

September 10th 2021

Take A Stand
City of Brampton Mayor's Youth Advisory Council
Brampton, Ontario

RE: Take A Stand Delegation - Written Remarks (Youth Unemployment)

We would like to extend our gratitude to the members of the City Council for engaging with young people. For the past year, the Take A Stand team (as an extension of the Mayor's Youth Advisory Council) has been examining existing public policy, consulting past research and meeting with young people across the city, to create a comprehensive paper that provides recommendations focused on eliminating youth unemployment within the city. To supplement our presentation, we have submitted our policy paper which contains extensive details on our methodology, research and recommendation framework.

Youth unemployment is as much of a social issue as it is an economic one. Therefore, our paper takes on an anti-oppressive, gender-informed, and harm reduction approach. The paper seeks to acknowledge historic systems of oppression that contribute to youth unemployment.

Our youth unemployment policy paper focused on six areas of concern. The COVID-19 pandemic, barriers to employment for youth, geographical limitations to youth employment, youth employment programs, mentorship support and the cost of employing youth in small-medium enterprises.

Our policy paper is divided into three sections; the principles, concerns and our recommendations. Our principles serve as the foundation and guiding statements behind each of our recommendations. Each of the recommendations has been evaluated against how well it allows us to achieve our principles. Our concerns section highlights the key facets of the issue specifically focusing on the sectors where we believe the most reform is required. Lastly, our recommendations use our research and the prior two sections to discuss what we believe the most effective policy to address the issue would look like. To address some of the gaps in our paper, we have also included a limitations section.

A full list of our principles can be found in the policy paper however we would like to highlight the principle that youth should not face undue barriers such as discrimination based on gender, ability, race, sexuality or socioeconomic class when looking for employment. Similarly, a full list of our concerns can be found in the policy paper and on the slide, however we would like to highlight the concern that marginalized communities are disproportionately affected by youth unemployment and are more likely to be victims of discrimination, which can be reflected in hostile work environments, pay disparities or impaired career mobility.

We would now like to present our recommendations.

The City of Brampton's existing economic recovery plan does not acknowledge the disproportionate effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on women nor does it account for intersectional identities like race, class, ability or immigration status. Therefore, we recommend that the execution of the plan prioritizes marginalized and racialized communities. The plan should focus on economic disparities faced by young people and create corresponding programming to develop transferable skills and build experience. The City of Brampton should continue communication with the Ministry of Labour to ensure equitable working standards and the protection of young workers.

To rectify barriers to youth unemployment the City should collaborate with interest groups like unions and the Ministry of Labour to advocate for hiring, and fight for policies that maximize equity and accessibility. This could manifest in the creation of a mobile app with job availability updates, or increasing the user experience of the existing website.

Geographical barriers serve as a major contributing factor to youth unemployment. The inaccessibility of public transportation and the fact that Brampton is not a walkable city means that youth are often confined to very short distances which limits their employment opportunities. The City of Brampton should continue the existing Affordable Transit Program and create a version that seeks to alleviate the transportation costs for youth. Another recommendation would be to increase the number of online job opportunities for youth through government programs and incentives for businesses to do the same

For unemployed youth, there are currently very few training and support programs in place. Additionally, these programs face a variety of challenges. For instance, many of these programs are severely underfunded, under-advertised and not accessible to a wide variety of youth.

Young people are oftentimes not given practical career assistance services during their elementary or secondary education and existing public services suffer from inaccessibility. The City of Brampton must invest in its existing youth mentorship programs. For example, existing partnerships with youth mentorship organizations like the HammerHeads program should be expanded and there should be a focus on encouraging young people who are underrepresented in these industries (like women and racialized youth) to participate.

The last aspect of youth unemployment that we will be discussing are the Costs of Employing Youth and the Investment into Youth Employment for Small-Medium Enterprises. To combat the unwillingness to hire young people, the City should implement Probationary programs with subsidized wages: This program can be implemented by requiring businesses to hire a specific number of youth members, as it will give youth the opportunity to gain real-life work experience and allow businesses to grow as well.

Our paper is not an exhaustive examination of the issue. Therefore we have also included a limitations portion to our delegation. The first limitation is that we do not analyze the links between urban planning and youth unemployment. We also do not heavily acknowledge the historic systems of oppression designed to prevent specific groups of youth from gaining

employment. To rectify this, we will attempt to reach out to organizations and groups that can provide us with data and guidance.

Thank you for your time and involvement with the youth of the City of Brampton. We hope our presentation provided meaningful and comprehensive information on some of the steps the City can take in order to rectify the issue.