



BOARD REPORT

REPORT No.: 2025-03

MEETING DATE: FEBRUARY 20, 2025

SUBJECT: EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TRANSFORMATION

RECOMMENDATION

For information only.

REPORT SUMMARY

To provide The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) with an Employment Services Transformation (EST) update.

BACKGROUND

In February 2019, the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) announced the EST as a direction for the future. This would involve changes in how employment services were offered across the province.

The focus of the work of TBDSSAB and Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSM) in delivering social assistance has and is shifting away from employment activities towards a greater emphasis on connecting those who rely on social assistance programs with the supports and services they need to move towards independence. Stabilization services will become a primary responsibility of the program.

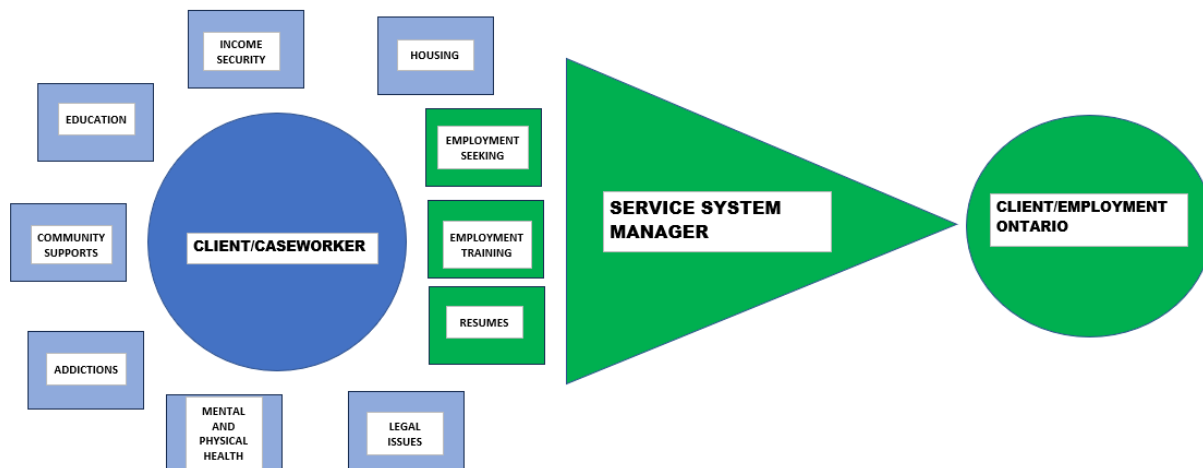
COMMENTS

TBDSSAB is part of the Phase Three implementation of the EST and began the transition in April 2024. This transition is in partnership with the MCCSS and the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD). Through 2024 and into March 2025, information sharing and planning will occur with a full launch of the new model in April 2025. When this change is complete, the focus of TBDSSAB's work with social assistance clients will no longer include employment planning but will focus primarily on stabilization services.

Stabilization services includes four areas:

1. **Crisis and Safety** - financial support, housing, crisis resolution.
2. **Health** - access to health supports and benefits, including mental health and addictions.
3. **Life Skills** - self sufficiency, education and literacy, language, and numeracy supports.
4. **Community Supports** - access to dependent care or caregiving supports, cultural connections (such as immigration and settlement supports), justice and legal support.

The diagram below illustrates the types of supports Ontario Works (OW) Caseworkers offer to participants. Prior to EST, the Caseworker guided all the supports. After EST, the supports in blue are the responsibility of the OW Caseworker, and the supports in green are provided by Employment Ontario (EO).



Once a participant is ready to pursue employment, the OW Caseworker completes a referral through the case management system (SAMS) to EO agencies through the Service System Manager (SSM). Responsibility for employment services will shift to an SSM awarded through a Request for Proposal to the MLITSD. The shift of responsibility will be finalized in April 2025. The SSM for Northwestern Ontario is Serco.

Serco is a global organization managing government programs in the UK, US, and Canada. In Canada, Serco leads a consortium with Deloitte Canada and Thrive Career Wellness, providing employment services under the EmployNext brand. The phased launch of the program began in January 2021, with EmployNext managing the Kingston-Pembroke area in October 2022, Kitchener-Waterloo-Barrie in January 2023 and Northwest in March 2024. The system is designed to be locally responsive, community-based, client-centered, and outcomes-focused, offering simplified pathways to sustainable employment.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPACT

Service Planning for 2025 is building on Fostering an Engaged & Collaborative Culture by developing a transition plan with staff input related to social assistance modernization.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS



With the onset of the EST, Service Managers experienced a 22% reduction from the Program Delivery Funding envelope. For TBDSSAB, this equates to a full amount of \$1,471,700 at the end of transfer period (March 2025 to February 2026), from the 100% Provincially paid funding.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that this report provides the Board with an Employment Services Transformation update.

REFERENCE MATERIALS

None

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