

**Ministry of Children,  
Community and Social  
Services**

**Ministère des Services à  
l'enfance et des Services  
sociaux et communautaires**



Assistant Deputy Minister  
Social Assistance Programs  
Division

Sous-ministre adjoint  
Division des programmes d'aide  
sociale

2 Bloor St West, 25<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Toronto ON M7A 1E9

2, rue Bloor Ouest, 25<sup>e</sup> étage  
Toronto ON M7A 1E9

April 17, 2020

**RE: Emergency Order—Work Redeployment and Staffing**

Dear District Social Services Administration Board CAOs,

As you are aware, on March 17, 2020, the government declared a provincial emergency pursuant to the authority granted under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* (EMCPA). I am writing now, to inform you that on April 16, 2020, the government issued an emergency order under the EMCPA (O. Reg. 154/20) to provide District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSABs) with flexibility to deploy certain of their staff to where they are needed most at this critical time. The order is effective immediately and will likely remain in effect for the duration of the provincial emergency.

I know that these are challenging times for DSSABs, particularly as the situation around us changes so quickly. The government has heard a clear message from DSSABs and municipal sector organizations that the authority to enable work deployment similar to that which has been provided by the Province for hospitals and public health units is urgently needed to ensure continuity of critical services.

This order is a temporary measure and provides your DSSAB with authority and flexibility like that just granted to municipalities under a separate order – the authority to take any reasonable measure necessary to respond to COVID-19 with respect to internal work deployment. I want to stress, however, that at this critical period in the emergency response, it is important that DSSABs continue to work collaboratively and engage in good faith with their bargaining agents.

Your Board must approve the exercise of authority under this order, which includes the ability for DSSABs to redeploy certain staff within the same employer or use volunteers to perform bargaining unit work, cancel leaves and change assignment of work, for those priority services listed in the order. This order does not apply to individuals

normally employed by the DSSAB in the operation of ambulance services under the *Ambulance Act*.

The order also specifies conditions under which the authority can be exercised. This includes requiring a DSSAB to provide at least 24 hours of advance notice to affected bargaining units before implementing a redeployment plan. The *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and existing rights under the *Employment Standards Act* will continue to apply.

As employers, DSSABs continue to be required to comply with all provincial orders, as well as any guidance and safety standards prescribed by the province for COVID-19. They are also responsible for ensuring that any staff being reassigned to new duties have the required training and skills. Full details of the orders can be reviewed online at [Ontario.ca/alert](https://ontario.ca/alert).

The ministry recognizes that many DSSABs have already taken steps to engage in good faith with their bargaining agents to keep their staff employed and safe; and to establish local arrangements to redeploy employees to high-needs areas. Please continue such efforts with your bargaining agents, beyond the notification requirements set out in the order. We would also encourage you, where possible, to use your existing authorities as employers and build on existing mechanisms with your bargaining agent partners, such as joint health and safety committees, to address staffing needs and allocate resources.

As you, your Boards and your management teams consider whether and how you will exercise the authority under the emergency order, I would ask that you maintain the following important objectives:

- In making staffing decisions, first provide opportunity for full-time work to existing part-time staff before seeking out and employing extra full-time staff from outside your organization.
- In redeploying staff, should there be a difference in the terms and conditions of work, in the different departments of the organization, the expectation is that staff will not receive a lower wage than their home position.

DSSABs are encouraged to review this and other applicable orders (available on the Government's Emergency Information webpage at: [Ontario.ca/alert](https://ontario.ca/alert)) and work with their legal counsel for advice and understanding of the flexibility it provides to you in managing your organizations.

If your DSSAB chooses to implement the authority in these orders, I would ask that you keep my team informed by letting your local Regional Office know when you use it. If

your DSSAB has any further questions regarding this order, please contact: Laura Belfie, Director, Social Assistance Program Policy Branch at: (647) 204-7948 or [Laura.Belfie@ontario.ca](mailto:Laura.Belfie@ontario.ca).

Thank you for your support and collaboration in these unprecedented circumstances.

Sincerely,

***Original Signed by***

Susan Erwin  
Assistant Deputy Minister

c: DSSAB Chairs  
Janet Menard, Deputy Minister of Children, Community and Social Services  
Jonathan Lebi, Assistant Deputy Minister, Municipal Affairs and Housing  
Josh Paul, Assistant Deputy Minister, Housing  
Alison Blair, Assistant Deputy Minister, Hospitals and Emergency Services  
Shannon Fuller, Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic Policy and Planning, Education  
Laura Belfie, Director, Social Assistance Program Policy  
Janet Gawne, Chair, Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association  
Brian Rosborough, Executive Director, Association of Municipalities of Ontario