

Toronto Community Housing



## Employment Opportunities for Tenants at TCHC

Item 4D

March 24, 2021

Tenant Services Committee

**Report: TSC:2021-28****To:** Tenant Services Committee (“TSC”)**From:** Chief Operating Officer**Date:** March 10, 2021

### **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this report is to provide the TSC with additional details about the economic development opportunities that have been provided to Toronto Community Housing (“TCHC”) tenants over the last 5 years.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

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

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

### **BACKGROUND**

Community Economic Development (“CED”) is articulated as action by people locally to create economic opportunities that enhance social conditions in their communities on a sustainable and inclusive basis. CED is a community-based and directed process that explicitly combines social and economic development, and fosters the economic, social, ecological, and cultural well-being of communities. Building on the fundamentals of CED, TCHC’s Economic Development and Tenant Employment Program is designed to support, create and facilitate access to opportunities for economic advancement for those residing in TCHC’s communities.

Originally implemented through a centralized team, the current structure includes three dedicated CED Community Service Coordinators (“CSC”) in the regions, centralized program support, and oversight through the Programs and Partnerships team, and program implementation through the program staff in the Community Safety and Support Pillar. The CED team focuses on supporting tenants at various level of engagement and creating multiple access points for opportunities for tenants. Staff work directly with community agencies and the City’s Toronto and Employment Social Service (“TESS”) staff to connect tenants to programs and services aimed to increase their employability and connect them to opportunities.

At its January 25, 2021 meeting, the TSC directed Management to report back with the number of tenants employed through the various employment programs, as well as the length of their employment and the location of their employment.

## **UPDATE**

TCHC recognizes the importance of supporting tenants to become economically resilient and as such, we are always actively supporting and creating new opportunities for tenants directly or through partnerships or referrals. As a result, we have been able to achieve the following in the last five years:

- Directly employ/place over 900 tenants across our Rookie League, YouthWorx, and Internship programs;
- Support over 1,200 tenants to participate in employment training;
- Host and refer over 700 tenants to financial literacy workshops;
- Connect over 900 tenants to employment opportunities; and
- Host 31 Job fairs attended by over 3,000 tenants.

Two of our most successful job placement programs that directly employ TCHC tenants includes our YouthWorx and Internship programs, which are eight and 12 weeks in length respectively. Our approach to creating opportunities with these programs has focused on young people at both ends of the job readiness and employability spectrum. In 2018 and 2019, TCHC was able to employ 260 youth facing barriers to employment in our YouthWorx program and provide 63 internships in 2019 and 2020 to four cohorts of young people and tenants either actively pursuing or recently completed their post-secondary education.

YouthWorx is designed to be as barrier free as possible so that it can reach those young people farthest from employment. The program also offers participants additional follow-up employment supports once they complete the employment component of the program. The internship program is designed to support tenants with career exploration aimed to increase their knowledge about the day-to-day working of TCHC. Since its inception, 33% of the participants have been offered longer term employment opportunities with TCHC. Our goal for both groups of young people in YouthWorx and the internship program remains the same: meet them where they are to help remove the employment barriers they face by providing the supports they need to maintain their employment with TCHC, while preparing them to pursue other employment opportunities afterwards. The program has been recognized by many community agencies and municipalities and has been replicated in Hamilton and Waterloo. It has been flagged by the City of Toronto as a program to further invest into and was recently provided with an additional \$600,000 for 2021. Due to COVID-19 safety restrictions, the 2020 YouthWorx program was suspended, but TCHC is working to offer it this year while adhering to COVID-19 protocols.

In addition, TCHC also employs an average of 50 TCHC tenants during the summers to support our Rookie League program. The roles they undertake are junior or senior program leaders. In these roles, young people between the ages of 15-18 years old get on-the-job experience and leadership development supports from staff.

Beyond employment, we work to provide pre-incubation supports to young entrepreneurs through our Be.Build.Brand program, which has graduated over 44 tenants in the last three years. In order to expand the supports offered through this program, we are working with the City to connect these entrepreneurs to additional supports so that they can access additional resources to launch or scale their respective businesses. The length of the employment and entrepreneur programs are summarized below:

*Figure 1: TCHC Employment & Entrepreneur Programs*

<b>Program</b>	<b>Duration</b>
YouthWorx	8 weeks
Active Living	10 weeks
Internship	12 weeks
Be.Build.Brand	12 weeks

**External Partnerships Highlight**

As of January 31, 2021, TCHC has supported 71 young women through one-on-one supports or service referrals to apply for various jobs with the Toronto Transit Commission (“TTC”). This included providing targeted supports to TCHC tenants who participated in the “Women as Transit Operators” event that was hosted during Winter 2020.

**CONCLUSION:**

The economic development team has been able to effectively connect hundreds of tenants to meaningful opportunities to support increased economic attainment and civic engagement. The team focuses on pathways particularly for youth, which has provided opportunities for tenants to go from entry level programs to interns and staff at TCHC. Well-developed program plans, robust outreach, and promotion strategies and comprehensive partner engagement have contributed to building a strong and scalable brand for youth employment and recreation programs for TCHC tenants. The new decentralized model provides an opportunity for more meaningful engagement and information sharing at a hub level around employment opportunities for tenants. By building on the successes of the work to-date and future plans to support tenant employment, we anticipate providing additional meaningful impact moving forward.

**SIGNATURE:**

*“Sheila Penny”*

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Sheila Penny  
Chief Operating Officer

**ATTACHMENT:**

1. Overview of Employment Opportunities and Supports for TCHC Tenants

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 TSC Public Meeting – March 24, 2021  
 Report:TSC:2021-28  
**Attachment 1**

**Overview: Employment Opportunities and Supports for TCHC Tenants**

<b>Program</b>	<b>Number of Tenants</b>	<b>Number of Tenants</b>	<b>Number of Tenants</b>	<b>Number of Tenants</b>	<b>Number of Tenants</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Year</b>	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	
<b>TCHC Employment Opportunities by program</b>						
YouthWorx	105	140	155	105	0	505
Internship	42	42	47	34	29	194
Active Living	100	50	50	50	0	250
<b>Total Internal Opportunities Provided by TCHC</b>						<b>949</b>
<b>Employment Opportunities with partners</b>						
Employment Opportunities	120	160	319	221	110	930
<b>Total Opportunities provided by partners</b>						<b>930</b>
<b>Employment Supports</b>						
Training	309	306	110	360	200	1285
Financial Literacy	179	288	125	165	0	757
CED Programs	90	126	230	305	84	721
<b>Total referral to employment supports</b>						<b>2763</b>
<b>Entrepreneurship</b>						
Tenant businesses supported	25	15	29	21	32	122
<b>Total tenant businesses supported</b>						<b>122</b>