



# County of Wellington



**ONTARIO WORKS**

# Social Assistance Review - Update



- **COMPARE LOCAL FEEDBACK/RECOMMENDATIONS TO COMMON THEMES RECEIVED BY THE COMMISSIONERS**
- **HIGHLIGHT KEY ACTIVITIES WITHIN ONTARIO WORKS LOCALLY THAT RELATE TO ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD IN THE COMMUNITY CONSULTATION**
- **DISCUSS THE NEXT STEPS OF THE COMMISSION**

# What has the Commission heard?



## Key recommendations

- **Culture Shift**
  - Focus on complete needs of people vs rules and compliance
  - Increase intensive case management services for clients with higher needs

## Feedback from Wellington/Guelph

- **Community**
  - Holistic approach
  - Client-based outcomes
  - Compassion/Respect
  - Simplify rules
- **Local OW Staff**
  - Increased support for intensive case management
  - Change focus away from the system to the client
  - Use of incentives versus punishments

# What has the Commission heard?



## Key recommendations

- **Benefits**
  - Low rates – especially for single people
  - Reflect regional differences in rate calculation, especially concerning shelter costs
  - Health benefits for all low income individuals
  - Increase asset limits

## Feedback from Wellington/Guelph

- **Community**
  - Higher rates, benefit indexing
  - End claw-backs
  - Increase asset limits
  - Benefits to all low income individuals
- **Local OW Staff**
  - Shelter benefits tied to local rental rates
  - Introduce new benefits, eg. telephone/internet, expanded adult dental
  - Health benefits available to all low-income families
  - Increase asset limits and income exemptions

# What has the Commission heard?



## Key recommendations

- **ODSP**
  - Shift focus from disability to ability
  - Increase earnings exemptions, ease benefit withdrawal for those starting employment
  - Increase accessibility and transparency of the programme (DAU process)
  - Is there a rationale for separate OW and ODSP programmes?

## Feedback from Wellington/Guelph

- **Community**
  - More individualized support to clients
- **Local OW Staff**
  - Quicker DAU decisions
  - More face to face interaction as part of the application process

# What has the Commission heard?



## Key recommendations

- **Employment**
  - Greater involvement with local employers
  - On the job, post placement supports
  - Improve coordination and interaction with Employment Ontario

## Feedback from Wellington/Guelph

- **Community**
  - Better connect clients to employers
  - More training opportunities
  - Ease transition into employment
- **Local OW Staff**
  - Direct marketing and linking of clients to local employers
  - Stronger financial incentives and supports to employers to hire clients
  - Provide clients with the same employment and training supports as EI eligible clients
  - Increased integration of employment service providers



## What's not included in the highlights?

Key local recommendations that were not directly included in the Commission's summary of most popular themes and feedback

- **Community**
  - Personal advocacy support
  - Ending claw-backs for OW clients
  - Encouraging self-employment
  - Indexing of benefits, guaranteed income levels
- **Local OW Staff**
  - Income exemption improvements
  - Consideration of individual support calculation vs household calculations in certain situations
  - Increased training and employment supports – parity with EI clients



## Engaging with our clients and the local community

Actions being taken by  
the Ontario Works office

- Bi-annual client and agency satisfaction surveys – looking to improve the process
- Active supporter and participant on many important community groups
- Increasing our engagement in community planning
- Finding ways to reach out and give back



## Making the system work better for clients

Actions being taken by the Ontario Works office

- Improving processes and relationships with key service delivery partners: ODSP, F&CS, legal clinic, employment service providers, etc...
- Opening a new office in Fergus to improve accessibility to services
- Continuous improvement through self-reflection and feedback
- Examining important client processes, e.g. internal reviews, intake processes



## Making investments in client-centred training

Actions being taken by the Ontario Works office

- Intensive staff training Supportive Approaches through Innovative Learning (SAIL)
- SAIL as a way of doing business
- Bridges out of Poverty
- Narrative Therapy and Interventions – *Getting the Story*
- Experiential learning activities



## Progressive approaches to service delivery

Actions being taken by the Ontario Works office

- Life Skills and Addiction Services Initiative (intensive case management)
- Employment specialist connecting clients with employers
- Integrating community wide employment and settlement services



## Service Manager Engagement

Actions being taken by  
the Ontario Works office

- Input, learning, and advocacy through OMSSA, AMO, Urban Commissioners, MCSS, etc...
- Important involvement on the joint municipal-MCSS working group on service delivery standards and outcomes
- Active involvement in the roll-out of new programme technology

# Next Steps for the SAR Commission



- Reviewing the 700 + submissions
- Completing some additional outreach
- Policy and programme analysis/research
- Creation of the next “discussion” paper, anticipated January release
- Determining future consultation processes
- Completing the final report – June 2012

# Next Steps Locally



- Continued engagement with the Commission through internal channels (OMSSA, MCSS, Urban Commissioners, AMO)
- Community and service manager response to the next Commission report
- Determine consultation processes with the community in formulating responses to the commission

# Questions and Suggestions



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