



Council Report

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| Report Number: | ED2022-022 |
| Meeting Date: | March 22, 2022 |
| Title: | SkillsAdvance Ontario Extension Request |
| Description: | Request to extend the AdvancEd Job Skills Training Program (SAO project) to May 31, 2022 |
| Author and Title: | Rebecca Mustard, Manager of Economic Development |

Recommendations:

That Report ED2022-022, **SkillsAdvance Ontario Extension Request**, be received; and

That the Mayor and Clerk, following a review of agreements to the satisfaction of the City Solicitor, be authorised to execute all required documents and agreement(s) with the Province of Ontario, Victoria County Career Services, and Sir Sanford Fleming College relating to the SkillsAdvance Ontario project extension for the period April 1, 2022 to May 31, 2022.

Department Head: _____

Financial/Legal/HR/Other: _____

Chief Administrative Officer: _____

Background:

The SkillsAdvance Ontario (SAO) pilot project is a provincially funded initiative to support workforce development in identified key growth sectors. The program funds partnerships that connect employers with employment and training services required to recruit and advance workers with the right essential, technical and employability skills. It also supports job seekers to obtain employment by providing them with sector-specific employment and training services, and connecting them to the right employers.

In March 2020, the City of Kawartha Lakes received Provincial funding to deliver a SkillsAdvance Ontario project. The Kawartha Lakes project, AdvancEd Job Skills Training Program (AdvancEd), is a partnership between the municipality, Sir Sandford Fleming College and VCCS Employment Centre. AdvancEd provides entry level training for job seekers and upskilling training for incumbent workers in manufacturing, construction, and agricultural sectors. The program is fully funded by the Province.

At the Council Meeting of December 15, 2020, Council adopted the following resolution:

CR2020-453

Moved By Deputy Mayor O'Reilly

Seconded By Councillor Veale

That Report ED2020-027, **Kawartha Lakes Skills Advance Ontario Programs Agreements with Victoria County Career Services and Sir Sandford Fleming College**, be received; and

That the Mayor and Clerk be authorized to execute service agreements with Victoria County Career Services and Sir Sanford Fleming College to implement the Kawartha Lakes Skills Advance Ontario Program, substantially in the form as provided in Appendix B and C respectively to Report ED2020-027.

Carried

The SAO project agreements are a maximum of one year in length. The initial SAO project agreement extended until March 31, 2021. At that time, a project amendment was granted to extend the program to March 31, 2022.

At the Council Meeting of June 15, 2021, Council adopted the following resolution:

CR2021-300

That Report ED2021-021, **Kawartha Lakes SkillsAdvance Ontario Program Amending Agreements with Victoria County Career Services and Sir Sandford Fleming College**, be received; and

That the Mayor and Clerk be authorized to execute service agreements with Victoria County Career Services and Sir Sanford Fleming College to implement

the Kawartha Lakes SkillsAdvance Ontario Program extension, substantially in the form as provided in Appendix D and F respectively to Report ED2021-021.

Carried

Since 2020, over 23 job seekers and 125 incumbent workers have completed training in manufacturing, construction and agricultural sectors in Kawartha Lakes, helping to address local business gaps in finding general labour and upskilling our existing workforce in these key industries. The Job Seeker number currently falls under the performance target of 90 participants. This section of the project has been heavily impacted by the pandemic which has resulted in difficulty recruiting job seekers willing to re-enter the workforce, and challenges with in-person training due to pandemic restrictions. This phenomenon has been experienced across the Province in other SAO projects. The incumbent training performance commitments have been met.

The current funding agreement expires on March 31, 2022. This report requests an extension be approved to May 31, 2022.

Rationale:

An extension to the current agreement from March 31, 2022 to May 31, 2022 will provide time to wrap up the administrative section of the project, complete additional incumbent training, and support the final cohort of job seekers currently in training to transition into full time employment. Completing the job seeker transition will increase the number of participating Job Seekers getting the project closer to the performance targets.

An extension request has been submitted to the Province and received preliminary support from Ministry Staff. The approval process continues. An outcome is expected imminently and the extension agreement will need to be executed before March 31, 2022.

Should the extension request be approved, Staff will coordinate executing the agreement with the Province and the agreement between the municipality and VCCS Employment Services until May 31, 2021. The agreement with Sir Sandford Fleming College will not be renewed. At this point, Sir Sandford Fleming College can complete the remaining incumbent training requirements by invoicing the project on a participant by participant basis.

Other Alternatives Considered:

The SAO program is administratively heavy. Extending the project allows Staff time to finish off the AdvancEd project and capture additional participant targets with full funding from the Province. As such, no alternatives are recommended.

Alignment to Strategic Priorities

A project extension supports the 2020-2023 Kawartha Lakes Strategic Plan priorities:

1. A Vibrant and Growing Economy
2. Good Government

The Kawartha Lakes SkillsAdvance Program continues to advance the vision of thriving and growing communities within a healthy natural environment by strengthening local business stability and upskilling the local workforce.

The project also supports the implementation of the Kawartha Lakes Economic Development Strategy. The Strategy is a people focused strategy, recognizing that the strengths of the local economy are built on the business owners, workforce and residents of the community. Manufacturing and agriculture are two of the key clusters identified in the Strategy.

Financial/Operation Impacts:

The AdvancEd program is 100% funded through the Province of Ontario SAO pilot project up to \$1,439,664. These funds include operating and financial supports for employers and participants. Funds are received by the municipality and distributed to project partners to fund their respective activities. The SAO project framework includes funding to cover administrative costs incurred by the municipality such as project management, accounting, and legal services.

Consultations:

City Solicitor
Senior Accountant
AdvancEd Steering Committee
Sir Sandford Fleming College
VCCS Employment Services

Attachments:

None.

Department Head email: rholy@kawarthalakes.ca

Department Head: Richard Holy, Director of Development Services