



An Extraordinary Year for Developmental Services

A Message from Minister Dr. Helena Jaczek

This has been an extraordinary year for developmental services in Ontario.

When our government's Budget investment in developmental services was confirmed this July, we knew it would be a very busy year for us all, but with the opportunity to help so many Ontarians. Already, more than 7,900 individuals and families have been approved for direct funding and more than 350 people for new residential supports.

In 2014, we took further steps to bring more consistency and fairness to how the developmental services system works, so that decision-making is clearer and more transparent for everyone. Last summer, we introduced a provincially-consistent process for responding to individuals in urgent need of short-term, time-limited supports.

The final report of the Select Committee on Developmental Services was tabled in July and earlier this month the Auditor General released her audit for residential services for people with developmental disabilities. Both these reports will help us continue to strengthen and modernize the



developmental services system in 2015 and reaffirm the priorities on which we are currently focussed.

“In 2014, we took further steps to bring more consistency and fairness to how the developmental system works”

We still have three years to go in our investment strategy, and the goal of helping thousands of people with developmental disabilities over its course. As we make services available to more people, we remain aware of the need to be constantly evaluate our work to make sure our developmental services system is doing the best

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job it can in supporting individuals. That means being as efficient and accountable as possible, and making sure services are focussed on the needs of the people we serve.

I want to thank everyone who has played a part in bringing our investment strategy to life this year.

The steps we took on the transformation journey in 2014 have only been possible because of the efforts of our agency partners and the staff who work with people with developmental disabilities every day.

I wish all of you a healthy and happy holiday season, and look forward to continuing to work together in 2015 to promote inclusion, choice and independence for people with developmental disabilities.

Growing Better

A city can grow by leaps and bounds, but without a good foundation, it can't meet the needs of its residents.

Similarly, increasing the size of our developmental services system alone is not enough. People with developmental disabilities and their families need clear and transparent decision-making, easy navigation and responsive services. This knowledge has been driving our work with community agencies to strengthen the developmental services system from the inside out.

The Auditor General of Ontario recently reviewed residential services for people with developmental disabilities. The Auditor looked at whether the residential needs of people with developmental disabilities were being met in a cost-effective way and assessed how service providers were complying with ministry policies and regulations.

The Auditor acknowledged the progress we have made in creating a consistent assessment and application process through Developmental Services Ontario. The report also pointed to a number of areas where improvement is needed.

We're pleased to say we already have work underway on a number of issues addressed by the Auditor, including:

- **More Consistency:**

Together with sector partners, the ministry is taking steps to improve consistency in decision-making for services. Last summer, the ministry introduced a provincially-consistent process for responding to individuals in urgent need of short-term, time-limited supports. In October, we introduced a standardized method for determining the priority of individuals requesting Passport and for eventual use for other services, including residential supports.



Growing better: transparent decision- making, easy navigation, responsive services



- **More residential supports:**

The three-year, \$810 million investment in community and developmental services will provide residential services for approximately 1,400 people with urgent needs, including more than 350 adults in 2014-15. Additionally, the Developmental Services Housing Task Force is tasked with proposing innovative models to help create a broader set of residential options for individuals and families. It will be issuing proposal calls in 2015.

- **Fill Spaces Faster:**

The ministry will issue guidelines in 2015-16 to agencies so there is more consistency in how vacancies are filled in existing residential spaces, such as group homes.

- **More Timely Assessments:**

As noted in the [last issue of Spotlight](#), the ministry is increasing the capacity of the nine Developmental Services Ontario offices to complete assessments in a timely manner. The ministry is planning improvements to the information technology system used by Developmental Services Ontario offices to support better management of waitlists and connect individuals to available resources.

The Auditor's recommendations will inform our ongoing work to improve services for people with a developmental disability. There is still work to be done, and together with our agency partners, we will continue building the developmental services system.



Read the
[Auditor General's report.](#)

Building community transportation for everyone

Ontario is launching a new two-year pilot program to improve community transportation services for persons with disabilities, seniors and other members of the community.

The Community Transportation Pilot Grant Program will help municipalities and community organizations to better use existing transportation resources to expand service areas and resources for everyone in the community.

For example, Toronto Ride is a collaborative partnership of fourteen not-for-profit community

support service agencies that provides transportation services to seniors and adults with disabilities.

When one agency is unable to fulfill a ride request, a dispatcher contacts the other Toronto Ride partner agencies to find an alternate arrangement.

All municipalities are invited to apply with the participation of at least one community organization.

Proposals will be accepted until January 30, 2015. Please visit the Ministry of Transportation's website for more information and grant application packages: ontario.ca/by8y.

Helping more people with ODSP employment supports

Ontario is making ODSP employment supports available to more people with disabilities.

Effective *January 1, 2015*, people with disabilities can apply for ODSP employment supports even if they are eligible to receive employment supports from other programs and sources, such as insurance policies, worker's compensation benefits, Employment Insurance, the Canadian Pension Plan, or services under a substance abuse program administered by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. The only exception is where someone is already receiving employment supports through Ontario Works.

Current regulations exclude people from receiving ODSP employment supports if they are also eligible for benefits under other programs.

The government's changes will speed up the application process, reduce cumbersome paperwork for caseworkers, speed up the application process and enable more people to receive ODSP employment supports.

To learn more about ODSP employment supports, visit: ontario.ca/bx54.

ODSP Employment Supports offer:



Reaching Out for Housing Solutions

The Developmental Services Housing Task Force is reaching out for the very best ideas on innovative housing solutions for adults with developmental disabilities.

The 19 volunteer members were appointed to review proposals and make recommendations on innovative housing solutions for funding under the province's three-year, \$810-million investment strategy for community and developmental services.

Last month, the Task Force began public outreach around the province. In November, Task Force members spoke with Ottawa families and agency representatives at a forum organized by Families Matter Co-operative and Total Communication Environment. Task Force members also met with 100 people in Toronto at a housing forum organized by the Provincial Executive Directors Group of Community Living Ontario.

The Housing Task Force is currently working on a proposal call for innovative housing solutions for people with a developmental disabilities and their families. You can look forward to seeing more information about this in early 2015.

How to connect with the Housing Task Force



Housing Task Force members welcome your ideas and feedback. Here's how you can connect with them:

- Visit the Housing Task Force's Facebook page: facebook.com/groups/527484407354214/
- Email the Task Force at: dshousingtaskforce@gmail.com
- Look for information about the work of the Task Force on connectability.ca in the coming weeks.

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