

Stakeholder engagement on new guidelines for the Passport program

Ontario is seeking feedback on new guidelines for its [Passport](#) program.

In recent years, a range of stakeholders including people with a developmental disability, families, community agencies as well as the [Auditor General](#), have identified concerns with the current Passport program.

Two of the key concerns raised include:

- **The need for more clarity** – the current rules for how Passport funding can be spent are open to interpretation. This has led to inconsistencies in how individuals and families are using their funding in different parts of the province.
- **The complexity of the reporting process** – the current process for reporting expenses and submitting invoices for reimbursement is labour intensive for individuals and families.

To address these concerns, Ontario is making improvements to the program.

We would like to hear from you about the improvements under consideration.

We want to know what you think about the proposed directions outlined in this issue of **Spotlight on Transformation**.

Some of the questions we want you to think about are:

- Is the proposed direction clear?
- Is there anything missing from what we are proposing?
- What are your comments as you read through the proposed changes?

Passport is a program that helps people with a developmental disability live as independently as possible in their communities.

Currently, adults with a developmental disability (or their families) can apply for funding to help them:

- Participate in community programs
- Develop work and volunteer skills
- Create their own life plans (this is called [person-directed planning](#)), and
- Reach their goals.



The improvements under consideration

Key change #1 – clear guidelines on how funding can be spent

Challenge:

The guidelines for the current Passport program are not as clear as they should be.

People interpret the current guidelines differently, so decisions about funding requests are not consistent.

The Passport program is meant to provide funding that enables individuals with a developmental disability to achieve personal goals by accessing and participating more fully in community-based activities. It is not intended to cover expenses that are common to all individuals and all families.

Proposed direction:

Under the revised Passport program guidelines, Passport funding will be used to purchase supports that are required to assist the individual with a developmental disability to access and participate in community activities, but not pay for the community activity itself.

This includes using the funding to hire a support worker to help the individual access and participate in community-based activities.

Expenses related to membership and entrance fees, technology, meals, entertainment, transportation and travel costs will not be eligible for reimbursement.

For example: Under the new rules for Passport, you will not be able to use the funding to buy tickets for a sporting event. But you can use the money to enable a support worker to go to the event with you.

When the new guidelines come into effect, we will provide a list that clearly states the kinds of expenses that are eligible for funding, as well those that are not.

Key change #2 – respite care

Challenge:

Historically, respite care has been understood as primarily a benefit to the caregivers and as a secondary benefit for the individual with a developmental disability.

Proposed direction:

Respite care will be an eligible expenditure under the Passport program, but it must relate directly to individuals with a developmental disability.

It is meant to help them achieve their goals first, and give the main caregiver a break second.

This involves hiring a support worker to help the individual with a developmental disability.

For example: Under the new rules, individuals and families can use their Passport funding to arrange for respite in their own home, or at a location other than their own home. This includes hiring someone to help with supervision, personal care, money management, hobbies and participating in recreational, social and entertainment activities.

Individuals and families will not be able to use their Passport funding to pay for child care fees for other children in the home, housekeeping, laundry, lawn care, snow removal or property maintenance (called indirect supports).

Key change #3 – modern accountability

Challenge:

Individuals and families are currently required to submit their receipts and invoices before they can be reimbursed for expenses. This is a lot of work for families, as well as for the staff who review the claims and make decisions about reimbursements.

Passport has been broadened to include thousands of adults who previously received direct funding through the Special Services at Home program. The increased number of claims presents a challenge for Passport agency staff who must have a process by which they can ensure that public funds are being spent as they are intended.



Proposed direction:

Ontario is making the funding approval process consistent and simplifying the reporting process for everyone.

For example: Designated Passport Agencies will check on how individuals and families are spending their money compared to their approved plan.

Individuals and families will be required to submit quarterly reports to their Passport Agency.

Individuals and families will be required to retain all invoices and receipts for a set period of time and may be called upon to submit them.

The Passport Agency will conduct random and risk-based audits to ensure that public funds are being spent as they are intended.

This approach involves less paperwork for everyone, and it modernizes accountability requirements.

Summary

We have just outlined three key areas where we need to improve the Passport program guidelines.

We need your input on the proposed directions.

As you submit your comments, bear in mind, our goal is to set clear new guidelines that:

- Remove ambiguity
- Promote fairness and consistency, and
- Simplify and modernize accountability processes.

The result will be an efficient program that can operate on a more sustainable basis.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Please refer to the back page of this bulletin for information on how to submit your comments on the proposed changes to Passport.

Deemed eligibility for adult developmental services: Proposed draft regulation for public review and comment

On September 21, 2012, Ontario posted a proposal for a new regulation.

The proposed regulation would make the following groups of people eligible for services and supports under the Services and Supports to Promote the Social Inclusion of Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act, 2008 (SIPDDA):

- Adults who transitioned from Special Services at Home to the Passport program on April 1, 2012.
- Adults who were on the Special Services at Home waitlist as of March 31, 2012.
- Adults who applied and were found eligible for adult services and supports under the Developmental Services Act between January 1, 2011, and June 30, 2011, and began to receive support or were waitlisted for support during that time.
- Children with a developmental disability receiving Special Services at Home who turn 18 by March 31, 2013.
- Children with a developmental disability who turn 18 between April 1, 2012, and March 31, 2013, and are on a waitlist for Special Services at Home before they turn 18.

If the regulation is approved and comes into effect, the transfer of eligibility will be automatic. The regulation will not affect people who are already receiving adult developmental services and supports or are waiting to receive them.

The draft regulation is posted on the Government of Ontario's [Regulatory Registry](#).

You have until **November 5, 2012**, to submit your comments.



How would the proposed regulation affect your eligibility for adult developmental services?

If you are an adult who transitioned from SSAH to Passport on April 1, 2012

You would automatically be eligible for adult developmental services and supports under SIPDDA.

You would continue to receive the same amount of funding until your needs are re-assessed.

We would give you more information about next steps.

If you are an adult who was on the waitlist for SSAH funding

You would automatically be eligible for adult developmental services and supports under SIPDDA.

DSO would contact you in the future to assess your needs.

When services and supports are available **DSO would** let you know.

If you are an adult who applied for and were found eligible for adult services and supports under the DSA **between** January 1, 2011, and June 30, 2011

You would continue to be eligible for adult developmental services and supports under SIPDDA.*

When services and supports are available **DSO would** let you know.

DSA – Developmental Services Act

DSO – Developmental Services Ontario

SSAH – Special Services at Home Program

SIPDDA – The Services and Supports to Promote the Social Inclusion of Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act

* All adults who received or were on the waitlist for services under the DSA prior to January 1, 2011, have already been deemed eligible under SIPDDA.

How would the proposed regulation affect your child's eligibility for adult developmental services?

If your child receives SSAH funding, and will turn 18 by March 31, 2013

Your child would automatically be eligible for adult developmental services and supports under SIPDDA upon turning 18.**

Until your child turns 18, you would receive the funding through SSAH.

After that, your child would receive it through the Passport Program until their needs are re-assessed.

Your child may also be eligible for support through ODSP upon turning 18.

We would be giving you more information about next steps.

If your child will turn 18 by March 31, 2013, and is on the waitlist for SSAH funding

Your child turning 18 would automatically be eligible for adult developmental services and supports under SIPDDA.**

DSO would contact you to assess your child's needs.

When services and supports are available **DSO would** let you know.

Your child may also be eligible for support through ODSP upon turning 18.

If your child receives or is waiting for SSAH funding, and will turn 18 after March 31, 2013

When your child turns 18, they will no longer be eligible for the SSAH program.

Your child may be eligible for support through ODSP upon turning 18.

Your child may apply for adult developmental services and supports through DSO.

** This only applies to children with a developmental disability.

How to comment

If you are interested in providing comments on the proposed improvements, please do so by **November 5, 2012**.

An **online survey** on the proposed changes to Passport is currently underway.

[Click here](#) to submit your feedback.

You can also contact us by:

Mail: Comments on Changes to the Passport Program
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Toronto, ON M7A 1E9

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This bulletin is also available online at: Ontario.ca/community