

## Council Report

---

**Report Number:** ED2023-020

**Meeting Date:** March 21, 2023

**Title:** Skills Development Fund 3 Projects

**Description:** Request to execute workforce development program agreements pending Provincial Skills Development Fund 3 funding

**Author and Title:** Rebecca Mustard, Manager of Economic Development

---

### Recommendations:

**That** Report ED2023-020, **Skills Development Fund 3 Projects**, be received;

**That** the Mayor and Clerk, following a review of agreements to the satisfaction of the City Solicitor, be authorised to execute all required documents, agreement(s), and extensions with the Province of Ontario relating to the Skills Development Fund 3 project titled Kawartha Lakes Skilled Employee Advanced Training Program (SEAT);

**That** the Mayor and Clerk, following a review of agreements to the satisfaction of the City Solicitor, be authorised to execute all required documents, agreement(s), and extensions with the Province of Ontario and Sir Sandford Fleming College relating to the Skills Development Fund 3 project titled Skills Training for the Horticultural and Wildlife Management sectors; 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, agreement(s), and extensions with the Province of Ontario, Trent University, Peterborough and the Kawarthas Economic Development, and Workforce Development Board relating to the Skills Development Fund 3 project titled Community-Campus Engagement for Rural Degree Holders in Peterborough and City of Kawartha Lakes; and

**Department Head:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Financial/Legal/HR/Other:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Chief Administrative Officer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**That** the Mayor and Clerk, following a review of agreements to the satisfaction of the City Solicitor, be authorised to execute all required documents, agreement(s), and extensions with be authorised to execute the Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Kawartha Lakes and Peterborough and the Kawarthas Economic Development, relating to the Skills Development Fund 3 project that continues and refines the work of the current Pathways to Prosperity project.

## **Background:**

In September 2021, the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development (MLTD) announced a new round of Skills Development Fund (SDF) funding of \$83.3 million to support projects that will enable market-driven solutions and unlock the economic potential of skilled trades and broader workforce development initiatives to facilitate economic recovery. The projects are 100% funded through the program.

The program has offered two rounds of funding to date, and Kawartha Lakes has received funding with project partners in both rounds. The Kawartha Lakes and project partner, Sir Sandford Fleming College, received funding in the first round of SDF funding for a simulator and training project targeting the agriculture, construction, forestry, and public works sectors.

In the second round, Kawartha Lakes received two funding contracts. One in partnership with Sir Sandford Fleming College titled Sustainable Food Systems and Urban Forestry Credentials, and another with Trent University and Peterborough and the Kawarthas Economic Development titled Community-Campus Engagement for Rural Degree Holders in Peterborough and City of Kawartha Lakes. Kawartha Lakes also partnered in a regional project, Pathways to Prosperity, led by Peterborough and the Kawarthas Economic Development delivering job seeker and incumbent training focused on the agricultural, construction, line cook, and manufacturing sectors.

The first two rounds of the Skills Development Fund were one year projects. Round two projects conclude on March 31, 2023. A report detailing the outcomes of these projects will be forthcoming to Council at the conclusion of the projects. To date, projects funding through SDF have brought new opportunities to Kawartha Lakes and our surrounding regions by upskilling incumbent works in our local businesses, helping train new workers in key industries, matching university graduates with local career opportunities, developing long term relationships between local employers and post secondary, and the investment in new technology with construction and agriculture simulators at Fleming College.

In Fall 2022, the Ministry announced a third round of funding for the program in an intake named Skills Development Fund 3. Three project were submitted by Kawartha Lakes as the lead applicant; Kawartha Lakes Skilled Employee Advanced Training Program (SEAT), Community-Campus Engagement for Rural Degree Holders (Trent University), and Skills Training for the Horticultural and Wildlife Management sectors (Fleming College). Kawartha Lakes is a partner in a fourth project submitted by

Peterborough and the Kawarthas Economic Development extending the current Pathways to Prosperity project.

This report requests that, should submitted applications be successful, Council enter into agreements with the Province and respective funding partners to execute the approved projects.

## **Rationale:**

The Skills Development Fund 3 offers a unique opportunity for workforce development projects to take place in Kawartha Lakes and surrounding region.

All projects are eligible for the SDF program and are 100% funded by the Province. They were designed with project partners to address immediate and strategic opportunities to provide skills training, and support engagement in the local workforce. New to SDF3, multi-year projects are being considered. The timeline for each project is included in their summary below:

### **Project: Community-Campus Engagement for Rural Degree Holders (Trent University)**

Applicant: City of Kawartha Lakes

Partners: Trent, Peterborough and the Kawarthas Economic Development,  
Haliburton County, Northumberland County

Budget: \$3,690,880

Timeline: March 2023- March 2026

The Community Concierge Program pilot project funded in SDF Round 2, demonstrated an appetite among employers to make immediate and long-term strategic change to increase the retention of graduates in the region. With Round 3 funding we propose to continue this program with higher targets, (2) expand further into Eastern Ontario with a focus on the County of Haliburton, and County of Northumberland, and (3) to support the implementation of the WIL partnerships to ensure what is on paper becomes a reality.

The project will target the creation of 100 multi-year co-operation agreements (annually) between Trent University and the employer community. We propose doubling the number of program participants, who are recent and emerging graduates seeking employment in the region to 200 annually. Co-operation agreements will address future WIL placements targeting 350 new placements annually for emerging graduates to better transition them to full-time

employment in the region upon graduation. At Trent, WIL opportunities include field placements, co-operative education, internship, community-service learning, and applied research placements.

**Project: Kawartha Lakes Skilled Employee Advanced Training Program (SEAT)**

Applicant: City of Kawartha Lakes

Partners: TS Manufacturing, Kawartha Dairy, Mariposa Dairy

Budget: \$1,758,000

Project timeline: April 2023- March 2026

The Kawartha Lakes Skilled Employee Advanced Training Program (SEAT) is a pilot program with resources for development and implementation. It is a hyper-local, employer-led, niche training program to address specific needs of local employers. The program will offer employers the opportunity to provide high skilled training to their employees through a custom built training initiative, or access to existing high skill training options.

The objectives of the Kawartha Lakes Skilled Employee Advanced Training Program are:

1. To support and help deliver a resilient workforce by retention and capacity building for employers
2. Encourage partnerships across the economy and support innovative ideas and training solutions

These partnerships will begin with the City of Kawartha Lakes and employers, employer to employer, and employer to training developer/ provider. A major component of SEAT's objectives is to support retention and up-skill current employees to bridge necessary skilled gaps in employment identified by local employers; in order to retain skilled workers and provide them with additional opportunities within the City of Kawartha Lakes.

**Project: Skills Training for the Horticultural and Wildlife Management sectors (Fleming College)**

Applicant: City of Kawartha Lakes

Partners: Sir Sandford Fleming College

Budget: \$1,186,614.31

Timeline: April 2023 – March 2025

The project will support the development of micro-credentials for the horticultural sector and in-person training for the wildlife control and pest management sector. Micro-credentials are skills-based courses which will be grouped into different subject areas. Students can either select individual courses or have the option to complete all micro-credentials to obtain a micro-certificate in a subject area. A micro-certificate consists of 90 – 120 course hours. Subject areas were determined through feedback from community members, employers, alumni, and community partners/members.

The proposed skills training is a response to the needs of the labour market and will lead directly to local/regional jobs. The training will also provide an opportunity for those currently employed looking to expand their skillset and be trained on new techniques and sustainable approaches to pest management.

The training will increase availability of specialized post-secondary programs and strengthen connection to industry and communities, thus strengthening the accountability and relationship between post-secondary institutions and employers, facilitating exposure to industry.

### **Project: Pathways to Prosperity 2**

Applicant: Peterborough and the Kawarthas Economic Development (PKED)

Partners: City of Kawartha Lakes, Muskoka Kawarthas Employment Services (MKES), Sir Sandford Fleming College

This project is a request for a three (3) year extension and refinement of the current Pathways to Prosperity project (P2P). P2P offers co-horted training for entry level job seekers to gain skills and seek employment in key regional economic sectors; agriculture, construction, line cook, and manufacturing sectors. P2P also offers incumbent training for upskilling local employees to help fill immediate skills gaps in these industries. The project is managed by PKED, and delivered locally by Kawartha Lakes, Fleming, MKES with VCCS Employment Services.

Requires: signing an MOU that is provided by PKED

The Kawartha Lakes led project proposals were submitted in Q4, 2022. Staff are waiting to hear the outcome of the proposals. The Province requires agreements between the municipality and the Province to be executed before March 31, 2023, should any of the submitted applications be successful. The agreements contain the requirements of the grant, performance targets, and budget.

## **Other Alternatives Considered:**

The project proposals provide opportunities to support economic recovery and strengthen collaborative programming with key post secondary institutions. As the SDF program is 100% funded, municipal costs to administer the program funding agreements are covered. As such, no alternatives have been considered.

## **Alignment to Strategic Priorities**

The SDF project proposals support the Kawartha Lakes Strategic Plan priority:

- A Vibrant and Growing Economy

The projects address workforce challenges in the local economy and also develop strategic collaborative partnerships with key institutions in the region.

Further, the Kawartha Lakes Economic Development Strategy supports the retention of youth in the community, which is the focus of the Trent University proposal. The Strategy also seeks to encourage a collaborative environment, which is delivered through developing working partnerships with both institutions to achieve outcomes of mutual benefit.

## **Financial/Operation Impacts:**

The Skills Development Fund is a fully funded program.

The Kawartha Lakes Skilled Employee Advanced Training Program (SEAT) proposal requests funding of \$1,758,000. This project will be executed by the Kawartha Lakes. The project budget includes expenses for project management, administration, and business training.

The Community-Campus Engagement for Rural Degree Holders in Peterborough and City of Kawartha Lakes Proposal requests funding of \$3,690,880. This project will be executed by Trent University. The budget includes funds to cover municipal administrative costs incurred by the project as well as funds to hire staff to execute the project deliverables. These Staff will be shared between the City of Kawartha Lakes, Trent University, and other project partners to ensure coordinated activities with existing programming.

The Skills Training for the Horticultural and Wildlife Management sectors, requests funding of \$1,186,614.31. This project will be executed by Sir Sandford Fleming

College. Administrative costs related to the management of the funding agreement are included in the project budget with no implication to the tax base.

**Consultations:**

City Solicitor  
Senior Accountant  
Peterborough and the Kawarthas Economic Development  
Sir Sandford Fleming College  
Trent University

**Attachments:**

None.

**Department Head email:** [rholy@kawarthalakes.ca](mailto:rholy@kawarthalakes.ca)

**Department Head:** Richard Holy, Director of Development Services