

**Ministry of Children,  
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Services**

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February 11, 2021

**MEMORANDUM TO: Human Services Collaborative Members**

**FROM: Janet Menard, Deputy Minister**

**SUBJECT: A New Provincial-Municipal Vision for Social Assistance**

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Today, Minister Smith announced [Ontario's new vision for social assistance](#) that we shared with you last month at the Provincial-Municipal Human Services Collaborative (PMHSC).

As you are well aware, Ontario is at a critical juncture, as we continue to struggle through the impacts of COVID-19. Hundreds of thousands of Ontarians are still unable to return to the labour market and many may have to turn to social assistance and other community supports and services, depending on the federal government decisions regarding the future of enhanced federal income benefits.

As such, Ontario's social assistance system must be ready to support increased numbers of people back towards employment, independence and stability. The new vision for social assistance aims to create an efficient, effective and streamlined social services system that focuses on people by connecting them with a range of local services and supports that respond to their unique needs and address barriers. Our goal is that once life stabilization is achieved, more people will also succeed in employment, contributing to better outcomes in all areas of their lives.

We know this plan is ambitious and requires significant consideration of how we can realign roles and responsibilities to best support clients. It will also involve legislative and regulatory changes to enable greater flexibility in decision making and service delivery, as

well as a new approach to funding. That is why we need to act now and accelerate work towards this critical transformation to support Ontario's economic recovery.

For this plan to be successful, municipalities and District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSABs) will be true partners in its design and implementation. While this plan identifies a path forward, it is the start of collaboration, not the end. The Province and municipal service managers and DSSABs will work together to engage broadly and drive forward this plan to create a better system for Ontarians.

We are sharing the attached material to support discussion with your municipal councils and other partners to engage with them on these changes, answer questions and identify any early concerns. The Provincial-Municipal Social Assistance and Employment Committee (PMSAEC) will work to refine details of the co-design process to support a better understanding of how we will collectively work together to over the coming months.

If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to Lindsay Jones at [Lindsay.Jones@Ontario.ca](mailto:Lindsay.Jones@Ontario.ca)

Sincerely,



Janet Menard  
Deputy Minister

**Attachments:**

- Social Assistance Vision Placemat
- Questions and Answers

**Copy:**

- Ontario Works Administrators at all Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs) and District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSABs)
- CMSM Commissioners and DSSAB Chief Administrative Officers
- City Managers
- Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA)
- Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association (NOSDA)
- The Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)
- City of Toronto
- Lindsay Jones, Director, Social Assistance Strategy and Transformation Branch