TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS
BOARD OF CONTROL

FROM: ROSS FAIR
GENERAL MANAGER, COMMUNITY SERVICES

SUBJECT: MEETING ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1, 2006
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL 05-35:
ONTARIO WORKS EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE SERVICES

RECOMMENDATION

That based on a Request for Proposals to provide Ontario Works Employment Assistance Services, the General Manager of Community Services recommends:

1. That the General Manager of Community Services **BE AUTHORIZED** to negotiate with and enter into contracts for a three (3) year period, with an option to extend the contract for two (2) additional one year periods as follows:

**EMPLOYMENT PLACEMENT**

a) Leads Employment Services Incorporated, 410-171 Queens Avenue, London, Ontario, N6A 5J7;
b) Nokee Kwe Occupational Skill Development Incorporated, 137 Dundas Street, London, Ontario, N6A 1E9;
c) Pathways Skill Development & Placement Centre, 2-210 Dundas Street, London, Ontario, N6A 5J3;
d) WIL Employment Connections, 4-141 Dundas Street, London, Ontario, N6A 1G3; and
e) Youth Opportunities Unlimited, 2-141 Dundas Street, London, Ontario, N6A 1G3;

**COMMUNITY PLACEMENT**


**EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

a) Centre for Lifelong Learning, 1230 King Street, London, Ontario, N5W 2Y2;
b) London Interfaith Counselling Centre, 141 Dundas Street, London, Ontario, N6A 1G3; and
c) London Urban Services Organization Centre Incorporated, 2-1193 Oxford Street East, London, Ontario, N5Y 3M2;

**EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT SERVICES With EMPLOYMENT PLACEMENT**

a) London Goodwill Industries Association, 390 King Street, London, Ontario, N6B 1S3
b) Leads Employment Services Incorporated, 410-171 Queens Avenue, London, Ontario, N6A 5J7;
c) Nokee Kwe Occupational Skill Development Incorporated, 137 Dundas Street, London, Ontario, N6A 1E9;
d) Pathways Skill Development & Placement Centre, 2-210 Dundas Street, London, Ontario, N6A 5J3;
e) WIL Employment Connections, 4-141 Dundas Street, London, Ontario, N6A 1G3; and
f) Youth Opportunities Unlimited, 2-141 Dundas Street, London, Ontario, N6A 1G3

**SKILL TRAINING DIRECTLY LINKED TO EMPLOYMENT PLACEMENT**

a) London Goodwill Industries Association, 390 King Street, London, Ontario, N6B 1S3;
b) Ontario March of Dimes, 310-700 Richmond Street, London, Ontario, N6A 5C7;
c) Pathways Skill Development & Placement Centre, 2-210 Dundas Street, London, Ontario, N6A 5J3;
d) WIL Employment Connections, 4-141 Dundas Street, London, Ontario, N6A 1G3; and
e) Youth Opportunities Unlimited, 2-141 Dundas Street, London, Ontario, N6A 1G3;
2. That approval hereby given be conditional upon the Corporation entering into a formal contract or agreement satisfactory to the City Solicitor relating to the subject matter of this approval.

PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER

- Extension of contracts, Employment Support Services, Employment Placement, and Community Participation Services (Board of Control, December 10, 2003)
- Changes to Ontario Works Employment Assistance Funding (July 26, 2004)
- Update: Changes to Ontario Works Employment Assistance Funding (November 29, 2004)
- Ontario Works Employment Assistance Services Delivery Framework (October 17, 2005)

PURCHASING PROCESS

The Request for Proposal called for interested agencies to submit programs for Employment Placement, Self Employment Development, Community Placement, Employment Development Services and Skill Based Training Directly Linked to Employment. Agencies could submit programs for one (1) or a combination of any or all programs. The Request for Proposals was issued on October 29, 2005. 18 organizations retrieved the proposal from the City's website resulting in a total of ten (10) proposals being received for a total of 32 service components as a result of this Request for Proposal. The submissions were evaluated by an Evaluation Team comprised of five (5) members from Community Programs and Strategies, Finance and Corporate Services, and Purchasing and Supply. The Team evaluated submissions based on a pre-determined set of criteria. The criteria consisted of:

a) Mandate and experience in delivering employment services
b) Service standards and quality assurance measures
c) Demonstrated outcomes of service delivery
d) Resources
e) Supports available to Ontario Works participants
f) Description and completeness of service delivery elements

The Evaluation Team recommends acceptance of the submissions received from all ten (10) agencies as they exhibited, strong organizational compositions, the financial capacity to deliver the programs, the technical resources and service sustainability. This covers four (4) of the five (5) requested service areas.

Responses to the Request for Proposal did not include any submissions to deliver Self Employment Development. There is only one supplier for the City to deliver this service and this supplier has contacted the City on an informal basis expressing great interest. Negotiations will take place to contract with this organization as we have in the last nine (9) years.

BACKGROUND

On October 24, 2005, City Council approved the new Ontario Works Employment Assistance Services Framework. A Request for Proposal Process was to be initiated to support the service delivery components of the new framework. The redesign of the service delivery model was the first one initiated since the introduction of the Ontario Works Act in London in 1997 and has been designed to address the current realities of delivering an employment focused assistance program. The key factors guiding the framework include:

- Provincial Ontario Works legislation is placing a greater emphasis on employment outcomes and a focus on participant centered services;
- Funding has changed, moving from cost sharing actual expenditures for legislative and restrictive services, to unit funding based on recorded participant levels of activity in one of three levels of service, to the achievement of employment outcomes;
- We have an increased awareness of the needs of our OW participants, including the needs of immigrants, the increase in the number of participants with significant barriers to employment and the holistic needs of sole supports parents; and
- As of 2006, Employment Assistance funding will be based on the achievement of Provincially established employment outcomes.
In order to respond to these changes and continue to ensure that employment supports to Ontario Works participants are responsive, focused on individual needs and are cost-effective, a review of the current Employment Assistance Services framework was initiated in 2004. The new framework for Employment Assistance Service delivery provides many benefits for OW participants and will support the achievement of the goals of Ontario Works - to move people to employment and to enhance their employability skills. It is also designed to support the achievement of Employment Assistance Outcome funding. It is necessary to achieve outcomes to ensure having adequate funding so that participants can be served. We recognize this impact, while at the same time we need to ensure that the Ontario Works Employment Assistance service delivery framework is one that can meet our legislated expectations and desired program outcomes.

In the new framework, specific services were identified as being delivered by community partners and were the basis of the request for Proposal. The organizations and services being recommended will provide the range of services and supports to assist in the achievement of the principles, goals and outcomes of the Ontario Works Employment Assistance program. The services to be delivered include the following:

**Employment Placement** - To assist job ready participants to find and maintain suitable employment.

**Community Placement** - To provide participants with opportunities to contribute to their community while gaining valuable experience in the labour market, developing skills, making job contacts and obtaining current references that can assist the participant in obtaining employment.

**Employment Development Services** - To assist participants to prepare for, enter/re-enter and progress in the workplace by providing intensive interventions and supports. This component included the option of delivering Employment Placement at the end of the service.

**Skill Training Directly Linked to Employment** -To assist Ontario Works participants to prepare for, enter/re-enter and progress in the workplace.

**Self Employment Development** – To assist participants in developing their own business to become self employed.

The Employment Assistance Service providers are integral to the effective Employment Assistance service delivery and to the achievement of Employment Assistance outcomes.

The Employment Assistance components noted in this report provide crucial skills and supports for Ontario Works participants in their movement toward self-sufficiency. Through this framework, we will be better able to provide employment services that are more responsive to changing Ontario Works participants, community and labour market needs.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT**

Funding for Employment Assistance is cost shared 80/20 between the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) and the City.

Funding for Employment Assistance Service contracts totaling approximately $2,100,000 (gross) or $420,000 (net) is included in the 2006 budget.

**Acknowledgements**

This report was prepared with the assistance of Elisabeth White, Manager III Employment Initiatives, Joanne Gray Manager I Community Programs and Strategies, Deborah Rosehart, Job Developer, Community Programs and Strategies, David Purdy, Manager Operational Support and Michael Davis, Procurement Officer.
DATE: February 16, 2006
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CC: Ross L. Fair, General Manager, Community Services Department
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    Michael Davis, Finance, Purchasing and Supply
    Bill Neville, Centre for Lifelong Learning
    Robert Collins, London Goodwill
    Wendy Lau, LEADS
    Bonnie Williams, London Interfaith Counselling Centre
    Elisabete Rodrigues, London Urban Services Organization
    Gloryann Solnar, March of Dimes
    Carl Cadogan, Nook Kwe
    Paul Hubert, Pathways
    Anne Langille, WIL
    Steve Cordes, YOU