



Results-based Plan Briefing Book 2009-10

Ministry of Community and Social Services

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Ministry of Community and Social Services Results-based Plan Briefing Book 2009-10

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Ministry of Community and Social Services Results-based Plan Briefing Book 2009-10

RESULTS-BASED PLAN 2009-10

MINISTRY OVERVIEW

Ministry Vision, Mission/Mandate, Key Priorities & Results

The [Ministry of Community and Social Services](#) helps Ontario families and individuals in need. Whether it is providing support during temporary financial difficulties, a safe haven away from violence in the home, or community homes for people with a developmental disability, the ministry's programs work to remove obstacles that stand in the way of opportunity or that limit Ontarians' ability to participate in their communities.

The ministry's key areas of responsibility include:

- Income and employment assistance for people in need and individuals with a disability;
- Community services, such as women's shelters and homelessness programs;
- Supports and services for adults with a developmental disability;
- Intervenor and Interpreter services for adults who are deaf and deafblind;
- Improving accessibility for all Ontarians;
- Collecting and distributing child and spousal support payments; and
- Disclosing adoption information.

The ministry's social assistance programs provide income and employment support to families and individuals in temporary financial need and to people with a disability. Helping people find and keep employment so that they can move to financial independence is a key to the success of Ontario's social assistance programs.

Community services include domestic violence prevention programs and supports for women and children, services for people who are deaf or deafblind, and support for people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. In addition to supporting healthy Aboriginal communities through the Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Strategy, the ministry supports the provision of personal information to adopted adults and birth parents while providing proper safeguards.

The ministry funds community services for adults with a developmental disability, including residential living and day programs, and programs that help young people with a developmental disability transition to life in their communities following high school.

Intervenor and Interpreter services provide communications supports to adults who are deaf and deafblind to enable them to participate fully in their home communities.

Through the Family Responsibility Office, the ministry enforces court-ordered child and spousal support orders to help Ontario families get the money they are entitled to.

The Accessibility Directorate of Ontario works with people with disabilities, government and the public and private sector to develop accessibility standards and to promote accessibility awareness throughout Ontario.

These programs and services strengthen Ontario's people and communities by helping people recover from hardship, regain control of their lives and move to self-sufficiency.

INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

Ontario's poverty reduction strategy, announced December 4, 2008, aims to create more opportunities for people with low income. In the strategy, the government announced a number of changes to social assistance to provide people with low income the support they need to reach their education and employment goals.

The changes included:

- Fully exempting earnings from employment or a training program as income and assets for full-time, post secondary students on social assistance, beginning in April/May 2009.
- Extending the eligibility for the Up-front Child Care Benefit to recipients that have to pay in advance for child care costs and require it to keep their employment or continue in employment assistance activities such as job-specific skills training; and
- Extending the time clients have to ask for an Internal Review to 30 from 10 days from the time they receive the decision letter, if they disagree with a decision made about their assistance.

The government also announced a review of social assistance. The goal of the review is to remove barriers and increase opportunity – focusing on people trying to move into employment from social assistance. The review will seek to better align social assistance with other key programs and initiatives, better communicate program rules and ensure that programs as a collective work to achieve the aims of increasing opportunity for the individual.

The ministry will also work on implementing the outcomes of the Provincial-Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review report "Facing the Future Together" as they relate to social assistance. This includes uploading the cost of Ontario Works income and employment assistance starting in January 2010, and working with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and the City of Toronto to develop principles for revising the approach to funding Ontario Works administration and opportunities to simplify and strengthen accountability. As well, the ministry will work with the Ministries of Training, Colleges and Universities, and Citizenship and Immigration, AMO and the City of Toronto to simplify and modernize delivery of employment-related supports by better integrating Ontario Works, Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), and Employment Ontario employment services planning to improve employment outcomes for clients and to make better use of resources.

The 2009 Ontario Budget announced that the phase-in of the Ontario Child Benefit (OCB) would be accelerated by two years, providing low- and moderate-income families with up to \$1,100 annually by July 2011. To support this increase, the ministry will be making adjustments to social assistance benefits for children to further consolidate them within the OCB.

The budget also announced a two per cent increase to social assistance. The increase provides social assistance recipients with an additional \$36 million of income support in 2008-09 and an additional \$87 million in 2009-10.

In 2009-10, modernizing the delivery of social assistance programs to improve customer service will be a priority. The ministry worked with the City of Toronto and the Algoma District Social Services Administration Board to pilot an online application for Ontario Works. The pilot began in November 2008 and is intended to provide another avenue for prospective clients to access Ontario Works, and to streamline and simplify the application process. The ministry will be using this pilot to determine whether an online application can be used province-wide. The ministry also launched two new tools on its website: an eligibility estimator that allows people to anonymously determine whether they may be eligible to receive assistance, and an office locator that assists people in locating the nearest Ontario Works or ODSP office. In addition, the ministry is continuing with the next phase of enhancing the ODSP website to provide clear program information in plain language.

The ministry has developed an implementation plan to expand service delivery in First Nations, which includes targeted initiatives to enhance the capacity of First Nation Ontario Works Administrators to deliver Ontario Works effectively. In 2009-10, the ministry will continue to move forward with its implementation plan for First Nations, including providing Administrators with targeted professional development and training opportunities.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

[Community services](#) are delivered by local and provincial agencies, municipalities and First Nations. These services help people who are deaf or deafblind, Aboriginal people, women and their children escaping violence, and people who are homeless or at risk of losing their home. The ministry has also passed new adoption information disclosure legislation, the *Access to Adoption Records Act, 2008* (AARA) that will bring greater openness to Ontario's adoption information system, while providing proper safeguards.

Supporting People who are Deaf or Deafblind

The ministry funds non-profit agencies to provide interpreter services for people who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing, and intervenor services for people who are deafblind.

[Interpreter and intervenor services](#) help people live with greater independence.

In 2009-10, the ministry is continuing to transform these services, including developing strategies to centralize access to services and an assessment tool to determine eligibility for intervenor services. Strategies will also be developed to address the chronic shortage of quality intervenors.

Investing in Stronger Aboriginal Communities

The ministry supports the [Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Strategy](#) (AHWS), a partnership between Ontario and 14 Aboriginal provincial/territorial organizations and independent First Nations.

The strategy's mandate is to support family healing, reduce family violence, improve Aboriginal health, promote networking, and facilitate community development and integration.

It was launched in 1994 and was renewed for two subsequent five-year terms in 1999 and 2004. The current AHWS Agreement is in force for a minimum of five years, until March 31, 2009. In 2009-10, the government will continue to support AHWS beyond March 2009 while discussions take place among the partners on the development of a new governance model.

The continued investments in social and health services for Aboriginal people both outside of AHWS and within the AHWS mandate contribute to improving the quality of life and economic development opportunities for Aboriginal people across Ontario.

Supporting Victims of Domestic Violence

The ministry will continue its central role in the government's \$82-million [Domestic Violence Action Plan](#). This includes funding for Ontario's [women's shelters](#) and ongoing support for [counselling and second stage housing services](#) for victims of domestic violence.

The ministry will continue to develop two women's shelters in Timmins – one for Francophone women and the other supporting non-Francophone and Aboriginal women. These shelters will further strengthen the Domestic Violence Action Plan goal of expanding community supports for abused women and their children.

Homelessness Prevention

To help people who are homeless or at risk of losing their homes, the ministry will continue to support a [range of services](#). This includes funding for emergency hostels, domiciliary hostels, homelessness prevention support services and emergency energy assistance.

In 2009-10, the ministry will continue to work closely with municipalities and others to help people obtain and retain temporary and permanent housing. The ministry is also working with municipalities that offer the domiciliary hostel program to promote compliance with provincial service guidelines.

Updating Ontario's Adoption Information Laws

The *Access to Adoption Records Act, 2008* (AARA) was passed on May 14, 2008. This legislation implements substantive changes to Ontario's [adoption information disclosure laws](#). The legislation balances greater openness with privacy protections for adopted adults and birth parents.

The AARA gives adopted adults and birth parents access to important identifying information contained in adoption orders and birth registrations. It also allows them to place a disclosure veto on their file, to stop the release of information, if the adoption order was made prior to September 1, 2008.

In 2009-10, the ministry will continue to work with the Ministry of Government Services to support the implementation of the AARA.

DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

The ministry supports [adults with a developmental disability](#) and their families. Programs and services include:

- Residential and community participation supports that help adults with a developmental disability live, work and participate in a range of community activities;
- Caregiver respite; and
- Clinical supports, including behaviour therapy and counselling.

In September 2008, the Legislature passed the first completely new developmental services legislation in 34 years. The Act contains significant changes from the previous act. When it is proclaimed and in force, people will:

- Have a single entry point to apply and access service and supports;
- Only have to provide information once through a standardized application package; and
- Have more options for managing their funding directly, provided they meet the necessary requirements, or through the agency system.

In 2009-10:

- The ministry will post for public comment draft regulations to support implementation of changes to the developmental services system as outlined in the *Services and Supports to Promote the Social Inclusion of Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act, 2008*.
- Policy guidelines will also be released in mid-2009 to support work at the community level to develop the application process within local communities, including guidelines on the needs assessment tool and how assessors will be trained.
- In 2009/10, the ministry will outline a long-term vision for the transformation of the adult developmental services in Ontario as well as key milestones for implementation.
- The ministry will release an individualized residential support guide for families and agencies that will provide information about how to create successful individualized residential supports.

The ministry is continuing to transform the way it delivers these services by expanding community living supports to coincide with the closure/decommissioning of the last three provincial facilities for adults with developmental disabilities.

The ministry worked closely with families, caregivers and agencies to provide smooth transitions to community life for residents who were living in the remaining residential facilities. All individuals had moved to community-based residential settings by March 31, 2009.

By providing adults with a developmental disability with programs and services that help them to participate in their communities, the ministry contributes to the government's efforts to build strong communities across Ontario.

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY OFFICE

The [Family Responsibility Office](#) enforces family support orders issued by the courts so that families get the money they are entitled to and can lead more financially secure and self-sufficient lives. This supports the government's priority of reducing poverty, investing in strong people and a strong economy. The office has been leading a modernization initiative to improve service, enforcement, fairness and efficiency.

In 2009-10, the ministry will continue to use the enforcement tools coming out of legislation passed in 2005, such as reporting defaulting support payors to professional bodies. Using the enforcement tools available, the Family Responsibility Office is continuing to locate defaulting parents and enforce court-ordered support payments.

The ministry is also in the middle of a project to develop technology to support a modernized business model that will allow the office to move from a reactive to a more proactive, client-based service approach.

ACCESSIBILITY DIRECTORATE OF ONTARIO

The ministry promotes accessibility and works to break down barriers that prevent Ontarians with disabilities from fully participating in the social and economic life of the province.

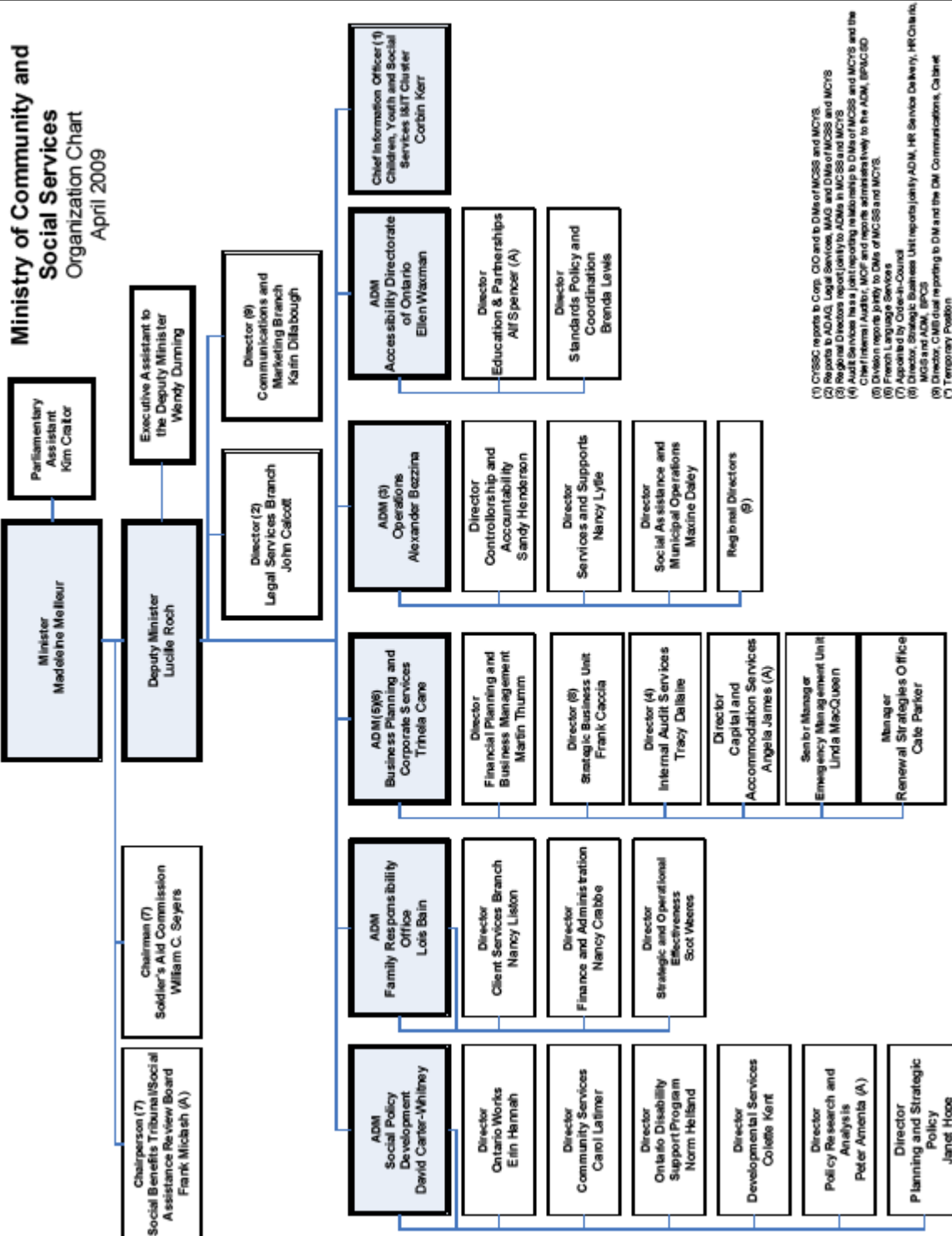
The [Accessibility Directorate of Ontario](#) will continue its work with a broad range of sectors to develop Ontario's [accessibility standards](#). The first standard developed under Ontario's landmark accessibility legislation – [accessible customer service](#) – became law in January 2008. In November 2008, the Accessible Transportation Standards Development Committee submitted the final proposed standard to the Minister. Three additional standards are currently being developed for information and communication, built environment and employment.

The ministry is continuing its strategic partnerships with organizations to promote accessibility awareness throughout Ontario. The ministry has recently launched the 2009-2010 EnAbling Change Partnerships Program, which will make a significant impact on improving accessibility for persons with disabilities and promoting compliance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*. The ministry will continue to implement its compliance assurance framework. This includes providing obligated organizations with tools and resources to assist them in meeting the requirements of the customer service standard.

By promoting accessibility and social and economic inclusion for people with disabilities, the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario supports the government's priorities of strong communities and a strong economy.

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Cost Sharing with the Federal Government

The Ministry of Community and Social Services shares costs for social assistance and other social services programs with the federal government, municipalities, First Nations and other public sector organizations.

Federal Reimbursements

Effective April 1, 1996, CAP and EPF have been replaced with a single block transfer fund, the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST), which provides provinces with funding for health, post-secondary education, social assistance programs and other social services. The CHST has been further split on Canada Health Transfer (CHT) and Canada Social Transfer (CST) as of April, 2004.

Independent of block funding received by the province under the CHT and CST, the ministry receives federal funding under the 1965 Indian Welfare Agreement and the Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities, for selected programs. For the 2009-10 fiscal year, federal funding under this agreements is:

Cost Sharing with the Federal Government

	<u>CASH</u>	<u>PSAB</u>
1965 Indian Welfare Agreement		
Ontario Works	\$72,455,000	\$73,108,000
Subtotal	<u>\$72,455,000</u>	<u>\$73,108,000</u>
Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities		
Employment Services and Supports	\$25,706,000	\$25,706,000
Developmental Services	\$12,500,000	\$12,500,000
Subtotal	<u>\$38,206,000</u>	<u>\$38,206,000</u>
Total	\$110,661,000	\$111,314,000

Ministry of Community and Social Services

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Statutes Administered by the Ministry of Community and Social Services

- *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, S.O. 2005, c. 11
- *Charitable Institutions Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. C.9
Except for the administration of all powers and duties pertaining to
 - a) An approved charitable home for the aged;
 - b) A building or part of a building that, when approved under section 3 of the Act, will be an approved charitable home for the aged;
 - c) An approved corporation that maintains and operates an approved charitable home for the aged; and
 - d) A corporation that intends to maintain and operate a charitable institution that, when approved under section 3, will be an approved charitable home for the aged.
- *Child and Family Services Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. C.11
Sections 162 – 165 inclusive.
- *Deaf-Blind Awareness Month Act, 2000*, S.O. 2000, c.34
- *Developmental Services Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. D.11
Except for the administration of all powers and duties in so far as they relate to the provision of Long-Term Care Programs and Services.
- *District Social Services Administration Boards Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. D.15
- *Family Benefits Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. F.2
- *Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act, 1996*, S.O. 1996, c. 31
- *Indian Welfare Services Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. I.4
- *Ministry of Community and Social Services Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.20
In so far as it relates to activities and programs respecting community and social services and except for sections 11.1 and 12 in so far as those sections relate to Long-Term Care Programs and Services.
- *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001*, S.O. 2001, c. 32
- *Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997*, S.O. 1997, c. 25, Schedule B
- *Ontario Works Act, 1997*, S.O. 1997, c. 25, Schedule A
- *Services and Supports to Promote the Social Inclusion of Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act, 2008*, S.O. 2008, c.14 (Note: This Act has not been proclaimed)
- *Social Work and Social Service Work Act, 1998*, S.O. 1998, c. 31
- *Soldiers' Aid Commission Act*, R.S.O. 1960, c. 377

Ministry of Community and Social Services
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Agencies, Boards and Commissions

	2009-10 Estimates \$	2008-09 Interim Actuals \$	2007-08 Actuals \$
Social Benefits Tribunal/Social Assistance Review Board*	7,381,300	7,793,820	6,896,617
Soldiers' Aid Commission	253,200	253,200	253,200

* **The Social Benefits Tribunal (SBT)** hears appeals of decisions made under the *Ontario Works Act, 1997*, and the *Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997*. The Tribunal was established in June 1998. The Chair, Vice Chairs and Members are appointed by Order-In-Council and are remunerated per Government Schedule. The administrative side of the Tribunal are OPS.

The Social Assistance Review Board (SARB) hears appeals of decisions made under the *Family Benefits Act (FBA)*, the *General Welfare Assistance Act*, and the *Vocational Rehabilitation Services Act*. SARB will cease to exist when appeals and subsequent court appeals have been decided.

The Soldiers' Aid Commission accepts applications for financial assistance on behalf of veterans and/or their dependants from the Royal Canadian Legion, Department of Veterans Affairs, the Air Force and Naval Benevolent Funds.

Department of Veterans offices throughout Ontario screen the appropriateness of the applications and make referrals to the Commission.

The Chairperson and Commissioners are appointed by Order-In-Council. By law, Commissioners serve without remuneration but may claim out of pocket expenses.

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Ministry Planned Expenditures 2009-10

	Ministry Planned Expenditures 2009-10 (\$M)
Operating	8,331
Capital	13
BPS Consolidation	(17)

TABLE 2: Ministry Planned Expenditures by Program Name 2009-10
**Ministry of Community and
Social Services***

Operating \$8,331 million
Capital \$13 million

**Ministry
Administration
Services**

Operating \$38 million

Adults' Services

Operating \$8,293 million
Capital \$13 million

* Broader Public Sector Consolidation is reported by Ministry total and not by program.

Ministry of Community and Social Services
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Mandate

The mandate of the Ministry of Community and Social Services is to promote vital and inclusive Ontario communities by delivering and funding services that help people achieve their potential, build resilience, and improve their quality of life.

Overall Summary (Operating and Capital)

Description	2009-10 Estimates \$	Change from 2008-09 Estimates		2008-09 Estimates* \$	2008-09 Interim Actuals* \$	2007-08 Actuals* \$
		\$	%			
<u>OPERATING AND CAPITAL EXPENSE</u>						
Ministry Administration	38,132,800	2,136,500	5.9%	35,996,300	35,468,919	33,916,197
Adults' Services	8,285,037,100	603,565,400	7.9%	7,681,471,700	7,952,568,791	7,507,452,672
Total Including Special Warrants	8,323,169,900	605,701,900	7.8%	7,717,468,000	7,988,037,710	7,541,368,869
Less: Special Warrants	0	0	-	0	0	0
Total Operating and Capital to be Voted	8,323,169,900	605,701,900	7.8%	7,717,468,000	7,988,037,710	7,541,368,869
Special Warrants	0	0	-	0	0	0
Statutory Appropriations	20,714,314	3,474	0.0%	20,710,840	25,481,635	18,208,737
Total Ministry Operating and Capital	8,343,884,214	605,705,374	7.8%	7,738,178,840	8,013,519,344	7,559,577,606
Consolidation	(16,600,000)	(2,600,000)	18.6%	(14,000,000)	(19,223,049)	(15,534,274)
Total Ministry Operating and Capital including Consolidation	8,327,284,214	603,105,374	7.8%	7,724,178,840	7,994,296,295	7,544,043,332

Assets

Description	2009-10 Estimates \$	Change from 2008-09 Estimates		2008-09 Estimates \$	2008-09 Interim Actuals \$	2007-08 Actuals \$
		\$	%			
<u>OPERATING AND CAPITAL ASSETS</u>						
Adults' Services	38,915,200	13,683,000	54.2%	25,232,200	33,108,000	22,626,600
Total Ministry Assets	38,915,200	13,683,000	54.2%	25,232,200	33,108,000	22,626,600
Less: Special Warrants	0	0	-	0	0	0
Total Assets to be Voted	38,915,200	13,683,000	54.2%	25,232,200	33,108,000	22,626,600

* Historical data has been restated to reflect the transfer of programs to and from other ministries, and for disentanglement of services.

Note: Commencing in 2009-10, the Province's minor Tangible Capital Assets are capitalized on the prospective basis. Direct comparison between 2009-10 and earlier years may not be meaningful.



APPENDIX I: Annual Report 2008-09

Ministry of Community and Social Services

ANNUAL REPORT 2008-09

INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

The ministry provides income assistance to families and individuals in need. Employment supports complement this by helping social assistance recipients find and keep sustainable employment and become financially independent.

[Ontario Works](#) provides income and employment assistance for people in temporary financial need. The [Ontario Disability Support Program](#) (ODSP) provides income support for people with disabilities in financial need and employment supports for those with disabilities who can and want to work.

In 2008-09, the ministry finished implementing an outcome-based funding framework for Ontario Works employment assistance. The framework lets Ontario Works delivery agents focus investments in the employment-related strategies that work best for their community and clients.

The ministry also continued the next phase of the ODSP Employment Supports (ES) outcome-based funding framework which, between March 2007 and March 2008, resulted in an increase of approximately 10 per cent in ES clients who started in jobs and reached the 13 week milestone. Changes already made to ODSP complemented this funding framework. The changes included Employment and Training Start-Up Benefit, the Transitional Health Benefit and the Employment Transition benefit, as well as rules that make it easier for recipients to return to the ODSP if their job does not work out.

The ministry moved to make it possible for social assistance recipients to take advantage of federal Registered Disability Savings Plans (RDSPs). The ministry made changes to Ontario's social assistance rules to make sure that both RDSP assets and withdrawals are fully exempt. This means:

- RDSP contributions do not impact eligibility for social assistance; and
- People on social assistance can take money out of an RDSP without affecting their social assistance payments.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

In 2007-08, the ministry committed an additional \$20 million over the next three years to bolster community social services organizations. This funding boost allows community social services organizations to provide:

- Shelters and counselling for women and their children fleeing domestic violence;
- Interpreters and intervenors for people who are deaf or deafblind; and
- Homelessness prevention program and hostels for hard-to-house people.

ANNUAL REPORT 2008-09

Investing in Stronger Aboriginal Communities

The ministry continued its support for the [Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Strategy](#) (AHWS), a partnership between the province and 14 Aboriginal provincial/territorial organizations and independent First Nations. The ministry – along with the ministries of Health and Long-Term Care and Aboriginal Affairs, plus the Ontario Women's Directorate – provides funding for the Strategy. The Ministry of Children and Youth Services funds [Aboriginal Healthy Babies, Healthy Children](#), which has been part of the Strategy since 2000.

AHWS has created more than 460 community-based health/healing programs, generated more than 650 jobs, and provided annual training for more than 1,000 staff in health and social services on- and off-reserve. AHWS has established a network of 10 Aboriginal health access centres, six healing lodges, seven family shelters, two family violence healing programs, two outpatient hostels, and crisis intervention teams in 47 northern communities.

In 2008-09, the government and Aboriginal partners initiated a process for renewal of AHWS.

Preventing and Addressing Homelessness

To assist people who are facing a housing crisis, the ministry continued to fund a [range of homelessness services](#). This included funding for emergency hostels, domiciliary hostels, emergency energy assistance, and support services that allow people to stay in their homes.

Homelessness prevention programs include supports for people who are hard-to-house. The ministry funds approximately 280 domiciliary hostels that provide housing for about 4,700 people with mental health issues, addiction issues, developmental disabilities, or those who are elderly. In 2008-09, the ministry increased the maximum per diem that the province cost-shares with municipalities to offset rising costs. The ministry also continued to support municipalities to implement and monitor the provincial service guidelines that were introduced last year. In addition, the ministry co-funded a research project with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care that examined the health and service needs of domiciliary hostel tenants.

Under the Emergency Energy Fund, the ministry helped low-income Ontarians, including social assistance recipients and those on fixed incomes, who faced energy-related emergencies. The fund covers utility arrears, security deposits and reconnection costs so that people do not lose their homes because of a short-term problem in paying their utility bills.

Supporting Victims of Domestic Violence

The ministry's [services for women and their children](#) who are fleeing domestic violence are part of a coordinated network of services delivered through 13 Ontario government ministries and the [Ontario Women's Directorate](#). Together, these services support the government's [Domestic Violence Action Plan](#) announced in 2005.

ANNUAL REPORT 2008-09

In 2008-09, the ministry allocated \$18.8 million to restore funding to shelters, reduce shelter operating pressures and create 83 new shelter beds. This enhancement also included an increase to second stage housing providers and cost-of-living increases to all violence against women agencies.

Supporting People who are Deaf or Deafblind

The ministry continued work that began in 2005-06 to transform its [interpreter services for people who are deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing, and intervenor services for people who are deafblind](#). This included more funding for services and salaries, and training for staff.

Under intervenor services, the ministry began developing a functional assessment tool, supported an annual Intervenor Training Symposium, and made investments that have helped provide service to people who were under-served or receiving no service at all.

Under interpreter services, the ministry continued to expand an Interpreter Internship program to increase the number of interns each year and funded a program that would provide francophone sign language services. Both of these programs address the chronic shortage of interpreters available to Ontarians who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing.

Updating Ontario's Adoption Information Laws

The *Access to Adoption Records Act, 2008* (AARA) was passed on May 14, 2008. This legislation implements substantive changes to Ontario's [adoption information disclosure laws](#). The legislation balances greater openness with privacy protections for adopted adults and birth parents.

The AARA gives adopted adults and birth parents access to important identifying information contained in adoption orders and birth registrations. It also allows them to place a disclosure veto on their file, to stop the release of information, if the adoption order was made prior to September 1, 2008.

DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

The ministry supports [adults with a developmental disability](#) and their families. Programs and services include:

- Residential and day supports that help adults with a developmental disability live, work and participate in a range of community activities;
- Caregiver respite; and
- Clinical care, including behaviour therapy and counselling.

The ministry has been transforming the way it delivers these services by expanding community living supports to coincide with the closure of the last three provincial facilities for adults with developmental disabilities.

ANNUAL REPORT 2008-09

The ministry worked closely with families, caregivers and agencies to provide smooth transitions to community life for residents who were living in the remaining residential facilities. All individuals had moved to community-based residential settings by March 31, 2009.

In 2008-09, the ministry achieved the following results:

- Urgently needed residential services were provided for 130 adults with a developmental disability at an annualized cost \$11 million;
- Funding for the Passport program increased by \$2.1 million (to a total of \$28.6 million), which is intended to support an additional 167 individuals. As of December 31, 2008 the program provided individually tailored community participation supports to 2,312 individuals;
- \$1.7 million was committed to support 64 individuals with a dual diagnosis to live in community housing with support services; and
- As of December 31, 2008, the ministry has approved requests for Special Services at Home from more than 24,000 individuals at a projected cost of more than \$100 million by the end of the fiscal year.

Beginning in the fall of 2008, the ministry undertook a series of consultations with community groups and agencies that resulted in local plans to expand residential and day supports and individual planning. Communities across the province have responded by developing plans for expanding supports to almost 700 more individuals by July 2010.

In 2008-09, the Legislature passed the first completely new developmental services legislation in 34 years. The *Services and Supports to Promote the Social Inclusion of Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act* contains significant changes from the previous act. When fully proclaimed people would:

- Have a single entry point to apply and access service;
- Only have to provide information once through a standardized application package; and
- Have more options for managing their funding directly (provided they meet the necessary requirements) or through the agency system.

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY OFFICE

The [Family Responsibility Office](#) enforces support orders and domestic contracts issued by the courts so that families get the money they are entitled to and can lead more financially secure lives. This supports the government's priority of investing in strong people and a strong economy.

In October 2008, the Family Responsibility Office launched a strategic plan to help guide the Family Responsibility Office to become a modern, responsive organization known for service excellence. The plan identifies objectives and initiatives that will modernize the office and its business process, and enable it to more effectively deliver on its mandate.

ANNUAL REPORT 2008-09

ACCESSIBILITY DIRECTORATE OF ONTARIO

The work of the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario contributes to the government's goal of making Ontario accessible by 2025. In 2008-09, the [Accessibility Directorate of Ontario](#) continued its ground-breaking work to develop accessibility standards that will lead to an accessible Ontario by 2025.

On January 1, 2008, Ontario ushered in the first accessibility standard – accessible customer service – that will help Ontarians with disabilities get the same quality customer service as everyone else. In November 2008, the Accessible Transportation Standards Development Committee submitted the final proposed standard to the Minister. Three additional standards are currently being developed for information and communication, the built environment and employment.

The ministry continued its strategic partnerships with private sector organizations and developed a public education program to raise awareness about the benefits of accessibility and the requirements of Ontario's accessibility legislation. The ministry's annual Accessibility Plan also identified key areas for improvements to accessibility in all areas of the ministry.

The 2008 - 09 EnAbling Change Partnerships Program is continuing and the ministry has recently launched the 2009-10 EnAbling Change Partnerships Program, which will make a significant impact on improving accessibility for persons with disabilities and promoting compliance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*. The ministry is continuing to reach out to obligated organizations and provide tools and resources to raise awareness about the benefits of removing barriers for people with disabilities.

In March 2008, the ministry launched the first ever public education campaign about accessibility – [AccessON: Breaking Barriers Together](#) – a transit and print advertising campaign throughout Ontario. The campaign is one way the ministry is delivering on its legislative requirement to educate Ontario businesses and the public on the benefits of accessibility.

ANNUAL REPORT 2008-09

Ministry Interim Expenditures 2008-09

	Ministry Interim Expenditures 2008-09* (\$M)
Operating	7,973
Capital	40
BPS Consolidation	(19)
Staff Strength (as of March 31, 2009)	4,476 Full-time equivalents

* The 2008-09 Expenditures are restated to reflect transfers with other ministries as approved in the 2009-10 Estimates.