Navigating Technological Advancements in Smaller Not-for-Profit Organization

Who We Are


- Community Living Mattawa is a small organization located in rural, Northern Ontario (approximately 45 minutes east of North Bay)

- Community Living Mattawa supports 40 adults, youth, and children with developmental disabilities who live in the Town of Mattawa and the surrounding Townships.

- We offer 24-hour group living services, Supported Independent Living services, Transitions for youth, Community Outreach services, Children's Respite Coordination for families, and Passport services.

- Community Living Mattawa has 40 staff which includes both frontline, management, and administrative employees. Our budget is $3M annually.

Our IT Situation – The Good

1. Community Living Mattawa has maintained a third-party contract with Community Living North Bay for the last 10 years.

2. This contract allows us to contact Community Living North Bay about IT questions and problems we are having. The CLNB IT department is very knowledgeable and can troubleshoot most issues remotely, but also comes to Mattawa when needed.

3. The CLNB IT department has made numerous recommendations over the years to make our computers and networks operate better and more efficiently.

Our IT Situation – The Bad
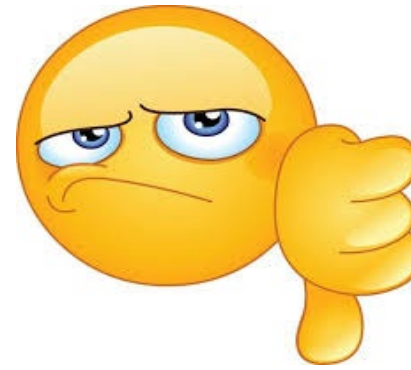
1. Though the relationship with Community Living North Bay is good and they are a resource, the issues that we bring forward can only be dealt with on CLNB's timeline.

2. Not having a dedicated person on-site, leads to issues needing to wait to be resolved.

3. Computer back-ups are completed using a physical back-up system that is kept off-site. There is limited use of cloud-based back-ups.

4. Resolving IT issues is often left to the Administrative staff, who have less knowledge of IT.

5. There is limited training available for our employees related to computers, especially for cyber security

Our IT Situation – The Ugly

1. Networking for Internet is very poor in Mattawa.

2. Our hardware is outdated in our Administrative building, causing challenges when meeting virtually.

3. We are very paper-based in all aspects of our business.

4. We do not have a centralized client management system. All work is done on paper.

5. The people we support utilize cash for purchases in the community and rely on employees to make any online purchases, restricting their independence, limiting their access to their money, and preventing them from participating in activities in the community.

6. Our software is outdated.

Ontario Trillium Foundation Resilient Communities Fund Grant

Ontario Trillium Foundation
Fondation Trillium de l'Ontario

An agency of the Government of Ontario
Un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

Ontario Trillium Foundation Resilient Communities Fund Grant

▶ OTF's Resilient Communities Fund supports community-based organizations that deliver programs and services in Ontario and need funding to recover and build capacity, resilience and sustainability.

▶ Eligible applicants can apply for a grant to develop and implement medium to long-term plans that address current organizational challenges they are facing to recover and build resilience.

▶ Grants support organizations as they:

   ▶ Develop new approaches to generate revenue

   ▶ Start new activities to meet community need

   ▶ Adjust strategies and plans

   ▶ Plan for future challenges

Ontario Trillium Foundation Resilient Communities Fund Grant

▶ Term length of the Grant: Minimum 6 months, Maximum 24 months

▶ Amount awarded (per year): Minimum $10,000, Maximum $100,000

▶ Applicants are to select up to three project outcomes they want to achieve with their grant and can apply for funding to cover eligible costs needed to carry out the project.

Ontario Trillium Foundation Resilient Communities Fund Grant

- Link to OTF Resilient Communities Fund

  https://otf.ca/our-grants/resilient-communities-fund

Community Living Mattawa's Grant Proposal – Impact on the Overall Organization

1. Developing and implementing long-term and strategic planning
2. Insufficient infrastructure and technology to deliver programs and services
3. Insufficient skills and knowledge related to technology
4. Insufficient funding to hire qualified information technology staff

Community Living Mattawa's Grant Proposal – Impact on Operations

1. Decreased ability to share information amongst employees, which has led to poorer communication between employees and an overall lower quality of service for the people with whom we work

2. Outdated infrastructure preventing the modernization of the organization

3. Inexperienced on-site staff that are hesitant to try new technology

4. Lack of knowledge of the individuals supported on how to use technology properly or effectively

Community Living Mattawa's Grant Proposal – Goals for the Grant

1. Modernize and upgrade the agency's information technology to increase operational efficiencies and support the agency moving forward

2. Increase the technical skills and knowledge of the staff so they are less paper-based and more computer-based in their work

3. Increase the knowledge and skills of the people supported so they maintain or increase their independence

Community Living Mattawa's Grant Proposal – How We Allocated the Funds

1. Hire a full-time IT Technician for an 18-month contract

2. Purchase hardware and software that will modernize and improve IT around the agency

3. Purchase consulting IT services to assist the hired IT Technician with modernizing the agency's information technology

Community Living Mattawa's Grant Proposal – Tasks for the IT Technician

1. Conduct an inventory review of the agency's IT equipment and make recommendations for upgrades

2. Update the agency's network cabling throughout the Administration building to improve Internet connections at workstations and improve the online speed throughout the building

3. Implement a virtual meeting platform within the agency and provide training to the Management Team on how to use the system

4. Reduce the agency's reliance on paper by implementing a cost-effective electronic document filing system which saves and backs-up to the Cloud and allows employees to work together on documents online

Community Living Mattawa's Grant Proposal – Tasks for the IT Technician

5. Implement a Client Information Data System

6. Improve the Internet capacity throughout the agency

7. Teach employees and individuals supported computer technical skills and overall cyber safety

8. Implement a two-step authentication process within the agency to protect emails and documents

9. Work with the Management Team and the Frontline employees on a system that allows the individuals supported to be more independent with their money in an electronic world

Successes So Far

1. Updated wiring within the Administration Building
2. Updated inventory and process has begun to replace old hardware
3. Migration to Microsoft OneDrive and SharePoint
4. 2-step authentication implemented
5. Introduction of online forms
6. Teams meeting platform set up and all Management staff trained on the system.

Ongoing Challenges

1. Resistance from employees to move to an electronic-based system. Still very paper-based

2. Still do not have a centralized Client Information System

3. Still waiting for upgraded internet in our other two buildings

4. Education component for the employees and the people supported has not been started

5. Modernizing the finances for the people supported is very challenging

After the Grant – Next Steps

1. Staffing partnership with Community Living North Bay
    1. Exploring a shared IT staff.
    2. Exploring number of days per week the IT staff would work for CLNB and for CLM
2. Exploring other grant opportunities
3. Putting training online
4. Ongoing discussions within the sector to share best practices

Contact Information

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