



MINISTRY OF LABOUR

Published Results-Based Plan

2005-06

MINISTRY OVERVIEW

Overview Statement

The Ministry of Labour and its agencies play a key role in Ontario by promoting safe and healthy workplaces, fairness in employment and stable labour relations.

Through key areas of occupational health and safety, employment rights and responsibilities, and labour relations, the Ministry's mandate is to set, communicate and enforce workplace standards. A range of specialized agencies, boards and commissions also assists the Ministry in its work.

The Ministry supports the government's priority of Strong People, Strong Economy and its key result of fostering a competitive business environment and providing modern, efficient public services.

Three key activities fulfill the mission of the Ministry:

Occupational Health and Safety

Through the Occupational Health and Safety program, the Ministry works with its health and safety partners to reduce and eliminate workplace injury and illness. In administering the *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)*, the Ministry sets, communicates and enforces standards set out in the *OHSA* and related regulations.

The workplace internal responsibility system is the foundation of Ontario's approach to occupational health and safety. This means that employers and workers who are closest to and most familiar with workplace conditions and requirements are responsible for identifying and controlling hazards in their workplaces, and preventing injuries and illnesses.

The Ministry is directing significant resources toward targeting those firms with the highest injury rates and injury-related costs to improve health and safety practices within these workplaces and reduce associated costs to both the employer and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB).

Employment Rights and Responsibilities

The goal of the Employment Rights and Responsibilities program is to set, communicate and enforce appropriate policies and standards under legislation such as the *Employment Standards Act, 2000 (ESA)* and the *Pay Equity Act (PEA)*. The Ministry ensures compliance with these standards through education, consultation, investigation and enforcement activities.

Over the past two decades, Ontario's workplaces have been experiencing rapid change driven by new technologies, a shift from manufacturing to services, changing demographics (older workers, more women, more immigrants) and global competition.

The challenge for the Employment Rights and Responsibilities program is to provide employers and workers with the flexibility they need to develop fair and productive workplaces in an increasingly competitive environment, while maintaining an underlying set of essential standards. At the same time, they must focus enforcement activity where it is needed most to ensure workers are protected.

Labour Relations

The Ministry's objective in the area of labour relations is to foster, support and maintain a balanced and stable labour relations environment. Stable labour relations are critical to the economy as well as the government's ability to deliver results in its key priorities of health care, education and other public services.

The Ministry's Labour Relations program focuses on the settlement of workplace disputes under various employment-related statutes, assists in the settlement of collective agreements, and assembles collective bargaining information. In promoting a stable and constructive labour relations climate, the program helps to foster productive workplace relationships throughout Ontario.

Ministry Agencies

The Ministry is committed to supporting the government's priority of Strong People, Strong Economy and its key result of a competitive business environment through its Occupational Health and Safety, Employment Rights and Responsibilities and Labour Relations programs, supported by the following agencies:

- Ontario Labour Relations Board
- Pay Equity Office
- Pay Equity Hearings Tribunal

The Ministry will also continue to provide services that are in the public interest through its other agencies; namely:

- Public Service Appeal Boards
- Office of the Worker Adviser
- Office of the Employer Adviser

The Workplace Safety and Insurance Board and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Appeals Tribunal report to the Minister of Labour but are not funded by the government.

MINISTRY PROGRAMS AND STRATEGIES

The Ministry of Labour is in its second year of a transformation agenda that will deliver on the key government priority of Strong People, Strong Economy.

The Ministry will continue to provide for the social and economic well-being of the people of Ontario by:

- Making workplaces safer and healthier by targeting new resources at reducing workplace injury in the highest risk workplaces;
- Protecting vulnerable workers and making workplaces fairer;
- Ensuring balance in labour relations and increasing productivity; and,
- Targeting the underground economy to help ensure that all employers in the construction sector are full participants in Ontario's economy.

Making Workplaces Safer and Healthier

In July 2004, the Minister of Labour announced a significant strategy to reduce workplace injuries. The strategy is comprised of two key components:

- A coordinated and comprehensive health and safety strategy including enforcement, focused on the highest risk/highest cost workplaces and collaboration with system partners to deliver effective training and education programs; and,

- A construction sector-specific strategy to target the underground economy in Ontario.

Working with its key health and safety partners, the Ministry will reduce workplace injuries by 20 per cent so that by 2008:

- 20,000 fewer workers will lose time from work as a result of workplace injury; and,
- The Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) will avoid \$300 million in associated claims costs.

The Ministry will work with the WSIB to identify the 6,000 worst (highest risk/highest cost) workplaces each year. Ministry inspectors will target these firms with up to four visits per year and take appropriate enforcement action.

Another component of the strategy focuses on the construction sector and includes an attack on Ontario's underground economy, which places unfair pressure on legitimate businesses, deprives governments of tax dollars and jeopardizes the health and safety of workers.

The underground economy initiative will continue to build on pilot projects undertaken in 2004-05. Partnerships and agreements with the Ministry of Finance, the Canada Revenue Agency, Ontario municipalities and the WSIB will be finalized. These agreements will allow Ministry inspectors to identify those employers who are not contributing their fair share and refer the firm to the appropriate agency or Ministry.

The Ministry of Labour will also restructure its field service delivery in order to provide more effective administrative and managerial support.

Link to Government Priorities

Health and safety activities create a safe workplace environment that will attract jobs and investment as a result of higher productivity and lower costs from having fewer injuries.

Protecting Vulnerable Workers and Making Workplaces Fairer

The Ministry identified three key strategies in its 2004-05 Results-based Plan to transform the Employment Standards program, and how it does its business:

- Targeted enforcement of high-risk non-compliant employers to improve compliance with the *Employment Standards Act, 2000 (ESA)*, including more than 2,000 inspections per year;
- Increasing multi-language outreach to the most vulnerable workers; and,
- Putting money owed into the hands of employees faster by reducing claims resolution times and improving collection rates.

The next step in the Employment Standards transformation is to make it easier for the clients to obtain information and submit claims electronically. The Ministry will look at streamlining the claims management process, simplifying the claim form and associated guide, and developing an electronic claim form. Re-engineered business processes will be mapped, and planning for a new information technology system will begin.

To build on effective enforcement, tickets and summonses will be added to the enforcement toolbox and issued to employers who fail to comply with Employment Standards legislation. Over 2,000 proactive inspections will be conducted. Compliance benchmarks will be set for the retail sector.

Link to Government Priorities

Employment standards activities create fair workplaces, which promote higher productivity and support a competitive business environment that will attract jobs and investment to Ontario.

Restoring Balance to Labour Relations and Increasing Productivity

The Ministry will continue to support a stable labour relations environment through effective delivery of neutral dispute resolution and education services. To meet Ontario's needs, the Ministry will continue to promote best practices and ensure expertise and capacity in labour relations.

Linkages with the academic community and other jurisdictions will continue to be strengthened.

Link to Government Priorities

Effective labour relations dispute resolution creates fair and stable workplaces and increases productivity, making Ontario an attractive place for investors.

MINISTRY PLANNED EXPENDITURES 2005-06

	Ministry Planned Expenditures (\$M) 2005-06
Operating	145.8
Capital	There are no Capital Estimates for the Ministry of Labour.

MINISTRY PLANNED EXPENDITURES BY PROGRAM 2005-06

Program	Ministry Planned Expenditures (\$M)
Occupational Health and Safety	75.1
Employment Rights and Responsibilities	24.1
Labour Relations	21.3
Pay Equity Commission	4.0
Ministry Administration	21.0
Economics and Business Information and Information Technology Cluster	0.3