

Cost of Administration for Ontario Works Funding Changes

The Ministry of Community & Social Services (MCSS) announced changes to the funding of Ontario Works administration and employment assistance; the new changes will be introduced in April, 2011. Among the changes are the consolidation of Ontario Works administration and employment assistance funding into a single funding allocation. Current cost sharing and upload commitments will be maintained within the single funding allocation, with the cost per case subsidy set at \$2,016. The Ministry will provide additional one-time in-year dollars to address municipal expenditures above the cost shared administration funding in the first quarter of 2011. Of the 47 Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs) and District Social Service Administration Boards (DSSABs), four will see a reduction in their funding, depending on their current local cost of administration ratio. For those Service Managers losing funding, the Province will implement a two-year transition strategy to help them adapt their local service planning to the new funding. Under this strategy, the Ministry will provide a portion of the municipal contribution at 100% provincial cost for the first two-year funding cycle - individual allocations should be forwarded this week. With the announcement, the Ministry has introduced a "rural/Northern factor" based on census population data, recognizing additional costs associated with those particular communities. Even with the factor applied, rural service providers such as the RRDSSAB will face significant challenges with this new funding model which may result in reduced funding or additional funding pressures on municipalities. The new funding will be reflected in the 2012 Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund (OMPF) allocations to municipalities.

Child Care Orientation Session

The Children's Services Manager and I attended a meeting recently with Ministry of Education staff regarding the transition of Child Care from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services to Education. The Minister of Education, Honorable Leona Dombrowsky attended the meeting briefly to welcome us to the 'fold' and shared her experiences as a mother of four who provided child care for others in her home. She stressed the importance of child care for

families so that parents can attend school or retain employment, while providing a safe, stimulating environment for their children.

Currently, the Province is in need of 20,000 Early Childhood Educators to fill the needs within the Early Learning Programs at schools. The biggest issue associated with the employees is the wage disparity between child care sites and schools, making child care more difficult to staff. It was noted by the Ministry's finance staff that funding changes may be introduced at a later date to streamline and simplify the current system. Contract management for First Nations will begin on April 1st.

Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy – Bill 140 Housing Services Act

In November, the Province released its Long Term Affordable Housing strategy which signals the most significant change for housing in Ontario since the download of social housing responsibilities to municipal service managers ten years ago. Although many changes are being introduced which will have a direct impact on how Service Managers such as the RRDSAB administer housing, the strategy does not provide any new funding.

Among the many changes being considered, the most significant is replacing the *Social Housing Reform Act (SHRA)* with the new *Housing Services Act*. The *SHRA* has always been considered 'restrictive' and cumbersome so the introduction of a more flexible *Act* is certainly welcome. A new section will be introduced which requires the development of local plans for current and future needs in the areas of housing and homelessness. The Service Manager will be required to consult with the community, and the plan must be consistent with other plans, such as the municipalities' official plans. Plans must be reported to the province and public. Assuming that the proposed *Housing Services Act* is passed and proclaimed by 01 January, 2012, the first local housing and homelessness plans would be expected one year after the proposed legislation comes into force – with the first reports on progress against local plans due the following year.

Human Resources

The following Human Resource activity has taken place since last reported:

Name	Title	Status	Start/Effective Date
Marcia Broughton	Primary Care Paramedic	Resignation	26 Nov/10

Welcome back to Jacques Fiset, Housing Maintenance who has returned after an extended medical leave. It's great to have you back, Jacques!

Respectfully Submitted,

/d Dittaro