
Niagara Region

REPORT TO: Co-Chairs and Members of Public Health and Social Services Committee

SUBJECT: 2009 Niagara Region Bursary Program Update

RECOMMENDATION

That this Committee recommend to Regional Council that this report be received for information.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- A total of 148 applications were received from across Niagara;
- In total, 107 bursaries were granted (106 full) (1 partial); and
- This project demonstrated a successful collaborative partnership between Children's Services, Social Assistance and Employment Opportunities and Niagara Regional Housing.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Through COM 23-2008, Regional Council approved spending in the amount of \$50,000 for the Niagara Region Bursary to be financed from the Council Business Plan. Approval was given to continue funding this bursary in 2009 in the amount of \$50,000 through the 2009 Operating budget.

PURPOSE

This report has been prepared to provide an update regarding the results of Council's investment of \$50,000 in 2009 to support youth living in low income households in Niagara to pursue post-secondary education.

BACKGROUND

COM 23-2008 outlined the need to re-establish the Low Income Household Bursary program for youth living in low income households to access post-secondary education.

During the 2009 budget process, Council approved funding in the amount of \$50,000 for bursaries for Niagara youth.

Youth (18-34 years old) were selected based on applications that demonstrated that they were:

- a grade 12 or OAC graduate or a mature student (a person 18 years of age or older who has been away from formal education for a period of one or more years);
- a Canadian citizen or legal resident of Canada;
- a resident of the Niagara region;
- a holder of a valid Social Insurance Number; and
- in financial need as demonstrated by being a Social Assistance recipient, a member of a low-income household through needs testing, a tenant in rent-geared-to-income housing in Niagara (and not in receipt of a Dr. Albert Rose Bursary), or awaiting placement in Niagara Regional Housing as demonstrated by confirmation of current status on their centralized waiting list.

Full bursaries were available to students entering their first or second year of post-secondary education leading to a certificate, trade diploma or degree. Third year students or students studying beyond third year were not eligible.

To be eligible for a part bursary, a student was required to be entering a short-term academic upgrading, trade, apprenticeship or skills-based training program that was a minimum of four weeks in duration.

The bursary program recognized all learning styles, including distance learning and correspondence programs.

REPORT

A working team began meeting in June 2009 with representation from across the three program areas. The work plan consisted of developing forms, letters and a screening process along with a communication plan to reach the intended client groups. The working group reviewed notes from 2008 and made improvements to clarify the process for applicants and develop the communication plan. Deadline for the application submission was August 31, 2009.

Each application was reviewed by the Niagara Region Bursary Awards Committee and audited by an independent Quality Assurance Coordinator/Auditor. Award decisions were based upon the allocation of \$50,000 in 2009 and adherence to the eligibility criteria.

Response to the program was good; however, the number of successful applicants was decreased, leaving \$16,000 of the available bursary funding unspent. The decision was then made to reopen the application process for January 2010 in order to maximize the number of successful bursary recipients. Since then, the full allotment of \$50,000 has been granted and distributed.

The Bursary Recipients

The bar graph in *Figure 1* shows both applications received and applications granted by municipality.

Figure 1 - Applications Received and Granted by Municipality

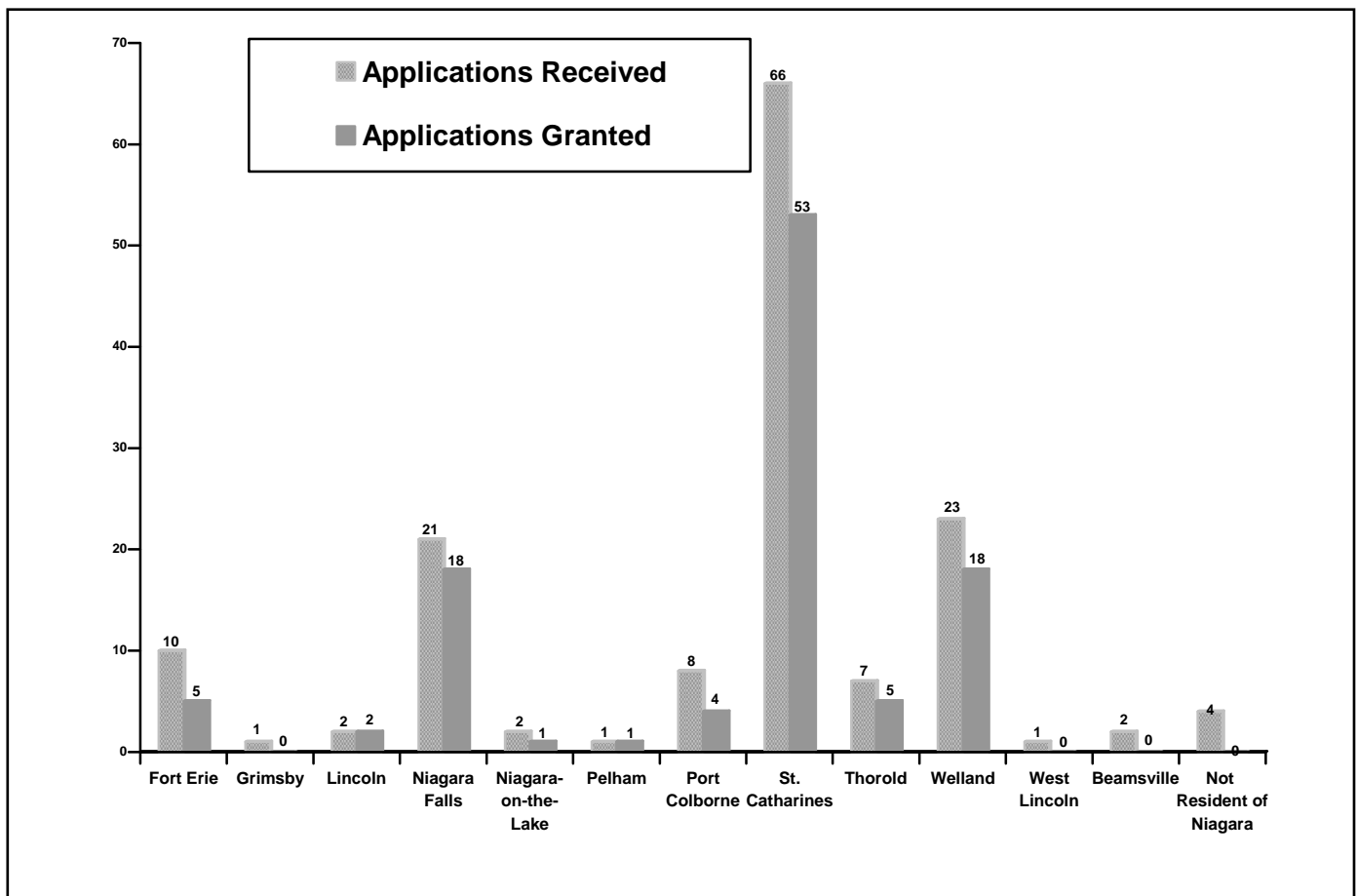


Figure 2 provides greater detail for the reasons for ineligibility. A total of 41 applicants were ineligible for the following reasons:

Figure 2 - Bursary Applicants – Ineligibility by Reason

Failure to Demonstrate Need	Over age 34 years	No Proof of Acceptance or Enrollment	Not Living in Niagara Region	In receipt of Dr. Albert Rose Bursary	Signature Page not included	Late Application	Total Ineligible
14	9	6	5	4	1	2	41

Figure 3 provides aggregate specifics about bursary recipients. Additional highlights include:

- ages range from 18 to 34 years
- median age of 22
- 71% are female; 29% are male
- 30% qualify in two areas of “need”
- 2 people qualify in three areas of “need”
- 62 are social assistance recipients, (OW 47 and ODSP 15 clients)
- 23% reside in rent-geared-to-income housing
- 9% awaiting placement in rent-geared-to-income housing
- 15% are Child Care income tested

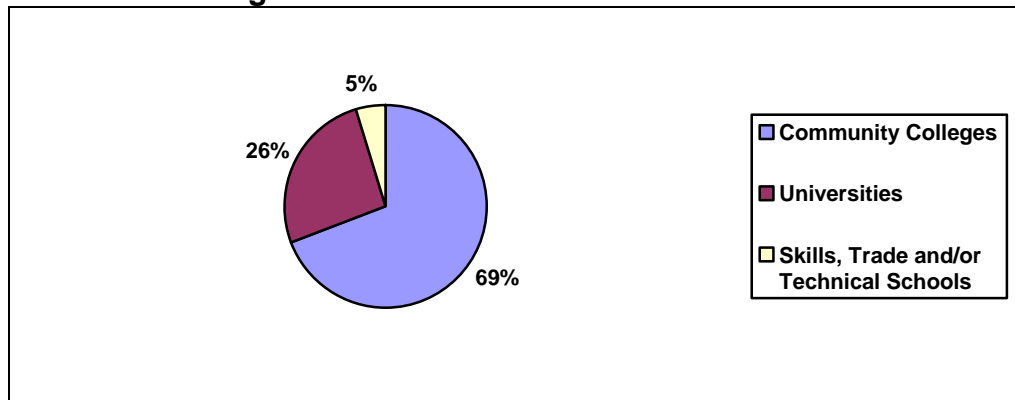
Figure 3 - Bursary Recipient Profile

Social Assistance Recipient Ontario Works (OW) and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) clients	Rent-Geared-to-Income Tenants	Applicants Awaiting Niagara Regional Housing Placement	Members of Low Income Households (based on child care income testing)
62	25	10	16

The Educational Choices

Figure 4 demonstrates the choices of educational institutions made by the bursary recipients. Fifty-seven students are enrolled at Niagara College. Brock University was the university of choice for 19 of the students enrolled in university programs.

Figure 4 - Educational Institutions Attended



The areas of study are as diverse as the recipients themselves and include:

- Law Clerk
- Construction Techniques
- Dental Hygiene
- Journalism-Print
- Landscape Technology
- Sociology
- Accounting and Financial Management
- International Relations
- Psychology
- Ecosystem Management Technology
- Culinary Chef Training
- Educational Assistant Special Needs Support
- Law and Security Customs
- Horticulture
- Drug and Alcohol Counsellor
- Medical Lab Science
- GAS-Pre-Media
- Personal Support Worker
- Practical Nursing
- Business Administration
- Visual Arts
- Computer Systems Technician
- Mechanical Engineering Technician
- Science
- Political Science
- Tourism Management
- Early Childhood Education
- English Language and Literature
- Computer Science
- Dental Office Administration
- Chemical Engineering
- Community and Justice Services
- Recreation and Leisure
- Radio and Broadcasting
- Child and Youth Worker
- Business and Sales Marketing

These educational opportunities are in alignment with the *Niagara Region 2009 Supply and Demand Study: Niagara's Labour Market in Transition* report which outlines current local labour force demand trends good employment 'bets' as educational services, health care and social assistance, business, building and other support services, construction, and selected industries within public administration such as police services. Emerging industry clusters include bio-products manufacturing, digital/interactive media, health and wellness' logistics and environmental, energy and other green technologies¹

¹ Niagara's Labour Market in Transition pg 4

The recent *Niagara Region 2009 Supply and Demand Study, Niagara's Labour Market in Transition* reported that post secondary graduate numbers have risen dramatically in recent years. Enrolment trends suggest a leveling-off in the near future. There has also been a rise in new apprentice registrations over 2000 to 2007, led by the service sector trades' cluster.²

When asked about factors hindering from getting a job and/or a better job, respondents cited a lack of suitable job opportunities, a lack of adequately paying jobs and my age as barriers.³

By improving financial access to relevant training/education, the foundation for future labour market planning will ensure that the future labour supply is in alignment with future labour market needs. The Niagara Region Bursary program makes a significant contribution to building the job skills within the youth living in low income households within the Niagara region.

Submitted by:

Approved by:

Brian Hutchings
Commissioner, Community Services

Mike Trojan
Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared by Wendy Stewart, Manager, Community Services, and reviewed by Lori Watson, Director Social Assistance and Employment Opportunities.

² IBID pg 69

³ IBID pg 72