi.ns.ca

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APPENDIX 1: Invite



May 9, 2018 9am-12pm
The Bridge
5553 Bloomfield St.

Please RSVP to:
Marika@gonorthhalifax.com
T. (902) 456-3842

Food will be provided.

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BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

As a community, business, employment or youth leader, you are personally invited to participate in a workshop focused on increasing diversity in North End businesses.

This workshop is building on previous workshops and dialogues that have identified **diversity in the North End business community as a priority initiative**. The workshop objective is to bring together key leaders and influencers necessary to create and implement an action plan that will lead to tangible results.

The North End Business Association Community Committee hopes you can join us. Your voice, wisdom, insight and leadership are needed.