

Municipality Of Chatham-Kent
Community and Human Services
Employment and Social Services

To: Mayor and Members of Council
From: Matt Keech Program Manager
Date: April 1, 2021
Subject: Grow Your Own Health Support Worker-Personal Support Worker Program

Recommendation

It is recommended that:

1. The Ontario Transfer Payment Agreement between the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development and The Corporation of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent, authorizing the funding and delivery of the HSW-PSW program, at no additional cost to the Corporation, be approved.

Background

The shortage of Personal Support Workers (PSW) is a serious issue across Ontario. The Chatham-Kent Workforce Planning Board explored the issue in 2018. Their findings, "A Career in Care: Chatham-Kent Senior Care Recruitment and Retention Research Project" identified a number of issues including the need to ensure appropriate staffing levels and balanced workloads existed in senior care.

The Ontario Health Coalition released the "Critical shortage of PSWs in long term care homes: report" in February 2020. The report found that Ontario's long-term care homes have been dealing with a shortage of one to two PSWs on almost all shifts.

The Chatham-Kent Workforce Planning Board "Local Labour Market Plan 2020" found that the Health Care sector in Chatham-Kent has a relatively high number of job postings relative to the number of people working in the occupational group. The implication is that employers have higher needs for PSWs in Chatham-Kent than the talent pipeline can supply.

Since November of 2019, Employment and Social Services has worked collaboratively with community partners to address the PSW labour shortage. Employment and Social Services has partnered with SE Career College of Health, the Erie St. Clair Local Health

Integration Network, and area employers, to deliver the Grow Your Own Health Support Worker-Personal Support Worker (HSW-PSW) Program in Chatham-Kent. To date, this partnership has provided 42 members of the community with new skills, upgraded education, and the opportunity to earn a living in an in-demand field of employment. Twenty-four of the 42 participants were previously connected to the Ontario Works program.

The Grow Your Own HSW-PSW Program is 30 weeks in duration that begins with four weeks of HSW training and continues with 26 weeks of PSW training. Students, each sponsored by a local employer, are paid a wage to attend the HSW training. During the PSW training students attend class between 11:00 AM and 4:00 PM each day. This allows the student to work as a paid HSW during the busy morning and evening times throughout the program. This ensures that at no time during the program will the student be without a paycheck. There are no tuition costs for the student as the employer absorbs tuition. This makes the program affordable and accessible, especially for traditionally underrepresented groups.

This program has been invaluable as it provides employers with immediate staffing. In exchange students are asked to sign a return of service agreement (at the employer's discretion). Upon completion of the full program, graduates are eligible for employment as PSWs in many different health care settings, including both community and long-term care anywhere in Ontario. The SE Career College of Health PSW program meets or exceeds the Ontario Personal Support Worker Program Standard (2014, Queen's Printer for Ontario).

The current program requires that employers absorb tuition and training costs for each student. This has proven to be cost prohibitive for some employers preventing participation.

Comments

On February 5, 2021 the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development (MLTSD) announced the launch of a new initiative called-the Skills Development Fund. The initiative intended to fund projects that quickly aid in the provinces economic recovery efforts. The deadline for submitting an application for round one of funding was February 28, 2021. A total of \$100 million dollars was available for the first round of funding.

Employment and Social Services submitted an application in partnership with SE Career College of Health based on the existing Grow Your Own HSW-PSW Program to address the shortage of Personal Support Workers in the region. The high-level objectives of the application include:

- Provide Long Term Care Homes and other Health Care Providers with immediate staffing options via the Health Support Worker program component;
- Address the PSW shortage in the region;

- Remove financial barriers for individuals and employers to participate in training; and
- Connect Ontario Work's recipients and other unemployed and underemployed workers to in demand, long term, employment opportunities.

As part of the application for the Skills Development Fund, Employment and Social Services initiated a regional partnership to deliver the training program across Southwestern Ontario in collaboration with Ontario Works delivery partners with the City of Windsor and the County of Lambton.

The application requested a total of \$2,546,240.00 in funding to deliver the program up to eight times throughout Chatham-Kent, Sarnia-Lambton, and Windsor-Essex with the opportunity to train up to 192 students.

Location	Program (HSW) Start Date	PSW Start Date	Program End Date
Sarnia	May 31, 2021	June 29, 2021	Jan 7, 2022
Windsor City	May 31, 2021	June 29, 2021	Jan 7, 2022
Chatham	June 21, 2021	July 21, 2021	Jan 28, 2022
Windsor County	June 28, 2021	July 28, 2021	Feb 4, 2022
Sarnia	July 19, 2021	Aug 18, 2021	Feb 25, 2022
Windsor City	July 26, 2021	Aug 25, 2021	Mar 4, 2022
Chatham	August 16, 2021	Sept 15, 2021	Mar 24, 2022
Windsor County	August 23, 2021	Sept 22, 2021	Mar 31, 2022

The application included supports for students and employers such as:

- Tuition and related expenses of \$9,200.00 per student;
- Wage subsidies of up to 30% of wages paid, to a maximum of \$3,000.00 per student;
- Health and safety related supplies of up to \$250 per student;
- First Aid and CPR - Health Care Provider Level for each student;
- Travel expenses for any in-class components of up to \$480 per student; and
- 30 loaner laptops for students who may not have access to technology.

On March 31, 2021 Employment and Social Services completed an agreement with the Ministry of Labour Training and Skills Development (MLTSD) to deliver the Grow Your Own HSW-PSW program as described.

Administration of the program will take place through in-kind staffing support via the Ontario Works employment program, which is funded by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, at no additional cost to the Municipality of Chatham-Kent.

Approximately 48 Chatham-Kent residents will benefit with immediate employment opportunities. In addition, both residents and employers would benefit through the provision of free training with a dollar value of \$451,770.00 and wage subsidies of up to \$144,000.00.

On a regional level, these numbers grow to include up to 192 residents of Chatham-Kent, Sarnia-Lambton, and Windsor-Essex with immediate employment opportunities and regional benefits of training worth \$1,807,080.00 and wage subsidies of up to \$576,000.00 to both residents and employers.

Areas of Strategic Focus and Critical Success Factors

The recommendation in this report supports the following areas of strategic focus:

Economic Prosperity:

Chatham-Kent is an innovative and thriving community with a diversified economy

A Healthy and Safe Community:

Chatham-Kent is a healthy and safe community with sustainable population growth

People and Culture:

Chatham-Kent is recognized as a culturally vibrant, dynamic, and creative community

Environmental Sustainability:

Chatham-Kent is a community that is environmentally sustainable and promotes stewardship of our natural resources

The recommendation in this report supports the following critical success factors:

Financial Sustainability:

The Corporation of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent is financially sustainable

Open, Transparent and Effective Governance:

The Corporation of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent is open, transparent and effectively governed with efficient and bold, visionary leadership

Has the potential to support all areas of strategic focus & critical success factors

Neutral issues (does not support negatively or positively)

Consultation

On March 23, 2021 MLTSD informed Employment and Social Services that the application was successful to proceed to the negotiation phase. MLTSD requested strict confidentiality about the project, no public announcements or discussion of financial terms, not even with project partners.

On March 26, 2021 MLTSD provided a contractual agreement to Employment and Social Services approving delivery of the program. This agreement required signature by March 31, 2021. Failure to complete the agreement by this time would have jeopardized Employment and Social Services eligibility to receive funding and deliver the program.

The By-Law to Delegate Authority requires a resolution of Council for execution of the agreement with MLTSD. Because MLTSD imposed a strict requirement of confidentiality and also a time limitation that required execution of the agreement prior to the lifting of the confidentiality requirement, this created an atypical scenario where agreement was required before presenting the matter publicly to Council.

Having regard to the fact that there is little to no risk for the Municipality in signing the agreement, the overwhelming benefit to local employees and employers and overall need for HSW-PSWs in Ontario, Legal Services determined the only available course of action with the confidentiality restriction in place would be for the General Manager of Community Human Services to sign the agreement on behalf of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent. Subsequently, this report was prepared with the intent to publicly approve the program by way of resolution. Should Council not wish to proceed with the program the funds will be returned to MLTSD.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications resulting from the recommendation.

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Attachment: None

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