

For Information Only

Ontario Fire Administration Inc. (OFAI) Candidate Testing Program

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Resolution

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Finance Implications

There is no cost to the City of Greater Sudbury for utilizing the services of the Ontario Fire Administration Inc (OFAI). Potential career firefighter candidates pay OFAI directly to complete the standardized Candidate Testing Services (CTS). Once the candidates are qualified, they can submit applications to multiple fire departments. By leveraging the OFAI services, Greater Sudbury Fire Services will save both time and costs associated with career firefighter recruitment. Fire Services and Human Resources personnel currently commit approximately 189 hours for testing and assessments related to each career firefighter recruitment at a cost of \$16,000. The 189 hours currently spent on candidate testing and assessment can now be dedicated to other operational needs.

Signed By

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Background

Greater Sudbury Fire Services (GSFS) has delivered all aspects of the full time firefighter recruitment process, as most departments have done across the province. This process included short listing, written and physical testing, and interviews. Short listing and interviews are manageable aspects of the process, but physical and written testing has significant logistical needs. The strain on the Training Division has been burdensome and required multiple resources throughout the GSFS.

Candidates were required to get a Candidate Physical Abilities Test (CPAT), at their own cost, and also pay for testing through the GSFS. This process would be done for any application in the province as a lot of testing has been determined by the local department. Costs for potential recruits for travel and accommodation to attend various departments have also been viewed as a time and money burden for those seeking fulltime employment. Achieving a consistent recruitment practice has also been challenging and a source of frustration for both recruits and municipalities.

Current

Greater Sudbury Fire Services has entered into an agreement with Ontario Fire Administration Inc (OFAI) with the intention that the next career firefighter recruitment will enlist their services to provide candidate testing.

The OFAI testing model includes medical screening, a general aptitude test, personality inventory, CPAT and a firefighter technical skills assessment. The OFAI standardized test is currently used by 23 municipalities in Ontario (notably Toronto, Mississauga and Oakville, among others). It is open, transparent, defensible, manageable, inclusive and cost effective for both the municipal fire service and the candidate.

The OFAI is owned by the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs (O AFC) and is governed by an advisory committee of Fire Chiefs and human resources professionals. This standardized selection process is in line with current Ontario Human Rights guidelines. GSFS has the final decision to hire and will have candidates complete a short application process, designed by the department, utilizing those candidates who possess an OFAI certificate.

The great benefit to potential candidates is that a prospective career firefighter can complete the standardized Candidate Testing Services (CTS) process once and submit applications to multiple departments, saving the expense of travel, testing fees and be able to limit the time needed to participate in each separate department's process.

The benefits to GSFS are immense with the City saving both time and the cost associated with career firefighter recruitment. A traditional recruitment requires a significant commitment of Fire Services resources and monies. The OFAI CTS follows industry standards and best practices in aptitude, human relations and work style assessments, bona-fide medical, clinical, physical and job specific skills testing. This process can help our fire service target specific job requirements needed in our community such as skilled trades, work experience, specialized fire training or a second language. GSFS is also able to obtain those who are located within a geographic location.

It is our intention to advise our current employees of this method of recruitment so that they can participate in the process to allow them the opportunity to obtain certification prior to our next recruitment process. All necessary information for OFAI participants is found on their website.

It would also be our aim to advertise, using various methods, to potential candidates our intention to use only this methodology for career recruitment.

GSFS is confident this process will identify the best candidates available for employment with the City of Greater Sudbury Fire Service ensuring fairness, transparency and an equal opportunity employer.