

**Subject: Small Business Covid Recovery Network Project**

**Department: Community Services**

**Division: Economic Development**

**Report #: CMS-2020-010**

**Meeting Date: 2020-12-07**

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### **Recommendations**

**That report CMS-2020- be received;**

**And that a by-law be presented to Council authorizing the Mayor and Clerk to sign the Agreement between Her Business Advisory Centre Durham Inc. and the Corporation of the Town of Orangeville for the execution of the Conditional Flow Through Grant Agreement;**

**And that staff be directed to implement the Ontario Small Business COVID-19 Recovery Network Program.**

### **Background and Analysis**

The Orangeville & Area Small Business Enterprise Centre (SBEC) is part of a network of 46 SBEC offices in Ontario funded in part by the provincial government. In May 2020, the network collectively responded to the provincial government's call for proposals for the Ontario Together Fund. This fund supports Ontario's response to COVID-19 recovery and in September, the "Ontario Small Business COVID-19 Recovery Network" project was approved for delivery.

The "Ontario Small Business COVID-19 Recovery Network" is a \$2.04 million project that will provide funding to help small businesses in the wake of the economic fall out of COVID-19. This pan-Ontario project is funded by the province through an agreement with the Business Advisory Centre Durham (BACD), a registered non-profit organization based in Whitby, Ontario.

The BACD in turn, will enter into agreements with up to 46 Small Business Enterprise Centres and flow grant funding of \$32,000 to each SBEC, enabling them to hire business advisors to provide specialized assistance and education to local small

businesses. The project timeline is October 1, 2020 to September 30, 2021 and staff received the Conditional Flow Through Grant Agreement on November 12, 2020.

### **Orangeville & Area SBEC approach**

The Orangeville & Area SBEC will administer the \$32,000 advisory funding and will engage private sector professionals to provide specialized workshops and to deliver enhanced, one-to-one confidential coaching services to assist business owners with the issues that they face. The office will work with a bank of specialized consultants who are available to provide advice and guidance on a range of topics including marketing, digitalization, sourcing new markets, bookkeeping, financial forecasting, and future planning. This enhanced, specialized service will be provided for free to local Orangeville and area business owners who are experiencing challenges created by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Confidential, specialized, one-to-one services will be provided by a variety of local business leaders and consultants on a contractual, hourly paid basis. Clients will be matched with a consultant based on the professional service they require. Hours of service provided will vary depending on client need and will be agreed upon, administered and approved by the Economic Development and Culture office. Throughout the duration of the program, access to GrowthWheel, a licensed software designed to support advisors/business clients with business planning will also be provided.

It is anticipated that delivery of 100 to 125 one-to-one consultations and ten to fifteen group training sessions will occur throughout the contract period and that the enhanced guidance provided to entrepreneurs will support the Town's business retention efforts, including enhanced business operations, improved profitability, capacity and competitiveness.

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## **Strategic Alignment**

### **Orangeville Forward – Strategic Plan**

Priority Area: Economic Vitality

Objective: Foster entrepreneurship

### **Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan**

Theme: Economic Development and Culture

Strategy: Enhance economic resiliency through attraction, expansion and retention of diverse business industries

## **Notice Provisions**

N/A

## **Financial Impact**

Funding to deliver the Ontario Small Business COVID-19 Recovery program is provided entirely by the Ontario Together Fund. Administration of the program will be completed by the Economic Development and Culture Office.

Respectfully submitted

Ray Osmond,  
General Manager,  
Community Services

Prepared by

Ellen Sinclair,  
SBEC Co-ordinator

Reviewed and edited by

Ruth Phillips,  
Manager, Economic Development &  
Culture

**Attachment(s):**    1. **Conditional Flow Through Grant Agreement**