



January 10, 2020

**MEMORANDUM TO:** Ontario Works Administrators  
• Municipalities and DSSABs

**FROM:** Patti Redmond  
Director, Social Assistance Service Delivery Branch

**RE:** **2020 Ontario Works Service Delivery Priorities**

---

Thank you for supporting client needs and your on-going commitments to exploring new innovative ways to achieve employment outcomes for clients.

The government is committed to working with our municipal and DSSAB partners to identify more effective and efficient ways to deliver services that are sustainable for the future and focused on improving outcomes. We know that municipalities recognize the need to work together to address our shared fiscal challenges while also finding opportunities to improve service and outcomes for clients.

Further to the September 12<sup>th</sup> memo regarding 2020 Ontario Works Program Delivery Funding (PDF) Allocation the ministry has identified service delivery priorities grouped within **four** pillars. These pillars are similar to what is in place for this current year, as this is the second year of the business cycle. There are **seven** service delivery operational expectations identified in Pillar #3.

Except for the process described below in Pillar #4 (submitting a request for 2020 additional one-time funding) the approach to service delivery priorities for the municipalities located in the three prototype employment services transformation catchment areas will be different and will be determined in consultation with these municipalities and Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development (MLTSD).

### **Pillar #1 - Improving Employment Outcomes**

The ministry will continue to establish ambitious employment outcomes targets with delivery partners to encourage continuous improvement within the program.

- 2019 actuals for the OW employment outcomes measured will be the forecasted baseline for 2020. Negotiated 2020 targets to be set at a minimum of 3% higher than the 2020 baseline. Similar to 2019, in exceptional circumstances, the ministry will consider demonstrated evidence (i.e. local demographics; delivery partner being significantly above the provincial median) for increases less than 3%.

## **Pillar #2 – Enhancing Accountability for Achieving Outcomes**

The ministry will be enhancing performance management measures with delivery partners to support greater accountability for achieving outcomes.

- In addition to setting employment outcomes above the prior year's actuals (namely, Pillar # 1), further attention will be initiated by Program Supervisors with delivery partners who are below the provincial median or below similar communities with respect to labour market conditions (e.g. unemployment rates). Similar communities may be defined as but not limited to similar OW caseload size and similar population size.
- Similar to 2019, negotiated targets will not be amended from the initial contract which may result in financial recoveries. The maximum recovery, based on performance is 15% of the total upload funding. Decisions regarding recoveries will be transparent, will consider all available information (e.g. employment outcome results/performance for non-disabled members) including unique circumstances and will engage with the impacted delivery partner.

## **Pillar #3 – Strengthening Program Integrity**

The ministry will continue to strengthen program integrity to ensure consistency in the delivery of the OW program through monitoring municipal performance in the specific areas identified below. Descriptions of the strategies implemented to support the seven (7) service delivery expectations will be documented in your 2020 OW Service Plan. The ministry will work with municipal delivery partners where performance is not in keeping with the stated objectives.

- Eligibility Verification Process (EVP) is the ministry's key oversight activity which uses a risk-based case audit process to ensure client eligibility for social assistance is determined based on accurate financial and personal information.

The Ministry will specifically report on delivery partners results related to:

- 100% assignment of audit plans within 15 business days
- 90% completion rate of audit plans prior to the following audit plan creation date and

- Perform Quality Assurance (QA) reviews of random samples of completed audits. The focus will be on EVP mandatory steps.
- The ministry announced in April 2019 that the standard overpayment (OP) recovery rate will increase from 5 per cent to 10 per cent when the cause of a new overpayment is deemed to have been within the individual's control to prevent. The ministry will work jointly with delivery partners who are below the median OP percentage of 10%.
- Delivery partners will continue to promote the MyBenefits online tool to clients to support Social Assistance (SA) Modernization initiatives to improve client access and experience.
- The ministry continues to drive efforts to move clients and vendors to electronic payments. With the introduction of the Reloadable Payment Card (RPC) and electronic payments to third parties (e.g., vendors and landlords) the ministry will continue to measure delivery partners efforts to transition clients and vendors from cheques to electronic payments (including DBD).
- Delivery partners will develop strategies to increase the number of ODSP non-disabled adults actively participating in OW Employment Assistance (EA).
- The ministry will work with delivery partners when there is a noted increase in the number of cases returning to OW within one year.
- In addition, delivery partners will continue to conduct third party verification checks before a case is transferred to the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP).

#### **Pillar # 4 – Strengthening Fiscal Accountability**

The ministry will continue to strengthen financial controls to ensure the provision of funding reflects program spending.

- Budget submissions for 2020 funding should not exceed the delivery partner's 2018 actual expenditures (i.e. if the delivery partner's 2018 actual expenditures were higher than the 2019 Notional Program Delivery Funding, the lower amount will be used as the 2020 funding) except in limited circumstances as identified below.
  - Delivery partners can submit a request for 2020 additional one-time funding. The request should include an itemized list of one-time costs and rationales for each cost related to OW program delivery. The request must

be submitted in writing to your Program Supervisor on or before January 24, 2020 and will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

- By mid- February 2020, a notional ministry approval subject to appropriations from legislation will be communicated to delivery partners who submitted a request for one-time funding. In determining the approvals for one-time funding, the following factors regarding the delivery partner requesting the additional funding will be taken into consideration:
  - cost per case
  - performance in the operational indicators/expectations highlighted in pillar # 3 (above)
  - 2019 approved funding
- Similar to this year, the ministry will not support increases to staffing and benefits ( i.e Cost of Living Allowance/ Collective Agreement increases), general office and education/staff training increases.
- The date for service contracts to be signed and returned to the ministry will be determined and communicated as soon as possible with the expected date being earlier in the year.

If you have questions on this material, please contact your Social Assistance Program Supervisor.

Thank you,



Patti Redmond  
Director, Social Assistance Service Delivery Branch

c. Laura Belfie, Director of Social Assistance Program Policy Branch