



Chief Administrative Officer/Administrator Program Guide

SEEDS for Elected Officials is a program designed as a new entry point for elected officials to learn more about how to be effective in their role. Needs assessment surveys of elected officials in 2019 and 2024 identified gaps in the participation of elected officials in learning related to the rural municipal sector, and more specifically, the roles and responsibilities of elected officials.

What Did We Learn? The assessment showed roughly half of elected officials did not receive a formal orientation when they first joined council, and that 'time' and 'distance to the training events' were the most cited barriers to participation. However, the survey also exposed a strong degree of interest in training and provided an understanding of the topics of interest. In general, there is an opportunity to build the capacity of elected officials.

Why *SEEDS* – What's Different?

SEEDS is a set of online learning modules designed to provide basic tips on topics considered relevant to the role of the rural municipal elected official. *What's unique about this program?* Each module has been designed to require only ten minutes of an elected official's time. Ten minutes, and they become familiar with key tips on an important topic, helping them be more comfortable with and effective in their role as an elected official.

Does each module provide a comprehensive learning experience on each topic? No. Each module presents a basic set of tips – highlights on foundational considerations that the elected official should keep in front of them. There's always more to learn - these modules *plant the seeds* for the cultivation of further learning interests.

What are the Program Objectives?

The fundamental program objective is to increase the awareness of elected officials of key topics – increased knowledge. In addition to this core objective:

- *Address the barriers* limiting participation by providing light and concise learning experiences
- *Build a learning culture* with elected officials by increasing the number of elected officials engaging and participating in learning, and
- *Provide a simple entry point to learning* for elected officials.

What is the Program Role for the Administrator?

SARM has selected a well-respected and tested Learning Management System (LMS) as the delivery platform for the program. Ease-of-use was a primary consideration in the selection of the platform. With this considered, support from the rural municipal administrator remains key. The program role for the administrator includes the following general requests.

NOTE: The program role may also be played by another member of the administrative team, or an elected official that has an interest in supporting their fellow members of council.

1 User Registration

Whether or not an elected official chooses to take the modules, it is important that they are registered. If an elected official does not take the steps to register on their own, the administrator is requested to register them on their behalf, or assist them with the registration process. This may include arbitrarily assigning a password for them.

2 User Engagement

There will be elected officials that may not engage independently in the *SEEDs* program. Administrators are encouraged to create opportunities for individual elected officials to take a module. For example, an administrator could invite a reluctant official to arrive early for a council meeting and be 'tutored' on how to log on and take a single module.

3 Report System Bugs

The platform and program are designed to be straightforward for the user – registration, logging in, taking a module, finding the next module, etc. An FAQ can also be accessed through the support button on the home page. Elected officials are asked to direct any related questions to the rural municipal administrator. If questions or concerns arise that are not related to the basic procedures of registering, logging in, or taking a module, the administrator is asked to report these to SARM by emailing learning@sarm.ca.

4 Confirm Users

The LMS provides for the monitoring of activity by each individual elected official, as well as by the council overall. This provides for engagement monitoring, and the release of reminder messages to keep users engaged. On an annual or semi-annual basis, administrators may receive a report on the registered users associated with their rural municipality. Administrators will be asked to confirm the users, and identify any to be removed from the system (e.g., change in council members due to election).