



	REPORT No.: 2019-31
MEETING DATE: JUNE 20, 2019	DATE PREPARED: JUNE 3, 2019
SUBJECT: EMPLOYMENT ONTARIO SERVICE DELIVERY	

RECOMMENDATION

WHEREAS the District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB), is the service system manager in the District of Thunder Bay for Ontario Works, Social and Affordable Housing, and Child Care and Early Years;

AND WHEREAS the TBDSSAB serves clients, applicants and tenants using an integrated approach at its seven offices located throughout its service area;

AND WHEREAS many of the people served by TBDSSAB face barriers to employment and already have a relationship with TBDSSAB;

AND WHEREAS becoming an EO Service Delivery Site would align with Recommendation 3, from the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario's Annual Report 2017 on Social Housing;

AND WHEREAS becoming an EO Service Delivery Site would align with Recommendation 18, from the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario's Annual Report 2018 on Ontario Works;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT with respect to Report No. 2019-31 (Client Services) we, The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB), call upon the Minister of Training Colleges and Universities to designate TBDSSAB as an Employment Ontario Service Delivery Site;

AND THAT a copy of this Resolution and Board Report No. 2019-31 be sent to the Minister of Training Colleges and Universities, the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services, the Minister of Education and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

REPORT SUMMARY

To provide information relative to TBDSSAB becoming an Employment Ontario Service Delivery Site.

BACKGROUND

On February 12, 2019, The Honourable Merrilee Fullerton, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, announced Ontario's plan for transforming employment services. This plan included the following components:

- Launching a refreshed [labour market information website](#) featuring 500 job profiles to help learners and job seekers explore their first or next career, and identify opportunities for relevant education, training and re-skilling. The website will include improved navigation to the [Job Bank](#) so job seekers can find employment opportunities and businesses can find the right workers with the right skills.
- Creating a new service delivery model that will integrate social assistance employment services into Employment Ontario (EO) to help the province's most vulnerable, including people with disabilities, to break free from the poverty cycle.
- Introducing a new model to manage the employment service system more effectively to meet the needs of job seekers, businesses and communities. The selection of service system managers will be determined through a new, competitive process and open to any public, not-for-profit and private sector organization, as well as consolidated municipal service managers and district social services board service managers.
- Ensuring employment services are working more effectively with other government services, including social assistance, so that when people find themselves facing barriers to employment, or in a precarious employment situation, they can obtain the help they need.
- Implementing changes to Ontario's employment services gradually, starting with three prototypes in fall 2019.

TBDSSAB is strategically positioned to become an Employment Ontario delivery site once the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities has determined the Service System Managers for the EO system.

COMMENTS

Current State

TBDSSAB, as an Ontario Works Service Manager, served an average monthly caseload of 2,828 clients in 2018.

An Employment Readiness Scale (ERS), an assessment tool that measures client readiness for employment by evaluating 5 key employability factors and 3 key soft skills for successful employment outcomes, is administered for clients within the Ontario Works Program. Based on this assessment, 73% of TBDSSAB OW clients scored "Not ready for employment."

These outcome results reflect the complex needs, and multiple barriers clients face, ranging, but not limited to poverty, homelessness, alcohol and or drug dependence, mental health issues, physical health issues, behavioural problems, victimization and conflicts with the law, low rates of employment experience, and absence from the workforce for more than 5 years.

In addition, 58% of the TBDSSAB Ontario Works clients do not have a secondary school diploma. This rate is significantly higher than the Ontario OW client provincial average of 37% that do not have a high diploma.

The Office of the Auditor General of Ontario's (OAGO) Annual Report 2018 states "that caseworkers had assessed 36% of Ontario Works recipients as having barriers that affect their ability to prepare for or find employment because they needed to stabilize their life." These outcomes demonstrate that TBDSSAB clients' have complex needs and require more intensive case management and support as they move to education and employment.

Recommendation 18 from The OAGO 2018 Annual Report:

"To increase the proportion of Ontario Works recipients who obtain employment, we recommend that service managers:

- take steps to identify opportunities to increase the proportion of recipients referred to employment supports that have successfully assisted recipients to obtain employment; and
- investigate the possibility and assess the merits of becoming a delivery agent for Employment Ontario."

The Minister of Children, Community and Social Services, The Honourable Lisa MacLeod's November 22, 2018 announcement indicated the transformation of Social Assistance delivery would include a reduction in rules and paperwork. These changes will allow more time for Caseworkers to offer life stabilization and support to clients. Becoming an EO Service Delivery Site would provide enhanced person-centered casework allowing easy referral access with soft handoff referrals within a familiar service "hub" where clients are supported by their Caseworker as they move them to more specialized employment services programs and employment specialists.

TBDSSAB is Service System Manager for Social and Affordable Housing and owner of almost 2,500 social housing units. TBDSSAB's integrated intake approach is a natural "hub" for tenants who access services on site such as applying for social housing, leasing up, paying rent, loading laundry cards, meeting property management staff, or requesting maintenance. Applicants and tenants access TBDSSAB services by telephone, in person, at social housing properties and in their units, and are already connected to staff who assist them on a daily basis such as Tenant Support Workers, maintenance staff, custodians and the staff mentioned above.

TBDSSAB becoming an EO Service Delivery Site aligns with Recommendation 3, from the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario's Annual Report 2017 on Social Housing which recommends the following:

“To support Social Housing recipients in transitioning out of Social Housing, we recommend that the Ministry of Housing Co-ordinate with Municipal Service Managers, the Ministry of Community and Social Services, and the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development to:

- Develop and implement a process that provides dedicated supports, such as employment and education supports, to those social housing tenants who are able to enter the workforce or upgrade their education; and
- Track and report on metrics that assess the effectiveness of this transition process.”

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing response to this recommendation was as follows:

“The Ministry accepts this recommendation. It is consistent with the direction in social housing modernization to enhance opportunities for increased social and economic inclusion for social housing tenants. And it will build on the work some service managers are currently engaged in with local service delivery partners to encourage and support social housing residents to access education and employment opportunities.”

Integrated Approach

The strategy of TBDSSAB being an EO Service Delivery Site would provide an integrated service approach to servicing tenants, many of whom are social assistance recipients, by enhancing their education and employment skills with the goal of becoming self-sufficient, transitioning out of social housing and subsequently moving to market rent housing.

In the backgrounder dated February 12, 2019, Merrilee Fullerton, the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities emphasizes “Employment services will work more effectively with other government services, including social assistance, so when people find themselves facing barriers to employment, they can get the help they need to return to work.” Strategically, TBDSSAB is already integrated at the front end and has a natural labour pool awaiting EO specialized services. A TBDSSAB EO Service Delivery site would bring together the programs and funding from the following Ministries: The Ministry of Children Community and Social Services, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities, resulting in a cross Ministerial approach to service delivery within the natural “hub” of TBDSSAB.

Prospective labour pools of employees, who require the services of EO are already connected to TBDSSAB. These include the parents and guardians of children who receive child care fee subsidy (a monthly average of 809), and social and affordable housing tenants, in addition to Ontario Works clients.

Client-Centred Service

Bringing EO services to TBDSSAB clients instead of sending clients elsewhere to receive this service is a more client-centred, streamlined service. It supports clients where they are and allows them to access services where they are already being served and have staff support. Providing EO services to OW clients and Community Housing tenants would lead to improved outcomes for the people served by TBDSSAB.

Strategic Plan Alignment

Advocating for TBDSSAB to become an EO service delivery site aligns with the TBDSSAB 2020 Strategic Plan within its Practical Vision of Excellent Services by providing “Increased flexible housing and programs” and the delivery of “responsive financial and employment services.”

The administrative savings by using existing office space would allow for more efficient and effective delivery of employment services, where they are most needed.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no immediate financial impacts associated with this Report. If TBDSSAB is successful in becoming an EO Service Delivery Site, the budget would be developed based on aligning resources with provincially directed program priorities and outcomes, and in accordance with the budget process.



CONCLUSION

It is concluded that given TBDSSAB’s social assistance employment services are to be integrated into the EO services, TBDSSAB is strategically positioned to respond to the employment needs of tenants and clients, throughout the district of Thunder Bay by becoming an EO Service Delivery Site.

It is also concluded that TBDSSAB petition the provincial government to become an EO Service Delivery Site and provide accessible, efficient, wraparound services for TBDSSAB clients and tenants as they improve their employment readiness skills.

REFERENCE MATERIALS ATTACHED

None.

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