



# **Towards a Younger Public Service**

**Opinion Paper on Municipal Public Service Renewal**

**Summary**

The current situation within the municipal public service calls for workforce renewal and a changing of the guard among its administrative and political staff. The rate of personnel retirement is projected to increase in most employment sectors. This could present an opportunity to rejuvenate the workforce within the municipality, while simultaneously reducing job insecurity among people under thirty. Indeed, on the one hand, we observe important movements of personnel within the municipal workforce, while on the other, we see the economic situation and living conditions of young Montrealers becoming increasingly precarious and unstable. This strongly suggests that the workforce should be renewed and the expertise of employees approaching retirement transferred to the younger generation. CjM is submitting recommendations in this regard in order to incite elected officials and managers to plan staffing in the new City. But first, it is advisable to summarily view the existing programs addressing the issue of civil service workforce renewal.

## **THE CIVIL SERVICE RENEWAL PROGRAM**

Renewal of the civil service is in fact a concern for all levels of government administrations: municipal, provincial and federal.

### The existing federal government program

The Canadian public service started considering the question of renewal in 1989 with the launch of the *Public Service 2000* initiative. However, budget cuts in the civil service compromised the success of the initiative. Its goals, which were not attained, were as follows:

- to initiate a major re-engineering of the culture within the public administration
- to improve delivery of services to the public
- to maintain the same standards of efficiency

In the nineties, other measures were taken, among which were a series of consultations held with the government, unions, and various associations within the federal civil service. These consultations gave rise to certain concerns in the Public Service Commission of Canada in regard to its own expertise in the matter. Indeed, these initiatives proved inadequate and were limited by financial pressures from the government.

The reaction of the Commission eventually led to a wide ranging campaign of renewal in 1997. The main government initiatives targeted the adoption of strategies dealing with:

- Recruitment
- Employment equity
- Staff retention
- Salary improvements
- Relaxing staffing requirements
- Improvement of pride
- Recognition
- Work relations
- Managerial training
- Ethics

The same year, the *La relève* action plan was launched with the objective of better addressing the problems of aging of the employees and of the growing number of retirements within the workforce. Another objective was to increase the low representation of young people among federal public servants. To do so, and especially to recruit young qualified employees, the government established the *Post-Secondary Recruitment Program*, aimed at hiring students.

Currently, the *Youth Employment Strategy* is a program managed by the government of Canada that is part of Human Resources Development Canada. Its goal is to help young Canadians make the transition from school to the labour market. Also, in partnership with the private sector, young people are supported in the process of landing their first job. <http://www.jeunesse.gc.ca/index.jsp> is a government website that gives access to all pertinent information about employment within the federal administration.

#### The existing provincial government program

Public service in Quebec has been in existence more than a century and, of course, has seen numerous changes over the years. In the sixties, the government played an important role in setting up the foundations of the actual public service in Quebec. The *Loi de la fonction publique* was adopted at that time and amended in 1978, 1983 and 2000.

In 1999, the *Conseil permanent de la jeunesse* tabled an opinion paper on provincial public service renewal, entitled *L'accès des jeunes à la fonction publique, place à la relève*. In this paper, the Council submitted solutions and made recommendations (8) regarding the question of the predicted *en masse* departure of baby-boomers from the public service.

In 2001, the Working Committee on Integration of Young People into the Quebec Public Service prepared the report *D'ici 10 ans, 21 000 nouveaux visages!* that presented four guiding principles (in the form of 28 recommendations) among which were the necessity of setting in place a permanent process of renewal, the importance of diversity, the search and promotion of excellence, and the permanency and quality of employment.

In 2002, from the propositions listed above, a document was drafted and submitted, *Le rajeunissement de la fonction publique québécoise, orientations et plan d'action*. This document proposes a program of thirteen actions to rejuvenate personnel in the public service.

Reviewing all these initiatives would be useful for Montreal in its efforts to renew and rejuvenate its own public service. In this context, it is also useful to draw a portrait of the young population of Montreal.

## **THE SITUATION OF YOUNG MONTREALERS**

Today, young Montrealers – under 30 – face many challenges, on the economic, social, cultural, and ethnic levels. Let us note:

- A reversal of the age pyramid due to an aging population and a declining birthrate. This demographic situation has consequences on demand in various dimensions, and in terms of employment.
- Some young people are confronted with major socio-urban problems, such as homelessness, drug dependence, suicide, teenage pregnancy, poverty, and reconciliation of work and school.
- As for young workers, they face difficulties of a technical nature on the labour market. Because of their lack of experience, they have problems gaining recognition for their skills in job interviews and through the job search process.
- Young people from cultural communities and visible minorities often suffer discrimination in the hiring process. The unemployment rate, lack of knowledge of the job market and of hiring practices are facts of life for young people from ethnic minorities, especially recent arrivals.
- Young natives suffer from numerous problems:
  - linguistic: with repercussions on the quality and level of their schooling;
  - economic: high unemployment, and the difficulty in adapting outside their community, notably in urban settings;
  - social: exposure to alcohol and drug abuse, family violence, anxiety, isolation, depression, dropping out of school, and suicide.

These are all elements contributing to a sentiment of desperation and powerlessness among young people, and this, in the context of a collapse of the economy and dissolution of the social and cultural fabric.

This being said, we recognize that programs already exist to help young people to integrate the labour market, notably the Affirmative Action Program stemming from a law in full force and effect since April 2001. There are also programs implemented by governments, municipalities, school boards, or other

bodies that are linked to specific sectors, such as the programs implemented by Health and Social Services. The Affirmative Action Program includes remedial measures that allow, on a temporary basis, preferential treatment to members of groups that are victims of discrimination. It is important to mention that these measures apply only when candidates have the skills required for the job.

The Act enforcing equal access to employment in public bodies is particularly directed at women, First Nations (Amerindians, Inuits and Metis of Canada), members of visible minorities (people who belong to a racial or skin-colour group), and members of ethnic minorities (people who do not count French or English as their mother tongue). This law, implemented at the municipal level, contributes in large part to the project of youth renewal within the municipal public service.

When considered in its entirety, the Montreal municipal public service counts a number of young employees, male and female from various cultural communities, but this category of employees is underrepresented. The City is aware of the number of its employees expected to soon retire, and is planning accordingly in order to quantify its labour force in terms of replacement needs. However, not all existing positions are being renewed since many are to be abolished when the employee retires. On the other hand, this wave of retirement should play in favour of hiring; many employees will be retiring at approximately the same time and the situation requires massive replacements in a wide variety of positions.

In concrete terms, a review of the actions implemented by the City regarding student hiring and apprenticeship for young people shows four types of intervention:

- hiring of students
- jobs for young people from cultural communities and visible minorities
- unpaid apprenticeship for students
- student shadow programs

Many apprenticeship programs were successful. For example:

- *Polyglobe*, a program connecting young people and businesses, and allowing students to establish a bridge between their scholastic training and the work place.
- *Jeunes fonctionnaires*, a program that provides an opportunity for high school students to discover for a day the important role of public service for citizens.
- *Projet de fin d'études du lycée français Amélie Zurcher*, a program that consists in a one-week study trips for graduates of the bachelors in Hygiene and Environment program.

- *Persévérance scolaire*, a program proposing apprenticeships, school conferences and visits to the municipal services.
- *Projet de parrainage professionnel du collège Ahuntsic*, a program offering College Ahuntsic students the possibility of meeting with professionals working in the field of their choice.
- *Opération « Retour à l'école »*, a program targeting high school and junior high school students that aims at promoting school attendance and obtaining a diploma.

Similarly, successful employment programs are worth mentioning:

- *Programme Carrière-été*: a program to help young people prepare for integration into the work force. By participating in this initiative, the City of Montreal helps promote youth integration into the future work environment.
- *Programme d'échange d'emplois d'été avec des municipalités française:*, provides summer jobs for Quebec youth in municipalities in France, and vice versa.
- *Projet de la relève des équipements scientifiques*: financed by the *Fonds Jeunesse Québec* and lasting from 20 to 50 weeks, this program creates temporary positions for young people from cultural communities and visible minorities.
- *Programme de formation des conventionnels du SPVM*: this program is offered by the Montreal Police Service to candidates who have not studied in the field but meet the educational requirements to become police officers.

Finally, efforts must be deployed to break the cycle of social assistance dependency, a situation in which many young adults find themselves. The *Ministère de la Sécurité du revenu* of the government of Québec, in collaboration with the City of Montreal, offers young Montrealers two types of programs aimed at reducing the number of Employment Insurance recipients. The *Solidarité Jeunesse* program, implemented in 2000 as a pilot project, became official in 2003 and targets employable young people between 18 and 24 who claim Employment Insurance benefits. The other program, *Ma place au soleil*, is designed specifically for young single mothers and hopes to break the cycle of unemployment among this group. This program offers and finances transportation for participants from their home to the child care centre or the adult training centre, and provides resource persons.

In reviewing the current situation regarding employment among young adults, as well as the various programs and projects developed to support them in integrating the work market, CjM came up with proposals in the form of recommendations in order to submit new strategies to reinforce existing programs so as to better address the issues of employment renewal among young Montrealers.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### *R1. Promotion Component*

- R1.1.** To create a youth program for employment access to the municipal public service
- R1.2.** To promote municipal public service among young people
  - R1.2.1.** Visibility in high schools, colleges and universities
  - R1.2.2.** Annual recruitment campaigns and youth hiring goals
  - R1.2.3.** Communication of the information regarding employment possibilities in the municipal public service
  - R1.2.4.** Website for young adults, created by the Municipality, and presenting all openings that may be of interest
  - R1.2.5.** Publicity targeting young people
  - R1.2.6.** One-day apprenticeship programs
  - R1.2.7.** Experiences that combine schooling and work, and academic scholarships

### *R2. Hiring Component*

- R2.1.** Put words into action by hiring young adults to fill some job openings
- R2.2.** Create a work force to develop strategies to better anticipate future staffing needs in the public service
- R2.3.** Set precise goals in terms of youth recruitment
- R2.4.** Keep it simple: modify the existing hiring process
- R2.5.** Create new measures adapted to the situation of young women and young mothers
- R2.6.** Implement a “second chance” program for young adults who did not finish high school
- R2.7.** Promote the hiring of young people from cultural communities and visible minorities
- R2.8.** Promote the hiring of young people from First Nations communities
- R2.9.** Promote the hiring of young people with a handicap or reduced mobility

### *R3. Integration Component*

- R3.1.** Coaching: adapt and reduce the work schedule
- R3.2.** Create an apprenticeship program for new graduates
- R3.3.** Facilitate progressive retirement and promote sponsorship of candidates
- R3.4.** Actualize two pilot projects:
  - Pilot project 1:* Montreal Public Service Work Integration Project, by *Action main-d'œuvre* and the *Comité régional des associations pour la déficience intellectuelle* (CRADI)
  - Pilot project 2:* Apprenticeship Project at the City of Montreal for Visible Minorities, developed jointly by the *Bureau des relations interculturelles* and the *Service du développement social et communautaire*

