

Spotlight_{on} transformation

A Developmental Services Bulletin from the Ministry of Community and Social Services

A Message from the Minister of Community and Social Services

March 25th of this year marked the release of the 2010 provincial Budget. I know that many of our partners in developmental services – like so many of our partners across government – have been waiting to learn what this budget will hold for Ontario's social services.

After three balanced budgets, the global recession caused Ontario, like other jurisdictions in Canada and around the world, to go into deficit. The 2010 Budget proposes a fair and balanced approach to protect important public services while charting a course to a stronger economic future.

Ontario's 2010 Budget lays out a realistic and responsible plan to eliminate the deficit over the next eight years. Eliminating the deficit is important if we're going to open Ontario to new jobs and growth and restore the province's financial health and ability to pay for critical public services.

Our approach to funding for developmental services is also realistic and responsible. Although we have set aside funds in the 2010-11 Budget to address critical service needs and to support transformation in the developmental services sector, we did need to make some compromises. The letter below, which I recently sent to some of our provincial partners, provides some additional details.

My continued thanks for your commitment to Ontarians with a developmental disability.



Madeleine Meilleur
Minister

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Dear developmental services partner,

I am writing today to update you on the 2010 Ontario Budget. I am very grateful for the open and constructive relationship we have had with your organization since we came to government, and wanted to write to you in the spirit of continuing that positive partnership.

Each year at Budget time, as I reflect on my ministry's achievements, I cannot help but be extremely proud of the progress we have made together with our developmental services community partners. Your support on our developmental services transformation and the facilities initiative has been instrumental to our shared success. I also want to thank your members for the incredible work they have done on the Increasing Community Capacity Initiative. I can confirm that we will not be extending this initiative past July 2010.



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I am very pleased about the support our government has been able to provide to the developmental services sector over the past six years. We have improved agency base funding for the last three years, accelerated and exceeded our commitment to strengthen salaries and wages in the sector and increased Ontario Disability Support Program rates by 11 per cent – 12 per cent by the end of this year.

We have also provided about \$300 million in infrastructure funding since 2004, the majority for developmental services agencies. For 2009 and 2010 alone, in difficult economic times, we committed over \$26 million for infrastructure funding for developmental services agencies.

We are truly heartened that the additional \$500 million we are investing in developmental services each year has made a real difference for Ontarians who have a developmental disability and their families.

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This year's Budget presents us with another challenging year. While Ontario's economy is beginning to show signs of recovery, the reality is that our province faces a significant deficit – of more than \$21 billion – and our funds are limited. We have had to make difficult choices about how to invest public resources.

I want to assure you we are not taking money out of the developmental services system. In fact, we are increasing funding by \$36 million to provide critical support and services for people in urgent need, and by a further \$20 million to continue to make progress on our transformation plan.

However, we will not be increasing base budgets this year for developmental services agencies. The fiscal situation in which we find ourselves requires us to focus our resources on our most pressing demands. I am sensitive to the impact this has on your budgeting for the year, and therefore wanted to be as forthcoming as possible with this news.

Another measure that will affect your members is the Public Sector Compensation Restraint to Protect Public Services Act, 2010 which the government introduced on March 25, 2010. The legislation, if passed, would freeze compensation plans for all non-bargaining employees in the broader public sector, including the Ontario Public Service, for two years. The objective of the legislation is to control costs in one of the government's largest spending lines – compensation of public sector employees. This will help redirect up to \$750 million toward sustaining schools, hospitals and other public services – including social services.

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To ensure your organization is prepared, I ask you to please share this letter with the appropriate staff. More information can be found at **Ontario.ca/compensation** in English or **Ontario.ca/remuneration** in French.

Even in this extremely challenging fiscal climate, you can be confident that our government's commitment to people with a developmental disability remains firm. We are finding ways to help people who need our help most. I look forward to working with agencies, parents, family and community members and clients to collectively support people with a developmental disability. We are all partners in this work and we all have a role to play.

Thank you again for all that you have done. Our collaboration with you and your members is key to making our developmental services transformation a success.

Sincerely,



Madeleine Meilleur
Minister

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