

Ministry of Children,  
Community and Social Services

Director's Office  
Social Assistance  
Service Delivery Branch

Ministère des Services  
à l'enfance et des Services  
sociaux et communautaires  
Bureau du directeur  
Direction de la prestation des  
services en matière d'aide sociale



March 26, 2020

**MEMORANDUM TO:** Ontario Works Administrators

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

**RE:** COVID-19 RESPONSE

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We are aware that your organization is re-focussing activities and resources in response to the emergency declaration in Ontario related to novel coronavirus (COVID-19). At this time the ministry is providing a number of key financial supports and flexibility to allow you the discretion to focus on the safety, health and well-being of your staff and your clients.

For programs with an ongoing funding relationship with the ministry your payments will continue into 2020/21 based on the 2019/20 funding you are currently receiving from MCCSS except for any time-limited funding that was scheduled to end or where the ministry communicated a different 2020/21 allocation for your organization. This is consistent with previous years' practice.

If your organization received time-limited or project-based funding that was tied to specific activities or milestones in 2019/20 that will need to be deferred to 2020/21 as a result of impacts related to COVID-19, such flexibility will be considered and will be addressed on a case by case basis.

For the period of April 1<sup>st</sup> to September 30<sup>th</sup> Transfer Payment Recipients (TPRs):

- Have the flexibility to shift funding within your organization and across your program areas to focus on critical services and needs in relation to COVID-19. The ministry will not hold programs to caps on administrative spending and other contract elements during this time.
- Will not be held accountable to meet predefined service targets or performance measures. Agencies will still be required to report on what progress was made on these elements but not until 2020/21 Q2. This information will not be used for compliance but be used to support ongoing transparency and accountability measures required by the Government.
- Should use any underspending in 2019/20 to address any COVID-19 related pressures that you are facing as a result of the current environment (see related expenditures set

out below). MCCSS will collect this detail at a later date, and TPRs will not be required to return these funds to MCCSS. If agencies identify surpluses but do not require the funding in the 2019/20 fiscal year, any amounts that were not already paid to agencies can be redirected by ministry offices for other priorities. Surplus 2019/20 funding cannot be moved into 2020/21.

At this time, we are defining expenditures related to COVID-19 to include:

- Materials required to manage COVID-19 related issues,
- Backfilling for positions of people who are required to self-isolate or self-quarantine,
- Increased staffing needs for residential services if required, and,
- Supporting the purchase of equipment, cleaning or sanitizing supplies, and/or to meet the increased need for expanded mobile services, i.e. cell phones and cellular data plans to support virtual service delivery.
- The use of hotels or other measures as temporary/alternate accommodation for clients if required to support isolation/social distancing

Please talk to your Program Supervisor or MCCSS contact if you have questions/concerns related to this list.

As you know, MCCSS was preparing to adopt the Transfer Payment Ontario (TPON) platform to support the service contracting process for 2020/21. However, due to the heightened level of concern related to the spread of COVID-19, MCCSS is pausing all work to onboard TPON at this time. This will not impact the way you receive funds from the ministry.

You are required to track any expenditures related to COVID-19 separately, and that you continue to do so until future discussions with you in the fall. Additionally, please ensure these expenditures are captured in your audited financial statements for 2019/20 and 2020/21. In the meantime, the service contracting process for 2020/21 and the timelines for the 2019/20 Transfer Payment Budget Package TPR Q4 Report and year end reconciliation are being deferred until further notice by MCCSS.

We thank you and appreciate what your organization and staff are doing to support Ontarians under these challenging circumstances. We know that these are unusual times and our collective responses to these challenges are still in a phase of rapid change and evolution.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact your Program Supervisor/MCCSS contact. We are committed to continuing to work with you to keep our communities safe and healthy as these circumstances continue to evolve.



Patti Redmond  
Director, Social Assistance Service Delivery Branch