

Employment Services Transformation – Call for Proposal
GENERAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. What is happening to employment services in Ontario?

The government is improving the delivery of employment services for Ontarians by focusing on the local needs of communities and workers so people can get good, quality jobs.

The government is creating a stronger system that's easy to use and localized to help all workers, businesses and communities.

Service system managers will plan and deliver services that meet the needs of their local economy and make Ontario open for business. These managers will be selected through a new, selection process that is open to any public, not-for-profit and private sector organization.

Beginning fall 2019, the new system will be implemented in three regions in Ontario so lessons learned may be applied and rolled-out across the province gradually.

Those three regions are Hamilton-Niagara Peninsula, Muskoka-Kawarthas and Peel.

As the new system is implemented in the prototype regions, the government will continue to work with service delivery partners across the province to plan and deliver stronger, locally-focused employment and social assistance services that help more people find and keep jobs.

2. Why are these changes being made? (How does this align with government priorities?)

Ontario's employment and training programs are critical to building the skilled workforce that keeps [Ontario open for business](#). However, current employment services are not delivering results and often don't provide people looking for a job with a clear path to employment.

We need to ensure Ontario's employment services are responsive to local labour market needs, so job seekers can find jobs and employers can find skilled workers.

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3. What happens to the existing employment service providers? Will locations close? Will people lose their jobs at service provider locations?

With large-scale transformation, we know there will be disruption within the system. These changes will be difficult, but are necessary to support improvement and drive innovation, and ultimately, to provide better services to the people of Ontario.

We will gradually implement the changes to Ontario's employment services, starting with three prototypes in fall 2019 and learn from this implementation along the way. Full implementation will be phased-in over the next several years, with regular communications to help people understand and prepare for any changes.

4. Will there be impacts to current Employment Ontario programming because of these changes?

Yes, there could be impacts to current Employment Ontario programming. A new outcomes-based, local service system management model will be introduced to ensure we have more effective and responsive employment services that achieve better results for job seekers and employers.

Service system managers will be selected through a new, selection process and open to any public, not-for-profit and private sector organization.

5. How will these changes impact Literacy and Basic Skills program delivery?

The ministry will continue to administer the Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) program during the prototype phase.

We recognize that delivery partners are interested in obtaining details of whether the Literacy and Basics Skills program will be part of the full implementation of the new employment and training system.

We also recognize LBS as a critical and effective intervention in supporting successful transition to employment, further education and training. As such, we intend to dialogue with the LBS network leadership to better inform the next steps for LBS over the transition period.

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6. Will service system managers take over some of the responsibilities currently held by Local Employment Planning Councils and Local Planning Boards?

Service system managers will be accountable for service planning and manage the delivery of employment services in a way that is integrated, people-focused and outcomes-driven. Service system managers will undertake activities, such as engaging employers, to match services and programs to local job seeker and employer needs and help them achieve employment outcomes. Community partnerships are critical to providing jobseeker supports and moving people to employment.

Service system managers will be required to engage with a number of partners, including local employment planning councils and local planning boards, colleges, municipalities and other social service entities to better meet the needs of jobseekers and employers.

While local employment planning councils and local planning boards may be performing some of these functions, the service system manager will be accountable to the government for using these partnerships to develop service plans.

7. When will clients see changes through this new service system? Will they have to change service providers to get help?

We will gradually implement the changes to Ontario's employment services, starting with three prototypes in fall 2019. The prototype regions will be operational and ready to take clients by April 2020. Regular communication will help people understand and prepare for any changes.

Full implementation across the province will be phased-in over the next several years.

8. Did the government consult with stakeholders prior to this announcement?

Yes. Since announcing the plan for modernizing employment services in February 2019, the government has executed targeted engagement with key stakeholders, clients and local organizations to better-inform the next steps of the modernization and ensure the new employment services model is viable.

This included information sessions in April 2019 and Vendor Market Day in May 2019, with over 200 organizations interested in learning about the role of service system managers within the new employment system. Participants included private

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and not-for-profit sector organizations, municipalities, Indigenous organizations, colleges and service providers. It consisted of webinars, an open information session, an extended Q&A session, a networking opportunity/presentation session and approximately 120 one-to-one meetings with organizations to get their advice on the new employment system and execution.

9. Will these changes result in fewer employment services for communities?

The changes are intended to strengthen the overall delivery model and improve employment outcomes for clients. The new local service delivery model will ensure employment services are more responsive and effective in meeting the needs of job seekers, employers and communities.

10. How will these changes help to ensure job seekers are given the skills needed to succeed in the jobs available?

The government wants all Ontarians to have the skills they need to get a good job. Ontario's employment and training programs are critical to building the skilled workforce that keeps Ontario open for business. Improving the delivery of employment services for Ontarians by focusing on the local needs of communities and workers will help people get good, quality jobs.

11. How will these changes impact First Nations communities?

The changes that will be introduced in the prototype phase will not apply to the employment services provided by First Nations.

There will be no immediate changes in access and delivery of employment services for clients in the catchment areas for any client, including First Nations clients who access employment and training services off-reserve.

We have started a direct dialogue with First Nation representatives along with the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services to discuss their perspective on the changes the government is considering.

12. How will these changes impact other Indigenous communities?

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The government is committed to providing quality employment services to all job seekers and employers.

We have started a direct dialogue with urban Indigenous community representatives along with the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services and we want to get their advice on how best to support Indigenous clients in the new model.

To ensure a locally responsive and client focused employment services system that meets the needs of Indigenous clients, service system managers will be required to engage with local organizations that serve Indigenous people in order to deliver long-term, sustainable outcomes for Indigenous jobseekers.

13. How will these changes impact Francophone communities?

The government is committed to providing quality employment services to all job seekers and employers, and that includes delivering services in French. The government consulted with Francophone service providers and included Francophone sessions in the vendor market day.

The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities will work closely with other provincial ministries and service system managers to ensure that services provided to the Francophone community are available in the new employment system, both in the prototype phase and province-wide implementation.

Service system managers will be required to engage with the Francophone community to ensure appropriate services are available that reflect community need.

14. How will these changes impact people with disabilities?

The government is committed to providing effective employment services to all job seekers and employers, and that includes delivering services to people with disabilities. The Ontario Disability Support Program Employment Supports program will be integrated into this newly transformed employment system.

The Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities will work closely with other provincial ministries and service system managers to ensure that services that meet the varied needs of people with disabilities are available in the new employment system, both in the prototype phase and as part of province-wide implementation.

In the new system, service system managers will be required to have the capacity to offer specialized services to support the varied needs of people with disabilities in achieving positive employment outcomes.

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15. How will these changes impact municipalities?

Municipalities that deliver Employment Ontario and Ontario Works employment services outside of the prototype regions will continue to operate as in the past until full implementation. The government will continue to work with service delivery partners across the province to plan and deliver stronger, locally-focused employment and social assistance services that help more people find and keep jobs.

In the prototype regions, the ministry will undertake a phased approach to transformation that will ensure service continuity and client access as roles and responsibilities shift during the transition from ministry oversight of service providers to service system manager oversight.

Phase I – Planning (January 2020 – March 2020)

This phase is intended to allow service system managers to establish themselves within the catchment area

Phase II – Transition (April 2020 – September 2020)

During this phase, responsibility for managing EO and ODSP employment services service delivery will be transferred to the service system managers. However, SSMs will not be able to make changes to the service provider network during this period.

Phase III – Integrated ES Delivery (begins on October 1, 2020)

In this phase, transition is complete and responsibility of employment services for Ontario Works recipients will be transferred to SSMs. During this phase, the SSM will be permitted to make changes to the service provider network and will be fully responsible for the planning, design and delivery of in-scope employment services within the identified catchment area.

16. How will these changes impact service providers?

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Outside of the prototype regions, the government will continue to work with service delivery partners across the province to plan and deliver stronger, locally-focused employment and social assistance services that help more people find and keep jobs.

17. What is the Supported Employment program? Will implementation of the program continue in Belleville, Cornwall, and Timmins? Is the program getting cancelled?

The Supported Employment program was launched April 2018 in Belleville, Cornwall, and Timmins. The goal of the program is to help people with disabilities secure competitive, long-term jobs. It integrates the Ontario Employment Assistance Services, the Ontario Disability Support Program Employment Supports program (Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services), and the Vocational Rehabilitation Services (Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care).

The Supported Employment program offers clients with complex barriers, as a result of a disability, a comprehensive range of employment services to help them achieve their career goals. The program also provides a wide range of services and opportunities for employers to address their staffing and skills needs.

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The Supported Employment program continues to be available in Belleville, Cornwall, and Timmins. We are currently conducting a third-party implementation evaluation of the program which will help inform how best to move forward in the future. This important project will help inform the development of the new service delivery model.

In the prototype communities, service system managers will be expected to deliver specialized services to people with disabilities in their catchment area. Service system managers will have the flexibility to design these supports and will be accountable to the government for achieving outcomes for these clients.

18. What is a prototype?

A prototype is a preliminary service system model that will be tested and learned from prior to full implementation of the new employment and training system.

For the employment services modernization, Ontario has been divided into 15 regions that align with Statistics Canada Economic Region boundaries, splitting the Toronto Economic Region into five catchment areas.

Beginning fall 2019, the new employment system will be implemented in three of the regions. Lessons learned from these prototypes may be applied and rolled-out across the province gradually.

19. What are the catchment areas for the prototypes?

The three prototype regions that will first implement the new employment services system are Hamilton-Niagara Peninsula, Muskoka-Kawarthas and Peel.

The three prototype regions reflect Ontario's geographic and community diversity to ensure the new employment services system works for all Ontario job seekers and employers.

An evidence-based framework was used to support the selection of these prototype regions.

From there, the regions were organized into three clusters representing urban, mixed urban/rural, and rural communities. These clusters were then assessed against criteria to determine the strongest options. The criteria included contestability, integration and transition. These criteria were assessed to ensure the prototype regions would be representative of the system.

20. What is the purpose of the Call for Proposals (CFP)?

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The purpose of this Call for Proposal (CFP) is to select a service system manager to deliver employment services within each of the three Catchment Areas during the prototype phase of employment services transformation. Participation in this CFP is only open to entities who qualified under the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) Tender# 11570 as a sole Applicant or Consortium.

CFP Applications must be received through the Ontario Tenders Portal eTendering System by October 31, 2019 (5:00 pm EST). Where there is conflict between the RFQ and CFP, the CFP will prevail.

CFP submissions will form part of the contractual obligations during the negotiation and contracting stage of the selection process.

21. Who can participate in the Call for Proposals (CFP) to be a service system manager for the three prototype regions launching fall of 2019?

Only organizations who have met the eligibility criteria through the Request for Qualifications and received an invitation to the next stage of the selection process can take part in the Call for Proposals (CFP) to be a service system manager.

CFP Applications must be received through the Ontario Tenders Portal eTendering System by October 31, 2019 (5:00 pm EST). Where there is conflict between the RFQ and CFP, the CFP will prevail.

Organizations that are successful in becoming a service system manager for one of the three prototype regions will be announced in fall 2019.

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22. What criteria will be considered when selecting service system managers for the three prototype regions?

Service system managers will be selected based on those best positioned to manage the employment system and deliver results. The selection process will be open to any public, not-for-profit and private sector organization, provided they meet the qualification criteria.

23. How many service system managers will be selected for the three prototype regions?

One service system manager will be selected for each of the three prototype regions – so a total of three. One service system manager cannot manage all three regions during the prototypes.

24. When can organizations apply to be a service system manager for the non-prototype regions?

Over the next few years, the ministry will introduce a competitive process for selecting service system managers in catchment areas across the province. As more information becomes known and decisions are made, updates will be shared.

25. What is the role of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities in this new service delivery model?

The ministry will be a system steward in the new service delivery model. As system steward, the government will set standards, establish performance outcomes and set the policies and priorities for the integrated employment system.

The ministry will also retain responsibility for sector-based initiatives, grants, and rapid response to address labour market crises. The ministry also retains training programs such as Second Career, Canada-Ontario Job Grant and SkillsAdvance Ontario.

26. What is the role of the Ministry of Children Community and Social Services in this new service delivery model?

Social assistance programs, specifically Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program, will be a key input into the Employment Ontario system with respect to client referrals, integrated case management and ongoing service

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coordination. These programs will work collaboratively to address mutual clients' needs in achieving their employment goals.

The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services will maintain responsibility for social assistance and for providing life stabilization supports to those clients.

We will gradually implement the changes to Ontario's employment services, starting with the three prototypes in fall 2019. As more information becomes known and decisions are made, we will ensure that all employees are updated.

27. Will the current Employment Services model continue to operate in the three prototype catchment areas during their transition period?

The ministry will undertake a phased approach to transformation that will ensure service continuity and client access as roles and responsibilities shift during the transition from ministry oversight of service providers to service system manager oversight.

Phase I – Planning (January 2020 – March 2020)

This phase is intended to allow SSMs to establish themselves within the catchment area

Phase II – Transition (April 2020 – September 2020)

During this phase, responsibility for managing EO and ODSP employment services service delivery will be transferred to the SSMs. However, SSMs will not be able to make changes to the service provider network during this period.

Phase III – Integrated ES Delivery (begins on October 1, 2020)

In this phase, transition is complete and responsibility of employment services for Ontario Works recipients will be transferred to SSMs. During this phase, the SSM will be permitted to make changes to the service provider network and will be fully responsible for the planning, design and delivery of in-scope employment services within the identified catchment area.

28. How were applicants evaluated?

A team of trained MTCU managers reviewed submissions individually and where there were significant differences, a discussion took place to arrive at consensus.

Supply Chain Ontario supported and facilitated the process to ensure consistency and fairness.

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29. Who is doing the evaluation? What are their qualifications for being evaluators and how did you ensure they have no conflict of interest?

Evaluations were conducted by managers from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, with wide representation across the ministry.

Three questions were straightforward mathematical calculations and were conducted by the ministry's finance branch.

All evaluators were required to sign non-disclosure agreements, and conflict of interest declarations prior to the start of the evaluation process.

30. What was the scoring criteria and weighting for evaluation? Please explain the reasoning behind it.

The scoring matrix and criteria were shared through the RFQ Tender document.

Applicants were required to respond to four mandatory requirements, and eleven questions. The mandatory requirements had a pass/fail property in which failure to respond to these requirements satisfactorily resulted in automatic disqualification.

The eleven questions were scored out of 100 and applications were required to have an overall score of 65 per cent or higher.

The questions were divided into four sections – Planning, Design, Delivery, and Governance, Oversight and Accountability. Each section had a particular weighting, and a threshold, as identified in the RFQ.

31. Will the evaluation results be shared with the public or all applicants?

Successful applicants will be invited to participate in the Call for Proposals which will be launched in late August. The evaluation results will be shared with each individual applicant by letter.

Unsuccessful applicants will be given the opportunity to have a debrief on their application.

A list of qualified applicants invited to participate in the Call for Proposal will be posted on the Employment Ontario Partners' Gateway.

32. What other measures were taken to ensure the integrity and fairness of the RFQ process?

Evaluation scores were recorded online in the Ontario Tenders Portal's Evaluation module. This ensured that all reviews and changes are time-stamped to ensure transparency throughout the process.

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33. Can an unsuccessful applicant request a re-review or appeal an evaluation or review the evaluation documentation?

There is no appeal process. Unsuccessful applicants will have one month after notification of the result to request a debrief on the evaluation of their submission.

34. Were the pre-qualified applicants selected based on meeting a minimum number of points or were you targeting to select a specific number of applicants (e.g., top 10 regardless of lowest score)

All successful applicants were required to meet an overall minimum threshold of 65 per cent, as well as the various subsection thresholds.

Each application was evaluated on its own merits. The ministry did not target a specific number of applicants or a specific number by sector.

35. How is the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities supporting people on social assistance?

The ministry is supporting people on social assistance by integrating Ontario Works – Employment Assistance and Ontario Disability Support Program – Employment Supports into Employment Ontario. This will create one efficient, cost-effective system that's easy to use and helps all job seekers, including people with disabilities and those on social assistance.

The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services maintains responsibility for social assistance and for providing life stabilization supports to those clients.

The SSM will be paid for results, with higher payments where people who have greater barriers, including many clients on social assistance, find jobs.

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36. What is the Ontario Disability Support Program – Employment Supports?

Ontario Disability Support Program - Employment Supports help people with disabilities find and keep competitive employment by offering a range of services, including:

- job preparation activities;
- job placement ongoing and retention supports;
- workplace training;
- job accommodations support and advice; and,
- funding for work related aids such as assistive devices.

Support is also provided to clients whose goal is self-employment.

Ontario Disability Support Program – Employment Supports are open to eligible job seekers with disabilities, whether or not they receive Ontario Disability Support income support.

37. What is Ontario Works – Employment Assistance?

Ontario Works – Employment Assistance provides a range of employment assistance supports and activities that help participants prepare for, find and maintain employment.

Ontario Works – Employment Assistance was developed as a labour market approach that emphasizes the client's responsibility to participate in available employment assistance activities to re-enter the labour market and work towards self-sufficiency.