



Report To:	Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB Board
From:	Donna Moroso, Director of Integrated Social Services and Gilles Plouffe, Ontario Works Program Supervisor
Date:	November 22, 2012
Re:	Commission for the Review of Social Assistance in Ontario – Issue Report

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the DSB Board Members with an update on the Commission for the Review of Social Assistance in Ontario which released its final report "[Brighter Prospects: Transforming Social Assistance in Ontario](#)".

Background

In 2008, the government's Poverty Reduction Strategy, was intended to move away from an overly complex, regulatory burdened system that fell far short from meeting recipient's basic needs and moving them out of poverty and into the labour market.

In January 2010, Premier Dalton McGuinty appointed Francis Lankin and Munir Sheikh to undertake a review of Ontario's social assistance program and to make recommendations for improvement. The commissioners were tasked with developing a vision and approach for a new system that would efficiently and effectively meet the twin objectives of providing employment supports and financial supports.

The announcement made on November 30, 2010 builds on SARAC's recommendations, with the review commission expected to create a "concrete action plan" to reform Ontario's social assistance system. The scope of the review is to examine the current social assistance system and understand its relationship with other federal, provincial and municipal income security programs.

The Commission for the Review of Social Assistance in Ontario released its second discussion paper on February 3rd, 2012. The paper, entitled [Discussion Paper 2: Approaches for Reform](#), is accompanied by [What We Heard: A Summary of Discussion on Social Assistance](#), a document summarizing the input they received in response to their first "[Issues and Ideas](#)" document that was released in June 2011.

On October 24, 2012, the Commission for the Review of Social Assistance in Ontario released its final report called '[Brighter Prospects: Transforming Social Assistance in Ontario](#)'.

Summary of the final paper

The final report contains 108 recommendations. This issue report will provide a high level overview of points of interest to OMSSA members as outlined below:

- All Social Assistance to be delivered at the municipal level
- Streamlined and integrated program and delivery: integration of Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), to be delivered by CMSMs and DSSABs
- Improved employment outcomes and employer engagement through coordinated and integrated program delivery: with municipalities as full partners with the province in managing and planning employment services in their communities
- Where interest and capacity exists, municipalities be given the opportunity to deliver Employment Ontario full suite of services
- A new rate structure that simplifies the current system
 - A new standard rate at \$100.00 more per month than the current OW rate for single adults;
 - A modified rate of 86 percent of the standard rate for adults who share accommodation;
 - A disability and children's supplement on top of the standard rate (building blocks);
 - Earnings exemptions of \$200.00 per month;
 - Harmonization of health benefits so that all recipients receive the same benefit;
 - Eliminate the ODSP Work Related Benefit
 - Pilot the consolidation of employment related special benefits and other special benefits into a block fund to be used at the discretion of local service system administrators;
 - Eliminate the Special Diet Allowance (SDA) and transfer responsibility to the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (\$30 million). Reinvest the remaining SDA (\$200 million) into the standard rate
- The new rate structure includes replacing the rent scales for rent-geared to income (RGI) housing with rent based on 30 percent of household income.

Many of the recommendations put forth through the Ontario Municipal Social Services and the Northern Ontario Service Delivery Association's response are contained within the report.

The above recommendations are identified as early implementation priorities. Understanding the implication of the suite of recommendations will take time. This includes the implications for both recipients of social assistance and CMSMs and DSSABs.

It must be noted that these are only recommendations to the province and it will be up to the provincial government to decide which if any recommendations are acted upon.

Conclusion

We will be working with the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA), with the Northern Ontario Service Delivery Agents (NOSDA) and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) to analyze the implications of the report recommendations to ensure the best interest of those in receipt of social assistance are best served in the new system.