

Sent by email to: [Merrilee.Fullerton@ontario.ca](mailto:Merrilee.Fullerton@ontario.ca)

January 10, 2019

The Honourable Merrilee Fullerton  
Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities  
Mowat Block, 3rd Floor  
900 Bay Street  
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1L2

Dear Minister Fullerton,

AMO listened with interest to the announcement late last year about the new provincial Social Assistance Reform Plan and noted that it was a joint one between yourself and the Honourable Lisa MacLeod, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services and Minister Responsible for Women's Issues. It signifies to us the emphasis the government is placing on finding employment for social assistance recipients and other unemployed and underemployed people in Ontario.

We could not agree more. AMO's submission about the reform plan talked about the need to create paths to employment to decrease reliance on social assistance and to improve quality of life for job seekers. A collaborative approach to reforming both social assistance and employment programs is essential. Ontarians can only benefit from well-planned changes. AMO is ready to move forward with the provincial government and contribute our best policy and program design advice.

As the announcement included a reference to working with municipal governments and District Social Service Administration Boards (DSSABs) on some pilot projects, we wanted to highlight our recommendations for your consideration. Our underlying premise, with which we are sure that you agree, is that reforms to social assistance, accompanied by employment services changes, will yield better employment outcomes.

Transforming employment and training services can improve the cost effectiveness and efficacy of employment programs for both job seekers and employers. The goal is to find the most effective way to supply the job market with trained, skilled up resources. More integration of employment services provided by Ontario Works, the Ontario Disability Support Program, and Employment Ontario would increase effectiveness and achieve efficiencies. This will require a multi-ministry effort working with the municipal sector.

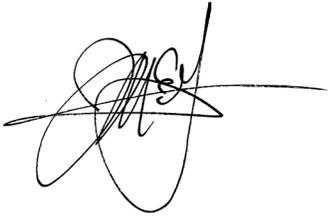
We ask that the Ministry should consider the following options on a rolling implementation basis:

1. Continue efforts to target more Employment Ontario services to serve clients with multiple barriers that are distant from the labour market, including those in community housing.
2. Implement the Common Assessment tool for all employment services so front-line workers can assess clients' individual strengths and challenges and help connect them to the right supports.
3. Leverage municipal expertise, knowledge of local labour market conditions, and engagement with employers to facilitate labour force and economic development in communities by re-examining the municipal roles in employment and training services and consider options along a continuum as follows:
  - Establish formal mechanisms for Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs) and DSSABs to jointly plan with the Province on the range and type of employment and training service offerings in communities that meet the needs of job seekers and employers within the context of local labour market conditions. This planning is needed as soon as possible.
  - Provide opportunity for interested CMSMs and DSSABs to become Employment Ontario service deliverers if they so choose. Where these interested CMSMs and DSSABs act as Employment Ontario service deliverers, the provincial and federal funding should cover 100% of the actual cost of service delivery.
  - Provide opportunity for interested CMSMs and DSSABs to assume a role to direct the delivery of provincially funded employment and training services in a way that meets the needs of job seekers and employers within the context of the local labour market. This would involve an exploration of a municipal service system management role for employment and training services based on local choice. This would not cost the Province or municipal governments anything and may well achieve greater efficiencies in addition to more effective service planning for communities. It could work if paid for 100% with a transfer of administrative resources from the Province (i.e. transfer of federal-provincial funds from the labour market agreements to CMSMs and DSSABs).

Pursuing these options will leverage the existing expertise of municipal governments and DSSABs not only with employment, but also with labour force and economic development with which there are existing relationships with local employers.

We are interested in discussing these options with you and hearing more about the Ministry's plans in a meeting at the AMO-Ontario Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) table. The next meeting is February 7<sup>th</sup>. The MOU provides an opportunity for confidential discussions even before decisions go to Cabinet for approval where municipal leaders can provide their best advice to inform policy directions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JM', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Jamie McGarvey  
AMO President

cc: David Piccini, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities  
The Honourable Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing  
George Zegarac, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities  
The Honourable Lisa MacLeod, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services and Minister Responsible for Women's Issues  
Janet Menard, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services