

Request for Decision

Social Services - Employment Assistance Contracts

Presented To: Community Services Committee

Presented: Monday, Feb 04, 2019

Report Date Tuesday, Jan 15, 2019

Type: Managers' Reports

Resolution

THAT the City of Greater Sudbury authorizes the Social Services Division to conduct a review on the purchased services provided under the Employment Assistance budget and make recommendations to the Community Service Committee in the fourth quarter of 2019 as outlined in the report entitled "Social Services - Employment Assistance Contracts" from the General Manager of Community Development, presented at the Community Services Committee meeting on February 4, 2019.

Relationship to the Strategic Plan / Health Impact Assessment

This report refers to operational matters.

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan in the area of Quality of Life and Place, as it aligns with the Population Health Priorities with Indigenous Youth, Resiliency, and Families.

Report Summary

This report provides City Council with an overview of the Employment Assistance budget in the Social Services Division and seeks approval to complete an overarching review of the current contracts with outside providers. The Employment Assistance budget is funded by the Province and is administered locally. Recommendations would be brought forward for Council approval in the fourth quarter of 2019.

Financial Implications

The purchased services Employment Assistance contracts for both the YMCA and the Ontario March of Dimes are both fully funded through the Provincial government. Changes to these contracts could impact outside service providers.

Signed By

Report Prepared By

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Health Impact Review

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Manager Review

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Division Review

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Financial Implications

Jim Lister
Manager of Financial Planning and Budgeting
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Recommended by the Department

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Interim General Manager of Community Development
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Recommended by the C.A.O.

Ed Archer
Chief Administrative Officer
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Background

Ontario Works (OW) employment activities and supports are provided with the intent of helping individuals prepare for, connect with, and remain in the labour market. It also includes employment activities such as:

- community participation (i.e., activities that allow people to contribute to the community and improve their employability);
- employment placement and job retention services;
- job search support services;
- supports for self-employment development;
- referral to basic education;
- referral for life stabilization supports;
- Learning, Earning and Parenting (LEAP) Program;
- Literacy; and
- job-specific skills training.

The appropriate mix of employment assistance activities depends on the experience, skills, circumstances, and needs of individual applicants or participants and the realities of the local labour market. The amount of time a participant needs to engage in activities designed to help him or her increase employability and obtain sustainable employment will vary.

As the Ontario Works Employment Assistance program has evolved some aspects of the services are outdated and in need of a review. The anticipated outcome will be that this review will determine current needs and establish a process to secure a purchased service provider going forward.

Employment Assistance Purchased Services – Community Participation and Employment Placement

The YMCA Sudbury and the local Ontario March of Dimes (OMOD) began providing brokered services in 1999 on the inception of Ontario Works and have been the brokers of record since. Both agencies have transitioned from providing stand alone services (youth focus and services for people with disabilities) to becoming part of the Employment Ontario Model; the YMCA working with all types of clients and the OMOD focusing on services for individuals of all ages receiving funding from the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), Canada Pension Plan (CPP) Disability, Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB), and private insurers.

Two of the contracts were originally developed under a different service model for employment activities. These transitioned to the newer employment outcome model (in or around 2003) where the focus was on earnings and exits to earnings. The brokers continued to offer community placements and a greater focus was placed on finding earnings, increasing earnings, and utilizing the full time employment placement

program to target living wage jobs. This offered a greater chance for the participants to exit from OW for a much longer period (beyond 24 months) - a new target in the service contract. The contract amounts and deliverables are as outlined in the table below.

| Broker | Overview of Contract Deliverables | Cost |
|--------------------------|---|-----------|
| Ontario March of Dimes | Provide support for Employment Placements and Community Placements | \$133,000 |
| YMCA Employment Services | Provide support for Employment Placements and Community Placements | \$240,000 |
| YMCA Employment Services | Community Helper Program - provides low income seniors and various festivals and not for profits who require a temporary crew | \$85,000 |

The current employment activities remain focused on earnings and exits to earnings, but the delivery of service at the brokers has evolved under the Employment Ontario suite of programs. The focus on job development/coaching is now delivered as more of a self-directed model. There are fewer paid employment placements happening and while youth are finding employment; the income is no longer impacting the earnings outcome as it can be exempt under certain criteria.

The recent announcement by the Provincial Government to refresh and move toward improving attachment to the workforce data for Ontario Works participants offers a chance to revisit and modernize the services the Social Services Division purchases.

Note: The Community Helper contract and associated deliverables was developed as a way to offer individuals who had criminal records to have a supervised activity to re-engage with society and move forward towards employment. This targeted individuals who would otherwise be precluded from community placements in mainstream not for profits. The program offers supports to low income seniors as a way to support outdoor work such as raking of leaves or shoveling of snow. The program also provides a crew of individuals for set up and/or tear down for festivals. It too should be modernized but remains a value added program.

Individualized Employment Assistance Supports (Life Stabilization and Increased Employability)

The Social Services Division also purchases individualized supports through the same Employment Assistance budget to offer clients a path towards life stabilization and opportunities to engage in activities focusing on increased employability. These life stabilization supports are often seen as addressing barriers (brief therapy, cognitive behavior therapy, learning disability testing, psycho-vocation testing, self-

awareness testing through MBTI/ Strong) that limit an individual's ability to move forward. While the Social Services Division has vendors of record for these types of services, the costs vary from year to year based on the type of clients that are on the OW caseload. Increased employability programs are often identified through labour market lead training, which include recent programming in the areas of culinary, carpentry and Personal Support Worker (PSW). They offer clients an experiential learning opportunity with a wrap around approach to client supports. Supports can include financial support to offset costs with employment activities to purchasing of a seat to connectivity with a dedicated staff resource to assist in planning and resolving issues that from time to time arise.

Next Steps

Upon approval by City Council, the Social Services Division will engage in a review of the services that are provided for under the Employment Assistance budget including external contracts with providers. This review will include an environmental scan of best practices in the Province and value for money with recommendations for the process for future procurement to the Community Services Committee in the fourth quarter of 2019.