



MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES



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Ministry of Community and Social Services

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Ministry Overview

Mandate

The [Ministry of Community and Social Services](#) helps Ontario's most vulnerable citizens with programs and services that support strong and healthy communities, and works to remove obstacles that impede opportunity and participation in community life.

Our social assistance programs provide financial and employment assistance to those in need, and help people to live more independently in their communities. Supports for adults with developmental disabilities provide places to live and help them work and participate in a range of community activities. Our community services support women and children who have experienced violence, Aboriginal peoples and communities, and people who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing, or who are deafblind. Through our Family Responsibility Office, we collect and distribute child and spousal support to help improve the financial security of families. And the Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Strategy promotes access to culturally appropriate health and community services for Aboriginal people.

Our ministry is guided by a vision of an Ontario where all communities are resilient, inclusive and sustained by the economic and civic contributions of all their citizens. We believe that Ontarians are born competent, capable of complex thinking, curious and rich in potential. As such, we partner with other ministries, municipalities, the federal government, First Nations and community leaders and agencies to promote opportunities and achievement of that potential.



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Ministry Contribution to Priorities and Results

Our ministry's key priorities are to:

- drive long term social assistance reform as part of a strengthened income security system;
- continue to transform developmental services with a focus on choice, flexibility and inclusion;
- modernize client service delivery and leverage opportunities for service integration;
- strengthen community services to help meet the needs of diverse populations; and
- improve child and spousal support collection so that families have greater financial security.

Our goal is to help Ontario's most vulnerable populations achieve their potential, independence and inclusion in their communities, and improve their quality of life through a strong sense of belonging, wellbeing, engagement and expression. We must also help protect people from crisis, harm and social exclusion.

All of our work contributes to the government's commitment to create jobs, grow the economy and reduce poverty.



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Ministry Programs

Developmental Services

The ministry funds [services and supports for people with developmental disabilities](#) and their families. People with developmental disabilities want to be active participants in their communities. To do that, many rely on a range of services and supports that promote social inclusion and involvement, including:

- help with daily-living activities;
- community participation and employment supports;
- caregiver respite;
- professional and specialized services;
- person-directed planning; and
- residential supports.

The ministry also provides direct funding to individuals and families to give them choice in their support arrangements and allow them to select the services and supports they feel best meet their unique support needs.

In 2016-17, the ministry will continue with the final year of a multi-year investment strategy to further transform developmental services. That strategy, which began in 2014-15, will continue to focus on:

- Promoting independence and inclusion through employment opportunities
- Enhancing personalized planning, navigation and case management
- Improved residential supports, using an individual-focused, multi-year planning model, with immediate action focused on youth leaving Children's Aid Society (CAS) care and individuals in urgent need
- Promoting creative housing solutions and improving supportive housing opportunities
- Advancing cross-ministry collaboration including healthcare access initiatives
- Expanding information management capacity and continuing to improve the technology

Our multi-year investment strategy is driving innovation and strengthening community partnerships, addressing critical pressures in the system and continuing our progress to transform services; leading to better lives for individuals and families.

The ministry continues to work with the ministries of [Children and Youth Services](#), [Education](#), [Health and Long-term Care](#), and [Training, Colleges and Universities](#) to support smooth life transitions for people with developmental disabilities and their families.

Social Assistance

Ontario's social assistance programs provide income and employment support for those in need.

[Ontario Works](#) provides income assistance for individuals and families in temporary financial need, and the [Ontario Disability Support Program](#) provides longer term income support for people with disabilities in financial need and their families. Both programs provide employment assistance to help people develop skills, remove barriers to finding and keeping jobs, and become more independent through work.

Ongoing social assistance reform is a key part of the government's [Poverty Reduction Strategy](#) in recognition of the fact that Ontario's social assistance programs affect more than 900,000 adults and children every day.

There are four overarching pillars underpinning social assistance reform:

- *Improving employment outcomes* by enhancing supports and incentives to work, with an emphasis on clients more distant from the labour market;
- *Improving income and access to core supports outside the system* to promote greater independence;
- *Strengthening integrity and accountability* through transparency and outcomes-based business practices;
- *Improving client service* by introducing modern, responsive, and self-serve service delivery options.

This year the ministry will engage with delivery partners, clients and sector advocates to chart the path to comprehensive reform. We will also continue to invest in social assistance, increasing rates by:

- \$25 for singles without children in Ontario Works
- 1.5 per cent for families on Ontario Works and individuals with disabilities receiving ODSP
- 1.5 per cent for various other rates, including the Remote Communities Allowance and Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities.

The ministry will also continue its focus on simplifying the system, reducing administrative tasks and integrating services and supports to improve cost effectiveness and enhance accountability and integrity. For example, we will leverage more technology, introduce more self-serve options for clients and simplify service through efficiencies such as a reloadable payment card and other paperless business practices. We will also introduce improvements to the ODSP adjudication and medical review process and remove the current requirement for persons already determined to be eligible for adult

developmental services to be re-adjudicated for ODSP eligibility.

Over the next year, we will introduce changes to social assistance rules so that families who receive child support can benefit more from this income. These changes are also aimed at motivating more payors to meet their child support obligations.

We will invest up to \$1 million annually over five years to partner with Prosper Canada to provide a range of financial empowerment tools and services and supports to low income Ontarians. Financial empowerment and advocacy are the cornerstones of enhanced financial independence, a key objective of Ontario's social assistance programs.

We will also continue to upload the portion of Ontario Works financial and employment costs that is paid by municipalities. This is anticipated to save municipalities \$425 million by 2018.

Community Services

Working with community partners, the ministry funds several [community services](#) programs, including:

- support for women experiencing violence and their children,
- interpreter services for adults who are deaf, deafened, hard-of-hearing or who are deafblind,
- intervenor services for adults who are deafblind, and
- health, healing and wellness programs and services for Aboriginal peoples.

The ministry also provides access to [adoption information disclosure services](#) under the Vital Statistics Act and the Child and Family Services Act, including providing information via the Custodian of Adoption Information.

In addition, we provide funding and administrative support to the [Soldier's Aid Commission](#) which provides support to Ontario veterans. We are also responsible for maintaining the legislative and regulatory framework for the Social Work and Social Service Work Act, 1998.

In 2016-17, the ministry will continue to support a strong service delivery system that will help to strengthen community agencies. The ministry will also continue its \$200 million system capacity investment, included in the 2014 Budget. This funding promotes labour stability and a qualified workforce while supporting salaries and wages for frontline workers.

The ministry's community services programs also include a range of [Violence Against Women investments](#) including:

- emergency shelter services;
- counselling;
- transitional and housing support program;
- child witness programs;
- provincial and regional Crisis Line Counselling; and
- Domestic Violence Community Coordinating Committees.

In response to recommendations from the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, the ministry worked with the violence against women sector to establish new standards for shelters, to support the provision of consistent, high-quality services. The ministry released the shelter standards in September and is targeting full implementation by early 2017-18.

Ontario will provide additional support to rural, remote and northern violence-against-women agencies. Starting in 2016-17, the [Rural Realities Fund](#) provides \$1 million over two years to help violence against women agencies, especially shelters, mitigate the broad and unique challenges of service delivery in rural, remote and Northern communities.

On February 23, 2016, the Ontario government released Walking Together: Ontario's Long-Term Strategy to End Violence Against Indigenous Women, which outlines actions to prevent violence against Indigenous women and reduce its impact on youth, families and communities.

Ontario committed over \$100 million over three years to support the implementation of the strategy, which builds on the existing work of Indigenous partners, community organizations and government to raise awareness of and prevent violence; provide more effective programs and community services that reflect the priorities of Indigenous leaders and communities; and improve socio-economic conditions that support healing within Indigenous communities.

Under the strategy, MCSS will continue to work with ministry, Indigenous, and community partners to improve access to community services that play an important role in reducing violence against Indigenous women and their families through culturally appropriate programming that is Aboriginal-designed and delivered.

Starting in 2017-18, MCSS will support province-wide access to a culturally appropriate counselling help line for Indigenous women. The help line design and delivery will be informed by consultations and implementation strategies from the pilot phase of Talk4Healing, the help line for Indigenous women in northern Ontario.

The Ministry of Community and Social Services is currently assisting the Violence Against Women sector in multi-year capital planning. As a first step, we have begun conducting Building Condition Assessments on all provincially-funded Violence Against Women and Developmental Services agencies. This will allow the agencies and the Ministry to better plan for proactive capital investments and avoid the more costly urgent repairs.

The ministry's Partner Facility Renewal fund (minor capital) is also available to agencies. Funding is provided annually to help repair, renovate or upgrade facilities and supports agencies when new facilities are needed. Under the Partner Facility Renewal program, \$16.2 million is being invested for over 900 projects this year to help repair, renovate or upgrade more than 200 community agencies across Ontario. This investment will help agencies across Ontario maintain their facilities in good working order so they can provide better services for people with developmental disabilities, families struggling with domestic abuse and the Aboriginal community.

The ministry also supports [interpreter services](#) for adults who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing, or deafblind, and [intervenor services](#) for adults who are deafblind. Both services help people communicate and participate more fully in their communities.

The ministry is continuing its multi-year renewal strategy for Intervenor Services program to support a fair, transparent and financially sustainable program. This includes a comprehensive, sector-led human resource initiative to increase the recruitment, talent and skill among intervenors and management.

In 2016-17, the ministry will finalize a funding framework for the program in consultation with stakeholders. This will include establishing clear eligibility criteria, an individualized funding model and a needs assessment tool for individuals who need intervenor services.

The [Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Strategy](#) delivers a wide range of health, healing and wellness programs and services that are Aboriginal-designed, delivered and managed.

The Strategy is funded through five ministries, lead by Community and Social Services and including Health and Long-Term Care, [Aboriginal Affairs](#), Children and Youth Services and the [Ontario Women’s Directorate](#). Funded organizations include First Nations, Métis, Political/Territorial Organizations and Aboriginal provincial organizations and service providers.

The ministry and Aboriginal partners have a shared commitment to reduce family violence and violence against Aboriginal women and children, and improve Aboriginal health, healing and wellness through culturally appropriate programming and ongoing collaboration. Community-based programs are available to Aboriginal peoples living on-reserve and in urban and rural communities.

In 2016-17, government ministries will continue to work closely with First Nations, Métis and Aboriginal leaders and organizations to ensure future Strategy success.

This includes working with funded organizations to increase access to services such as crisis intervention, counselling, supports for women, children and families at risk, and health and family violence awareness and education.

The Family Responsibility Office

The [Family Responsibility Office](#) (FRO) collects and distributes child and spousal support payments to improve the financial security of families. Every year, FRO is involved in more than 180,000 cases involving more than 380,000 support recipients, payors, and third parties.

In 2016-17, FRO will continue to build on its investments in technology to improve both the effectiveness of enforcement efforts and responsiveness to clients.

Infrastructure

The ministry’s 2016-17 infrastructure plan is focused on program specific plans and strategic investment that enables ministry program outcomes.

Investments will help Aboriginal healing and wellness centres, violence against women community agencies, Interpreter and Intervenor service providers and developmental services providers to maintain, improve and provide safer and more accessible facilities for individuals, children and families.

Moving forward in collaboration with transfer payment agencies, Infrastructure Ontario, Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure and other partner ministries, we will continue to develop the asset management plan to enable business transformation, better outcomes, enhancement of service delivery capacity, demonstration of value for money, and effective stewardship of public assets.



Ministry Planned Expenditures 2016-17*

	Ministry Planned Expenditures 2016-17 (\$M)
Operating	11,418.5
Capital	67.3
BPS Consolidation	(18.3)

Ministry Planned Expenditures by Program Name 2016-17*

- Ministry of Community and Social Services
 - Operating \$11,418.5 million
 - Capital \$67.3 million

- Ministry Administration Services
 - Operating \$37.2 million
- Adults' Services
 - Operating \$11,381.3 million
 - Capital \$67.3 million

*Includes Statutory Appropriations for Minister's salary, Bad Debt, and Capital Expense (amortization).
Broader Public Sector Consolidation is reported by ministry total and not by program



Highlights Of 2015-16 Achievements

Developmental Services

- In the last two years, the ministry has made a tremendous difference for thousands of Ontarians with its three-year \$810 million dollar investment strategy for community and developmental services. We are on schedule to meet our targets:
 - The wait list for Special Services at Home (SSAH) was eliminated in just eight months, well ahead of the original two-year timeline.
 - New Passport funding was provided to more than half of the people on the 2014 Passport service registry.
 - New residential supports were created for more than 800 people - well over half of our multi-year investment target of 1,400. Work began on a multi-year plan to help communities match the right kinds of residential supports with the distinct needs of individuals, many of whom have high priority needs.
 - We created the Housing Task Force to encourage effective, inclusive and creative housing solutions to expand the options and choices available for adults with developmental disabilities. So far, 12 projects have been selected and funded, and a second call for proposals was issued in December 2015.
 - The ministry awarded funding to 38 proposals through the Employment and Modernization Fund promoting employment and implementing innovative developmental services and supports.
 - By the end of the Year 2 of the investment strategy, approximately 1,000 people received person directed planning (PDP) and/or independent facilitation supports through the 2013 PDP Regional Initiative, the Passport program, and the Independent Facilitation Demonstration Project.
 - In 2016-17, the Ministry will continue the Independent Facilitation Demonstration Project. The project was launched in May 2015 to increase people's access to independent facilitation, evaluate outcomes on improving the lives of people with a developmental disability, and to build the capacity of grassroots independent facilitation organizations.
 - The ministry continued working with agencies, families and individuals to move away from sheltered workshops towards inclusive employment and other meaningful community participation.
- The ministry's action plan and investment strategy continues to strengthen and transform the system by:
 - Promoting independence and inclusion through employment opportunities
 - Enhancing personalized planning, navigation and case management
 - Improved residential supports using an individual-focussed, multi-year planning model, with immediate action focused on youth leaving CAS care and individuals in urgent need
 - Promoting creative housing solutions and improving supportive housing opportunities
 - Advancing cross-ministry collaboration including healthcare access initiatives
 - Expanding information management capacity and continuing to improve the technology, and
 - Driving innovation and efficiency in service delivery.

Social Assistance

- The 2015 Budget invested about \$100 million annually to increase social assistance rates by:
 - \$25 per month or more than 3 per cent for adult singles without children receiving Ontario Works;
 - 1 percent for families receiving Ontario Works and individuals with disabilities who rely on the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP); and
 - 1 percent for various other rates, including the Remote Communities Allowance and Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities.
- This means that Ontario Works singles without children received \$75 more per month in 2015-16 than they had in 2012. For a single parent with two children, this means an extra \$120 per year, and approximately \$156 more a year for a couple with two children.
- Low-income parents also saw the maximum Ontario Child Benefit (OCB) increase from \$1,310 to \$1,336 in July 2015 because the OCB is indexed to inflation for the first time.

The Family Responsibility Office

- 2015-16 was the second full year of operation following the implementation of FRO's new case management technology in 2013. Collections continued to track upward and totaled \$697 million in 2015-16, an increase of \$19

million compared to collections of \$678 million in 2014-15.

- With a program cost of \$54.7 million in 2015-16, FRO collected more than \$12 for every dollar spent. Since October 2003, FRO has collected more than \$8 billion in support payments for families.
- The ministry is gradually rolling out a secure, online self-service tool that will allow clients to view support obligations and active enforcement information, view financial information and print account statements, send information and attachments to case contacts, and request call backs from case contacts.

Community Services

- In 2014-15, the ministry provided approximately \$145 million for programs that help women experiencing violence and their children find safety and rebuild their lives, including:
 - \$83 million for 96 emergency shelter agencies to support 2,022 beds dedicated for use by abused women and their children,
 - \$29 million for counselling services for women and children,
 - \$15 million to help abused women find housing and connect with local community supports.
 - \$6 million to help children recover from witnessing abuse
 - \$3 million for crisis telephone counselling, and
 - \$10 million for other Violence Against Women (VAW) programs, including Domestic Violence Community Coordinating Committees.
- In 2015-16, the ministry invested \$1.93 million to help build a new women's shelter to serve Elgin County. The shelter, expected to open in June 2016, will replace the existing Women’s House Emergency Shelter to better meet the needs of local women and children who have experienced violence in their homes.
- Ontario is providing additional support to VAW agencies, including shelters, in rural, remote and Northern communities that provide programs and services for women and their children who have experienced domestic violence. As announced in January 2016, the Rural Realities Fund is a two-year, \$1 million program available to VAW agencies facing unique challenges in delivery of services in rural, remote and Northern communities. The fund supports creative solutions to service delivery challenges for women and their children accessing Violence Against Women services in these communities.
- In 2015-16, through Intervenor and Interpreter services the ministry supported individuals who are deaf, deafened, hard-of-hearing, or deafblind, to communicate and participate more fully in their communities.
- Intervenor Services programs include:
 - Residential intervenor supports
 - Community Participation intervenor supports
- Interpreter Services programs include:
 - American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreting Services
 - Langue des Signes Québécoise (LSQ) Interpreting Services
 - Interpreter Internship Program
 - After Hours Health-Related Emergency Interpreting Services
- In 2015-16, the Soldier's Aid Commission provided grants totaling more than \$150,000 to help more than 120 veterans, their spouses or dependents with payment of home or health related expenses.

Infrastructure

- As of December 2015, the ministry had provided \$16.2 million for upgrades and repairs at more than 200 community agencies across Ontario. These investments will help Aboriginal healing and wellness centres, Interpreter and Intervenor service providers, violence against women community agencies and developmental services providers maintain and improve their facilities.



Organization Chart

This is a text version of an organizational chart for the Ministry of Community and Social Services as of April 2016. The chart shows the following hierarchical structure with the top level assigned to the Minister of Community and Social Services.

1. Minister of Community and Social Services - [Helena Jaczek](#)
 1. Parliamentary Assistant - [Soo Wong](#)
 2. **(Appointed by Order-in-Council)**
Chairman, Soldiers' Aid Commission - Colin Rowe (A)
 3. Reporting to the Deputy Minister - Janet Menard
 - 3.1. Executive Assistant to the Deputy Minister - Josh Vandezande
 - 3.2. Director, Legal Services Branch - Diane Zimnica **(also reports to Assistant Deputy Attorney General, Legal Services, Ministry of the Attorney General)**
 - 3.3. Director, Communications and Marketing Branch - Garth Cramer **(also reports to the**

Deputy Minister Communications, Cabinet)

- 3.4. ADM, Social Policy Development - Erin Hannah (A)

3.4.1. Director, Ontario Works - Anna Cain (A)

3.4.2. Director, Community Supports Policy Branch - Barbara Simmons

3.4.3. Director, Ontario Disability Support Program - Gloria Lee

3.4.4. Director, Policy Research and Analysis - Aki Tefera

3.4.5. Director, Planning and Strategic Policy - Laura Summers (A)
- 3.5. ADM, Family Responsibility Office - Jeff Butler (A)

3.5.1. Director, Client Services Branch - Mena Zaffino

3.5.2. Director, Finance and Administration - Sandra Yee

3.5.3. Director, Strategic and Operational Effectiveness - Erin O'Connor (A)

3.5.4. Director, Support Services Branch - Bani Bawa

3.5.5. Director, FRO Legal Services - Shannon Chace (A)
- 3.6. ADM, Business Planning and Corporate Services - Nadia Cornacchia
This division reports jointly to Deputy Ministers of the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services.

3.6.1. Executive Director, Organizational Renewal Directorate - Madeleine Davidson

3.6.2. Director, Financial Planning and Business Management - Steve Skyers (A)

3.6.3. Director, Strategic Business Unit - Patricia Kwasnik (Reports jointly to Assistant Deputy Minister, Human Resources Service Delivery, HROntario, Ministry of Government Services and Assistant Deputy Minister, Business Planning and Corporate Services)

3.6.4. Director, Community Services Audit Services - Gord Nowlan (Joint reporting relationship to the Deputy Ministers of MCSS and MCYS and the Chief Internal Auditor, Ministry of Finance and reports administratively to the Assistant Deputy Minister, Business Planning and Corporate Services)

3.6.5. Director, Capital Planning and Delivery Branch -Tony Paniccia (A)

3.6.6. Director, Corporate Services - Maxine Daley (A)
- 3.7. ADM, Community and Developmental Services - Karen Chan

3.7.1. Director, Service Delivery and Supports - Sal Marrello

3.7.2. Director, Controllershship and Accountability - Lourdes Valenton (A)

3.7.3. Director, Program Policy Implementation - Christine Kuepfer
- 3.8. Regional Directors (report jointly to Assistant Deputy Ministers in MCSS and MCYS)

3.8.1. Karen Eisler - Central Region

3.8.2. Nicole True - North Region

3.8.3. Paul Wheeler (A) - Toronto Region

3.8.4. Arlene Berday - West Region

3.8.5. David Remington - East Region
- 3.9. ADM, Social Assistance Operations - Richard Steele

3.9.1. Director, Social Assistance and Municipal Operations - Jeff Bowen (A)

3.9.2. Director, Social Assistance Central Services Branch- Bob Davidson

3.9.3. Director, Social Assistance Service Delivery Branch - Patti Redmond

3.9.4. Director, SAMS Transition Program Management - Nelson Louriero
- 3.10. Chief Information Officer - Children, Youth and Social Services I&IT Cluster - Kevin Byrnes (A)
Reports to Corporate Chief Information Officer and to Deputy Ministers of MCSS and MCYS

3.10.1. Head, Solutions Development and Maintenance - Katherine Kulson (A)

3.10.2. Head, Business Relationship Management - Kim Davison (A)

3.10.3. Head, Information Management and Architecture - Bruno Bevilacqua

3.10.4. Director, Business Services -Robert Maieron (A)

3.10.5. Head, Operations - Mark Bernier

3.10.6. Head, Cluster Transformation Office - Mike Morley (A)



Cost Sharing with the Federal Government

MCSS shares costs for social assistance and other specified social services programs with the federal government, municipalities, First Nations, and other public sector organizations.

Federal Reimbursements

Independent of block funding received by the province under the [Canada Social Transfer](#) (CST), the ministry receives federal funding under the 1965 Indian Welfare Services Agreement (IWS), the Social Housing Agreement, the Supporting Families Initiative Fund, and the Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities (LMAPD) for selected programs. Estimated federal reimbursement for the 2016-17 fiscal year under these agreements is:

Cost Sharing with the Federal Government

	Revenue
1965 Indian Welfare Services Agreement	
Ontario Works	111,345,000
Subtotal	111,345,000
Social Housing Agreement	
Supportive Housing	2,356,196
Subtotal	2,356,196
Supporting Families Initiative Fund	
Family Responsibility Office	1,028,858
Subtotal	1,028,858
Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities	
Employment Services and Supports	49,825,467
Developmental Services	12,700,758
Subtotal	62,526,225
Total	\$177,256,279



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Statutes Administered by the Ministry

- [*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*](#)
- [*District Social Services Administration Boards Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. D.15*](#)
- [*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 which are the responsibility of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Responsibility for the Act is also shared with the Ministry of Children and Youth Services and the Ministry of Education, in so far as it relates to activities and programs respecting children and youth services and child care services and programs.
- [*Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997, S.O. 1997, c. 25, Schedule B*](#)
- [*Ontario Works Act, 1997, S.O. 1997, c. 25, Schedule A*](#)
Except in respect of Part IV which is the responsibility of the Ministry of the Attorney General.
- [*Services and Supports to Promote the Social Inclusion of Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act, 2008, S.O. 2008, c.14*](#)
This Act is being proclaimed in stages. Sections relating to the operation of funding entities and direct funding are not yet proclaimed.
- [*Social Work and Social Service Work Act, 1998, S.O. 1998, c. 31*](#)
- *Soldiers’ Aid Commission Act*, R.S.O. 1960, c. 377 (as amended by *The Soldiers’ Aid Commission Act, 1970*, S.O. 1970, c.83)

Agencies, Boards and Commissions

	2016-17 Estimates \$	2015-16 Interim Actuals \$	2014-15 Actuals \$
Soldiers' Aid Commission	253,200	189,900	189,900

The Soldiers' Aid Commission (SAC) provides financial assistance to veterans, their spouses or dependents who are in need when all other resources have been exhausted. An eligible veteran is a person in financial need who resides in Ontario, enlisted in the Canadian Armed Forces and served overseas or served with the armed forces in Canada during the First or Second World Wars or the Korean War. Support is provided to assist with the payment of home or health related expenses that veterans, their spouses or dependents may have difficulty affording.

MCSS provides the SAC with accommodations for meetings and administrative support, as well as annual funding of \$253,200 for payments to applicants approved for financial assistance. This includes \$100,000 for grants for applicants with non-overseas service. The relationship between SAC and the ministry is governed by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Commission and the Minister. The MOU was last renewed in 2007 and is in effect until 2017.

The applicant must have insufficient income and assets to pay for the service or the support he/she is requesting. The SAC employs a screening tool to assess financial need.

Financial assistance is provided to meet a specific health or home related need when all other resources have been exhausted. Funding is provided on an individual basis and is not provided for long-term, ongoing assistance.

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

The Commission celebrated its 100th anniversary in November 2015. A Treasury Board required agency mandate review is currently ongoing.

Overall Summary (Operating and Capital)

Mandate

The Ministry of Community and Social Services promotes resilient and inclusive communities through delivering and funding programs that help people achieve their potential, build independence and improve their quality of life.

Operating and Capital Summary by Vote

Description	2016-17 Estimates \$	Change from 2015-16 Estimates \$	Change from 2015-16 Estimates %	2015-16 Estimates \$	2015-16 Interim Actuals \$	2014-15 Actuals ¹ \$
OPERATING EXPENSE						
Ministry Administration	37,179,100	-2,095,600	(5.3%)	39,274,700	39,240,900	34,285,280
Adults' Services	11,341,724,100	357,878,900	3.3%	10,983,845,200	11,179,934,900	10,468,683,551
Total Operating Expense to be Voted	11,378,903,200	355,783,300	3.2%	11,023,119,900	11,219,175,800	10,502,968,831
Statutory Appropriations	39,611,914	0	0.0%	39,611,914	39,611,914	39,278,061
Ministry Total Operating Expense	11,418,515,114	355,783,300	3.2%	11,062,731,814	11,258,787,714	10,542,246,892
Consolidation	-18,280,800	-839,900	4.8%	-17,440,900	-18,568,700	-18,750,198
Ministry Total						

Operating Expense Including Consolidation	11,400,234,314	354,943,400	3.2%	11,045,290,914	11,240,219,014	10,523,496,694
OPERATING ASSETS						
Adults' Services	45,304,000	0	0.0%	45,304,000	41,004,000	45,295,100
Total Operating Assets to be Voted	45,304,000	0	0.0%	45,304,000	41,004,000	45,295,100
Ministry Total Operating Assets	45,304,000	0	0.0%	45,304,000	41,004,000	45,295,100
CAPITAL EXPENSE						
Adults' Services	39,000,000	-1,931,000	(4.7%)	40,931,000	38,236,000	14,804,543
Total Capital Expense to be Voted	39,000,000	-1,931,000	(4.7%)	40,931,000	38,236,000	14,804,543
Statutory Appropriations	28,314,700	-349,800	(1.2%)	28,664,500	26,104,500	13,165,010
Ministry Total Capital Expense	67,314,700	-2,280,800	(3.3%)	69,595,500	64,340,500	27,969,553
CAPITAL ASSETS						
Adults' Services	1,950,500	-1,340,700	(40.7%)	3,291,200	2,659,500	35,471,138
Total Capital Assets to be Voted	1,950,500	-1,340,700	(40.7%)	3,291,200	2,659,500	35,471,138
Ministry Total Capital Assets	1,950,500	-1,340,700	(40.7%)	3,291,200	2,659,500	35,471,138
Ministry Total Operating and Capital Including Consolidation (not including Assets)	11,467,549,014	352,662,600	3.2%	11,114,886,414	11,304,559,514	10,551,466,247



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Appendix: 2015-16 Annual Report

The [Ministry of Community and Social Services](#) helps Ontario's most vulnerable citizens with programs and services that support resilient and inclusive communities, and removes the obstacles that impede opportunity and participation in community life.

In 2015-16, the ministry made significant investments to improve and expand its programs, and we remain committed to improving access, quality and effectiveness to best meet the needs of our clients.

Our programs and services have become important gateways to employment and meaningful participation in the community. Our ultimate goal is greater inclusion for vulnerable people in all aspects of society.

The ministry's programs and services today must be so much more than they were in the past.

Ontarians are seeking programs that support community capacity building and promote opportunities for everyone to be included in the life and the economy of their communities. They also demand greater transparency, and a higher level of participation in decision-making. The ministry's clients aren't simply looking for a list of services from which to choose - they expect an integrated client experience.

The ministry is in step with these expectations.

Through social assistance - the [Ontario Disability Support Program](#) (ODSP) and [Ontario Works - programs for people with developmental disabilities](#), the [Family Responsibility Office](#), and the ministry's many [community services programs](#), the work of the ministry touches the lives of hundreds of thousands of Ontarians each year.

In 2015-16, projects throughout the ministry focused on delivering more targeted, integrated services and supports that better meet people's needs. This is complex work that requires thoughtful, forward-thinking solutions and modern technology to deliver the types of programs, services and supports that Ontarians today expect.

The ministry is also strongly positioned to meet the challenges these new expectations raise.

We have a committed and sensitive workforce whose primary interest is the well-being of vulnerable Ontarians. We have strong, collaborative ties with our community partners throughout Ontario who deliver our programs and services. And working closely with our community partners, we are bringing greater consistency to everything we do, so that Ontarians can expect the same quality of service regardless of where they live.

Over the past several years, the ministry has focused on:

- long-term social assistance reform;
- making progress on the evolution of the developmental services system through critical, targeted investments; and
- improving service delivery through more effective technologies and streamlined business processes.

In 2015-16, the ministry made important investments to support these priorities of helping vulnerable people and improving service quality.

Developmental Services

Ontario is well on the road to becoming a world leader in inclusion, choice and independence for people with developmental disabilities.

We have completed the second year of our three-year, \$810 million investment to strengthen community and developmental services. The ministry set some ambitious targets, and in some cases we exceeded our original commitments.

At the end of 2015-16, direct funding has been significantly increased so thousands more people and families can choose the programs that will help them achieve their goals.

- For [Special Services at Home](#) (SSAH), we eliminated the 2014 waitlist two years ahead of schedule, providing direct funding to 8,000 families.
- For [Passport](#), -we are more than half way to our target eliminating the 2014 Passport service registry of 13,000 individuals by 2017-18.

Our progress also includes:

- Funded new residential supports for more than 800 adults with developmental disabilities;
- Began implementing a multi-year plan to help communities match the right kinds of residential supports with the distinct needs of individuals, many of whom have high priority needs;
- Supported 38 new projects that will promote employment and support person-centred and sustainable services for people with developmental disabilities;
- Launched the second call for proposals to develop innovative housing solutions for adults with developmental disabilities, and funded 12 creative housing projects to expand the range of more flexible housing solutions;
- Launched the Independent Facilitation Demonstration Project in May 2015 to provide up to 1,100 individuals with person directed planning within the next two years, and built the capacity of grassroots independent facilitation organizations;
- Continued working with agencies, families and individuals to move away from sheltered workshops towards inclusive employment and other meaningful community participation.

We continue to work with our ministry partners to better coordinate and integrate services between ministries and programs, to improve efficiency and lead to more effective client outcomes and resource sustainability across the health and social services sectors.

Our developmental services investment also includes \$180 million over three years to support agencies and frontline workers. This investment will help agencies continue to provide high-quality services, hire and retain qualified staff, and better support the people they serve.

One of the most fundamental shifts in developmental services has been the move from institutions to community-based residential supports and services. This has heightened the need for more residential supports. The ministry's challenge is finding the right kinds of supports for each individual.

The growing need for a broader range of housing solutions that offer more choice and flexibility is the impetus behind the work of our [Developmental Services Housing Task Force](#) - the first cross-sector task force to tackle housing issues specifically for adults with developmental disabilities.

In March 2015, the Housing Task Force launched its first call for proposals, and the ministry approved the first 12 recommended projects for funding.

The ministry is investing up to \$3.47 million over the next two years in these creative and inclusive housing demonstration projects spearheaded by community agencies and partners. The Task Force made its second call for proposals in late 2015. The goal is to develop projects that could be replicated in other areas of Ontario, potentially leading to broader set of future residential options.

The ministry has also launched person-directed planning to help people with developmental disabilities choose what they want to do in life, so they can set their own goals and have increasingly more say on decisions that affect their lives.

The life goals of some adults with developmental disabilities include employment. To that end, the ministry has invested nearly \$8 million in the [Employment and Modernization Fund](#) as part of our \$810 million investment strategy to support 23 new projects that will promote employment and 15 projects that will help modernize services for people with developmental disabilities. The goal is to foster a culture change and make meaningful and competitive employment accessible and available for adults with developmental disabilities.

The ministry has selected projects that focus on key areas:

- Customized employment initiatives
- Assisting community programs to meet their inclusivity goals
- Helping agencies collaborate more closely
- Cross-sector training collaboration
- Developing a provincial Centre of Excellence on employment
- Transitioning individuals from sheltered workshops to community employment

These are the kinds of projects that will directly benefit adults with developmental disabilities and their families, providing more opportunities for choice, to fully participate in their communities, and ultimately, live as independently as possible.

The ministry has been working to help build responsive, sustainable person-centred services. Since their creation in 2011, the [Developmental Services Ontario](#) offices, known as DSOs, have provided individuals and families with a single point of access to apply for provincially-funded adult developmental services. DSOs help to ensure that everyone applying for services and supports are subject to consistent eligibility and assessment criteria across the province.

There has been a lot of work underway at DSOs focussing on:

- Increasing the number of assessors to reduce the time that individuals and families have to wait.
- Better connecting individuals to available services and supports.

In addition, a project to improve the DS provincial IT case management system, Developmental Services Consolidated Information System (DSCIS) will improve the ability to match individuals to available resources in their community and provide more accurate and up-to-date information to support system planning.

Another key element in building a sophisticated, responsive developmental services system is coordinating and integrating supports available outside of the ministry's developmental services. Several cross-government initiatives are also underway that will help people move more seamlessly between systems to respond to their needs in employment, affordable housing, and poverty reduction.

This is especially important when managing an individual's complex medical needs, or during periods of life transition, as in the cases of the 1,500 children with developmental disabilities who turn 18 each year. For example, the ministry has established an Integrated Framework for Transition Planning for Young People with Developmental Disabilities with the ministries of Education and Children and Youth.

Transforming developmental services depends on maintaining a healthy and responsive community agency sector. The approximately 370 community agencies across Ontario are vital to supporting the service needs and expectations of people with developmental disabilities and their families.

We are supporting agencies to move to a more person-centred way of delivering programming and support - one that takes each individual's situation, goals and preferences into consideration and involves them in making key decisions about their future and how they participate in the community.

The ministry's action plan and investment strategy continues to strengthen and enhance the system through further transformation by:

- Promoting independence and inclusion through employment opportunities
- Enhancing personalized planning, navigation and case management
- Improved residential supports using an individual-focussed, multi-year planning model, with immediate action focused on youth leaving CAS care and individuals in urgent need
- Promoting creative housing solutions and improving supportive housing opportunities
- Advancing cross-ministry collaboration including healthcare access initiatives
- Expanding information management capacity and continuing to improve the technology, and
- Driving innovation and efficiency in service delivery.

Social Assistance and Employment Supports

Social assistance affects more than 900,000 people every day, with more than 480,000 receiving ODSP, and more than 450,000 in Ontario Works.

The ministry recognizes that we must continue to implement social assistance reform while maintaining an effective social safety net for those in need. Maintaining that balance is critically linked to the broader government efforts to support employment and reduce poverty.

Over the long-term, the ministry envisions an Ontario with a modern income security system, where all low-income Ontarians have access to integrated and effective human services that will help to reduce poverty, support inclusion and enable them to participate in our economy and communities.

The ministry's objective is for a simpler program, one with fewer rules and a clear and rational way to set rates, balancing the principles of adequacy, fairness, and the incentive to work.

There are four overarching pillars that drive the ministry's social assistance reform:

- *Improving employment outcomes* by enhancing supports and incentives to work, with an emphasis on clients more distant from the labour market.
- *Improving income and access to core supports outside the system* to promote greater independence.
- *Strengthening integrity and accountability* through greater public transparency and outcomes-based business practices.
- *Improving client service* by introducing modern, responsive service delivery.

The ministry made progress in improving the social assistance system over the past several years with important first steps to increase incomes, promote better employment outcomes.

Through the 2015 Budget, the government announced rate increases in social assistance with priority for those in deepest need. Single people without children received an increase of \$300 a year to help with the cost of food, clothing and other personal needs. Rates for families receiving Ontario Works increased by \$120 a year for a single parent with two children and about \$156 a year for a couple with two children.

Promoting employment remains a fundamental pillar of the system. All Ontarians - regardless of their economic status or background - should have an equal opportunity to reach their full potential and contribute to the prosperity of our province.

The ministry developed new policies to promote work while ensuring that employment services are effective and easy to navigate.

We began by making work pay.

Today, individuals on social assistance can earn up to \$200 a month without reducing their income support. Earned income of more than \$200 is subject to a 50 per cent earnings exemption. As a result, more families can get a foothold in the labour market and see a direct, positive impact on their quality of life.

During 2015-16, the ministry continued to help social assistance recipients find and keep meaningful employment while providing the benefits they need.

- In 2014-15, approximately one per cent of the Ontario Works caseload left the program for employment, on average, each month.
- The average monthly earnings among Ontario Works cases increased by about 36 per cent between 2005-06 and 2014-15.
- In December 2015, 11.6 per cent of ODSP cases received employment earnings compared to 8.8 per cent in October 2003.

The ministry is planning a gradual, phased-in approach to introduce the Reloadable Payment Card, with implementation commencing in Spring 2016 for social assistance recipients who are unable to open or maintain a bank account. This initiative helps reduce clients' reliance on expensive cheque cashing services, replacing lost or stolen cheques, and removes the stigma of the 'welfare cheque'.

We have collaborated with other ministries, specifically with the ministries of [Health and Long-term Care](#), [Finance](#) and [Children and Youth Services](#), in an effort to provide benefits to more Ontarians by moving them outside of social assistance, including the integration of dental benefits for children in low income families into the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's [Healthy Smiles Ontario](#) program as of January 1, 2016.

The ministry has also long recognized the extra burden rate increases can have on municipal budgets, and where possible, we have minimized that burden. Municipalities were not required to cost-share the Ontario Works rate increase until January 2016, when their share became 5.8 per cent, moving to zero in 2018 when the full cost of Ontario Works benefits will be uploaded. Municipalities will have saved \$349 million since the upload began in 2010.

We also know that improving social assistance isn't only about improving the policies and the programs. Improving the way we deliver those programs matters as well.

In November 2014 the ministry launched a new computer system called the Social Assistance Management System, or SAMS. The ministry uses SAMS to administer Ontario Works, the Ontario Disability Support Program and Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities. SAMS replaced the Service Delivery Model Technology, an out-dated technology first introduced more than a decade ago.

The decision to move to new technology was not taken lightly. An update was necessary because of the ministry's need for a more flexible system that can enable social assistance reform. There is no question that 2015-16 has been challenging. However, the ministry has confronted those challenges, and is returning to stability and enabling us to move forward. Because of the work undertaken in recent months, the ministry has made important progress to complete the transition.

Throughout these challenges, ministry staff and delivery partners have worked tirelessly to ensure that our social assistance clients are getting the payments they need and that the ministry is continuing to deliver vital services that vulnerable Ontarians rely on.

As the ministry works on business recovery, staff are collaborating with our delivery partners on all major activities and decisions.

SAMS is important technology that provides the foundation for future integrated human services delivery and social

assistance transformation.

Family Responsibility Office

The **[Family Responsibility Office](#)** (FRO) provides client-centred services to more than 380,000 support recipients and payors every year, receiving an average of more than 4,000 calls per day.

Collections continued to track upward and totaled \$697 million in 2015-16, an increase of \$19 million compared to collections of \$678 million in 2014-15.

With a program cost of \$54.7 million in 2015-16, FRO collected more than \$12 in support for families for every dollar spent.

Since October 2003, FRO has collected more than \$8 billion in support payments for families.

In 2015-16, FRO continued to build on its investments in technology and enhance its business processes to further improve frontline client service.

The ministry is gradually rolling out access to a secure, online self-service tool which will allow clients to view support obligations and active enforcement information, view financial information and print account statements, send information and attachments to case contacts, and request call backs from case contacts.

Community Services

Supporting Women Experiencing Violence

In 2014-15, the ministry provided approximately \$145 million for programs that help women experiencing violence and their children find safety and rebuild their lives, including:

- \$83 million for 96 emergency shelter agencies to support 2,022 beds dedicated for use by abused women and their children,
- \$29 million for counselling services for women and children,
- \$15 million to help abused women find housing and connect with local community supports.
- \$6 million to help children recover from witnessing abuse
- \$3 million for crisis telephone counselling, and
- \$10 million for other VAW programs, including Domestic Violence Community Coordinating Committees

Approximately 10,390 women and 7,330 children were served at VAW shelters in 2014-15.

In 2015-16, the ministry invested \$1.93 million to help build a new women’s shelter to serve Elgin County. The shelter, expected to open in June 2016, will replace the existing Women’s House Emergency Shelter to better meet the needs of local women and children who have experienced violence in their homes.

In March 2015, the ministry approved two-year funding for Family Services Ontario for a pilot project to provide joint counselling programs for couples experiencing situational couple violence. The pilot study will assess the effectiveness of conjoint counselling for lower-risk situational violence and whether the early intervention would lead to a reduction of violence against women.

In 2015-16, the ministry worked closely with the **[Ontario Women's Directorate](#)** and other supporting ministries to support the **[Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan, “It’s Never Okay”](#)**. Ministry initiatives and contributions include:

- Enhancing the focus of Domestic Violence Community Coordinating Committees and action of sexual violence awareness;
- Exploring the use of Community Hubs for improved access to the violence against women system;
- Increasing violence against women staff capacity to serve survivors of sexual violence; and
- Supporting a review of exiting counselling services and helplines available to sexual violence survivors.

In 2015-16, the ministry worked with the violence against women sector to develop standards for shelters, along with enhanced monitoring procedures, that will address service planning and delivery to ensure consistent and high-quality services. The ministry released the shelter standards in September and is targeting full implementation by early 2017-18.

Ontario is also providing additional support to VAW agencies, including shelters, in rural, remote and Northern communities that provide programs and services for women and their children who have experienced domestic violence.

As announced in January 2016, the Rural Realities Fund is a two-year, \$1 million program available to VAW agencies facing unique challenges in delivery of services in rural, remote and Northern communities. The fund supports creative solutions to service delivery challenges for women and their children accessing Violence Against Women services in these communities.

Interpreter and Intervenor Services

The ministry continued its multi-year strategy to transform and modernize **[intervenor services](#)**, in collaboration with service providers, individuals and families. The renewal strategy is aimed at increasing the effectiveness of the program and making intervenor services more fair, accountable and sustainable.

Following the release of the Intervenor Services Program Policy Framework, which establishes the policy foundation for the program and sets the strategic direction for guiding the development of the funding framework, interim operational guidelines were issued in January 2015.

In the fall of 2014, the ministry began work with stakeholders to develop a new funding framework to set a consistent approach to the allocation of program resources. The ministry continued to consult on the funding framework throughout 2015.

The ministry is also continuing its work on an Intervenor Human Resources Strategy introduced in 2013, which supports education and skills development among frontline staff and management and the creation of core competencies and learning pathways.

The [Interpreter Services](#) Program Framework was developed in consultation with the Canadian Hearing Society will increase transparency and accountability for the program, and will help guide operations and inform future decision making.

Social Workers and Social Service Workers

The ministry has introduced a new support for Ontario social workers and social service workers to promote professionalism and quality service with the [Social Worker and Social Service Worker Professional Development Fund](#).

This two-year pilot project is funding professional development opportunities for Ontario social workers and social service workers who are registered members in good standing with the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers and who work in Ontario. This investment, capped at \$500,000 per year, provides social workers and social service workers with access to up to \$300 in financial support. The goal of the Fund is to ensure the province has the right supply of professionals available to care for its vulnerable population and their complex needs.

Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Strategy

The [Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Strategy](#) (AHWS) now includes over 450 health and healing projects across the province. The Strategy is a partnership between five government ministries - led by MCSS and including the ministries of Aboriginal Affairs, Children and Youth Services, Health and Long-Term Care and the Ontario Women's Directorate - and First Nations and Aboriginal Provincial/Territorial Organizations.

In 2015-16, the government dedicated more than \$46 million to the Strategy, including approximately \$29 million from the ministry. Building on an increased investment of \$10 million in 2014-15, the ministry worked collaboratively with funded Aboriginal organizations to increase access to services such as crisis intervention, counselling, supports for women, children and families at risk, and health and family violence and education.

Ontario will continue to work with Aboriginal partners and service providers to build on the Strategy's successes over the years and make positive impacts for more Aboriginal individuals and families.

Infrastructure Program

In 2015-16, the ministry continued to implement its multi-year asset management plan for the ministry's funded transfer payment agency sites (over 3400 sites) and directly operated sites (53 sites). These sites are used to deliver a variety of ministry programs and services.

- The asset management plan focused on sustaining existing assets to support the delivery of ministry-funded programs, supporting program enhancements to meet service demands and enabling program transformation.

In 2015-16 and 2014-15, the ministry invested \$4.0 million in the new Valoris for Children and Adults of Prescott-Russell multi-service building to make it easier for residents in the area to access a wide range of services and programs in one place. This community hub is expected to be completed in 2016.

Ministry Interim Expenditures 2015-16

	Ministry Interim Expenditures 2015-16 (\$M)
Operating	11,258.8
Capital	64.3
BPS Consolidation	(18.6)
Staff Strength (as of February 2016)	3,736.2 Full-time equivalents



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