



Committee of the Whole Report

Report Number: SOC2022-001
Meeting Date: January 11, 2022
Title: Social Services 2021 Service Plan
Author and Title: Janine Mitchell, Human Services Manager

Recommendation(s):

That Report SOC2022-001, **Social Services 2021 Service Plan**, be received; and

That the 2021 Social Services Plan, Appendix A to Report SOC2022-001, be endorsed; and

That this recommendation be brought forward to Council for consideration at the next Regular Council Meeting.

Department Head: _____

Financial/Legal/HR/Other: _____

Chief Administrative Officer: _____

Background:

The completion of a two-year Ontario Works Service Plan is a business plan objective of the Social Services Division and is a requirement of the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS). With Employment Services Transformation (EST) and the impact of COVID-19, the Ministry adjusted service plan requirements, and as an EST prototype community we are required to submit a service plan for 2021 and will be required to submit a two-year plan in 2022.

As Ministry approved plans become the Service Description of the Service Contract with Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs) the submission of a 2021 plan was required even though the year had mostly passed by the date of submission.

All Ontario Works delivery partners share the same provincial vision and mandate.

Vision

To create an efficient, effective and streamlined social services system that focuses on people, providing them with a range of services and supports to respond to their unique needs and address barriers to success so they can move towards employment and independence.

Mandate

To provide life stabilization and financial assistance to people in financial need. The Ontario Works program:

- Recognizes individual responsibility and promotes self-reliance through participation in life stabilization activities
- serves people needing assistance by Providing financial assistance to those most in need while they meet obligations to become and stay employed
- Is accountable to the taxpayers of Ontario.

As part of the 2021 Service Plan, CMSMs are required to articulate how activities will be undertaken to address the following Ministry priorities:

1. Recovery and Renewal

- **Accelerated digital delivery solutions**, including the launch of a new and easy-to-use Social Assistance (SA) Digital Application and expansion of the MyBenefits digital platform to improve access for people receiving social

assistance and allow two-way digital messaging between clients and caseworkers.

- **Centralized and automated delivery**, beginning with centralized intake pilots across several municipalities that reduce paperwork, giving caseworkers more time to support clients through crisis and helping them get back to work.
- **Risk-based eligibility review**, to be developed alongside the centralized intake pilots, that uses provincial, federal and third-party sources to make financial assistance processing faster, while strengthening program integrity.
- **Access to employment and training**, partnering with the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development to support people to get back to work, including people with disabilities who have been particularly hard hit by job losses during the COVID-19 outbreak.
- **Collaborating with municipal partners**, by co-designing a renewed SA operating model following work with municipalities to design a new SA transformation vision; and engaging with key stakeholders, including staff, provincial bargaining agents and clients.

2. Improving Employment Outcomes

For the interim, while a SA performance management framework is being developed EST Ontario Works delivery partners will use the interim performance metric as outcomes for service planning.

3. Develop and Maintain Local Community Service Partnerships

Build on and strengthen the range of supports available to Ontario Works clients, including long-term recipients of SA and marginalized or disadvantaged groups across service sectors, including health, developmental services, housing and child-care.

4. Strengthen Program Accountability

The ministry continues to refine program controls to support greater delivery and financial accountability. Delivery partners will need to consider how these controls impact their business processes and delivery approaches when constructing their service plans. Key elements include:

- Compliance with expectations related to completing the Eligibility Verification Process
- Participation in current, and prospective, Oversight Intelligence activities aimed at preventing and reducing financial losses
- Documentation requirements for Ontario Works benefits that are managed outside of the Social Assistance Management System (SAMS)

The Business Plan was presented and received by the Joint Social and Housing Services Advisory Committee on December 1, 2021.

Rationale:

The 2021 Service Plan (Appendix A) has been developed to describe the context in which local services will be delivered to meet the priorities as defined by the Ministry. The actual program delivery at the local level continues to adapt to meet the changes as a result of social assistance modernization, recovery and renewal, and to meet local needs. Funding decisions and allocations are determined through the annual budget process or as required throughout the year by Council if there are provincial program changes.

The programs and services described in the Service Plan primarily highlight caseload characteristics and life stabilization strategies and influences.

Our current funding allocation continues to be under the Employment Assistance funding model. The province is working on a new funding model that will apply to all municipalities sometime in 2023. Revised service outcomes based on Life Stabilization measures for EST Prototype sites have been established by the province and data to support this work continues to be developed and updated. At this time, not all service outcomes are able to be measured.

Our service outcome performance for 2021 and 2022 have been determined to the best of staff's ability with the information currently available. Under performance in any of the service outcome areas will not result in a recovery of funding for 2021.

The business plan was completed based on information known at the time. As the Ministry progresses with system transformation and social assistance modernization, the plan will be adjusted and updated to maintain service standards within the revised delivery system model.

Alignment to Strategic Priorities:

The Social Services Service Plan relates directly to the Exceptional Quality of Life and Vibrant and Growing Economy Priorities through the delivery of the Ontario Works Program, supporting life stabilization and providing supports to employment.

Financial/Operation Impacts:

The Service Plan does not include specific financial decisions related to Ontario Works.

Consultations:

Program Supervisor, Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services
Director, Human Services
Manager, Human Services (Housing)
Program Supervisor, Human Services
Data Analysis Coordinator, Human Services

Attachments:

Appendix A – 2021 Service Plan



Kawartha Lakes
Service Plan 2021.doc

Department Head email: rsutherland@kawarthalakes.ca

Department Head: Rod Sutherland