



CLOSED REPORT

Clerk's office

TO: Mayor and Members of Council

FROM: Chad Curtis, Deputy Clerk

DATE: January 26, 2021

REPORT: CL-04/2021

SUBJECT: Youth Council Coalition of Canada's Hour-for-Hour Challenge

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Youth Council Coalition of Canada (YCC) is a newly-formed non-profit agency that is committed to supporting youth through tailored resources, professional development, and networking platforms to promote civic engagement. The YCC has issued a challenge to municipalities: provide volunteer hours to students for meaningful civic engagement opportunities.

The Hour-for Hour Challenge seeks to encourage municipalities to provide hour-for-hour volunteer compensation for high school students who partake in activities such as watching Council and Committee/Board meetings. Students may be asked to write about their volunteer experience or participate in follow-up surveys and discussion groups.

The purpose of this report is for the municipality to become a member of the Youth Council Coalition of Canada, and for Council to approve and participate in The Hour-for-Hour Challenge. This report also describes how initiative fits with ongoing operational improvements to encourage youth engagement with governance in Prince Edward County.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** Report CL-04/2021 of the Clerk's Office be received for information;
2. **THAT** the Corporation of The County of Prince Edward become the first Eastern Ontario municipality to join the Youth Council Coalition of Canada;

3. **THAT** Members of Council participate in the Youth Council Coalition of Canada's Hour-for-Hour Challenge as a means to increase opportunities for local youth to participate and engage in municipal government.

ANALYSIS:

Prince Edward County Council has recently undertaken initiatives to increase civic participation with people in Prince Edward County that have traditionally been underrepresented, including youth.

A recent example of Council's commitment to youth engagement occurred at the September 24, 2020 Committee of the Whole meeting where the following motion was passed:

Motion CW-377-2020

Moved by Councillor MacNaughton

Seconded by Councillor Roberts

THAT a member of a Board or Committee must be a minimum of 16 years of age or older.

Through the Clerk's Office, the County has also worked with numerous schools in Prince Edward County to celebrate Local Government Week. This week-long event provided an opportunity for staff and a number of Councillors to engage with youth to promote local government. In addition, the Clerk's Office has facilitated Cadet's Day events with Members of Council to further engaged youth and have partnered with the Prince Edward County Learning Centre to host multiple youth engagement presentations, with other members of Council on what local government means and the importance of making a difference in our communities.

The County also depends on students to support extra work in the summer months, and recruits local students from across the region in a variety of internal and customer-facing roles.

Hour-to-Hour Challenge

The Ontario Ministry of Education requires that each student complete 40 hours of volunteer activities in the community in order to earn their Ontario Secondary School Diploma. The Hour-for-Hour Challenge will provide high school students with an opportunity to earn these 40 volunteer hours.

The Hour for Hour challenge is a youth engagement opportunity intended introduce and positively incorporate youth voices and participation in the governance work of the municipality. Both staff and Council want to ensure youth are engaged in civic decision-making, and this challenge involves leveraging digital media and tools for community engagement to support high school students in obtaining their volunteer hours required for graduation – a difficult feat for some during COVID-19.

Staff believe this opportunity would be a positive personal growth and development experience for youth interested in civics. In discussing the idea with guidance councilors at Prince Edward Collegiate Institute and Belleville Centennial High

School, the Clerk's Office has received positive feedback on the initiative from guidance counselors.

How it would work:

A prospective student would be paired with a Member of Council. The Member of Council would provide a point of contact between the youth and the municipality. The Councillor would be responsible for signing off their volunteer hours, and following up with the student. There is flexibility in each Councillor making the Hour for Hour challenge their own. The student may be asked to write about their experience watching meeting, what they learned, or participate in follow-up surveys/phone call with the Councillor signing off on their hours. The Clerk's Office will provide Councillors with tools to assist with receiving feedback from students.

Staff will be on-hand to support Council with all logistics related to the Hour for Hour challenge. Councillors participating in the challenge will get help from staff and the two high schools in pairing them with prospective students, support Council in customizing the challenge, a kit to get you started with resources and help to facilitate sign-off.

The overall objective is for participating students to learn how local government works through active engagement with municipal representatives by way of a mentor to mentee match. This would be a municipality-led initiative with support from the YCCC.

There are numerous benefits to both Members of Council and youth for this initiative.

Benefits for Councillors:

- Mentoring opportunity;
- Support youth to share thoughts and ideas about municipal government;
- Encourage dialogue amongst participants;
- Solicit youth insights and feedback; and,
- Serve as a champion for County youth.

Benefits for Students:

- Connect with their peers by participating in this exercise;
- Build and expand their network of contacts;
- Collect helpful information and resources;
- Learn and build new outreach, advocacy, leadership and empowerment skills; and,
- Visible recognition for "graduation"

By becoming a member with YYC, they will support Prince Edward County in this journey by:

- Providing a free "how-to-guide"
- Offering bi-weekly webinars for coalition members to support youth education and engagement

- Offering a ready-made social media package
- Promoting Prince Edward County on social media platforms and their website.

There is a goal of helping at least 25 students obtain some or all of the community service hours through this challenge.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED:

No other options were considered for this report.

CONSULTATION TO DATE:

Kelsey Santarosa, Youth Council Coalition of Canada
 Shannon Alexander, Centennial Secondary School
 Suzanne White, Prince Edward County Collegiate Institute
 Mark Kerr, Communications and Consultation Supervisor
 Joy MacLeod, Executive Assistant to Mayor Ferguson

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

There is a \$1,200 annual cost to join the YCC and to have access to their support materials. Currently, YCC has a 30 percent discount for Government and Non-Profit Memberships. This discount is applied at checkout, so there is no code necessary. The price including the discount is \$840.00.

RISKS:

| RISK DESCRIPTION | RISK TYPE | PROPOSED MITIGATION |
|---|--------------------|--|
| Commitment of personal time and resources for youth and councillor mentors is considered burdensome | Public/Stakeholder | Provide options for Councillors and Youth to achieve the Hour-for-Hour Challenge. County Staff will provide Councillors and students with a tool kit to assist in the facilitation of this program. Dependent on interest from students, there may have to be a cap imposed on the number of students to participate in the program. |

RELEVANT POLICY/BY-LAW:

There are no relevant policies or by-law associated with this initiative.

CORPORATE STRATEGIC PRIORITY ALIGNMENT:

The recommendations of this report support the following proposed new Corporate Strategic Priorities:

Priority #6: Livable Community - Foster an affordable, healthy, livable community for all

This initiative would assist members of Council engage with youth and inspire the next generation of civically minded residents.

COMMUNICATIONS:

The Youth Council Coalition of Canada will provide graphics for promoting the program on The County's website and social media accounts. Additionally, a youth-specific resources web page will be created to centralize information about the Hour-for-Hour Challenge and other opportunities for youth to participate in local government, such as summer employments and membership on advisory committees or boards.

Following Council's decision, a letter will be sent to local high schools to provide more information about the Hour-for-Hour Challenge and to help promote the opportunity with County students attending Prince Edward Collegiate Institute and Belleville Centennial High School. Dependent on interest from students, this initiative may be extended to students who reside outside of Prince Edward County.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. The One Hour Commitment

Authorizing Signatures:

Prepared by: Chad Curtis
Deputy Clerk
January 21, 2021



Reviewed by: Catalina Blumenberg
Clerk
January 21, 2021



CAO Approval: Marcia Wallace
Chief Administrative Officer
January 21, 2021

The One-Hour Commitment

Samantha C. Dalo

What young Canadians learn and how they are learning is important to their development. Experience matters, but how do Canadian youth incorporate experience to develop and sustain their political consciousness¹ during a pandemic? A study in 2018 regarding the engagement of diverse Canadian youth in youth developmental programs acknowledged that positive surroundings and development settings were key to a young person's community engagement and political participation (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Heather et al., 2018). A young person needs to build a sense of *sociopolitical empowerment*- belonging and support- and this means becoming engaged in their communities. When they are supported and experience a sense of belonging (also known as *sociopolitical control*), a young person perceives that they have the "ability to influence policy decisions in an organization or community" (Peterson et al., 2011, p. 594).

During this Covid-19 pandemic, digital media and digital tools can be leveraged for community engagement as well as peer socialization, which will support high school students in obtaining their volunteer hours required for graduation. As a response to the importance of meaningful community engagement, especially during the time of a global pandemic, the Youth Council Coalition of Canada (YCC) is presenting an initiative called The One-Hour Commitment. This initiative seeks to encourage organizations and municipalities to provide one-hour volunteer compensation for high school students who partake in activities such as virtual town hall meetings, webinars provided by organizations, and participating in surveys. The students may be asked to write about their volunteer experience, prepare questions for the webinar they registered for, or participate in discussion groups that follow their virtual one-hour

commitments. The YCC can help promote municipalities and organizations that join The One-Hour Commitment by promoting their volunteer opportunities through social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook.

Pending review, the YCC hopes to partner with local school boards to endorse The One-Hour Commitment, all while connecting young Canadians with their communities. This initiative means to provide time commitment that is minimal to Canadian youth who may only be able to devote little of their day to volunteer work, all while trying to navigate their secondary careers during difficult times. The goal of the initiative is to ultimately encourage meaningful community engagement that can lead to longevity in volunteering. An additional benefit to this initiative is the promotion of peer socialization, which boosts the grit needed in Canadian youth to change political thought into political action.

References

- Eccles, J. S., & Gootman, J. A. (2002). Features of positive developmental settings. In J. S. Eccles, & J. A. Gootman (Eds.). *Community programs to promote youth development* (pp. 86–118). Washington, DC: National Academic Press.
- Peterson, N. A., Peterson, C. H., Agre, L., Christens, B. D., & Morton, C. M. (2011). Measuring youth empowerment: Validation of a sociopolitical control scale for youth in an urban community context. *Journal of Community Psychology, 39*(5), 592–605. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.20456>.
- Ramey, H., Lawford, H., Rose-Krasnor, L., Freeman, J., & Lanctot, J. (2018). *Engaging diverse Canadian youth in youth development programs: Program quality and community engagement. (Report)*. Children and Youth Services
- Zugman, K. (2003). Political consciousness and new social movement theory: The case of Fuerza Unida. *Social Justice (San Francisco, Calif.)*, 30(1 (91)), 153-176.

¹ Refers to someone who is politically aware, cares about political matters, and seeks out methods to politically participate to promote change (Zugman, 2003).