## HOW DOES THIS SERVICE CONTRIBUTE TO THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE CITY OF LONDON?

*In relation to the desired population results in the City of London’s Strategic Plan: A Strong Economy, A Vibrant and Diverse Community, A Green and Growing City, A Reliable Infrastructure, A Caring Community*

Promotes a strong, inclusive economy and a caring community through a program that enhances employability, increases employment, increases earnings and financial independence.

Ontario Works is a provincially mandated and legislated employment program that provides integrated financial and employment supports to help move people toward self-sufficiency.

Employment supports are geared to enhance employability, increase employment, and increase earnings and ultimately move Ontario Works Participants and ODSP Spouses and dependent adults to sustainable employment. Our service delivery model is based on a combination of generic and more intensive case management services to address the needs of participants who face multiple barriers to employment and require additional supports.

Basic financial assistance is provided for basic needs and shelter, benefits as prescribed in the regulations, and emergency assistance.

The Ontario Works program includes the initial screening (through online or phone application), verification interview and ongoing case management. Ontario Works Participants are mandated by the Province to complete individual employment plans and participate in the Ontario Works Employment Program. This service provides employment information, access to employment resources, intensive and individualized job search support services, basic education and job skills training, community and employment placement, supports to self-employment and other specialized supports. Addiction Services is a targeted employment assistance activity designed to help participants whose substance abuse is a barrier to participation in Ontario Works and employment. London remains one of only 15 sites providing this innovative approach.

The Discretionary Benefits program provides subsidy to help acquire health-related and critical items (such as dental, prosthetic appliances, vision care, medical travel and transportation, surgical supplies, hearing aids, utilities, wheelchairs, baby cribs, funeral and burial services) not otherwise funded to assist Social Assistance Recipients and low income Londoners.

Family Support workers assist participants in obtaining financial supports by negotiating support orders for child, spousal, sponsorship and parental support.

Ontario Works Child Care subsidy assists Ontario Works participants to attend employment program requirements.

The Centralized Business Supports team helps to ensure that monies issued to, or on behalf of participants, are issued in accordance with legislation and provincial directives by performance compliance reviews and responding to complaints.
## Service: 7.4.6 Ontario Works Program
### Program: Social & Health Services

### BASIC FACTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># Staff</th>
<th>Cost per Household</th>
<th>2012 Approved Gross Budget ($000)</th>
<th>2012 Approved Net (Tax/Rate-Supported) Budget ($000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>245</td>
<td>$162</td>
<td>$125,638</td>
<td>$27,137</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Name the main activities done to provide this service:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>How much did we do? (statistics - optional)</th>
<th>Is this service provided by someone other than City staff? (Yes/No/%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Basic Financial Assistance</td>
<td>In 2011, an average of 10,889 families was served per month at an average gross cost of $683 per case.</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Employment Programs</td>
<td>In 2011, there was an average of 11,053 Participants (including County) per month active in the Employment Program.</td>
<td>Yes 65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Addiction Services</td>
<td>In 2011, there were a total of 569 Participants (including County) served in the Addictions Services Initiative.</td>
<td>Yes 38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Discretionary Benefits</td>
<td>In 2011, approximately 14,000 individuals (not unique) were served.</td>
<td>Yes 17% of the admin costs are contracted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TURNING THE CURVE

Turning the curve is changing the direction of a trendline on an important measure of performance.

#### City of London Unemployment Rate and Ontario Works Caseload

![Graph showing the relationship between unemployment rate and average number of OW cases per year from 2006 to 2011.](#)

- **OW caseload**
- **Unemployment Rate**

---

Page 2 of 8  2013 Business Plan  7.4.6 Ontario Works Program
THE STORY BEHIND THE CURVES

Ontario Works provides integrated financial and employment supports to help move people toward self-sufficiency which is best measured by people gaining employment. Our employment results are at record highs despite London’s economic downturn and having one of Canada’s highest unemployment rates. Our model for the delivery of Ontario Works is pivotal to achieving success.

The first chart demonstrates the economic downtown that occurred in London in 2009 and the corresponding impact on the Ontario Works caseload. The overall objective of this service is to help our most vulnerable Londoners move to self-sufficiency through increased employment, earnings and financial independence. The second chart shows the ratio of Ontario Works participants that have found employment including those Participants that remain on Ontario Works. The third chart demonstrates the ratio of Ontario Works terminations that have resulted from employment.
Key factors that impact the achievement of employment outcomes include:

- The economic downturn commenced in 2008. London’s economy remains in a sluggish economy as demonstrated by the unemployment rate which increased from 7% in 2008 to 9.9% in 2009 and currently remains around 9% (8.5% in March 2012).
- The Ontario Works caseload has increased since 2007 with the most significant increase experienced in 2009. In the first 3 months of 2012, the caseload has continued to grow. London’s local economy has suffered significantly during this last recession impacting caseload size. Data from the recession of the early 1990’s demonstrates that social assistance caseloads continued to grow for some time after the economy began recovering, therefore, caseload increases could continue in 2013 or even into 2014.
- The profile of individuals served is very diverse and in many ways reflects the diversity of the general population. We are also seeing increasing numbers of individuals and families requiring intensive supports and interventions particularly related to addictions, mental health and homelessness.
- Provincial requirements for the delivery of Ontario Works continue to evolve which requires a nimble delivery system, ongoing change in processes, staff training, etc.
- Delivery of all components of Ontario Works is complex and challenged by the competing priorities of quickly needing to respond at our intake line to people in extreme financial need, while balancing ongoing case management that ensures provision of all eligible benefits, supports and eligibility as well as provision of employment supports. Provincial service standards must be met along with our internal key performance indicators.
- New Provincial service delivery technology is scheduled for introduction in June 2013 with work already actively underway in our office.
- Many changes are underway in the Homelessness, Hostels and Special Populations portfolio. The Ontario Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy, the London Community Housing Strategy and the London Community Plan on Homelessness all have a focus on housing stability for individuals experiencing homelessness. Efforts are well underway in strengthening the combined programs between Housing and Community Services as we prepare the expected changes by the province regarding community start up, the funding to emergency shelters and homeless programs. Council’s approval of the Housing supplement program will directly improve the outcomes for the participants of London CAReS and some of the selected vulnerable youth on Ontario Works.

Our structure and approaches are designed to meet the above noted business realities with a focus on achieving outcomes through a strong system that includes the following key actions and accomplishments:

- Ontario Works case management strategies support individuals and families on their path to stable employment opportunities and reduced reliance on social assistance. To ensure positive outcomes and to address varied needs of the individuals served, a varied and extensive set of employment strategies and supports are provided. This includes a number of specific intensive support initiatives including Intensive Case Management, Addiction Services, Youth and Young Parents, and No Fixed Address. These specialized programs rely on more intensive case management, person centred approaches, with unique services addressing the specific needs of the target populations. Employment supports and services, along with the specialized programs
result in overall cost savings in the long term for Ontario Works. They also contribute to decreasing costs, impacts, and challenges associated with other service systems (substance use, mental health, homelessness, violence against women, etc).

- Employment outcomes for two of our intensive case management teams are higher than outcomes for the regular caseload. This is particularly significant as the individuals served have multiple barriers and usually have been on Ontario Works for significantly longer periods of time. In 2011, exits to employment for participants on the Intensive Case Management team was 41.7%, for the Addictions team was 35% whereas overall caseload was 23.9%. These outcomes can be attributed to the Caseworker providing more intensive, coordinated and wrap around services, with a smaller caseload.

- In 2009, we commenced a planned and purposeful multi-phased transformation that saw us integrating some of our services where it made sense, and increasing specialization in other areas to provide more focused case management, where there is a need, such as with youth. Our strategies continue and we continue to see accomplishments. We are turning the curve from a highly reactive model to one that is proactive, with strong systems that are agile enough to expand and contract with changing caseload needs.

- Organizational structure changes and our continued commitment to better streamline how we do our work, better align resources and focused human resource strategies have allowed us to be much more effective in the way we do our work, so that we maximize the quality and quantity of time our frontline staff spend with Participants. In addition, we are able to see an applicant after initial contact within 2 to 3 days. This maximizes response time and allows sufficient time for the individual to gather necessary documentation so that the financial need can be addressed quickly. The Provincial standard to see an applicant after initial contact is 4 days, a standard we have been successful in achieving since 2009 transformation activities.

- Caseworkers are located in community centres in South London and Glen Cairn and a number of caseworkers are actively engaged in work with specific populations and dispersed communities, including youth, persons experiencing homelessness, those with more intensive support needs, those leaving mental health services, and those in emergency shelters. These initiatives have been well received by the participants and our community partners. The goal is to decentralize into the community over the next few years and continue to explore the best methods of service delivery for all OW participants. Council endorsed a community-based strategy for Ontario Works in July, 2010.

- London was a pilot site for the Hostels to Homes project. This innovative approach teamed up the emergency shelters with Ontario Works Case workers to support individuals who had the lengthiest emergency shelter stays with being supported in finding and retaining housing. Over 90% of participants retained their housing long after the pilot concluded. Although the Province did not renew funding the model has been refined and now forms the basis for the homelessness directions. The true solution to homelessness is housing with support. Housing stability with wrap around supports is being applied in London CAReS, our housing model and funding criteria.
STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLANS TO TURN THE CURVE

Briefly explain the strategies and action plans you will undertake in the next 5 years to improve effort, efficiency, effectiveness and economy, including at least one no-cost/ low-cost strategy.

Who are your partners and what is their role?

This service works with a significant number of community partners in a variety of sectors that share in our objective of helping our most vulnerable Londoners move to self-sufficiency through increased employment, earnings and financial independence. These partners include Ontario Disability Support Program, Employment agencies, mental health services, addiction services, Violence Against Women agencies, emergency shelters, housing services, health unit, the education sector, Children’s Aid.

Action Plan

Ongoing transformation of Ontario Works service delivery at the City of London from one of primarily income support to a client centred, community engaged integrated financial and work readiness program. In the Ontario Works Service Plan we have outlined a number of initiatives that show how we plan to deliver compassionate, effective, and outcome focused services that address individual needs and systemic solutions. Part of this transformation also includes moving the services of Ontario Works out into the community.

A continued strategy within Ontario Works will be the identification of actions to support those relying on Ontario Works services who should more appropriately be on the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) with associated community supports. This includes those individuals with multiple and complex needs and those who may be living in shelter or experiencing crisis in housing.

The comprehensive review of the delivery of employment services was completed and we received Council approval in March 2012 for the Ontario Works Employment Services Framework 2013 to 2018. The Framework, which sets out the planned structure of employment service provision for Ontario Works participants over a five year period, is an important tool for strategic planning and will assist us and employment service providers in developing service and business plans. It is consistent with the City of London’s strategic priorities of developing a skilled workforce and partnerships with key private, institutional and community partners (City of London, 2011). Key components and action plans include:

- The evolution of the Purchase of Service Strategic Group into the Ontario Works Employment Advisory Group with enhanced membership to situate Ontario Works employment programs within the community’s broader workforce development network.
- A RFP process to select partners for the delivery of employment services consistent with the new framework.
- A greater attention to tailoring the employment service plan (Participation Agreement) to meet the specific needs and goals of participants.
- Staff training.
- Exploring and developing new innovative employment and job creation approaches.
- Developing a closer relationship with LEDC and employers.
- Continuing to build and enhance strong programs that are innovative and creative.
As part of the Provincial-Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review, Ontario will upload the cost of all social assistance benefits by 2018 and pay the portion of Ontario Works benefits which is currently paid by municipalities. The timing of the upload is scheduled as follows:

3%    6%    14%   29%   43%   57%   71%   86%   100%  
This review noted municipalities will continue to have a key role to play in delivering Ontario Works in their communities.

A joint working group was formed in 2009 to discuss the current approach to Ontario Works administration and employment funding and to recommend principles for simplifying and strengthening accountability. A new funding model was implemented April 2011. Changes are forthcoming to the outcome-based funding and the specific employment targets that need to be met as a condition of funding. An action plan will be implemented after more information is confirmed by the Province.

The Province is in the process of replacing the current social assistance technology with a new case management software solution by 2013. London was a pilot site in 2011 for a web-based online application program for Ontario Works. On-line application process was implemented April 2011 and we continue to review the impacts of the on-line application and the intake model.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND STORIES

Accomplishments, successes, improvements to efficiencies, economy and effectiveness in the last 12 months and stories of people who have been positively impacted by your Service.

London’s model of programming and service delivery has long been one that is highly regarded across the province and beyond as innovative, creative and continuously building on strong partnerships.

Even at a time of continued high unemployment rates, slower economic recovery, increasing caseloads and more complex individual and family circumstances coming through our doors, including increased mental health and addiction issues, we have seen our Ontario Works Participants achieve success in unprecedented ways. Just to highlight a few:

- A record number of people gained employment while on Ontario Works in 2011, 9.5% higher than in 2010.
- The average number of people with earnings while on Ontario Works was 4% higher than in 2010.
- The percentage of the caseload recorded as leaving Ontario Works due to employment in 2011 was the highest this CMSM has had.
- The amount of earnings recorded at the time of leaving Ontario Works was the highest we have seen.
- We have continued to increase the timeliness of our response to meeting with Ontario Works applicants for a person-to-person interview after their initial intake telephone screening.
- Anecdotally, we know that this response at a time when many people are in crisis alleviates some of the anxieties attached to applying for Ontario Works, whether it is the first time or not.
- We continue to increase opportunities for Ontario Works Participants to access our services
closer to where they live, therefore strengthening their ties to their own communities leading to achieving greater holistic success in their lives.

- Investment in the Ontario Works Addictions program and Intensive Case Management has resulted in positive employment outcomes. The success rate of participants who have multiple and complex barriers leaving Ontario Works for employment continues to meet or exceed the success rate for the general Ontario Works caseload.

Enhanced employment outcomes can be attributed to our model of service delivery and to our continued focus on intensive case management approaches, additional supports to Participants and innovative community partnerships (such as the Skills at Work initiative).

Organizational structure changes and our continued commitment to better streamline how we do our work, better align resources and focused human resource strategies have allowed us to be much more effective in the way we do our work, so that we maximize the quality and quantity of time our frontline staff spend with Participants. In 2009, we commenced a planned and purposeful multi-phased transformation that saw us integrating some of our services where it made sense, and increasing specialization in other areas to provide more focused case management, where there is a need, such as with youth. Our strategies continue and we continue to see accomplishments. We are turning the curve from a highly reactive model to one that is proactive, with strong systems that are agile enough to expand and contract with the changing caseload needs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of measure</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Intake – Days between phone call and first appointment</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Percentage of addictions caseload exiting to employment (%)</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Percentage of intensive case management caseload exiting to employment (%)</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>41.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Cases terminated as a result of complaint records</td>
<td>595</td>
<td>539</td>
<td>669</td>
<td>512</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Recoveries achieved by Family Support ($000)</td>
<td>971</td>
<td>1,052</td>
<td>1,006</td>
<td>1,085</td>
<td>1,100</td>
<td>1,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. ODSP Participating in Employment</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>448</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MEASURES UNDER DEVELOPMENT**

What important performance measures have you identified for which you do not currently collect the data?

Work continually being done to develop and enhance new performance measures.