

Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) Employment Services Transformation (EST) Key Messages

Date to be shared: February 14, 2020

Purpose: To provide high-level overall messaging for sharing with ODSP-ES Providers

Background

- In February 2019, the government announced the transformation of employment services that mean changes to some elements of the social assistance system, specifically the transfer of employment services to the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development (MLTSD).
- The new model will integrate social assistance employment services into Employment Ontario to help the province's most vulnerable, including those with disabilities, break free of the poverty cycle.
- By modernizing the delivery of employment services, we will help job seekers find and keep good jobs and help employers recruit the skilled workers they need.
- Service System Managers are being introduced in three areas of the province first (Peel, Hamilton-Niagara, Muskoka-Kawartha), so that best practices and lessons learned can be applied and rolled out across the province over the next several years.

Key Messages

- The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services is working with the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development to create a stronger employment services system by introducing Service System Managers (SSMs) to plan and deliver services that meet the needs of their local economy.
- As we transition to a new delivery model in parts of the province, we are working to minimize disruptions for clients, and keep affected parties involved in and informed of changes as they take place.
- The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services is working closely with municipalities within the prototype areas to develop and implement a transition plan.
- The hard work and expertise of service delivery partners in communities across the province is as important as ever. Both job seekers and employers will continue to depend on service providers to help them succeed under the new model.
- The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services and the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development remain committed to ensuring that the new model meets the needs of persons with disabilities.
- The changes to employment service delivery will not affect First Nations Ontario Works Delivery partners at this time. The government will consult with First

Nations Ontario Works delivery partners on the future design of employment services in First Nations communities.

- The selection process for SSMs, led by the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development, was a fair and competitive process that was open to any public, not-for-profit and private sector organization and adhered to the principles of fairness and transparency.

1. What changes are happening to social assistance?

Employment programs for Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) will be integrated into Employment Ontario to create one efficient, cost-effective system that's easy to use, helps all job seekers and better supports employers.

The new system will be implemented initially in three prototype regions in Ontario so lessons learned may be applied and rolled out across the province gradually. The three regions are Peel, Hamilton-Niagara and Muskoka-Kawartha.

Through a new, competitive process, the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development has selected Service System Managers (SSMs) that will plan and deliver services that meet the needs of those local economies. During the transition period, the SSMs will start establishing themselves in their regions but cannot make changes to the employment service provider network or programs.

As the new system is implemented in the prototype regions, the government will continue to work with service delivery partners across the province to plan and deliver stronger, locally-focused employment and social assistance services that help more people find and keep jobs.

2. How are the changes being implemented in the three prototype regions?

The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services will undertake a phased approach to transformation that will ensure service continuity and client access as roles and responsibilities shift during the transition from government oversight of service providers to SSM oversight.

Phase I – Planning (February 2020 – March 2020)

This phase is intended to allow SSMs to establish themselves within their prototype region and familiarize themselves with the existing employment service provider network.

Phase II – Transition (April 2020 – September 2020)

During this phase, responsibility for managing the delivery of Employment Ontario and ODSP employment services will be transferred to SSMs. However, SSMs will not be able to make changes to the service provider network or program during this period.

Phase III – Integrated ES Delivery (begins on October 1, 2020)

In this phase, responsibility of employment services for Ontario Works recipients will be transferred to SSMs. During this phase, SSMs will be permitted to make changes to the service provider network and will be fully responsible for the planning, design and delivery of in-scope employment services within their prototype region.

3. How will ODSP clients receiving employment supports in the prototype regions be impacted?

During the transition period (April 1, 2020 to October 1, 2020), clients will not experience any changes to how they access employment services and supports.

There will be minimal changes to the way in which clients access services in the prototype areas during this time. There may be limited piloting of new assessment and referral approaches to ensure clients get the right support at the right time. ODSP clients will continue to voluntarily seek employment supports and will be provided with information on available employment providers. Clients will continue to take individual initiative to contact employment providers. Non-disabled adult family members will continue to be referred to the relevant Ontario Works site as is current practice.

During the transition period, SSMs will establish a presence in their prototype region and familiarize themselves with the existing employment service provider network to help ensure that all programs and services continue to operate seamlessly and with minimal disruption for clients.

The new SSMs may begin to make changes to the service provider network beginning October 1, 2020. Regular, timely communications will help people understand and prepare for any changes.

Clients outside of the prototype areas will also not experience any changes.

4. How will ODSP Employment Supports (ES) service providers in the prototype communities be impacted?

The SSM and the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development will not be making changes to the ODSP Service Provider network during the transition period (April 1, 2020 to October 1, 2020). ODSP ES service providers will be offered six-month contracts with the Service System Manager (SSM) for the provision of employment services to individuals with disabilities during this time.

The new SSMs may begin to make changes to the service provider network and program beginning October 1, 2020.

The ministry will provide additional details on the transition contracts to the impacted service providers in the prototype communities.

5. How will impacted recipients be informed of this change?

There is no immediate change for Ontario Disability Support Program clients.

The SSMs will start establishing themselves in their regions but cannot make changes to the employment service provider network or programs until October 1, 2020. Some

clients in the prototype areas may experience changes in the provision of employment services at that time.

The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services is planning a phased-communications approach for this change. Recipients will be notified directly if affected.

6. How will the role of the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services and the current social assistance model change in the prototype regions?

During this transition period, clients will not experience changes to how they access their employment services and supports. The SSMs will start establishing themselves in their regions but cannot make changes to the employment service provider network or programs until October 1, 2020.

After October 1, 2020, the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services will continue to deliver ODSP income support, benefits and life stabilization supports; and responsibility for Employment Services will fall to MLTSD and the SSM.

7. Which MCCSS ODSP offices are located in the prototype communities?

The following table includes a list of ODSP offices in the prototype areas:

Hamilton-Niagara	Muskoka-Kawarthas	Peel
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• St. Catharines• Brantford• Chatham• Hamilton	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bracebridge• Lindsay• Peterborough	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mississauga• Brampton

8. Why is the government making this change?

Ontario's employment and training programs are critical to building the skilled workforce that keeps [Ontario open for business](#). However, current employment services are not delivering results and often don't provide people looking for a job with a clear path to employment.

We want to help job seekers get the support they need to find meaningful employment by focusing on the local needs of employers, communities and workers.

9. What is the role of the Ministry of Children Community and Social Services in this new service delivery model?

Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program will be a key part of the Employment Ontario system with respect to client referrals, integrated case management and ongoing service coordination. These programs will work collaboratively to address mutual clients' needs in achieving their employment goals.

The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) will maintain responsibility for social assistance and for providing life stabilization supports (e.g., housing, mental health, addiction counselling, domestic violence supports, etc.) to clients.

The government will gradually implement the changes to Ontario's employment services. As more information becomes known and decisions are made, we will ensure that all employees are updated.

10. What is the role of the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development supporting people on social assistance?

MLTSD is supporting people on social assistance by integrating Ontario Works – Employment Assistance and Ontario Disability Support Program – Employment Supports into Employment Ontario. By integrating and modernizing the delivery of employment services, they can help job seekers – including those with disabilities and on social assistance – find employment in good jobs and help employers get the workers they need to grow their businesses.

11. How will these changes impact service providers outside of the prototype regions?

Outside of the prototype regions, there are no changes to the delivery of employment services at this point. The government will continue to work with service delivery partners across the province to plan and deliver stronger, locally-focused employment and social assistance services that help more people find and keep jobs.

12. Will the SSMs be ready to manage employment services in the prototype regions by April 1, 2020?

The SSMs will immediately establish themselves within their prototype region and familiarize themselves with the employment service provider network so they will be ready to effectively manage employment services as of April 1, 2020.

The government will continue to work with service providers in the prototype regions throughout the phased approach to transformation to ensure service continuity and client access as roles and responsibilities shift to service system manager oversight.

13. What training will be provided to ODSP-ES service providers and social assistance service delivery partners in the three prototype regions to ensure we are able to work effectively together?

Changes are being phased in throughout the transition period between April 2020 and October 1, 2020. For example, the new Common Assessment Tool, which will support effective and consistent client intake and service planning, will be available for training

and use in the three prototype regions as of April 1, 2020. However, it will not be mandatory until October 1, 2020.

Staff at both the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development and the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services are working closely together to keep service providers and delivery partners informed and ready for changes as they take effect.

14. What happens to the existing employment service providers? Will my location close? Will people lose their jobs at service provider locations?

Outside of the prototype regions, the government will continue to work with service delivery partners to plan and deliver stronger, locally-focused employment and social assistance services that help more people find and keep jobs.

Within the prototype areas, no changes will be made to the employment service provider network at this time. However, responsibility for managing Employment Ontario and ODSP employment services service delivery will be transferred to the SSMs on April 1, 2020, so your reporting relationship will change at that point.

ODSP ES service providers will enter into six-month contracts with the SSM, effective April 1, 2020 to September 30, 2020, for the delivery of employment services. The contract will be between the service provider and the SSM (not the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services).

Once SSMs are fully responsible for the planning, design and delivery of in-scope employment services on October 1, 2020, there could be impacts to service providers and service locations in the three prototype regions. While changes can be difficult, they are intended to support improvement and drive innovation, and ultimately, to provide better services to the people of Ontario.

We will gradually implement the changes to Ontario's employment services, starting with three prototype regions, and learn from this implementation along the way. Full implementation will be phased-in over the next several years, with regular communications to help people understand and prepare for any changes.

15. Will there be impacts to current ODSP-ES programming because of these changes?

In April 2020, there will be no changes to the ODSP employment services delivered to support individuals with disabilities during the transition period (April 2020 to end of September 2020) under the new contracts with the SSMs. In October 2020, there could be impacts to the services and supports as the SSM establishes their programming service delivery framework.

A new outcomes-based, local service system management model will ensure we have more effective and responsive employment services that achieve better results for job seekers and employers.

16. Will the SSMs reduce funding?

There will be no changes to the service provider network in the transition period between April 1, 2020 and September 30, 2020. The SSMs can make changes to the service delivery network as of October 1, 2020. Service providers will be given sufficient notice of any upcoming changes, as appropriate.

The SSM's role includes determining many aspects of service delivery, including service provider funding. Changes introduced by SSMs will be informed by a transparent and evidence-based process that recognizes the importance of local delivery partners and ensures a diverse local network of service providers able to achieve outcomes for a wide range of clients.

The government will collaborate with the SSMs throughout the prototype period to ensure the ongoing evolution of the new system and continued access and availability of services to clients.

The responsibilities of the SSMs with respect to the Service Provider Network in their catchments will vary throughout the phases of transformation:

- During the Planning Period (January 1 to March 31, 2020), SSMs will not be responsible for managing agreements for Service Providers delivering any EO or ODSP-ES services within the catchment area.
- During the Transition Period (April 2020 to September 2020) responsibility for managing EO and ODSP employment supports service delivery will be transferred to the SSMs. However, SSMs will not be able to make changes to the Service Provider Network during this period, and SSMs must flow funds to Service Providers to support service delivery during this period.
- During the Integrated Employment Services Delivery Period (beginning October 1, 2020), the SSM will be permitted to make changes to the Service Provider network, and will be fully responsible for the planning, design, and delivery of in-scope employment services, including managing subcontracts with Service Providers, within the defined Catchment Area, will be a change in the funding model.
 - SSMs are required to create and submit to the ministry an Integrated ES Delivery Plan which must include details for contracting with Service Providers.
 - SSMs will be required to monitor and manage the overall health and capacity of their service delivery footprint.

Decisions on retention funding have not yet been made.

Changes to the ODSP-ES delivery model in the prototype areas are not applicable to non-social assistance clients.

17. Will any ODSP-ES Service Providers receive retention funding? How will these decisions be made?

During the transition period in the prototype areas, transition agreements will be established between ODSP ES providers and the SSM. These agreements will be expenditure based and will not involve the milestone payments that were a key component of previous ODSP ES agreements.

18. I work for a service provider in one of the prototype regions. Will the new SSM be able to tell us how to run our organization?

The SSM's role is to provide guidance, tools, set targets and monitor service delivery sites, much as the ministries do today. The SSM will not tell organizations how they should run their organizations but may provide advice to help service providers reach their client service outcomes.

19. Will there be a mechanism for resolving any potential disputes between service providers and their SSM?

The ministry is developing processes and a partnership table to resolve conflicts that may arise and to ensure stable joint governance and decision making between the government and service system managers.

The ministry will ensure there are mechanisms for continuous engagement with the service system managers and regular engagement with service providers during the prototype period.

20. How will these changes impact people with disabilities within the prototype regions who are seeking employment supports?

The government is committed to providing effective employment services to all job seekers and employers, and that includes delivering services to people with disabilities.

Service System Managers will be required to have the capacity to offer specialized services to support the varied needs of people with disabilities in achieving positive employment outcomes. The Ministry of Labour, Training, and Skills Development will be consulting with persons with disabilities and has structured payments to provide more compensation to Service System Managers for positive outcomes for clients with complex barriers to employment.

The Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development will work closely with other provincial ministries and Service System Managers to ensure that services that meet the varied needs of people with disabilities are available in the new employment system, both in the prototype phase and as part of province-wide implementation.