



Staff Report to Council

Report From: Stacey Jeffery, Community Relations Manager

Meeting Date: November 4 2024

Report: CR- 08-2024

International Agri-Food Workers (IAW) Welcoming
Communities Initiative Funding

Recommendation

That South Huron Council receives Staff Report CR08-2024 International Agri-Food Workers (IAW) Welcoming Communities Initiative Funding, and

That South Huron Council authorizes staff to apply to the IAW Welcoming Communities Initiative funding program, in collaboration with Huron County Local Immigration Partnership.

Report Overview

Purpose of Report	For Approval
Council Priority Alignment	Community Safety and Well-Being Planning For and Managing Sustainable Growth
Consultations	Rebekah Msuya-Collison, Chief Administrative Officer/Deputy Clerk Huron County Local Immigration Partnership Local international worker employers
Attachment(s) to Report	None.

Report Highlights

- The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness and Ministry of Rural Affairs have launched the International Agri-Food Workers (IAW) Welcoming Community Initiative funding program.

- The deadline for application to the funding program is November 19, 2024. and if awarded, provides funding for 75% of eligible project costs, up to a maximum of \$100,000 per project.
- Through the implementation of the Community Safety and Well-being Plan and on-going consultation with community partners and organizations who support international workers, South Huron staff recommend applying to the funding program in partnership with Huron County Local Immigration Partnership.

Context and Background

The [International Agri-Food Workers \(IAW\) Welcoming Community Initiative](#) (the Initiative) provides funding to not-for-profits and municipalities to:

- Foster independence of international agri-food workers (IAWs);
- Improve access to community services; and
- Support an inclusive and welcoming environment for the attraction and retention of IAWs.

Agri-food is a complex system of interconnected activities and actors involved in getting food from field to fork, including primary agriculture and food processors.

Within the approved Community Safety and Well-being Plan (2021), newcomers, minority populations, culturally and linguistically diverse were identified as more vulnerable to social, economic and/or health related risk factors. It is important to note that the needs of each individual and group are diverse and there is no one-size-fits-all approach to improving community safety and well-being.

Through staff discussions since the beginning of 2023 with the Huron County Local Immigration Partnership (LIP), local international worker employers and other agencies and services providers, it was noted that an increase in support for international workers in South Huron may be a future area of focus to strengthen overall community safety and well-being and rural economic development.

In February 2024, the Municipality of South Huron and the Huron County Local Immigration Partnership hosted a Newcomer Networking Workshop, with a focus on bringing together community organizations and service providers to discuss newcomer inclusion in South Huron. A total of 30 representatives from community organizations and service providers attended the workshop and through a roundtable discussion, the following key opportunities and challenges were identified:

- Challenges related to newcomers navigating community resources, programs and services (language barriers, culturally appropriate methods);

- Lack of resources servicing newcomers (translated materials, culturally appropriate methods);
- Opportunity for consistent and shared messaging for community organizations and service providers (translated materials, culturally appropriate methods);
- Lack of recreational, social opportunities and transportation services (and lack of knowledge related to existing opportunities and services);
- Opportunity for strengthening partnerships around newcomer supports; and
- Lack of volunteerism within the community to assist with newcomer integration.

Understanding the number of temporary foreign workers (TFW) supporting the agricultural industry within South Huron is identified as a gap in existing data. According to the 2021 Statistics Canada census data for Huron County, the top industry among immigrants, recent immigrants (2016-2021) and non-permanent residents is Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting. Statistics Canada census data for 2021 indicates that a total of 775 immigrants and 65 Non-permanent residents live in South Huron, however, it is important to note that TFW are not represented in this data. Within South Huron, TFWs support large agri-food producers and play a vital role in supporting the South Huron rural economy.

Discussion and Staff Recommendation(s)

Staff are seeking Council authorization to apply to the IAW Welcoming Communities Initiative, in collaboration with Huron County Local Immigration Partnership, based on the following:

- Newcomers, minority populations, culturally and linguistically diverse were identified as a priority population within the CSWB Plan (2021)
- The focus of funding program outcome aligns with the Community Security priority area identified in the approved CSWB Plan as it includes ability to meet basic needs, enjoy life and participate in leisure activities, sense of belonging and being free from crime.
- There is an identified need to understand the number of TFWs living and working in South Huron to effectively support capacity building and cultural knowledge efforts.

It is recommended by staff that the following components make up the proposed project spanning over a two-year period (2025 and 2026):

- Building capacity and cultural knowledge of the Municipality's and community support staff:

- Training for staff and/or volunteers (e.g., Equity, Diversion, and Inclusion (EDI)) to better support IAWs;
- Development of resources to support cultural knowledge among staff (e.g., development and implementation of inclusive policies and standards, awareness of days of significance);
- Conduct surveys to identify barriers and gaps in service to IAWs;
- Coordinate and host new cultural and recreational activities/events (e.g. sports, games, festivals, religious or holiday events) that celebrate IAWs and foster EDI in the community;
- Facilitation of collaborations and networking events to expand community services for IAWs across broader regions and information-sharing; and
- Support knowledge and awareness to identify extraordinary situations (e.g., human trafficking) through training and distribution of resources.

Impact Analysis

An application to the IAW Welcoming Communities Initiative requires staff time to prepare and submit the required application and documentation.

The IAW Welcoming Communities Initiative will fund 75% of eligible project costs, up to a maximum of \$100,000 per project.

The estimated total project cost is \$75,000 over a two-year period, with sources of funding for 2025 and 2026 outlined in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Proposed Project Sources of Funding (2025 and 2026)

Sources of Funding	2025	2026
Municipality of South Huron - Community Safety and Well-being portion of \$10,000 within the Operating Budget – General Administration (~8.33%)	\$3,125	\$3,125
Municipality of South Huron - Economic Development (~8.33%)	\$3,125	\$3,125
Huron County - Local Immigration Partnership ¹ (~8.33%)	\$3,125	\$3,125

¹ Funding source dependent on Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) funding approval for 2025 to 2030.

IAW Welcoming Communities Initiative (75%)	\$28,125	\$28,125
Total Sources of Funding (100%)	\$37,500 (2025)	\$37,500 (2026)

Linkages

- [Community Safety and Well-being Plan for Huron \(2021\)](#)

Respectfully submitted,

Stacey Jeffery, Community Relations Manager

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	CR08-2024 - International Agri-Food Workers (IAW) Welcoming Communities Initiative.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Oct 29, 2024

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Alex Wolfe - Oct 28, 2024 - 7:26 AM

Erin Moore - Oct 28, 2024 - 2:55 PM

Rebekah Msuya-Collison - Oct 29, 2024 - 2:58 PM