



Committee Report

OW-24-02

To: Chair and Members of the Social Services Committee
From: Stuart Beumer, Director of Ontario Works
Date: Wednesday, March 13, 2024
Subject: **2024 Ontario Works Service Plan Submission**

Background:

The Ontario Works division is currently completing the annual service planning and contracting processes with the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) for 2024. MCCSS requires that each Consolidated Municipal Service Manager complete an Ontario Works Service Plan that outlines the strategic plan for service delivery and the achievement of programme outcomes.

2024 is the first year of a new 4-year planning cycle which includes revised service planning guidelines, and a requirement to complete more structured risk management and outcomes monitoring documentation. An addendum to the initial service plan will be required in the second year of the cycle. Once reviewed and approved by MCCSS, these documents form the basis of our service contract with the province. The County's service planning documentation submission met the March 1st, 2024, deadline to MCCSS for their consideration and we anticipate completion of the service contracting process in May 2024.

With the implementation of Employment Services Transformation (EST) in January of this year, many of the historic provincial expectations related to employment activities and outcomes are no longer in place. Instead, MCCSS has set new performance outcomes and targets for all EST sites, including our service delivery area.

2024 Service Plan Highlights:

The 2024 Ontario Works Service Plan marks a key change in the delivery of Ontario Works supports. While Ontario Works remains an employment-focused programme, it is no longer responsible for the direct delivery of employment and training supports to Ontario Works recipients. These services are now being offered through Employment Ontario and Ontario Works recipients will be referred to Employment Ontario to participate in employment assistance activities as a condition of eligibility. Ontario Works will continue to be responsible for delivering case management services that focus on connecting recipients to life-stability and pre-employment supports and services. This includes supporting clients in achieving their goals related to health, housing and basic skill building that will prepare and enable them to work and participate in Employment Ontario services.

The 2024 Service Plan establishes targets in accordance with direction from MCCSS, as well as our strategies to achieve these targets. In addition, the Service Plan includes important information about our current caseload as well as how we are structured to deliver effective, timely and integrated services to residents of Wellington-Guelph.

The four new performance outcomes and targets established by MCCSS are outlined below:

2024 Ontario Works Performance Outcome	Percentage of Caseload
Ontario Works adults and ODSP non-disabled adults with participation requirements have an Action Plan	100%
Ontario Works adults and ODSP non-disabled adults with participation requirements are referred to Employment Ontario	30%
Ontario Works cases exit to employment	14%
Cases that exit Ontario Works do not return to the programme within one year	35%

The Service Plan submission also includes the completion of the following two provincial templates:

- Performance Outcomes Risk Assessment Template
- Privacy Risk Assessment and Privacy Maturity Self-Reporting Tool

In the completion of the above assessments, there were no high-risk items identified and therefore, no mitigation strategies are required to be submitted to MCCSS as part of our Service Plan submission.

The province is waiving potential financial recoveries for underachievement of outcomes for the 2024 contract year as lessons learned from this first year of the new EST 4-year cycle will help inform the full roll-out of service planning enhancements targeted for 2025.

Priorities in this contract year include managing the transition to Integrated Employment Services, supporting staff in completing client assessments and referrals, and working with Employment Ontario and other community partners on joint case management. The 2024 Service Plan outlines how we plan to manage these priorities, with a focus on staff training, policy and process development, continued management oversight of caseloads and collaborative relationships with community partners.

Financial Implications:

The 2024 Ontario Works Service Plan is accompanied by an annual budget submission. The province continues to cap available Ontario Works administrative funding at 2018 levels and this was reflected in the approved 2024 County Budget and Ten-Year Plan and the 2024 Ontario Works budget submission to MCCSS.

Attachment: Ontario Works Service Plan – County of Wellington CMSM, 2024.

Recommendation:

That the report, 2024 Ontario Works Service Plan Submission, be received for information.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stuart B', written in a cursive style.

Stuart Beumer
Director of Ontario Works