



Committee Report

To: Warden Mitch Twolan
Members of the Planning and Development Committee

From: Kara Van Myall
Director of Planning and Development

Date: July 9, 2020

Re: Rural Economic Development Program Funding Application

Staff Recommendation:

That a by-law be introduced to execute the Agreement with the the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs for the Rural Economic Development program to support the Skills Training and Development Plan implementation.

Background:

On June 13th, 2019 the Trades and Skilled Workforce Secretariat Action Plan was brought forward to Council for review and approval. The plan covered three counties, Bruce, Grey and Huron, with direction and input from local industries, Bruce County and the Nuclear Innovation Institute. The action plan described 27 key initiatives across eight themes that where to be carried out in connection with local school boards, community colleges, universities and industry. Focal areas included:

1. Raising the awareness of trades and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) to young people so they are aware of the great career opportunities that are available;
2. Working with underrepresented populations promoting pathways into the trades and STEAM fields; and
3. Collecting and compiling data on the vast local resources, providing a focal point for information of what is available in the region.

On August 1st 2019, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was brought forward to Council between the County and the Nuclear Innovation Institute (NII), a part of this MOU was for the Trades and Skilled Workforce Secretariat to transition over to the NII and for the Trades and Skilled Workforce Secretariat Action Plan to continue. The NII Business Plan was also presented at this time and the same intentions where noted.

After successfully transitioning the Trades and Skilled Workforce Secretariat to the NII, the organization was restructured, and the Trades and Skilled Workforce Secretariat and accompanying Action Plan were not pursued.

Recognizing this change, staff began working to address this known and critical workforce gap and on April 16th 2020, the Workforce Attraction Strategy Phase 1 Update was brought forward to Council. This report outlined the current issues of:

1. Rapidly Shrinking Labour Force
2. High Labour Force Participation Rates
3. Aging Population
4. Low Unemployment Rate
5. Migration Trends
6. The Business Culture Shift
7. Mismatched Worker Skills to Available Work
8. Sector Specific Challenges

Subsequently, on June 18th, 2020, the Recommended Actions for the Workforce Attraction Strategy were endorsed by Council under the following 4-pronged approach:

1. Continuous data collection
2. Attraction
3. Retention
4. Skills building

RED Funding:

Bruce County finalized its submission to the Rural Economic Development Program (RED) with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) in February 2020 to support the advancement of this critical work. Staff received conditional confirmation on May 28th that the funding application was approved for the amount of \$34,000. This funding is to be leveraged with matching County funds \$34,000 bringing the total funding to \$68,000.

The RED grant funding will allow for the actioning of Workforce Attraction Strategy including the specific elements of the Trades and Skilled Workforce Secretariat Action Plan specific to the needs of Bruce County, some examples include:

- Support the community in developing a programming approach for the region that includes developing the trades and skilled workforce
- Participate in school events with trade facilities where kids and parents can experience the trades together
- Generating awareness of upcoming opportunities and career pathways in the region
- Collaboration with indigenous communities and organizations and promoting the skilled trades opportunities
- Develop student testimonial videos to illustrate local student pathways and generate awareness and exposure
- Advocate for the development of programs to attract more women to the skilled trades and generating awareness of opportunities

Funding announcements will be made public following execution of the Agreement with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Financial/Staffing/Legal/IT Considerations:

\$34,000 will be allocated from the 2020 Economic Development budget to support this initiative through 2020/2021. Combined with the \$34,000 from the RED grant for a total of \$68,000 to support the approach as outlined.

Interdepartmental Consultation:

Planning and Development and the Office of the CAO staff worked together and co-wrote the RED Grant application.

Link to Strategic Goals and Elements:

Goal #7: Stimulate and reward innovation and economic development.

Written by: Pierre Valley, Economic Development Officer

Approved by:A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sandra Datars Bere', written in a cursive style.

Sandra Datars Bere
Chief Administrative Officer