



Music Therapy Services of Simcoe County

C/o Heidi Flynn, BMT, MTA

Phone: 705-715-4804

Email: musictherapysc@gmail.com

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I recently accessed a \$4000 grant through Northern Lights Canada when I hired my first employee. I am a self-employed individual and was trying to grow my business to meet the demand for music therapy services in Simcoe County. However, being a single person operation, hiring a new employee came with some significant costs for my bottom line. When I miss client hours I do not get paid. In anticipation of bringing someone new on board I was very mindful of the fact that not only was I going to miss opportunities to generate revenue to train and orientate a new hire, but I was going to have to pay them for their time as well. This scenario was overwhelming but I knew necessary to grow my business and to train the individual properly so they could excel and represent my business positively.

The grant was allocated over a 16 week period but a greater portion was dispersed during the first month when I faced the “double whammy” of my missed client hours + employee wages. I honestly don’t know how I would have financially made it through the first month without the financial assistance. I faced many uncertainties in my first month after hiring the new employee, trying to figure out my responsibilities as an employer, but this grant allowed me to focus on figuring out the logistics rather than worrying about how I would pay myself.

I can’t say enough about Melissa Fletcher and Northern Lights. Through this entire process she went above and beyond to be of assistance and help me feel more confident and comfortable with the daunting step of hiring a new employee. She offered to do the leg-work to locate all the resources I would need to make sure I would be a well informed employer and minimize any rookie mistakes or omissions.

The only problem with this grant program was that I accidentally found it. I spent a great deal of time trying to determine if I qualified for something to assist with creating a new employment position and could not find any programs online. When I called a government department looking for guidance about the logistics surrounding hiring a new employee, they referred me to Northern Lights. It was then that Melissa told me about the grant program and assisted me with the paperwork to determine if I would qualify.

I think that more self-employed individuals would take a chance and create new employment positions if they knew that programs like this were available. I am extremely grateful for this financial assistance program and hope that it continues to be available for future new employers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Heidi Flynn', with a stylized, cursive script.

Heidi Flynn, MTA

Music Therapist and Owner, Music Therapy Services of Simcoe County