

February 10, 2020

Jeannette Campbell,
Chief Executive Officer
Ontario Disability Employment Network (ODEN)
20-850 King Street West
Oshawa, ON
L1J 8N5

Dear Ms. Campbell,

RE: OFA Support for the Ontario Disabilities Employment Network (ODEN) Project

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) is pleased to provide our support for your proposed project, “Sector Based Workforce Development: Building local capacity in Ontario’s Agricultural and Mining sectors to employ people who have a disability”. We believe this is an excellent candidate for funding under the Skills Catalyst Fund

OFA is Canada’s largest voluntary general farm organization, representing more than 38,000 farm family businesses across Ontario. These farm businesses form the backbone of a robust food system and rural communities with the potential to drive the Ontario economy forward.

OFA serves Ontario farmers by working with 52 county and regional federations to provide direct member service, research, education, member benefits, and farm advocacy services to members. In addition, OFA is supported by 25 Ontario farm commodity organizations and other farm interest groups.

We know there is a critical shortage of labour in the agricultural sector. As of 2017 the labour shortage has resulted in over 16,000 unfilled jobs and a loss of almost \$3 billion in potential revenue. While we know this project will not solve this problem entirely, we are excited by the possibility of expanding labour options for our employers and workers.

OFA supports the objectives of this project to;

- Build meaningful relationships to eliminate potential barriers for job seekers who have a disability in Ontario;
- Create awareness by providing Disability awareness training with our employers;
- Encourage innovative ideas and solutions by creating Career Pathways that increase the in-demand skills and competencies of people who have a disability; and
- Promote Workforce Development by Increasing In-Demand Skills and Competencies that align with the needs of business and eliminate barriers for people who have a disability.

OFA is confident that ODEN has the capacity and expertise to successfully complete this project. We appreciate the opportunity to be involved with ODEN, and are prepared to commit \$4500 in cash and 40 hours in-kind towards the project should you receive funding.

We look forward to working with you on this timely and valuable project and are hopeful you successful in receiving funding through the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development's Skills Catalyst Fund.

Sincerely,



Keith Currie
President