



TO: GENERAL COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: GRANT APPLICATION FOR SKILLS DEVELOPMENT FUND SUPPORTED BY GEORGIAN COLLEGE

WARD: ALL

PREPARED BY AND KEY CONTACT: N. GAVARRE, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT OFFICER, EXT. 4431

SUBMITTED BY: S. SCHLICHTER, DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC AND CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

GENERAL MANAGER APPROVAL: B. ARANIYASUNDARAN, GENERAL MANAGER OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER APPROVAL: M. PROWSE, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

RECOMMENDED MOTION

1. That the Economic and Creative Development Department be authorized to apply to the Skills Development Fund through the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development, in partnership with Georgian College to address skills development and labour shortages within the manufacturing sector, under the following parameters:
 - a) That in accordance with the requirements of the Skills Development Fund, the City of Barrie be the lead applicant;
 - b) That all costs incurred by the City of Barrie to administer the program, including employee resources, be identified, and supported as part of the funding application; and
 - c) That the Director of Economic and Creative Development Department be given delegated authority to make decisions pertaining to the program when it is deemed reasonable or required, at the sole discretion of the Director, in consultation with applicable departments and the General Manager of Infrastructure and Growth Management.
2. That should the City of Barrie be successful in obtaining the funding that the appropriate Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) be created between the City of Barrie and Georgian College outlining program deliverables and funding to each party.
3. That the City Clerk be authorized to execute all requisite documents and to facilitate the application, and any associated funding approvals in a form acceptable to the Director of Finance/Treasurer, Director of Economic and Creative Development and the Director of Legal Services.

PURPOSE & BACKGROUND

4. The purpose of this Staff Report is to seek approval for staff in the Economic and Creative Development Department to submit an application to the Skills Development Fund for funding to deliver programming and supports, in partnership with Georgian College, to address workforce development issues with manufacturers related to skills training and economic recovery.

Skills Development Fund (SDF)

5. The Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development (MLTSD) has allocated \$83.3M in 2021-22 through the Skills Development Fund (SDF) 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.
6. This SDF fund targets sectors or occupations within the skilled trades or other sectors experiencing labour market challenges including those impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.
7. The objectives of the SDF program are to:
 - Ensure a resilient workforce by supporting access into the labour market and capacity-building for employers.
 - Empowering workers and job seekers who face higher barriers of entry into meaningful and gainful employment.
Encouraging partnerships across the economy and supporting innovative ideas and training solutions.
8. There is no application deadline established for the Fund, applications are being accepted on a continuous intake basis until the Fund has been depleted.
9. Ministry approved primary applicants have been identified as: Employers (other than private and public colleges, universities, and Indigenous Institutes), Apprenticeship delivery agents, non-profit organizations, Indigenous band offices, professional associations, trade unions, district social services administration boards, hospitals, and municipalities.
10. All colleges, universities and Indigenous Institutes must work with other community partners to apply for the Skills Development Fund (SDF).

Proposed Application

11. The primary objective of this application is to develop and implement solutions to address the workforce challenges of the manufacturing sector.
12. The City of Barrie would act as the lead applicant and work in partnership with Georgian College to create deliverables that will support economic recovery efforts for manufacturing through the development and delivery of flexible, entry and mid-level technical skills training solutions, employment services support, recruitment and retention initiatives, and promotional activity for the wider manufacturing sector.
13. Program applications of this type are approximately \$500,000 to \$700,000 and include the human resource costs to deliver the program in addition to the programs themselves. Georgian College with staff in Economic and Creative Development have begun some early consultation with local manufacturers on their needs in order to develop program frameworks.
14. Should staff receive approval to complete an application, the specific program elements would be refined as part of the program application process.
15. The City of Barrie and Georgian College have a longstanding partnership jointly working on several initiatives that benefit the community. Historically, the City of Barrie has supported similar applications for these types of programs where Georgian College has been the lead applicant. For this particular application, the City would be leveraging Georgian Colleges' expertise in continuing education and corporate training along with career and employment services

16. In addition to the City of Barrie's partnership with Georgian College a subsequent Stakeholder Advisory Group will be formed consisting of local industry employers to help guide the programming and ensure it aligns with their needs. The County of Simcoe, who is also a strong partner in supporting local labour market initiatives will be a member of the Advisory Group.
17. If the funding application is successful, Economic and Creative Development Staff and Georgian College will work with the Stakeholder Advisory Group to help achieve the objectives of this fund throughout the program.

Role of the City of Barrie

18. As the primary applicant, the City of Barrie would be responsible for acting as the main contact to the Ministry.
19. Other responsibilities the City of Barrie would have, include developing the project plan, administration of the program, promoting the program, helping in the recruitment of employers to participate in the programming, managing all financial resources, reporting obligations to the Ministry, and ensuring the delivery of the project meets Ministry requirements.
20. Should the City be successful in its application, it would enter into a Transfer Payment Agreement with the Province (MLTSD) and will be accountable to meet reporting requirements throughout the life cycle of the agreement, including activity and progress reports, final report, and fiscal accounting for the project.
21. MLTSD may engage or require the project to engage a third-party auditor to evaluate funded projects during or after their implementation.
22. The City of Barrie, if successful, would be responsible for managing third party service provider relationships and paying service providers for program deliverables, which will primarily be Georgian College for this application.
23. The Economic and Creative Development Department will be responsible for portions of the project identified within the application process. These responsibilities would include project management, employer outreach and promotional activities.

Role of Georgian College

24. The City of Barrie will be partnering with Georgian College's Continuing Education and Corporate Training Department (CECT) and Career and Employment Community Services to deliver program training and services that will be identified in the application to support labour market skills development to meet the needs of local manufacturers.
25. Georgian College has extensive experience managing projects within government-funded and community-based initiatives. The college has over 50 years of education and training experience. Georgian's Continuing Education and Corporate Training department regularly engages faculty to develop curriculum and design and deliver training. Georgian's Career and Employment Community Services has a long history within the community creating and piloting employment initiatives through government-funded programs that support employers and job seekers.
26. Based on preliminary conversations with local employers, training may include (but not limited to): Robotics, Industrial Automation, Hydraulics and Pneumatics, Precision Machining and CNC, Quality Assurance, Pathways to Manufacturing, Soft-skills, Basic hand tools, Math competencies.

-
27. Georgian College's Career and Employment Community Services will work with the stakeholder group, including employers to identify key technical and soft skills shortages in the manufacturing industry. They will work with unemployed job seekers by providing training and coaching in pre-employment skills. They will then work with employers to present new applicants once key skills are secured.
 28. Georgian College Career and Employment Community Services as part of the SDF project will also develop a career mapping tool will be designed to allow service providers and employers to easily develop customized skills training pathways for job seekers and employees in the manufacturing sector.
 29. Both CECT and Career and Employment Community Services will fulfil their reporting requirements and any other obligations outlined through the creation of a Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Barrie, should an application be approved through the Skills Training Fund.

ANALYSIS

30. Prior to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, Ontario was facing tight labour market conditions, with the unemployment rate at multi-year lows and employers reporting recruitment challenges, particularly related to finding workers with specific desired skills and experiences.
31. Through Economic and Creative Development consultations with local manufacturers, labour and skills shortages have been identified amongst the most pressing challenges facing Barrie's manufacturers today.
32. Many other sectors are facing similar labour and skills shortages, however based on capacity for training at Georgian College and resources available to deliver an effective program, this application will have a manufacturing sector focus.
33. In the City of Barrie's 2021 Business Data Survey, Manufacturing was Barrie's top full-time employer. Access to a large, high-quality workforce is critical to manufacturing success. It boosts output, productivity, and profitability.
34. In a recent Canadian Manufacturer and Exporters survey more than 85 per cent of manufacturers struggle to fill vacancies and lack the capacity to continuously invest in skills training.
35. The \$83.3M Skills Development Fund offers an opportunity for the City of Barrie to partner with Georgian College and submit an application that consists of corporate training and attraction and retention of employees for the manufacturing sector.
36. This application will be led by the Economic and Creative Development Department and aligns with the department's key deliverables including collaborating within the community to deliver supports, programs and services that ignite economic growth, promote resilience in business, cultivate a dynamic workforce and pipeline of talent and implement strategies to strengthen development of key sectors.
37. Georgian College has been a long-standing partner of the City of Barrie and has the experience and expertise in delivering labour market programs, skills development, training, and employment services.
38. The Skills Development fund requires that college's form a partnership with approved community partners who can lead the application. Municipalities have been identified by the Province as an eligible applicant lead.

-
39. The Skills Development Fund application from the City of Barrie in partnership with Georgian College will specifically target manufacturers and their training needs, employee skills gaps and attracting new applicants to industry.
 40. This application will focus on manufacturing as Barrie's largest full-time employment sector and will aim to build capacity and attract employees to the sector.
 41. Georgian College is well positioned to create the training programs identified through preliminary work. In addition, Georgian College's career and employment services have the capacity to implement attraction and retention employee initiatives with local manufacturers.
 42. During the application phase, initial conversations and research with employers will determine program areas required and a general outline that will be included for funding.
 43. If successful with the application, the City of Barrie will create a Memorandum of Understanding with Georgian College to solidify responsibilities and payment plans.
 44. The preparation of this application is key to its success and also to ensure that the City of Barrie accounts for all potential costs of running this program.
 45. Costs to be included within the application will include a coordinator position, all meetings and associated miscellaneous expenses, marketing materials and promotions along with the Ministry approved maximum of 15% to cover administration costs not directly associated with the delivery of the program.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT MATTERS

46. There are no environmental and/or climate change impact matters related to the recommendation.

ALTERNATIVE

47. The following alternative are available for consideration by General Committee:

Alternative #1

General Committee could not support the City of Barrie as the lead applicant for the Skills Development Fund.

This alternative is not recommended as it is an opportunity for the City of Barrie to apply for provincial funding that will directly and positively impact our local manufacturing sector at cost recovery to the City of Barrie.

FINANCIAL

48. There would be no net new impacts to the budget resulting from the proposed recommendation. All costs associated with Skills Development Fund will be included in the application which is estimated between \$500K-\$700K.
49. The application will include all costs that would be incurred by the City of Barrie to manage the Skills Development fund. Included in the application will be a staff resource to fulfill the obligations of the program, in addition to the maximum 15% allowed for operating and administrative costs will also be included in the application.

LINKAGE TO 2018–2022 STRATEGIC PLAN

50. The recommendation(s) included in this Staff Report support the following goals identified in the 2018-2022 Strategic Plan:
- Growing Our Economy
51. The Skills Development Fund is an opportunity to support the local economy and acquire funds through the province to implement programming.