

REGION OF OTTAWA-CARLETON
RÉGION D'OTTAWA-CARLETON

REPORT
RAPPORT

Our File/N/Réf.
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DATE 4 October 1999

TO/DEST. Co-ordinator
 Community Services Committee

FROM/EXP. Commissioner
 Social Services

SUBJECT/OBJET **REGION'S TASK FORCE ON EMPLOYMENT :
 PARTNERS FOR JOBS**

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION

That the Community Services Committee approve this report and the Region's role to provide overall leadership for the Strategic Directions contained in the Final Report of the Task Force on Employment.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In January 1999, the Region's Task Force on Employment: Partners for Jobs was established. The objective of the Task Force was to develop an Employment Strategy targeted to the unemployed, the underemployed and social assistance clients of Ottawa-Carleton.

The Final Report of the Task Force on Employment: Partners for Jobs has been completed. It contains strategic directions and priorities developed by the members of the Task Force and Working Group. It also integrates feedback from individuals and organizations involved in the consultation process. Please refer to Annex 1 for details on the Final Report of the Task Force on Employment: Partners for Jobs.

The Task Force has recommended that a Partners for Jobs: Action Phase be established until March 2000. The Social Services will have a leadership role to coordinate, chair, convene meetings and to provide the required support and resources to this initiative.

The mandate of the Partners for Jobs: Action Phase will be:

- (1) to strengthen the networks established with the various sectors (employers, labour, education, training, community agencies, economic development agencies, people living on low incomes, etc.),
- (2) to continue to identify new partnerships related to employment development and,
- (3) to operationalize the strategic directions and priorities contained in the Final Report.

BACKGROUND

In January 1999, the Region's Task Force on Employment: Partners for Jobs was established. The Task Force was co-chaired by John Kelly, CEO, JetForm Corporation and Andrée Lortie, President of La Cité collégiale. The Task Force was assisted by a Working Group chaired by Dick Stewart, Commissioner of Social Services. The Task Force and Working Group were comprised of representatives of: the business community; the francophone community; labour; the educational sector; the Local Training Advisory Board; community agencies; community members; the health services sector; economic development agencies; the Ottawa Board of Trade and Regroupement des gens d'affaires; social policy advocates and representatives from the Task Force on Poverty. In addition, there were representatives of all three levels of government.

The Task Force was given a mandate by the Chair of the Region to develop an Employment Strategy within 6 months. The goals of the Employment Strategy were to:

- (1) integrate labour force development with economic development;
- (2) reduce and prevent unemployment;
- (3) increase labour force participation;
- (4) identify and reduce skill shortages;
- (5) increase access to training and employment services;
- (6) reduce barriers to employment;
- (7) strengthen and develop the labour force and,
- (8) create a sustainable framework for labour force development.

The focus of the Employment Strategy was on the employment needs of the unemployed, the underemployed and social assistance clients.

The Task Force and Working Group members identified short and longer term strategies including nine pilot initiatives to strengthen the workforce, increase participation in the labour force, remove barriers to employment and provide supports and training. The Final Report identified 9 Strategic Directions and 34 specific actions.

CONSULTATION

The Task Force and Working Group members developed an Interim Report and consulted with representatives of their networks. In addition, a web site was developed to provide information to the community-at-large and to solicit ideas, comments and suggestions related to employment development. The Interim Report was placed on the web site as well. A telephone access line was established to receive telephone comments on the work of the Task Force. Several consultations were organized with members of the general public who expressed an interest in the work of the Task Force.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The strategic directions which have been identified by the Task Force require the Region to provide overall leadership for the development of a comprehensive, community-based Employment Strategy. The Region is required to ensure that there is an ongoing structure to support, implement, maintain and update the strategy. There is also an expectation that the momentum will continue to build on the pilot initiatives identified by the Task Force and to further identify additional opportunities. The strategy acknowledges that there are many public policies and program rules which need to be changed in order to remove barriers to employment. The Region will be expected to work in collaboration with other levels of government to implement the strategy. One of the requirements will be improvements to the labour force information system as a foundation for the strategy. In addition, the role of technology will be examined in such areas as training, labour force information and literacy. The partners will seek alternative funding arrangements for a range of supports to employment development and the Region will develop a public awareness campaign.

The Pilot Projects which have been identified by members of the Task Force and Working Group are being implemented. Policies will be changed and emergency and transition employment supports will be developed.

The Final Report identifies strategic directions and priorities as a foundation for the development of the local workforce and prevention of unemployment in our community. This framework acknowledges that all sectors of the community have a role to play and that partnerships are essential to make this initiative a reality.

The Task Force has recommended that a Partners for Jobs: Action Phase be established for a 6 month period effective October, 1999 - March, 2000. The Action Phase will have a mandate to strengthen the networks; to continue to focus on employment; to advise and recommend specific actions to Regional Council, the Provincial and Federal governments and to implement the identified strategic directions and priorities.

The next steps will be for members of the Partners for Jobs: Action Phase to take the strategic directions and priorities identified in the attached report and to proceed with development and implementation of the identified initiatives. A progress report will be submitted in April, 2000.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The preliminary cost of the 9 Pilot Projects is approximately \$591,000. The projects expect to receive funding from the federal, provincial and regional governments as well as the private sector. The Regional contribution to date is \$122,400, allocated as follows:

(1) Foreign Trained Teacher Project :	\$ 43,400
(2) La Clé de l'opportunité :	\$ 54,000
(3) Biotechnology Project :	\$ 25,000
Total Regional contribution	<u>\$122,400</u>

Regional Social Services is not requesting any additional funding in 1999 . It is anticipated that any additional funding required will be provided for the pilots through the existing 1999 budget.

CONCLUSION

The Task Force on Employment has achieved its objective of developing an Employment Strategy within six months. The Task Force has brought together representatives from business; education; training; community agencies; advocacy groups; economic development agencies; people living on low incomes etc. to share expertise and to develop new partnerships.

The Employment Strategy is a framework of change and action. It identifies 9 strategic priorities and 34 actions which are the foundation for the development of the local workforce and prevention of unemployment in this community. The Strategy acknowledges that all sectors of the community have a role to play and that partnerships are essential to make this initiative a reality.

The next steps will be for members of the Action Phase (October, 1999 - March, 2000) to implement the Strategic Directions and Priorities, to develop additional partnerships related to employment development and to report the progress of the Action Phase in April, 2000.

Approved by
D. Stewart