

**Municipality of Chatham-Kent**  
**Health and Human Services**  
**Employment and Social Services**

**To:** Mayor and Members of Council  
**From:** Matt Keech, Program Manager, Employment and Social Services  
**Date:** December 9, 2024  
**Subject:** Employment Services Update

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**Recommendation**

It is recommended that:

1. The hiring of two permanent full time equivalent Job Developer positions within Employment and Social Services, to support the CK Jobs program via 100% provincial funding, at no cost to the Corporation be approved.

**Background**

Council authorized Employment and Social Services to enter into a service delivery agreement with the Windsor Regional Employment Network to deliver employment services at no additional cost to the Corporation at the October 30, 2023 [Council meeting](#).

The initial service delivery agreement for the period of January 1, 2024, through to March 31, 2025 provided operational funding of \$1,420,000 to serve a client caseload of 1000. The full-time equivalent (FTE) positions identified in the report to Council to support this new program included:

- One Supervisor of Employment Programming
- Two Community Navigators
- Seven Job Developers
- One Trainer
- One Local System Support

**Comments**

On October 25, 2024 The Windsor Regional Employment Network offered The Municipality of Chatham-Kent the opportunity to increase the number of intakes for the April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025 contract to 1100. The additional intakes would result in an increase to operational funding by \$232,000 for a new total of \$1,652,500 for the contract year. In addition to the increased operational funding, funding for client supports would increase by \$17,424. The increase in funding will result in more

employment and programming opportunities for clients and businesses supported through the program. Employment and Social Services was offered this opportunity based on strong year to date performance and the current demand to support job seekers and businesses.

Since January 2024 the Employment and Social Services (ESS) Division, employment team has achieved a number of successes including:

- Delivered five workshops, including a partnership workshop with Walpole Island First Nation Ontario Works, to 65 participants intended to help develop necessary skills to obtain and retain employment. The workshops, known as the Foundations of Work were themed around in demand employment sectors including Customer Service, Food Service, and Early Childhood Education assistants.
- In September 2024 the team organized seven open house events in Blenheim, Chatham, Dresden, Ridgetown, Tilbury, Wallaceburg, and Wheatley. With positive feedback and strong attendance, including 45 new intakes, the open houses played a key role in raising awareness about available employment services to our community members throughout Chatham-Kent
- On November 6 the team hosted an exclusive interview night event, offering a unique opportunity for over 100 CK Jobs participants to participate in multiple on the spot interviews. The event supported the hiring needs of 21 employers from across Chatham-Kent. Employers praised the quality of the event and diverse pool of talent to hire from. Multiple candidates secured job offers on the spot, helping employers fill immediate vacancies and drive program outcomes.
- Staff have linked job seekers to provincial Ministry retained programs such as Better Jobs Ontario and Apprenticeships through a series of targeted events including a Facebook Live event on the Municipal Facebook page and an Apprenticeship Information Night in partnership with St. Clair College. These events inform job seekers on available funding, training, and employment support programs.
- The team registered 858 new job seekers (intakes) to the program since launch in January of this year connecting more than 200 participants to employment while maintaining an above network average rate of participants employed.
- In partnership with other Municipal Departments, the team coordinated the Chatham-Kent Workforce Week which will be held from February 24 to March 5, 2025. Throughout this period Municipal Departments will have the opportunity to showcase the many resources the Municipality provides to job seekers and business through a series of engagement events. The week will end with a community job fair on March 5, 2025, at the John D. Bradley Convention Center. The job fair will include experiential employer booths, networking opportunities, and highlight education and training programs.

The opportunity to serve additional clients and maintain quality recruitment events requires the original staffing plan to be revisited as the current complement of Job Developers will not be able to meet the workload requirements with the increased intakes. Through an analysis of current needs, it is recommended that the program hire two permanent full time equivalent Job Developer's at no cost to the Corporation.

Through ongoing evaluation, additional administrative burdens were also identified that were not appreciated when the program was first launched in January 2024. Employment Ontario guidelines require that all benefit decisions be reviewed and approved by the Windsor Regional Employment Network. This transaction-based approach results in a significant amount of documentation in technology and often multiple submissions for single benefit approvals like bus passes, vouchers for clothing and hair cuts. Participant employment milestones must be meticulously documented at one, three, six and twelve month intervals with Job Developers surveying participants, collecting pay stubs, and documenting the details in a Case Management System. This workload necessitated the re-evaluation of caseload sizes and the need for two additional Job Developers.

The original staffing plan for seven job developers was based on annual program intakes of 1000 clients. An increase of 100 clients could not be absorbed amongst the current complement of Job Developers without negatively impacting employment outcomes. Clients who are enrolled in the program stay on for a period of one year, even once they are employed, as they continue to receive retention supports. An increase in staffing would result in caseloads of approximately 122 per Job Developer. Without the additional Job Developers, caseloads would increase to 157 each. High caseloads limit Job Developers ability to engage employers to find client job opportunities, limit available client support for job retention, and impact team members' ability to complete milestones which results in a loss of performance based funding.

In order to manage the increased intakes, complete participant milestones, and manage the administrative burdens of the program, it is recommended that the number of Job Developers be increased by two FTE.

**Council Term Priorities**

This report supports the following Council Term Priorities:

			
<p><b>Deliver Excellent Service</b></p>	<p><b>Promote Safety &amp; Well-Being</b></p>	<p><b>Grow Our Community</b></p>	<p><b>Ensure Environmental Sustainability</b></p>
<p>1a</p>		<p>4a, 4c</p>	

**Consultation**

The Director of Employment and Social Services, Supervisor, Accounting and System Support of Employment and Social Services, and the General Manager, Health and Human Services, reviewed and approved this plan.

**Communication**

Employment opportunities resulting from approval of this report will be advertised in accordance with current Municipal guidelines to internal and external candidates. This may include the municipal website, subscription services and social media. Any participants connected to a new Job Developer as a result of this approval will be notified by email or letter and in person meetings. The CK Jobs program is promoted to job seekers through paid social media advertisements on Facebook, Spotify, and Google. The program is also advertised at several bus stops and on pull up banners throughout municipal buildings and Chatham-Kent library locations.

**Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice (DEIJ)**

Employment programs play an important role in supporting Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice by providing equitable access to job opportunities, skill development, and career advancement for individuals of all backgrounds including equity deserving communities. Employment programs such as CK Jobs ensure that individuals from marginalized or underrepresented communities have access to the same opportunities as others.

**Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications resulting from the recommendations. The funding from the existing employment service contract which is 100% provincial is able to fund this recommendation at no cost to the Corporation.

Prepared by:

Matt Keech, Program Manager, Employment and Social Services

Reviewed by:

Jodi Guilmette, General Manager, Health and Human Services

Consulted and confirmed the content of the consultation section of the report by:

Ryan Blair, Supervisor, Accounting and System Support, Employment and Social Services

Polly Smith, Director, Employment and Social Services

Attachment(s): None