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| TO: | CHAIR AND MEMBERS COMMUNITY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING ON NOVEMBER 11, 2013 |
| FROM: | SANDRA DATARS BERE MANAGING DIRECTOR HOUSING, SOCIAL SERVICES AND DEARNESS HOME |
| SUBJECT: | ONTARIO WORKS EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE FRAMEWORK 2013 - 2018 |

RECOMMENDATION

That, on the recommendation of the Manager Employment and Strategic Initiatives, with the concurrence of the Managing Director Housing, Social Services and Deerness Home, the Ontario Works Employment Assistance Services Framework, approved March 20, 2012 **BE AMENDED** in order to remove the cap per Agency Service Agreement; it being noted this will assist in delivering better Ontario Works employment outcomes; and, it being noted further, that there is no budget impact.

PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER

- Purchase Of Service Agreements - Ontario Works Employment Assistance Services (CPSC, Fe. 25, 2013)
- Purchase Of Service Agreements - Ontario Works Employment Assistance Services (CPSC, Dec. 3, 2012)
- Ontario Works Employment Assistance Framework 2013 – 2018 (CSC, March 5, 2012); and,
- RFP 12-07 Request for Proposal Ontario Works Employment Assistance Services (June 19, 2012).

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this report is to remove the cap on Ontario Works Employment Assistance contracts to enable Ontario Works to achieve better employment outcomes.

As the delivery agent under the Ontario Works Act, the City has the responsibility to effectively deliver services that respond to the needs of our participants. In addition to providing income supports, Ontario Works is an employment program. Employment Assistance services for Ontario Works participants are focused on increasing the participant's employability, and seek to increase their employment earnings and retention in employment. The City's Employment Assistance service delivery approach utilizes a combination of individualized services and supports while leveraging and maximizing services funded by other levels of government, and contracting for specific services with local service providers.

On March 20, 2012, City Council approved the London Ontario Works Employment Service Delivery Framework 2013 to 2018. The new contracts under the Framework commenced January 1, 2013 and operate using the following key components of the Framework:

- Services address the diverse and evolving needs of individuals on the Ontario Works caseload
- Distinct components include Employment Placement, Self-Employment, Essential Employment Services, Specialized Individual Service and Skills Training Directly Linked to Employment
- Services are purchased from local employment agencies



- Employment focused programs are a priority
- Strengthened focus on providing supports and referrals for all Ontario Works participants
- Strengthened accountability and quality assurance approach
- A Request for Proposal process selected organizations to deliver specified services for a contracted period of 3 years with an option of two, one year renewals
- Fee schedule is a pay-for-performance for actual services and outcomes delivered
- Expenditures under these agreements will not exceed \$600,000 per agreement
- Annual reviews of these service agreements will be based on the provider's performance with respect to Ontario Works performance criteria as well as budgetary considerations, Provincial program changes, or fundamental changes to the labour market or Ontario Works participants needs.

Business Impacts

We need more creative approaches to support participants to gain employment due to the complexity and skills demand of the job market, the slow and uneven economic recovery and the service needs of Ontario Works participants. Our contracted services provide a broad range of approaches and supports to best meet the unique needs of the individuals on the caseload. We operate under a demand driven approach with Caseworkers making referrals to the service best suited to the participant.

A cap has been part of the Employment Assistance Services contracts since 2006. In our on-going monitoring of referrals and expenditures, we have identified that the cap creates an artificial bottleneck to reaching employment outcomes. In order to ensure that the cap was not exceeded, we had to slow down referrals to partners who are achieving strong employment outcomes. It must be noted that the agencies are funded on a pay-per-performance model, with one service being funded almost solely on actual employment placement outcomes impacted. The cap needs to be removed in order to address the needs of the caseload in ways that will ensure strong employment outcomes continue to occur, including retention in employment.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial impacts. Expenditures will continue to be closely monitored to ensure that the total spending is within the existing Council approved budget.

CONCLUSION

In order to achieve maximum positive employment outcomes, it is recommended that the cap per Ontario Works Employment Assistance Agreement be removed.

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| RECOMMENDED BY: | CONCURRED BY: |
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| ELISABETH K. WHITE MANAGER, EMPLOYMENT & STRATEGIC INITIATIVES HOUSING, SOCIAL SERVICES AND DEARNESS HOME | SANDRA DATARS BERE MANAGING DIRECTOR HOUSING, SOCIAL SERVICES AND DEARNESS HOME |



- C. Anna Lisa Barbon, Manager, Financial & Business Services
- Elaine Sauve, Program Supervisor, Ministry of Community and Social Services
- Lise Beland, College Boreal
- Katryn Eggert, Daya Counselling Centre
- Michelle Quintyn, Goodwill Industries, Ontario Great Lakes
- Marilyn Neufeld, Hutton House Association for Adults with Disabilities
- Wendy Lau, LEADS Employment Services London Inc.
- Tamara Kaattari, Literacy Link South Central
- Elisabete Rodrigues, LUSO Community Services
- Gloryann Sollner, Rehabilitation Foundation for the Disabled (known as March of Dimes)
- Deb Armstrong, Nokee Kwe
- Paul Hubert, Pathways Skill Development & Placement Centre
- Steve Pellarin, The London Community Small Business Centre
- Anne Langille, WIL Counselling and Training for Employment
- Steve Cordes, Youth Opportunities Unlimited