



Report To:	Program Planning Committee
From:	Donna Moroso, Director of Integrated Social Services and Gilles Plouffe, Ontario Works Program Supervisor
Date:	September 23, 2015
Re:	<b>Jobs for Youth Program - Issue Report - Revised</b>

## Purpose

To advise the Board about the changes to the Jobs for Youth program within the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Service Board jurisdiction for 2016.

## Background

Ontario's Youth Opportunities Strategy was launched in 2006 as a response to government concern regarding the escalating rate of youth violence in urban communities. The research pointed to diminished economic opportunity, early school leaver rates, youth unemployment rates and a variety of neighbourhood-level factors, including low community participation and socially disorganized neighborhoods, as risk factors for youth violence. The Strategy, comprised of five key programs/services (the Summer Jobs for Youth program; the Youth in Policing program; the Youth Outreach Worker program; the School-Based Prevention/Diversion program; and the Youth Connect website), were established in identified at-risk communities to provide young people with positive opportunities to build their skills, self-esteem and resilience.

The Strategy was expanded in the second year to reach more youth in additional at-risk communities.

Then in 2008, growing government concern over breaking the cycle of poverty in Ontario led to the government's commitment to reduce the number of children living in poverty by 25 per cent over 5 years and a further expansion of the Youth Opportunities Strategy. The Summer Jobs for Youth (SJFY) program and the Youth in Policing Initiative of the Strategy were included as part of the government's Poverty Reduction Strategy as these programs help youth to overcome economic disadvantages and reach their potential by supporting them as they gain confidence, new skills and work constructively within their communities. Overall, the Strategy gives young people in priority communities the opportunity to be successful in life.

On March 26, 2009, the Ontario Budget announced an investment of over \$35M for the enhancement of the Youth Opportunities Strategy. This included more than \$10M from the federal government for 2009/10 to 2010/11. The budget announcement more than doubled the ongoing support for the strategy, bringing the total annual allocation to over \$23M by 2011/12.

## **Overview of the Strategy**

The Strategy recognizes four populations of disadvantaged youth/youth “at-risk”:

- Youth living in identified underserved/at-risk communities – those youth residing in communities that face poor access to services and supports creating increased barriers for young people;
- Youth at risk of conflict with the law – those youth who are at greater risk of developing negative outcomes and becoming involved in violent and/or criminal activities;
- Youth at risk of re-offending – those youth who have already been involved in the youth justice system and are at risk of re-engaging in criminal activities;
- Youth who face identified barriers to employment – includes those youth who have unemployed parents and/or have parents on social assistance, have been, or are, in the care of a Children’s Aid Society (CAS) and/or have been, or are, at risk of dropping out of school.

The Youth Opportunities Strategy primarily focused on promoting positive opportunities for all youth who reside in at-risk communities. This approach acknowledges that youth who are not typically considered to be “at risk” face significant barriers in accessing the opportunities that help develop their capacity to make healthy choices.

The Strategy supported the achievement of other key government priorities over the long-term. The Strategy complemented the work of the Ministry of Education to prevent youth from leaving school prior to graduation and promoted long-term attachment to the school environment. It also supported government efforts to provide young people with the job readiness and employability skills needed to succeed in the labour force and develop into productive, healthy adults. Investing in youth in priority communities assisted them in reaching their full potential and becoming strong citizens who will build strong communities.

The Youth Opportunities Strategy promoted the development of evidence-based solutions to promoting opportunities for young people as well as outcome-focused evaluations of initiatives.

## **History of the Jobs for Youth Program**

In 2006/2007, the Ministry provided \$2.6 M in funding for placement of 750 youth. This grew to \$5.1 M in 2007/2008 to provide an additional 900 placements in five expansion communities: Ottawa, Hamilton, London, Windsor and Thunder Bay.

This grew to \$15.9 M in 2009/10 to provide an additional 2,700 placements in all six existing communities and in 12 new communities: Toronto, Ottawa, Hamilton, London/Middlesex, Windsor/Essex, Thunder Bay, Kenora, Algoma, Manitoulin, Nipissing, Chatham-Kent, Peel, Niagara, Brant, Peterborough, Hastings, Frontenac and Stormont, Dundas and Gelngarry.

The design of the Summer Jobs for Youth program expansion in 2009/10 was shaped by program experience in the Summer Jobs for Youth and Youth Outreach Worker programs and research related to supported employment.

Based on the information contained in this report, the allocation for Manitoulin Island was given to the DSB back in 2009 because it was an area identified with youth living in identified underserved/at-risk communities. Those youth are residing in communities that face poor access to services and supports, which create increased barriers for young people.

## **Program Overview**

### **Jobs for Youth**

The Jobs for Youth, formerly known as Summer Jobs for Youth (SJFY) program provides disadvantaged youth aged 15-18 with the equivalent of eight weeks of full-time paid work experience through summer employment with local employers. Local youth employment agencies are funded to recruit youth and employers and place/ monitor/supervise youth in employment positions. Youth are paid at the adult general minimum wage.

Local youth employment agencies are funded to hire Youth Worker Leaders (YWL) to support youth and employers in the program. YWL provide ongoing one-on-one and group employment coaching to youth to obtain and maintain summer employment that matches their career interests. YWL help agencies with youth and employer recruitment. YWL help youth to transition from employment placements to other employment or education through developing and monitoring individual action plans. Overall, YWL help to promote a positive work experience for youth and employers.

### **Youth Employment Fund (YEF)**

In 2013, the Ontario government announced the two-year Youth Jobs Strategy. The Youth Employment Fund (YEF) is a key part of the strategy that has created employment opportunities for over 25,000 youth. The YEF created employment opportunities for populations with high youth unemployment, by providing financial support for training and employer incentives for job placements.

For those 2 years, the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB was the delivery agent for the Youth Employment Fund. In 2013-2014, we provided supports to 7 youth between the ages of 15 and 29 years old with an allocation of \$37,226. In 2014-2015, we provided supports to 15 youth with a fiscal allocation of \$78,000.

Unfortunately this program ended on March 31, 2015 and it seems to have been replaced with the Youth Job Connection program which will begin on October 1, 2015. The client target for 2015-16 is 6 (\$39,600) and for 2016-17 it is 9 (\$59,400).

The new target numbers and fiscal allocations are lower than the numbers of the two previous years and represents a reduction of 40% or 9 Youth and a 24% reduction in funding over 2014-15.

The Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB has been overseeing the Jobs for Youth Program, formerly known as the Summer Jobs for Youth, since 2008 funded by the Ministry of Child and Youth Services. This program allocated the funding for Jobs for Youth program since its inception to the DSB for Manitoulin Island only. Since the inception of this program, the DSB continued to lobby to the Ministry for the allocation for the remainder of the district.

In 2013-2014, the DSB staff worked with the YMCA of Sudbury who was the delivery agent for the Sudbury North, Sudbury East and LaCloche areas to transition the program to the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB.

### **The future of the Jobs for Youth Program**

The DSB received a letter on August 14, 2015 from the Ministry of Training, Colleges & Universities (MTCU) confirming the funding allocation and site targets for the Sudbury North Region for the Youth Job Connection (YJC) Program, this program is intended to replace the former Jobs for Youth Program.

In this same letter, the DSB is asked to accept the funding to deliver both components of the program – Youth Job Connection from October 2015 to March 2017, and Youth Job Connection Summer from April 2016 to March 2017.

Shortly thereafter, the DSB asked for the Ministry's rationale to determine funding allocations and targets as these numbers are very low. Ministry staff responded by indicating the Ministry used the following data sources to determine YJC funding allocations at the Consolidated Municipal Services Manager (CMSM)/ District Social Services Administration Board (DSSAB) level:

- Administrative data from the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) on the number of youth who have applied for social assistance;
- Employment Service program data on youth clients (e.g. percent of youth served and employed outcomes for youth);
- Census data on youth unemployment by region;
- Statistics Canada's 2011 National Household Survey data on youth unemployment by CMSM/ DSSAB.

Ministry staff also advised that to determine YJC funding allocations at the site level, the Ministry used data on each site's youth service capacity (e.g. number of Employment Services youth served, number of Youth Employment Fund placements).

The DSB has always had the resources available to ensure that the Jobs for Youth program is well delivered in each part of the DSB jurisdiction. As a matter of fact the DSB has always reinvested any central administration dollars back into the program to ensure as many high risk youth as possible have the opportunity for a summer job.

The DSB's Youth Job Connection Summer program allocation for 2016-17 is 3 for the Sudbury North Region which is significantly less than past years and represents an 87% reduction in placements over the summer of 2015.

The service delivery history of the Jobs for Youth program for the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB's district is as follows:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Manitoulin / LaCloche</b>	<b>Sudbury East</b>	<b>Sudbury North</b>
<b>2011-2012</b>	82	1	12
<b>2012-2013</b>	87	1	13
<b>2013-2014</b>	71	15	21
<b>2014-2015</b>	46	29	23
<b>2015-2016</b>	58	29	24

Cambrian College will be the delivery agent for the next 2 years and their allocation is 7 for the Manitoulin and LaCloche areas which is significantly lower than previous years. The reduction from 58 placements to 7 represents an 88% reduction in Youth Placements.

College Boreal will be the delivery agent for the next 2 years and their allocation is 9 for the Sudbury East area which is significantly lower than previous years as well. The reduction from 29 placements to 9 represents an 69% reduction in Youth Placements.

## **Conclusion**

The Ministry analyzed geography, labour market information and demographic characteristics, such as youth unemployment rates, to determine community needs. This, in turn, informed the provincial budget for the program, as well as client targets for each region and service delivery site to address needs at the regional and community level.

The Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board and its 18 member municipalities need to understand how the Ministry can reduce the number of at risk youth placements from 111 in the summer placement component to 19 summer placements under the new Youth Job Connection. This represents an 83% reduction in the number of high risk youth obtaining summer jobs.

That means there will be 92 high risk youth who will not get an opportunity for a summer job in 2016 because of the change in MTCU programming.

**\*Please note: numbers in red represent a revision due to a typo in the original document.**

The Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB staff created a letter to send to all employers who took part in the program advising them of the change. We are also providing the employers with a template letter addressed to the Premier asking them to advocate for the funding and allocation to remain the same for the DSB jurisdiction.

In addition, the DSB will write to the Premier directly asking her to intervene and ensure that at risk youth in the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB jurisdiction are not adversely affected by the introduction of the new Youth Job Connection (YJC) Program.