

Report SSR-SS-03-14

To: Chair Burley and Members of the Social Service Committee
From: Debbie Pegelo, Ontario Works Manager
Meeting Date: February 12, 2014
Subject: **Funding for Implementation of Social Assistance Management Systems (SAMS) Technology**
Status: Recommendation adopted by Committee as presented per Resolution SSC17-14 February 12, 2014; Endorsed by County Council March 4, 2014 per Resolution CC38-14;

Recommendation(s)

WHEREAS the County of Grey will receive estimated revenue of \$10,100 from the provision of Social Assistance Management Systems (SAMS) training;

AND WHEREAS The Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) will provide to Grey County \$39,000 in one-time 100% funding for costs associated with the implementation of the new Social Assistance Management System;

AND WHEREAS changes to the current Social Service workspace and the hiring of a contract team assistant for a three month period would support the implementation of SAMS;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Report SSR-SS-03-14 be received;

AND THAT the one-time MCSS funding of \$39,000 be accepted;

AND FURTHER THAT the one-time MCSS funding and the revenue from the provision of SAMS training be used to cover the cost of workspace improvements and the cost of hiring a three month contract team assistant;

AND FURTHER THAT implementation costs are be managed within the funding received by the MCSS.

Background

The Province is implementing new technology, Social Assistance Management System (SAMS), in 2014. Ontario Works Manager, Melissa McCulloch has obtained the necessary training through the Ministry to facilitate training of the Ministry-developed curriculum to other staff to learn to use SAMS.

Bruce County, Huron County and Stratford have entered into contracts with Grey County for the provision of the training to each of its respective staff members who require the training. Training revenue which is based on the number of staff participating is estimated to be \$10,300. Training which began in January 2014 will be completed in April 2014.

Further, on January 2, 2014, the County received a letter from the Ministry of Community dated December 27, 2013 advising that the County of Grey was eligible for one-time 100% funding of \$39,000. The intent of the funding is to assist with additional costs delivery agents incur related to SAMS implementation such as re-tooling peripherals, meeting technical specifications, organizational and business process changes, delivery of training, and other allowable Ontario Works administration costs.

Details of the SAMS training revenue and one-time MCSS funding were unknown at the time the 2014 budget was prepared.

Workspace Modifications

A workplace survey was conducted in the fall and social service staff expressed concerns about noise levels. Health and Safety Manager, Geraldine Cole, was consulted and recommended installing acoustic ceiling tiles. Modifications to the office cubicle layouts to decrease noise levels are also being investigated.

The Health and Safety Manager has also brought in a stand-up work station on a trial basis. Several staff members have had an opportunity to try out the work stations and have found them to be beneficial. Work stations purchases will be based on the following parameters:

- Staff with previously disclosed hip issues from sitting/standing for long periods of time
- Staff with tasks that require them to work at their desk for long periods of time
- Staff with tasks that tie them specifically to their computers and phones (i.e. intake)

The unit cost of the model being tested is \$350.00 plus HST and shipping.

The reduction of noise levels and the use of stand-up work stations will improve workplace functionality. The Purchasing Department has been advised that assistance in the procurement process will be required if the recommendations in this report are approved.

Additional Support

Because of the time required by staff for SAMS training and the anticipated learning curve when the system goes live, the Social Services management team is proposing that an additional team assistant be hired for a three-month contract to provide additional administrative supports to staff. The cost of the three month contract position would be \$11,200.

Implementation Costs

The cost of workspace modifications and acoustic ceiling tiles has not been determined. Once all costs have been established a budget can be prepared based on priorities to ensure expenditures do not exceed revenue from one-time funding and training facilitation.

Ministry Program Supervisor, Jacqui Capson has agreed that the use of funds to make workspace modifications and to hire a contract team assistant meet the one-time funding criteria.

Financial / Staffing / Legal / Information Technology

Considerations

The proposed costs will be funded by one-time 100% funding from the Ministry and revenue from the provision of SAMS training to Huron, Bruce and Stratford.

Link to Strategic Goals / Priorities

The use of funds to improve the current workspace and relieve workload pressures supports the Corporate goal of Achieving Excellence in Governance and Service.

Respectfully submitted by,

Debbie Pegelo

Ontario Works Manager

Director Sign Off: *Barbara Fedy, Director of Social Services*

