

The District of Thunder Bay
Social Services Administration
Board (TBDSSAB)

Ontario Works Employment
Programs



Evaluation Findings and Recommendations
January 9, 2012

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Introduction

Introduction

The opportunity

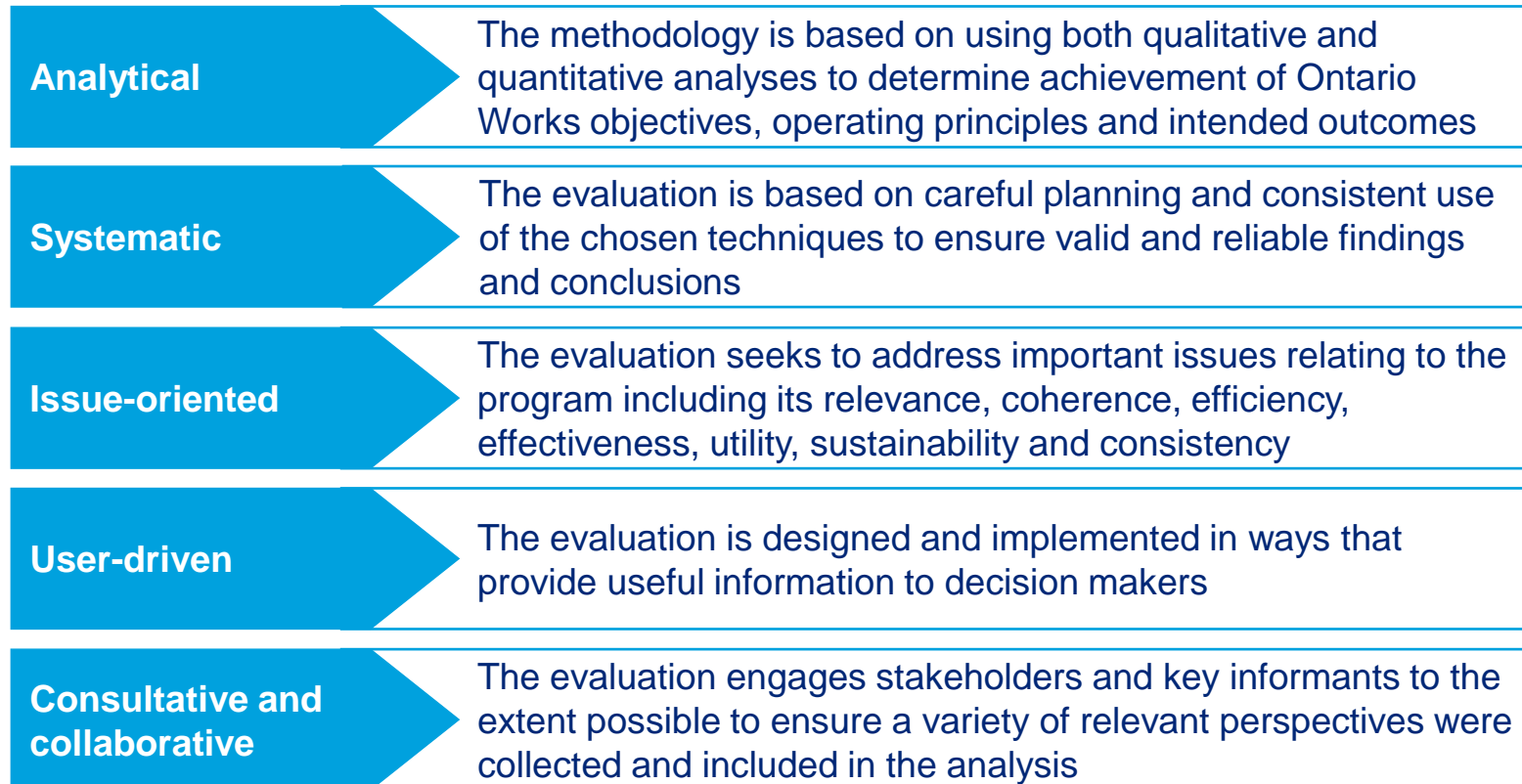
- Recent changes in the funding model for the Ontario Works program has resulted in an increase to the gross annual budget by approximately \$3.8 million
 - TBDSSAB has the opportunity to develop and deliver employment programs that achieve a greater return on investment
 - Development and delivery of relevant and successful employment programs relies on TBDSSAB's understanding of current program performance, client needs, community economic needs and gaps in services
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The results

- Results of the review of the Ontario Works employment programs will provide TBDSSAB with direction on:
 - How to better meet the needs of participants in the District
 - How to better meet the needs of Aboriginal participants
 - How to improve overall employment services and performance outcomes
 - The evaluation will drive towards an implementation plan that will act as the foundation for TBDSSAB's employment program strategy
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Project Methodology

- Deloitte’s approach to the program evaluation was driven by five (5) principles:



Project Activities

- The tasks undertaken to assess all elements of the program included:
 - Gathering of **data**, (e.g. desk research and documentation review regarding program performance and other jurisdiction best practices)
 - Gathering of **stakeholders' opinions and perceptions**, through surveys, interviews, and focus groups
 - Assessing **economic situation** within the District of Thunder Bay
 - Developing an **inventory** of agencies and services to support analysis
 - Analyzing data using appropriate methods of **qualitative and quantitative analysis**
 - Summarizing **key findings, lessons learned and opportunities for improvement**
 - Formulating **recommendations and conclusions**

Consultation Summary

- Consultation activities were selected to maximize participation by staff and stakeholders and ensure representation from across the Thunder Bay District to the extent possible given timelines. The follow table summarizes the consultations that took place as part of the evaluation:

Stakeholder group	Method of consultation	Number of participants
Nipigon area stakeholders	Focus group (teleconference)	3
Schreiber area stakeholders	Focus group (teleconference)	4
Marathon area stakeholders	Focus group (teleconference)	4
Thunder Bay stakeholders	Focus group (in person)	15
Geraldton/Longlac area stakeholders	Focus group (teleconference)	4
Nipigon area stakeholders	Focus group (in person)	2
ERC staff	Focus group (in person)	13
North Cumberland staff	Focus group (in person)	10
District staff	Focus group (teleconference)	3
Funded programs	Interview	2
Stakeholders/staff not participating in a focus group	Survey	40
Ontario Works staff from other jurisdictions	Interview	1
Local economic development professionals	Interview	2

Document Review Summary

- The table below summarizes the documents reviewed as part of this evaluation. A detailed document summary can be found in Appendix F of this report.

Program and services evaluation (including Inventory)	Economic development analysis	Other jurisdiction information
TBDSSAB Service Agreements with funders (province and municipalities)	Building a Superior Workforce 2011 update	Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board Ontario Works Plans
Ontario Works Service Plans (2006-07, 2008-09, 2010-11)	The Northern Growth Plan	District of Nipissing Ontario Works Service Plan 2006-2007
Program Performance Reports	Northwest Ontario Labour Market Monitor	Kenora District Services Board Ontario Works Service Plan
Ontario Works Statistics – Program Data (including ASI & March of Dimes)	Thunder Bay CEDC – various reports and publications	City of Hamilton – Ontario Works Service Plan 2010-2011
Social Assistance Review Notes and Workshop Report	District of Thunder Bay Labour Market Inventory	
ERC Budget Information and Activities Reports	Municipal websites for Greenstone, Terrace Bay, Marathon, Schreiber, Nipigon	
ODSP Statistics Data		
211 Service, Thunder Bay District offices websites, YellowPages (inventory compilation)		
Evaluation of the Jobs Now Pilot		

Evaluation Limitations

- There are inherent limitations with completing any evaluation especially those undertaken within restrictive timelines: stakeholders may not be available; data may not be complete etc. Limitations relevant to this evaluation are outlined below:
 - Program participants were not consulted directly on their perceptions of the programs and services due to constraints posed by project timelines
 - Financial data was not available or broken down to a specific program level in some cases, making it difficult to determine efficiency and effectiveness
 - Data was not always available to provide an understanding of trends
 - Stakeholder participation in data collection activities was low, which may be due in part to the restrictive timeframe resulting in a larger proportion of staff input

Key Findings

Evaluation Measures

Key Findings – Evaluation Measures

- We have presented our findings in the tables below by evaluation measures developed in the evaluation plan. A copy of the evaluation framework can be found in Appendix A. In addition, data collection guides and detailed statistical summaries can be found in Appendix B and C respectively.
 - Program relevance
 - Addressing employment barriers
 - Employment needs of participants
 - Employment opportunities and skills demands
 - Program accessibility
 - Program alignment
 - Program performance
 - Delivery meets expectations and standards
 - Program objectives or outputs
 - Program goals or outcomes
 - Strengths and weaknesses
 - Cost effectiveness
 - Value

Program Relevance – Key Findings

Addressing employment barriers	Qualitative results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants lack basic needs; barriers precede any need for employment programming (housing, addictions, mental health) and programs available to address these needs are limited • Lack of motivation to seek employment is a significant barrier <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Loss of benefits when employed – Benefit is more income than applicant was receiving previously – Family history of social support • Transportation is a barrier to participation in programs across all geographic areas and support is minimal compared to the need • Daycare was cited as a barrier in all areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Availability – Cost – Transportation to and from – Not available for evening and weekend employment • Participants have a variety of training needs and the level of support to overcome this barrier varies among communities; some are available periodically based on numbers; some are available via distance; some must travel to Thunder Bay for access
	Quantitative results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please refer to the table on the following slide

Program Relevance – Key Findings

Barriers addressed by TBDSSAB employment programs

	Addictions	Mental Health	Transportation	Childcare	Literacy	Education	Employment training	Life Skills
Employment Resource Centre (training programs)							√	√
Addictions Services Initiative (ASI)	√	√						
Community placement program			√	√			√	
Learning, Earning and Parenting (LEAP)					√	√	√	√
Child Care				√				
Employment Placement Program – (March of Dimes)							√	
Lakehead Adult Education Centre (internal and external)					√	√		
Lakehead District School Board (SAM/MISOL)			√		√	√		
One-time Employment Funded Projects (2010-2011)								
Employment Training and Internship Program							√	
Nipigon District Memorial Hospital – Community Handi-Van			√					
\$100 firefighting certification Training							√	
Thunderbird Friendship Centre			√					√

* Indicates specific travel services are provided, travel funding is available to all Ontario Works participants who require it participation

Program Relevance – Key Findings

Employment needs of participants

Qualitative results

- All stakeholders stated that transportation and childcare are not being addressed by employment programs
- Limited availability of medical professionals (ex. Doctor, NP, Psychologist)
- Client base has changed, aboriginal participants are now estimated to make up over 50% of case load
 - Transition to urban lifestyle challenging
 - Lack of culturally specific programs
- For those that are employable without multiple barriers, services are available and meeting their needs (training, resume support)
- Clients interested in pursuing post secondary education to improve employability (sustainable jobs) are not eligible for Ontario Works
- Clients need more support finding jobs (linking client to job)
- Thunder Bay respondents indicated that more assistance was needed with resume writing and interview preparation
- All respondents identified that programs are focused on job acquisition not on retention
- Several respondents indicated that program supports for clients with multiple barriers are too linear with a focus on getting a job before basic needs are met

Quantitative results

- Please refer to the table on the following slide

Program Relevance – Key Findings

- The table below provides a breakdown of participation trends over a four year period.

Programs	2008	2009	2010	2011 (Sept)
ERC Training	464	435	497	422
ACCEPT and Post-ACCEPT	410	484	126	N/A
Community Placement (Informal)	204	146	191	N/A
Community Placement (Formal)	71	49	13	N/A
Employment Placement	66	64	52	N/A
Employment Placement ASI	16	34	14	N/A
ASI Active Clients *				
Criminal Reference Checks	80	56	67	N/A
Intensive Casework	77	224	178	N/A
Utilization of ERC and Other Services	18040	25079	21500	15953

- Data provided on ASI active client lists from 2008 to 2011 did not show the unique # of participants in the program, making it difficult to determine the total figure over the years and view the difference between repeat and carry over participants compared to net new.
- Numbers do not represent unique contacts – where programs are composed of multiple modules participation is counted for each module potentially overstating numbers
- Values cannot be validated as accurate participation numbers but are presented as an indicator of program usage

Program Relevance – Key Findings

Employment opportunities and skills demands

Qualitative results

- Respondents across all areas indicated that there are limited jobs available
- Current training offerings address entry level skills
- Several districts indicated that available employment is seasonal or part-time; training is not the issue but rather funding penalties and lack of financial incentive to work
- Participants indicated that opportunities are available in several skilled trades
- Economic develop research supports anticipated increase in demand for skilled trades related to construction and mining
- Interviewed economic development professionals indicate a local demand for skilled trades with opportunities being presented for seasonal employment in the construction sector

Quantitative results

- 2011 labour market inventory for the Thunder Bay district indicates that the greatest growth is anticipated to be in the construction trades
- Demand for skilled trades is indicated across all key sectors in the Thunder Bay district
- General labour represents a small percentage of positions anticipated to be hired in the next 12-18 months
- Skills needed to meet job market requirements in the region are primarily in the areas of technology and professional (management, HR, team building)

Program Relevance – Key Findings

Program accessibility

Qualitative results

- Services are only available on a part time basis in many regions
- Applicants experience difficulty completing application requirements
- Residents of smaller communities are required to leave their community to access programs
- In several districts, community established interagency committees improve access to programs by creating a “no wrong door” approach across agencies
- Mental health and addiction services have wait lists
- Programs are not located at N. Cumberland St. and many clients do not follow up when they have to go elsewhere
- Concerns about client privacy is a limitation when making referrals
- Using the flexibility that the system allows (e.g. initial PA for job search only) improves access
- 56% of survey respondents disagreed that the Ontario Works application process is easy to follow

Quantitative results

- Intensive Casework ODSP Referrals* were 12 in 2007, 166 in 2009, 178 in 2010 and 141 to September in 2011.
- ASI Referrals were 319 in 2007, 181 in 2008, 72 in 2009
- ASI Waitlist was 259 in 2010 increasing to 275 in 2011

* Please note that statistics were not available for 2008.

Program Relevance – Key Findings

Alignment with municipal and provincial priorities

Qualitative results

- Most respondents were not aware of the provincial and municipal priorities
- Assumption that employment and reduced dependency on social services would be aligned with all levels of government
- One municipality was mentioned as working to increase population numbers using inexpensive housing as a draw thereby creating increased competition for a limited number of employment opportunities
- Municipal and provincial priorities are on a more macro level; not individual employability

Quantitative results

- Municipality of Greenstone is focused on supporting mining development and the Ring of Fire initiative which is anticipated to create significant employment in the region
- Strategic plan for Marathon includes training and employment as key priorities for creating a high standard of living
- Schreiber is currently in the process of developing a strategic plan
- Terrace Bay strategic priorities revolve around business retention, municipal services and building healthcare services
- Strategic priorities for the City of Thunder Bay in the area of employment focus on development of a knowledge based economy
- Thunder Bay has put a focus on supporting substance abuse issues

Program Performance – Key Findings

Meeting program expectations and standards

Qualitative results

- Program staff expressed that there is not sufficient time to spend with clients to adequately identify their goals and barriers with respect to employment
- Staff and stakeholders observed that Ontario Works program can be effective at assisting clients to find employment but does not support retention
- Caseloads and staff shortages impede the ability to conduct follow-up meetings on schedule
- 80% of survey respondents did not agree that there were enough staff and resources to maintain good client service standards
- 16% of respondents felt that current reporting processes allow Ontario Works to track and measure success
- Program reports track training attendance and participation; several do not have measures for success defined

Quantitative results

- No quantitative data found for indicators

Program Performance – Key Findings

Program objectives Outputs	Qualitative results	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There were few comments during focus groups regarding program outputs and objectives; comments that were made indicated that training and referrals to assist Ontario Works clients are successful in the short term but do not feel that job success is sustainable• 76% of survey respondents agree that Ontario Works employment programs are meeting their objectives• Staff indicated that at times staffing levels are too low to provide service
	Quantitative results	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Over the three year period from 2008-2010 there has been an overall increase in participation in ERC training and drop-in services – the participation rates spiked in 2009 and then declined in 2010 but remained greater than 2008 volumes• 2008 saw an increase in a number of services provided at ERC• ACCEPT/Post ACCEPT training saw a decline in 2010 to 126 from 484 in the previous year• Refer to slide 14 for a breakdown of training and program participation

- Numbers do not represent unique contacts – where programs are composed of multiple modules participation is counted for each module potentially overstating numbers
- Values cannot be validated as accurate participation numbers but are presented as an indicator of program usage

Program Performance – Key Findings

Program goals Impacts and effects Outcomes

Qualitative results

- Funding agreement with the Province of Ontario identifies the following outcome measures:
 - Average employment earnings and earnings at exit
 - Percentage of clients with employment income
 - Percentage of caseload exiting to employment
- Participants in all focus groups indicated that the employment programs are not successful at achieving the longer term goal of sustained employment
- Several commented that program goals are not realistic. Two reasons were cited:
 - Employment is not available
 - Clients have multiple barriers and are not ready for employment
- Employment may not be achieved but clients move along continuum towards improved employability
- Additional outcomes:
 - Improved self esteem
- Sustainable employment as an overall outcome is difficult to measure as the tracking process for those exiting to employment is short term (follow up after a certain length of time is not currently tracked for all programs)

Quantitative results

- Average earnings of participants exceeded targets in 2008-2010 and has increased from \$707.22 to \$748.65 over the period
- Average employment earnings at exit have exceeded targets from 2008-2010 increasing from \$929.94 to \$1133.39 over the period
- Percent of caseload with employment income has declined over the period from 2008-2010 from 10.9% to 9.1% and did not meet targets in 2009 and 2010
- Percent of caseload exiting to employment has remained fairly steady over the 2008-2010 period and has achieved targeted values

Program Performance – Key Findings

Strengths and weaknesses

Qualitative results

Strengths

- Employment placement programs are successful in building experience
- Collaboration with community service providers in District
- Intensive case management program effective at moving higher need s clients to needed services
- Wage subsidy programs are effective (employer incentive)
- Staff are identified as strengths by survey respondents and during focus groups
- Variety of programs to meet an array of needs
- Number of visitors to Employment Resource Centre support that it is seen as a valuable resource

Weaknesses

- Program does not meet all social needs/barriers
- Limited outreach to assist clients once programs are completed
- Staff travel to District and are not always available
- Not enough time for caseworkers to determine client needs
- Funding structure perpetuates dependency – no incentive to accept minimum wage or part time employment
- No linkage to employment – no outreach to support transition and improve retention

Quantitative results

- Job retention rate values not available beyond 2008
- Employment income of participants has increased each year from 2008-2010
- Increase in employment income is 5.8% over this period; inflation rate for the same period has remained below 3%
- Percentages of participants with employment earnings or exiting for employment have declined slightly in the period 2008-2010
- Caseload has increased over 20% in this same period

Program Performance – Key Findings

Cost effectiveness	Qualitative results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ASI program relieves strain on other services such as ambulance and fire services, utilization of hospital services, health care providers, and child and family services – the total cost of substance use is estimated to be \$151.9 million in the District of Thunder Bay
	Quantitative results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to the table below for a snapshot of program expenditures over a four year period. Costs for the ERC are not broken down by program or service offering therefore effectiveness measures can not be calculated Based on overall participation at ERC (total numbers of participants in all training and services) the cost per participant has increased annually by 30%

Programs	2008	2009	2010	2011 (YTD Q2)
ERC	\$1,484,686.00	\$732,797.00	\$811,930.00	\$791,134.00
Addiction Services Initiative (ASI) TBCC Employment Placement (MOD)** (total \$ wage subsidy payments to Employers + Total \$ Job Placement fees to MOD)	\$514,479.01	\$537,784.50	\$532,221.53	\$253,269.01
	N/A	N/A	\$53,098.42	\$40,058.00

• Total figures do not take into consideration the government subsidies and provincial funding that offset total expenditures

• **Employment Placement total figures do not include ASI Employment Placement

Program Performance – Key Findings

Value	Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The measure of economy is the total cost per program • Refer to previous slide for a breakdown of program costs.
	Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collection process for programs and training is inconsistent on a year to year basis – this makes it difficult to consolidate data and provide meaningful statistics. • The measure of efficiency is the total cost per participant. Based on the last complete year of stats (2010), a cost per participant is identified for the ERC, Employment Placement and ASI: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – ERC: ($\\$ 811,930.00/21,500^*$) = \$38.00 per participant (assumption is that the total utilization of the ERC and other services includes the number of participants from all programs) – Employment Placement: ($\\$53,098.42/52$) = \$1021.00 (does not include ASI employment placement) – ASI – TBCC: active client list data provided does not give a unique number of participants, therefore the approximate number of participants is difficult determine for this calculation
	Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The measure of a “successful participant” is not clearly defined for all programs, and there is a greater focus on output measures such as attendance compared to outcomes • The measure of effectiveness is the total cost per successful program participant • Not available as costs are not broken down by program

Key Findings

Other Jurisdictions and Economic Development

Other Jurisdictions

- A high-level scan of Ontario Works employment programs was conducted of four jurisdictions with a focus on the key challenges facing participants, the programs and services offered and the model of delivery for the programs and services. A further interview was conducted with the Kenora District Services Board as they face similar economic, geographic and/or cultural challenges. The key findings from this jurisdictional review are summarized below and detailed findings can be found in Appendix D:
 - In general, similar programming is offered across all jurisdictions (literacy, life skills, job specific training, job readiness skills)
 - Addictions and mental health programming not evident in jurisdictions reviewed
 - Partnerships with Aboriginal agencies are established to provide culturally appropriate programming for employment training and life skills
 - In Kenora District, Aboriginal agencies are invited to participate in life skills training offered through Ontario Works, separate training is not provided for Aboriginal clients
 - All jurisdictions indicate the use of community partnerships to offer services
 - Each of the jurisdictions reviewed offer programs that create a direct link to the job market either through the provision of employment outreach or job development services

Economic Development Analysis

- Summary of economic development analyses is summarized below and on the pages that follow. Detailed findings can be found in Appendix E.
 - Economic development activity is focused on expanding the mining sector as well as growing Thunder Bay as a knowledge based economy
 - Decline in the forestry industry has had a negative impact on all communities
 - 2011 labour market inventory indicates that positions expected to be hired in the Thunder Bay District in the next 12-18 months are primarily in the skilled trades
 - Perceived skills needed to meet job market conditions are focused on technology and management skills
 - Construction sector is expected to have the largest demand for trades people
 - Small gains are expected in the area of general employment and labourers
 - Seasonal employment continues to be available in most communities in the Thunder Bay District

Economic Development Analysis

Key Findings by District

Thunder Bay

- Decline of call centres has reduced number of entry level positions available
- Increasing focus on the development of a knowledge based economy
- Large construction initiatives are anticipated to create employment but will likely require trades certification
- Development opportunities in mining sector but current opportunities are primarily in professional sector (e.g. geologists)

Geraldton

- Primary development activities are focused on mining exploration with initiatives like the Ring of Fire

Manitouwadge

- Construction and mine site job opportunities are anticipated through Still Water Project and potential super pit gold mine
- Jobs available in service industry at entry level positions
- Mining us considered to be a driver of employment opportunity

Schreiber

- Nipigon and Red Rock are hub for services; opportunities are around government services, health care and retail
- Surrounding smaller communities are tourism-based with seasonal employment opportunities
- Mill in Terrace Bay continues as a major employer; grade 12 is a requirement

Conclusions and Recommendations

Summary of Key Findings by Evaluation Measure

Relevance	Conclusion
Do programs address identified barriers to employment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs offered are aligned to identified barriers to employment • Not all identified barriers are being adequately serviced by programs (addictions, mental health, access to childcare, access to transportation)
Do programs address identified employment needs of participants?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current programs address some of the needs identified by participants • There is limited capacity (internally and externally) to meet employment needs in certain areas • Gaps include access to medical professionals, addictions services, transportation, child care, culturally specific programs
Are programs meeting the current and projected employment opportunities and skills demands?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large scale economic or employer opportunities are understood and incorporated into service plan • Limited capacity within DSSAB to determine and track employment opportunities and skills demands • Limited direct linkages to employers to understand skills demands and create employment opportunities • Limited supports provided once client achieves employment to improve opportunity for long term job retention
Does the design of program(s) facilitate access by targeted clients?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separate facilities for intake at North Cumberland and employment services at ERC meant that some clients did not follow through with the referral • Improved communication with other service providers has been successful in some areas and would improve access for all • Part time staffing in district offices limits access • Limited capacity of specialized case worker
Do programs align with Ontario Works, DSSAB, municipal and provincial priorities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was an overall lack of awareness of municipal and provincial priorities • Alignment with Thunder Bay, Greenstone and Marathon evidenced by published strategic plans (economic development or employment and training identified as a priority)

Summary of Key Findings by Evaluation Measure

Performance	Conclusion
Did program delivery meet expectations and standards?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No program delivery standards or expectations were set or documented • Programs met established provincial outcome targets • Stakeholders indicated that more time is required to properly assess client needs
Were the objectives of the program(s) met?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training opportunities and employment activities were provided for clients of Ontario Works • TBDSSAB is very responsive to the needs of their clients and provided opportunities to overcome employment barriers as they were identified • Target objectives are not documented for employment programs
Were the goals of the programs met?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program goals are not articulated outside of provincial measures for funding
What are the programs strengths and weaknesses?	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service plan demonstrates a good foundation of understanding of the communities they are serving, the needs of their clients, and the barriers to employment • The dedication, commitment and skills of ERC staff and availability of programs and services • Variety of programs and services to meet an array of needs <p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of formal communication between service providers in Thunder Bay • Lack of formalized link to employers and support for sustained employment • More time needed to assess client needs • Lack of performance measures and data for internal and funded service delivery
Can programming be delivered more cost-effectively?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial data was not available by program area and therefore effectiveness of programming could not be calculated
Does the program provide value for the money?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to quantify the value provided due to inconsistent record keeping • Stakeholder consultation confirms perceived value to employment programs • Incremental results are not captured through employment outcome indicators but provide value moving participants towards employability

Recommendations

- We have developed 11 recommendations to address the challenges and issues being encountered, and present them for consideration in the following categories:

Category One: System design

- Advocate for Ontario Works legislative reform to reduce systemic barriers
- Facilitate delivery of integrated programming
- Develop and implement a structured means for communication and referrals among service providers in each of the Districts and in Thunder Bay

Category Two: Administration and reporting

- Align financial record keeping with program and service offerings
- Establish evaluation measures and indicators for programs and services that capture program outcomes beyond the provincial measures and incorporate into reporting requirements for funded service delivery agencies

Category Three: Internal capacity building

- Build capacity for ongoing case management
- Build capacity to facilitate more direct and consistent linkages with the local job markets
- Provide employment incentives and outreach supports for employers and Ontario Works clients to stimulate job retention

Category Four: Service delivery gaps

- Improve access to transportation for clients during pre-employment and employment activities
- Facilitate cultural programming to support the transition of aboriginal clients from northern communities to the urban environment
- Facilitate improved access to childcare for clients engaged in pre-employment and employment activities

Category 1: System Design

Recommendations

Category 1: System Design

Recommendation #1

Recommendation

Advocate for Ontario Works legislative reform to reduce systemic barriers.

Supporting rationale

- Employment opportunities in the TBDSSAB area can be characterized as entry level, seasonal in nature, part time, and / or minimum wage. Due to the structure of Ontario Works, clients lack incentive to pursue these types of employment opportunities.
- According to stakeholder feedback, participants with chronic health problems risk losing medical benefits should they find employment and move off Ontario Works.

Potential benefits

- Legislation that facilitates the gradual reduction of dependence on Ontario Works.
- Funding model that promotes all forms of employment.
- Flexibility in funding to address barriers to participation in employment and pre-employment activities.

Category 1: System Design

Recommendation #2

Recommendation

Facilitate delivery of integrated programming to move clients towards increased employability through the development of a service delivery continuum and central coordination by TBDSSAB caseworkers.

Supporting rationale

- Majority of clients have multiple barriers to employment that need to be addressed prior to finding and sustaining employment.
- Minimum requirement for participation in employment is increasingly GED or grade 12.
- Significant job losses led to increasing competition for entry level positions.
- Ontario Works clients do not always have the specific skills and education to qualify for employment opportunities.
- Progression to employment readiness is not linear therefore an integrated approach is required to prepare Ontario Works clients for sustainable employment.
- Difficult to transition relationship, there should be a primary client relationship role within the continuum of services and programs

Potential benefits

- Will result in more success moving clients towards sustainable employment though improved awareness and access to existing programs and services.
- Gaps in programs and services will be identified at a system level and addressed by appropriate service provider.

Category 1: System Design

Recommendation #3

Recommendation

Develop and implement a structured means for communication and referrals among service providers in each of the Districts and in Thunder Bay.

Supporting rationale

- Level of awareness of programs and services available in their community was inconsistent among staff participating in data collection.
- Concerns were expressed regarding privacy and knowledge of what client information could be shared with other service providers and what consent was required.
- Staff and stakeholders in communities where interagency committees are working effectively, cite these committees as a key factor in successful client referrals.
- Improved referral processes have been established between Ontario Works and some District service providers as a result of relationships and communication.
- Research on other jurisdictions confirms the success of interagency communication in the ability to provide effective referrals.

Potential benefits

- Awareness of available programs and services, and communication between service providers, will lead to an increase in successful referrals.
- Clients who are successfully referred to the right service providers are better able to overcome their individual barriers to employment, potentially improving overall Ontario Works outcomes.
- Awareness and knowledge of available services will assist TBDSSAB with planning related to Ontario Works funding and service delivery priorities.

Category 2: Administration and Reporting

Recommendations

Category 2: Administration and Reporting

Recommendation #4

Recommendation

Align financial record keeping with program and service offerings.

(See recommendation Number 5 for broader evaluation measurement)

Supporting rationale

- Employment Resource Centre (ERC) delivers a number of employment training programs including ACCEPT, tax preparation, haircuts and numerous training courses; however financial reporting for the ERC does not separate the costs of delivery for these programs.

Potential benefits

- TBDSSAB will be able to evaluate the efficiency (cost per participant) and effectiveness (cost per successful outcome) of programming to support planning and future funding requests.

Category 2: Administration and Reporting

Recommendation #5

Recommendation

Establish evaluation measures and indicators for programs and services that capture program outcomes beyond the provincial measures and incorporate into reporting requirements for funded service delivery agencies.

Supporting rationale

- Funding from the Province is based on number of clients exiting to employment and increases in employment income.
- Current service agreement with March of Dimes (dated 2001) measures only employment status at three and six months as the basis for payment.
- A high number of clients are facing multiple barriers to employment and in fact may never be employable.
- Staff and stakeholders identified a number of unanticipated benefits of program participation that are not captured in current reporting format including:
 - Improved self-esteem
 - Increased motivation to participate in employment activity
 - Improved mental health
- A large number of employment activities do not lead directly to employment but move the client along the continuum of increasing employability.
- Current tracking of programs and services monitors program participation and completion (outputs) but does not capture results (outcomes).
- Feedback suggests that client needs and barriers to employment have increased over the years and opportunities for employment have decreased. This means the majority of case worker time and effort is focused on addressing barriers and current measures focused on employment results do not capture where the bulk of effort and time is spent.

Potential benefits

- Ability to evaluate ongoing effectiveness of funded programs will inform decisions on future funding requests
- Ability to evaluate and measure client progress towards employability
- Support continuum approach to employment programming

Category 3: Internal Capacity Building

Recommendations

Category 3: Internal Capacity Building

Recommendation #6

Recommendation

Build capacity for ongoing case management by reducing average caseloads through:

- a) Workflow readjustments and/or**
- b) Increased specialized caseworker staffing levels.**

Supporting rationale

- Administrative processes associated with the application require 45 minutes of each 60 minute intake appointment to complete leaving 15 minutes for caseworkers to assess their clients' needs and prepare an initial Participation Agreement.
- Previously conducted organizational review of TBDSSAB revealed that caseworkers in Thunder Bay are spending only 35% of their time on case management activities; this number is reduced to 21% for district caseworkers.
- An increasing number of clients are facing multiple barriers to employment and require significant assistance to move them towards improved employability demanding more time and specialized assistance from their case worker.
- Client survey results from the organizational review indicated that clients are seeking a consistent relationship with a case worker and better access to in-person services.
- Staff and stakeholders participating in the data collection process cited the trust established through the relationship with the case worker or counselor as a key factor in the success of the client; this is further evidenced by the perceived success of the Intensive Case Worker program.

Potential benefits

- Efficiencies realized through workflow redesign may result in improved responsiveness by reducing administrative demands.
- Case workers will be able to take more time to complete the assessment process to identify client needs and barriers and develop employment plans that reflect more accurate and achievable timelines and activities.
- The ability to establish trusting relationships between caseworker and client will improve the likelihood of clients following through with employment plans and achieving positive outcomes.

Category 3: Internal Capacity Building

Recommendation #7

Recommendation

Build capacity to facilitate more direct and consistent linkages with the local job markets.

Role: Job Development:

- Works with industry to identify future employment opportunities and skills demands to inform Ontario Works planning
- Works with employers to understand their employee needs
- Works with Ontario Works clients to identify specific skills and personal employment goals

Supporting rationale

- Staff and stakeholders from across TBDSSAB service area indicated that there was a lack of employment opportunities available.
- The depressed job market has increased the competition for available positions.
- Research on economic development activity indicates that current and future opportunities in the region are centered on mining exploration, the “Ring of Fire” initiative and establishing Thunder Bay as a knowledge-based economy. The skill demands associated with these initiatives are not typical of the majority of Ontario Works clients.
- Providers of job placement services cite the efforts of a job developer as a key success factor in positive outcomes. The developer matches individual skills to job opportunities and cultivates relationships with key employers to access job opportunities before they become public.
- TBDSSAB staff identified the position of Job Developer as an example of successful programs previously delivered through the agency.
- Other jurisdictions have similar services
- Interviews with other jurisdiction indicate this service as a key success factor for employment for clients

Potential benefits

- Improved and increased job opportunities for Ontario Works clients resulting from relationships established through direct interaction and linkage with employers.
- Longer term job retention and reduced reliance on Ontario Works subsidy stemming from a “better fit” between employer and employee.
- Understanding of employers’ skills demands will enable responsive employment program planning.
- Funded training initiatives will be relevant to employer needs and employment opportunities.

Category 3: Internal Capacity Building

Recommendation #8

Recommendation

Provide employment incentives and outreach supports for employers and Ontario Works clients to stimulate job retention.

Role: Employment Outreach

- Provides support to employers and Ontario Works clients to ensure successful transition and retention

Supporting rationale

- Lack of workplace transition support for employers and clients once successfully placed was identified by staff and stakeholders as a gap in services.
- Participants across all data collection methods stated that Ontario Works programs were successful at employment placement for job ready clients but unsuccessful in supporting sustained employment.
- Employers of Ontario Works participants identified that assisting new employees with the transition to work is a potential challenge.
- The employer subsidy was identified as a strength to Ontario Works employment programs by several stakeholders and employers.
- The former Employment Support Worker position was identified by staff as an example of a successful initiative to support employment.
- Unable to determine long term success for employment placements because the current employment placement program delivered by March of Dimes only tracks and supports clients up to six months of continuous employment.
- Other jurisdictions have similar supports and indicate outreach as a key success factor in job retention

Potential benefits

- Support to employers in transitioning Ontario Works clients into employment reduces the burden on the employer and may incent more employers to participate.
- Increases available time of caseworker by shifting employment related support and counseling to specialized outreach support.
- Improved employer participation. Financial incentive to employers helps offset costs associated with onboarding and training clients.
- Improved job retention and reduced reliance on social services. Providing support for clients as they adjust to employment while potentially overcoming additional outside pressures will improve job retention and participation rates.

Category 4: Service Delivery Gaps

Recommendations

Category 4: Service Delivery Gaps

Recommendation #9

Recommendation

Improve access to transportation for clients during pre-employment and employment activities.

Supporting rationale

- Transportation is a key barrier to participation in employment activities as identified in TBDSSAB submission to the Commission for the Review of Social Assistance in Ontario and further confirmed by all participants during the data collection for this review.
- Within the City of Thunder Bay examples were given where funds provided to clients for the purchase of a monthly bus pass were used, in part, for other costs effectively reducing the transportation benefit and leaving clients at the end of the month without any means of transportation.
- In the more remote communities in the District , the barrier to transportation goes beyond cost factors and is also a matter of availability.
- The majority of the communities located outside of the City of Thunder Bay do not have public transportation services and rely on expensive taxi operators. In some communities taxi is not available.
- Without access to transportation, clients are unable to attend appointments, training programs take their children to daycare or meet employment commitments.
- Transportation services through use of a van provided directly through the DSSAB was considered successful in another jurisdiction facing similar transportation challenges

Potential benefits

- Clients will be able to more actively participate in pre-employment activities.
- Improved success rate with employment placements resulting from removal of the transportation barrier.
- Increased access to training programs offered in the communities in the district currently inaccessible to clients who do not have a means of transportation, in particular those communities that do not have taxi service, or where transportation is required between communities.

Category 4: Service Delivery Gaps

Recommendation #10

Recommendation

Facilitate cultural programming to support the transition of aboriginal clients from northern communities to the urban environment.

Supporting rationale

- Estimated nearly 60% of the current caseload is aboriginal.
- Feedback from participants indicated that the transition for northern residents from remote communities into Thunder Bay is a challenge and can present as a crisis situation.
- Limited availability of transition support for northern residents in many communities in the TBDSSAB region.
- Northern residents relocating to TBDSSAB communities experience challenges transitioning. This can include language and cultural barriers, and social barriers resulting from intercommunity rivalry.

Potential benefits

- The ability to refer clients to relevant and effective services that address unique barriers for this client group.
- Will result in reduced demands on Ontario Works case worker time.
- Will result in improved employment outcomes for this target group.

Category 4: Service Delivery Gaps

Recommendation #11

Recommendation

Facilitate improved access to childcare for clients engaged in pre-employment and employment activities.

Supporting rationale

- Lack of available childcare is a key barrier to participation in employment and pre-employment activities.
- The child minding service offered in the past was cited as an example of a successful initiative in overcoming employment barriers and enabling employment.
- Shortage of available childcare spaces in Thunder Bay.

Potential benefits

- Clients will be able to more actively participate in pre-employment and employment activities.
- Improved success rate with employment placements resulting from removal of the child care barrier.
- Single mothers will be ready for employment opportunities once their children start attending school.

Summary Inventory of External Service Providers

Summary Inventory

- This section provides a summary of services available through organizations other than TBDSSAB. It is intended to provide a summary of potential agencies for TBDSSAB client referrals.
- The following pages present an overview of external service providers organized by service delivery area for the following Ontario Works client needs:
 - Mental Health Services
 - Addiction Services
 - Housing Services
 - Aboriginal Training and Transition Services
 - Literacy Services
 - Employment Services

Mental Health Services

Thunder Bay	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alpha Court Community Mental Health and Addiction Services, Community Mental Health Recovery Team• Alpha Court Community Mental Health and Addiction Services, Rapid Response Outreach Services• Alpha Court Community Mental Health and Addiction Services, Ooshke Bemahdesewin• Avenue II Community Program Services Inc.• Canadian Mental Health Association, Thunder Bay Branch, GAPPS Program• OPTIONS Northwest• PARO Centre for Women’s Enterprise• St. Joseph’s Care Group, Mental Health and Addiction Services Outreach Programs• Centre for Addiction and Mental Health• Community Living Thunder Bay• Dilico Anishinabek Family Care• People United for Self Help in Northwestern Ontario
Schreiber/Nipigon	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• North of Superior Counselling Programs• PACE
Greenstone	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• North of Superior Counselling Programs
Marathon/Manitowadge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• North of Superior Counselling Programs• PACE

Addiction Services

Thunder Bay	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Al Anon Alateen• Crossroads Centre Inc.• June Steeve-Lendrum Family Resource Centre• Thunder Bay Counselling Centre• Ka Na Chi Hih Specialized Solvent Abuse Treatment Centre• Ontario Addiction Treatment Centres, Methadone and Maintenance Program• Three C's Reintroduction Centre
Schreiber/Nipigon	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• North of Superior Counselling Programs
Greenstone	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thunderbird Friendship Centre, Aboriginal Alcohol and Drug Workers Program• Ontario Addiction Treatment Centres, Methadone and Maintenance Program
Marathon/Manitowadge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• North of Superior Counselling Programs

Housing Services

Thunder Bay	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alpha Court Community Mental Health and Addiction Services, Housing Services• Beendigen Inc. Transitional Housing and Support• Beendigen Inc, Wakaigin Housing• John Howard Society of Thunder Bay• Native People of Thunder Bay Development Corporation, Native Housing Program• Resolution Counselling, Shelter House• Thunder Bay Seaway Non Profit Housing Corporation• Thunder Bay Coalition of Housing and Homelessness• Metis Nation of Ontario, Housing Branch
Schreiber/Nipigon	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• n/a
Greenstone	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• n/a
Marathon/Manitowadge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Marjorie House, Transitional Housing and Support Program

Aboriginal Training and Transition Services

Thunder Bay	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thunder Bay Indian Friendship Centre – Anishnawbe Skills Development Program, Literacy and Basic Skills• Anishinabek Employment and Training Services• Confederation College – Negahneewin College of Academic and Community Development• Matawa First Nations Management – Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment and Training• Métis Nation of Ontario – Training Initiative Region 2• Red Sky Métis Independent Nation – Employment Resource Centre• Lake Superior First Nations Development Trust• Working Words Training Program
Schreiber/Nipigon	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• n/a
Greenstone	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ontario Native Women's Association
Marathon/Manitowadge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kinna Aweya Legal Clinic

Literacy Services

Thunder Bay	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lakehead District School Board, Lakehead Adult Education Centre• Thunder Bay Literacy Group, Literacy and Basic Skills• Literacy Northwest• Contact North• Confederation College, Northwest Employment Works
Schreiber/Nipigon	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contact North• Schreiber Adult Learning Association, Literacy and Basic Skills• Superior North Literacy , Literacy and Basic Skills
Greenstone	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Confederation College, Literacy and Basic Skills• Contact North• Superior Greenstone District School Board – Adult Learning Centre, Adult High School Diploma
Marathon/Manitowadge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Centre de formation Manitowadge Learning Centre, Literacy and Basic Skills• Contact North• Confederation College, Northwest Employment Works

Employment Services

Thunder Bay	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DOORS to New Life Refugee Centre Inc.• Ontario March of Dimes• YES Employment Services• North Superior Workforce Planning Board• Employment Ontario• Scandcorp Employment Resource Centre• Phelps Group Inc.
Schreiber/Nipigon	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Confederation College, Northwest Employment Works• Superior North Literacy, Adult Learning Centre• Employment Adjustment Office• Service Ontario• Superior North Community Futures Development Corp. – Self Employment Benefit Program
Greenstone	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• MTW Employment Services, Ontario Employment Services• Confederation College, Northwest Employment Works• Adult Training Centre• Service Ontario
Marathon/Manitowadge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• BP Doig Consulting, Employment Resource Centre, Ontario Employment Services• Manitowadge Employment Resource Centre• Service Ontario• Superior North Community Futures Development Corp. – Self Employment Benefit Program

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