



December 19, 2022

The Honourable Monte McNaughton  
Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development  
Government of Ontario  
400 University Avenue, 14<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1T7

Dear Minister McNaughton:

**Re: Skills Development Fund – Letter of Support for Proposed Expansion of the *Compassion Tech* Pilot to Multi Year Program by the Town of Ajax and Computek College**

The Durham Business Alliance is pleased to provide this letter of support for the proposal by the Town of Ajax and Computek College to the latest round of the Skill Development Fund (SDF). The Town and Computek are seeking to build on the success of their *Compassion Tech* pilot, which the [Ontario government previously funded](#) and Computek co-invested in, and now expand it to a multi-year program in Durham Region as well as launch a satellite training program in Scarborough where Computek has operated for more than three decades.

Launched in July 2022, *Compassion Tech* has been successfully implemented as a free training pathway program for the education, licensing, and employment of personal support workers (PSWs) in the high priority community of West Durham. Through this program, 150 students (more than 90% of whom are residents from the region) in over five cohorts underwent an accelerated, hybrid training program that included placements at more than 15 long-term care institutions, including at major institutional partners such as Lakeridge Health, SE Healthcare, and Chartwell to name a few. The pilot is on target to conclude by March 2023.

Based on the urgent need for the large number of personal support workers that healthcare employers had documented in the previous SDF round and the demand that Computek witnessed with nearly five times the number of prospective students applying for the 150 training spots that were available for the pilot, **the Town and Computek is seeking to train an additional 700 PSWs across Durham Region and 200 PSWs in Scarborough over the next three years.** The site-specific pilot that was initiated for West Durham has provided key insights that extend beyond the region and can be leveraged to serve as an employment pipeline in other high priority communities such as Scarborough.

As one of our province's leading regulated career colleges, Computek has a strong track record for over 30+ years of providing practical learning opportunities for new Canadians to help them access the Ontario job market – and is, therefore, perfectly positioned to deliver a training program of this magnitude. Going beyond their mandate as a postsecondary institution focused on skills development and improving employment outcomes for newcomers, Computek's consistent impact investments, and that of 369 Global, their parent company, to help improve



health, education, civic engagement, financial literacy, and other social outcomes through their holistic framework for immigrants and other vulnerable populations in the communities in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area where they currently operate is significant.

As the Durham Business Alliance, we have no doubt that this proposed expanded program will go a long way towards addressing the historic labour challenges that the long-term care sectors in Durham Region and East Toronto continue to face, while creating a future workforce pipeline through local health care facilities and employment partners in home care, hospices, and hospital systems. As the Ministry carefully reviews all submissions, we urge you to consider this funding request.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any further information.

Sincerely,

Talia Lane  
President  
Ajax-Pickering Board of Trade

Elizabeth Burley  
President  
Brock Board of Trade

Sheila Hall  
Executive Director  
Clarington Board of Trade

Jason King  
Chief Executive Officer  
Greater Oshawa Chamber of Commerce

Jane Black  
President  
Newcastle & District Chamber of Commerce

Karey Anne Large  
Executive Director  
Scugog Chamber of Commerce

Rick Nihda  
Executive Director  
Uxbridge Chamber of Commerce

Andrew Scuse  
President of the Board  
Whitby Chamber of Commerce



- cc. Hon. Jill Dunlop, Minister of College and Universities  
Hon. Paul Calandra, Minister of Long-Term Care  
Hon. Lorne Coe, Member of Provincial Parliament  
Regional Chair John Henry, Durham Region  
His Worship Shaun Collier, Mayor of the Town of Ajax  
Her Worship Elizabeth Roy, Mayor of the Town of Whitby  
Muraly Srinarayanathas, Chief Executive Officer, Computek College