

Report CCR-PCD-24-14

To: Chair Wright and Members of the Planning and Community Development Committee
From: Philly Markowitz
Meeting Date: July 22, 2014
Subject: **Food Safety Regulatory Training Project Report**
Status: Recommendation adopted by Committee as presented per Resolution PCD83-14; Endorsed by County Council August 5, 2014 per Resolution CC115-14;

Recommendation(s)

THAT Report CCR-PCD-24-14 regarding the Food Safety Regulatory Training project be received for information.

Background

The Food Safety Regulatory Training course is being developed through a working partnership between Grey and Simcoe Counties, Georgian College and Grey Bruce Public Health. Bruce County is an additional funding partner. The multi-faceted, first of its kind course for food businesses is scheduled for delivery in Grey County at the Owen Sound campus of Georgian College in November, 2014.

Project History

The need for a food safety regulations course was identified by area stakeholders and communicated to past Warden Duncan McKinlay in 2012. Discussions about the burden of food safety regulations began with the Local Food Project in partnership with the Grey Bruce Health Unit in fall of 2012. The concept was championed to the Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus by then Warden McKinlay and to the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food by then CAO Lance Thurston with positive and enthusiastic response in spring and summer of 2013.

A formal curriculum development partnership was extended to Georgian College in October 2013 and Simcoe County joined the project team in December 2013. Contributions to the budget are as follows:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|----------|------------------------------|
| 1. Grey County | \$5,000 | |
| 2. Bruce County | \$5,000 | |
| 3. Simcoe County | \$5,000 | |
| 4. Georgian College | \$10,000 | |
| 5. Grey Bruce Public Health | | \$15,000 +/- (in-kind value) |

Project Oversight

The project is managed by three committees:

1. Steering Committee: provides project management (meets approximately bi-weekly)
2. Advisory Committee: provides oversight; includes industry and regulators (meets approximately every six weeks)
3. Curriculum Development Committee: provides curriculum suggestions and review, includes seven local business owners and representatives from Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food and Canadian Food Inspection Agency (meets as required during curriculum development)

RED Funding

At the County Council session on January 9th, 2014, a recommendation was adopted by Committee as presented per Resolution PCD11-14. This endorsed an application to Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food's Rural Economic Development Fund to support development and delivery of the course.

On March 7th, the County received notification that our application was successful, and our project budget effectively doubled from the original \$25,000 to a total of \$49,900. The impacts of this funding have allowed the project team to expand and enhance the project in numerous ways including keeping the course cost to \$60 per student.

Curriculum Modules

The curriculum development team has reviewed the four originally proposed modules and combined elements to create three units:

1. Understanding the Nature of Food Safety Regulations
2. An Overview of Food Safety Regulations
3. Understanding Food Safety Regulatory Roles and Responsibilities

RED funding will allow the course to be expanded from original format and add elements that may include:

1. One-on-one mentorship with area food experts

2. Access to Genesis nutritional analysis and labelling software (a value of \$5,000-\$6,000 per product analyzed)
3. Access to web-based simulation that allows students to walk through potential food safety crisis as the producer or inspector

Project Milestones

All milestones as outlined in the harmonized agreements between Grey County and Georgian College, and the project partners and OMAF (RED agreement) have been met on or ahead of schedule. The content creation milestone will be delivered two weeks later than originally projected because of accommodation for summer vacation schedules.

1. Stakeholder Presentation and Project Launch - completed
2. Survey - completed
3. Research & Market Information Gathering - completed
4. Program Design – in process
5. Content Creation – in process
6. Program Market Strategy & Plan Creation – in process
7. Funding Applications - completed
8. Program Delivery – to come
9. Post Delivery Analysis & De-Brief – to come

Course Delivery

The pilot course will be delivered in Owen Sound in Fall 2014; Collingwood and Barrie in early 2015. Delivery will include comprehensive course materials to take away. It might also include video elements in order to bring in specialized subject matter experts to deliver modules. The course could also be delivered live to additional locations by interactive video conference.

This is the first course of its kind in Ontario and has potential to be rolled out across multiple campuses within the Georgian College network and at other colleges.

Course Completion Criteria

To receive credit for successful completion of the course, students must attend the full 12 hours of class time and complete and submit all required exercises. Participants who successfully complete the course will receive a Certificate of Completion from Georgian College.

Project Goals

1. Stimulate creation and expansion of food-related businesses.
2. Strengthen positive relationships between businesses and regulatory bodies.
3. Identify Central-Western Ontario as an area of excellence for food safety.
4. Build capacity to brand locally-produced food as freshest, tastiest, most nutritious AND safest.
5. Create more partnered projects between Public Health, Municipalities and Georgian College.

Financial / Staffing / Legal / Information Technology

Considerations

Grey County has invested \$2,500 from the 2013 budget and will invest an additional \$2,500 in 2014 towards the development of the curriculum. Project partners Bruce and Simcoe Counties have invested \$5,000 each and Georgian College will invest \$10,000 for a total investment of \$25,000. The receipt of funds from the RED program brings the project budget from \$25,000 to a total of \$49,900.

Staff resources required to support this project are available within existing departmental work plans and are described as “in-kind” contributions as outlined on page 12 of the grant application document RED Application - Food Safety Regulatory Training for New and Existing Food Businesses.

Link to Strategic Goals / Priorities

This project aligns with several of Grey County’s Strategic plan Goals, including:

- 1.3 to “Enhance the viability and diversification of agricultural operations and primary industries”
- 1.7 to “Engage the education sector in identifying opportunities for the expansion of postsecondary services within the county, with the intent of providing more accessible learning opportunities for all and retaining and attracting young adults to the area.”
- 4.7 to “Work cooperatively with our neighbours on issues of mutual interest, in support of advancing collective aspirations.”

Attachments

None

Respectfully submitted by,

Philly Markowitz
Economic Development Officer

Director Sign Off: *Sharon Vokes*