POLICY: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Cheshire recognizes the importance of lifelong learning to the organization, to the consumers and to the employees.

Cheshire supports two levels of development, Mandatory Staff Training and Professional Development.

MANDATORY STAFF TRAINING
Mandatory Staff Training includes all training, conferences, activities, and committee work which Cheshire requires of its employees or which may be required by legislation.

This may include the Basic Training Program, Health and Safety Training, in-service training for new equipment etc., computer upgrading, and group in-house training.

Level of Support
Cheshire provides eligible and authorized employees with:

- 100% of the program costs;
- regular wages if program attendance occurs during the employees normal working day with the exception of First Aid, for which wages are not paid. Mileage to attend First Aid provided by Cheshire is reimbursed at the same rate as Basic Training;
- reimbursement for mileage and travel expenses in accordance with Mileage Reimbursement Policy # 3-90 and Travel Expenses Policy # 4-60; and,
- course fees and wages for group staff development activities.

Authorization
All employees are to attend mandatory staff training as directed by their supervisor. Employees are to submit receipts and Travel Expense forms to the supervisor.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Professional Development includes training/courses which enable the employee to acquire and/or improve skills to increase effectiveness in their current role.

The objectives for staff training and professional development are to:

- enhance the professional growth of Cheshire employees;
- enhance staff and consumer health and safety;
- improve the agency's ability to address key issues readily and effectively;
- contribute to the agency’s growth, continual improvement and ability to be a leader in the field;

Level of Support
Cheshire provides eligible and authorized employees:

- up to 50% of academic, credit and certificate course tuition;
- the possibility of adjusting work hours to accommodate the course; and
- up to 100% of registration costs covered for other training/courses. (Note: expenses such as books, travel, accommodation or other fees are the employee’s responsibility).
Eligibility
Support for Professional Development training/courses is available to all full-time and part-time employees who have completed probation.

Authorization
Requests must be made in advance on the Application for Staff Development form and be approved by the supervisor based on:
- relevancy to current role;
- financial/budgetary considerations and allocations; and,
- ability to accommodate the required time off.

Criteria for Payment
The employee must:
- successfully complete the program, course or workshop;
- submit verification for course completion and related receipts to supervisor.

If an employee resigns or the employment is terminated during the course of study, Cheshire terminates the eligibility for these benefits and the employee will not be reimbursed for the course.

Professional Development for the Executive Director, Directors and Program Managers
The Board of Directors will review all requests for Professional Development from the Executive Director. The Executive Director will review all requests for Directors and the Directors will review all requests for Program Managers. The determination of eligibility for reimbursement will be based on the following criteria:
- relevancy to current role;
- relevancy to organizational strategies and goals;
- financial/budgetary consideration and allocation;
- the ability to accommodate the time required;
- what other professional development support has been used by the employee; and,
- how the information will be shared within the team/organization.

Expectations of Employees Who Receive Professional Development Funds
It is expected that employees who receive professional development funds will effectively share the information gained from their experience.

This sharing of information may include: presentation of an in-service based upon a portion of the conference, a written synopsis of a portion of the conference, or any other presentation as agreed upon by the supervisor. Any conference material obtained must be made available to program staff or co-workers.

Succession Planning
Succession planning is the systematic process of ensuring leadership continuity by identifying, assessing and developing talent internally and ensuring their readiness to assume key leadership roles within the organization when needed.
The overarching objectives of a succession plan are to:

- Ensure leadership continuity;
- Ensure the existence of a pool of individuals ready to assume key leadership positions;
- Develop and communicate critical leadership competencies for key senior management positions;
- Guide the developmental activities of key employees;
- Engage senior management in a dialogue regarding the development of leadership competencies for key positions.

Cheshire’s succession plan needs to reflect our organization’s objectives and goals and be an essential component of our overall organization strategy. This includes identifying “high potential” employees and providing them with the training and development necessary to develop the competencies essential for success as tomorrow’s leaders.

In addition to the obvious benefits of having a succession planning strategy in place are the immeasurable impacts on workplace culture, motivation, commitment and excitement for the future.

The following points are important considerations for implementing a succession plan:

- Ensure that our succession plan has the profile that it needs to be successful and is part of our overall organization strategy;
- Ensure that our succession plan is integrated with key HR processes (i.e. hiring, training & development, performance management);
- Develop a communication strategy for informing and promoting our plan;
- Identify benchmark positions to be included in our succession plan;
- Develop competencies for identified positions (i.e. behaviours, knowledge, skills, abilities required to achieve Cheshire’s desired level of performance in a given position);
- Ensure readiness and potential of candidates to fill benchmark positions within the next year or, one to two years or, two to five years or further out;
- Establish a succession plan framework (i.e. job rotation, acting assignments, stretch assignments, mentorship/coaching/career counselling program, formal training, leadership development programs etc.);
- Establish processes for identifying and assessing candidates;
- Develop individualized training and development requirements for potential successors to address gaps and achieve proficiency in position competencies;
- Establish mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating and providing feedback.

Succession planning is about the future and ensuring that Cheshire is positioned to meet the challenges ahead; remain a step ahead of our competitors and create a culture of opportunity for our staff.