

## Transition Child Benefit (FOI CSS2019 -1501)

1. The total amount of money paid to Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program recipients through the Transition Child Benefit for each fiscal year starting from 2010/2011.

### Annual Transition Child Benefit Expenditures (\$M)

Fiscal Year	Ontario Works	ODSP	Both Programs
2010-11	\$53.2	\$12.5	\$65.7
2011-12	\$51.5	\$13.8	\$65.3
2012-13	\$49.8	\$14.2	\$64.0
2013-14	\$46.6	\$15.5	\$62.1
2014-15	\$41.6	\$17.3	\$58.9
2015-16	\$38.0	\$18.0	\$56.0
2016-17	\$38.4	\$15.4	\$53.8
2017-18	\$43.7	\$14.9	\$58.6
2018-19	\$52.1	\$15.1	\$67.2

2. The amount of money that was received as repayment for Ontario Works and/or Ontario Disability Support Program Transition Child Benefits for each fiscal year starting from 2010/2011.

### Annual Transition Child Benefit Repayments (\$M)

Fiscal Year	Ontario Works	ODSP	Both Programs
2010-11	\$7.5	\$1.6	\$9.1
2011-12	\$8.2	\$2.0	\$10.2
2012-13	\$9.2	\$2.4	\$11.5
2013-14	\$11.1	\$3.5	\$14.6
2014-15	\$6.5	\$3.0	\$9.5
2015-16	\$10.8	\$4.3	\$15.1
2016-17	\$10.2	\$3.1	\$13.3
2017-18	\$8.7	\$2.3	\$11.0
2018-19	\$7.9	\$2.5	\$10.4

3. The number of benefit units that received the Ontario Works and/or Ontario Disability Support Program Transition Child Benefit for each fiscal year starting from 2010/2011.

**Average Monthly Number of Cases in receipt of the Transition Child Benefit**

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Ontario Works</b>	<b>ODSP</b>	<b>Both Programs</b>
2010-11	14,969	5,225	20,194
2011-12	14,964	5,756	20,720
2012-13	14,122	5,788	19,909
2013-14	12,624	6,029	18,653
2014-15	11,175	6,427	17,601
2015-16	9,754	6,419	16,173
2016-17	9,147	5,468	14,615
2017-18	9,692	5,178	14,870
2018-19	10,708	5,083	15,792

- A case refers to a single individual or a family unit on social assistance (e.g., a family on social assistance is counted one case).

4. The number of children (under 18 years of age) that were part of benefit units that received the Ontario Works and/or Ontario Disability Support Program Transition Child Benefit for each fiscal year starting from 2010/2011.

**Average Monthly Number of Children in Cases in receipt of the Transition Child Benefit**

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Ontario Works</b>	<b>ODSP</b>	<b>Both Programs</b>
2010-11	29,772	9,743	39,516
2011-12	30,042	10,620	40,662
2012-13	27,875	10,447	38,321
2013-14	24,509	10,647	35,156
2014-15	21,641	11,229	32,870
2015-16	19,204	11,469	30,673
2016-17	18,043	9,896	27,939
2017-18	19,761	9,423	29,185
2018-19	22,359	9,338	31,696

- A case refers to a single individual or a family unit on social assistance (e.g., a family on social assistance is counted one case).

5. The number of recipients of Ontario Works and/or Ontario Disability Support Program who received the Transition Child Benefit for each fiscal year starting from 2010/2011 who were: non-permanent residents or citizens; residents of First Nations; had an application for Canada Child Benefit that was in process; had their entitlement for the Canada Child Benefit that was suspended during a review and/or audit.

**Average Monthly Refugee Claimant Cases in receipt of the Transition Child Benefit**

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Ontario Works</b>	<b>ODSP</b>	<b>Both Programs</b>
2010-11	4,840	105	4,945
2011-12	4,751	143	4,894
2012-13	4,538	152	4,690
2013-14	3,591	147	3,738
2014-15	2,703	124	2,827
2015-16	2,326	99	2,426
2016-17	2,786	109	2,894
2017-18	3,861	132	3,994
2018-19	5,386	151	5,537

- A case refers to a single individual or a family unit on social assistance (e.g., a family on social assistance is counted one case).

**Average Monthly ODSP First Nations Cases in receipt of the Transition Child Benefit**

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Ontario Works</b>	<b>ODSP</b>	<b>Both Programs</b>
2010-11	not available	19	19
2011-12	not available	14	14
2012-13	not available	13	13
2013-14	not available	11	11
2014-15	not available	16	16
2015-16	not available	11	11
2016-17	not available	16	16
2017-18	not available	14	14
2018-19	not available	16	16

- A case refers to a single individual or a family unit on social assistance (e.g., a family on social assistance is counted one case).

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## Social Assistance Reform: 2019 Budget Updates

### Quick Summary

I want to let you know about some important updates on social assistance reform, some of which were highlighted in the government's 2019 Budget, as well as additional changes which will be implemented in the coming months.

The Social Assistance reform plan is designed to make social assistance sustainable, redesigning ODSP and Ontario Works to provide people with more effective and efficient support, while removing barriers between local service systems.

Changes are being implemented gradually to update the system, so it can better meet the needs of those who need it the most and so people have time to understand and prepare for changes.

Key elements of the plan to be rolled out over the next three years include:

- Better employment supports to help people find and keep good jobs
- A simplified rate structure for Ontario Works and a local service delivery model that empowers municipal service delivery partners and front-line staff to help clients return to work
- A redesign of the ODSP program including annualized income support with far fewer reporting requirements and a new definition of disability
- A focus on accountability and locally-delivered, wraparound services to help people stabilize their lives and reach their potential.

### FYI for

Municipal Ontario Works Administrators  
SA Directors, SAPD  
Program Supervisors  
Program Managers  
Corporate Managers

## What's Happening

The following early changes are being made to improve efficiency and program integrity and lay the foundation for future reforms.

### Modernizing Service Delivery

We are improving service delivery by expanding online services, giving Social Assistance recipients faster and more convenient ways to securely access their case information and report employment income. Paperwork and administration will be reduced, so clients and caseworkers can focus on addressing more complex needs and planning for the future.

Currently, most services are only available in person or by fax or phone. **MyBenefits**, a new online service, expands access to services, particularly for people who may have no other means of internet access beyond a mobile device. Client service is also being improved by eliminating the need for monthly drug and dental cards through improved technology and by expanding the use of reloadable payment cards to the Ontario Works program.

### Benefit changes

The social assistance reform plan involves updating the system to focus available resources where they will have the most impact, to ensure support is available for those who need it most. The government is proposing the following changes:

- The Transition Child Benefit (TCB), which supplements social assistance recipients' incomes when they are not eligible for the full Ontario Child Benefit, or who are eligible for the partial OCB amount, will be eliminated in November 2019. Currently, low income families not on social assistance do not have access to supplementary funding similar to the TCB if they are not eligible to receive full or partial payments through the Ontario Child Benefit. The government believes that whether or not you are on social assistance should not impact your entitlement to children's benefits.
- The Addictions Services Initiative (ASI) is a pilot currently delivered by 17 municipal social assistance partners. A series of evaluations showed that the ASI, while well-intentioned, was not achieving the results that people struggling with addictions desperately need. ASI will be ending July 31, 2019. Current participants will be given transition support and we will restore public trust and confidence through careful and responsible use of fiscal resources. The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care continues to expand access to mental health and addictions supports province-wide with an investment of 3.8 billion dollars over the next 10 years.

### Moving people to employment

The following changes are being proposed to help social assistance recipients find and keep work:

- The Ontario Works wait period before earnings exemptions can be applied would be reduced from three months to one month effective November 1, 2019
- New earnings exemptions including:
  - Ontario Works recipients would be able to earn up to \$300 per month without

reducing their assistance. Twenty-five per cent of subsequent earnings would be exempt. This change would be effective November 1, 2019.

- \$6,000 flat annual earnings exemption for ODSP disabled recipients, and a 25 per cent exemption for earnings above \$6,000. This change would be effective January 2020.

Ontario's plan for transforming employment services, to be implemented gradually over the coming years, also includes:

- Integrating social assistance employment services into Employment Ontario to help the province's most vulnerable, including people with disabilities, to break free from the poverty cycle.
- A new model to manage the employment service system more effectively to meet the needs of job seekers, businesses and communities.

### **Cutting red tape and restoring accountability**

To make sure that funds are paid to those who are eligible, we have implemented and will continue to enhance a new Eligibility Verification Process that uses third-party information to identify high-risk cases for review.

Information sharing partnerships with third parties are also being enhanced to help ensure only eligible individuals receive social assistance and stop overpayments from happening. This includes accessing and corroborating information important to an individual's social assistance eligibility from Equifax Canada (e.g., record of employment information, death notices) as well as information regarding the eligibility and receipt of assistance from other provincial programs (e.g., Ontario Student Assistance Program). We will soon be commencing bulk data sharing with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to enhance the verification of social assistance eligibility.

When a person being sponsored to come to Canada receives social assistance during the sponsorship period, the sponsor is expected to repay the costs of that assistance. As part of the plan to make service simpler and more efficient, the ministry is automating and streamlining the sponsorship debt collection processes. This will mean frontline staff can spend more time focusing on meaningful interactions with people while increasing program accountability.

The ministry will be communicating directly with clients impacted by the above changes in the coming months once implementation plans are finalized.

The government is also beginning engagement with First Nation delivery partners to develop a specific approach to social assistance reform.

The attached questions and answers will provide additional information to respond to client inquiries.

### **More Information**

Q&A

Link to [Budget on Ontario.ca](https://budget.ontario.ca)

### **Sent from**

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FOR ONTARIO WORKS AND  
ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM STAFF

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**Social Assistance Reform: 2019 Budget updates  
and other upcoming program changes**

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**BENEFIT CHANGES**

**Transition Child Benefit**

**1. What changes are being proposed to the Transition Child Benefit (TCB)?**

The government is proposing to end the TCB effective November 1, 2019.

This means that as of November 1, 2019, TCB payments would be discontinued for all current recipients under both Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) and no new applicants would be eligible to receive the benefit.

**2. Why is the government making this change?**

Whether or not you are on social assistance should not impact your entitlement to children's benefits.

Currently, low income families not on social assistance do not have access to supplementary funding similar to the TCB if they are not eligible to receive full or partial payments through the Ontario Child Benefit.

**3. Who will be impacted by this change?**

The proposed change would impact Ontario Works and ODSP applicants and recipients of the TCB. TCB recipients include individuals with dependent children under the age of 18 who are not receiving, or receiving less than the maximum amount of, the Ontario Child Benefit (OCB) and the Canada Child Benefit (CCB).

**4. How will impacted recipients be informed of this change?**

The ministry is planning a phased-communications approach for this change. All affected recipients would be notified directly, well in advance of the implementation date.



## **MOVING PEOPLE TO EMPLOYMENT**

### **Earnings Exemptions**

#### **Ontario Works**

##### **5. What changes are being proposed to the earnings exemptions in Ontario Works?**

As announced in November 2018, the government is proposing a new earnings exemption structure for Ontario Works including:

- Recipients would be able to earn up to \$300 per month without reducing their assistance. Twenty-five per cent of subsequent earnings will be exempt.
- The “waiting period” for earnings exemptions and access to the Full-Time Employment Benefit (FTEB) would be reduced from 3 months to 1 month.

##### **6. When will the new earnings exemption structure take effect?**

The proposed earnings exemptions and reduced “waiting period” would come into effect November 1, 2019. Further information will be shared with delivery partners and clients in the coming months.

##### **7. Why is the government proposing these changes?**

The proposed changes are being introduced to help social assistance recipients find and keep work. The proposed \$300 flat rate exemption would allow recipients to keep more of their earnings before impacting their social assistance payments and reducing the “waiting period” would encourage individuals to reconnect sooner with the labour market after coming onto assistance.

#### **Ontario Disability Support Program**

##### **8. What are the proposed changes to earnings exemptions in ODSP?**

As announced in November 2018, the government is proposing a new earnings exemption structure for ODSP:

- An ODSP disabled recipient would have a \$6,000 flat annual exemption, plus 25% exemption for earnings above \$6,000. Annual would be defined as a regular calendar year (January-December). The \$6000 would apply to net earnings as defined under current regulation.

##### **9. Why is this change being made?**

This change is part of the Social Assistance reform plan designed to make social assistance sustainable by redesigning ODSP and Ontario Works to provide people with more effective and efficient support, while removing barriers between local service systems.

The new earning exemptions outlined in the 2019 Budget would be implemented as an early reform initiative, intended to help ensure people with severe disabilities have access to stable

funding and benefits, annualized income support with less red tape and far fewer reporting requirements and encourage employment faster for persons who are able to work.

**10. When will the proposed earnings exemption changes take effect?**

The implementation of the proposed annual earnings exemption scheme for an ODSP disabled recipient would be effective January 1, 2020 (i.e., would apply to benefit months of January 2020).

For November and December 2019, the current earnings exemptions (\$200 flat rate + 50 per cent exemption) would continue to apply for these recipients.

**11. How will the earnings exemptions be applied to other family members (non-disabled and double disabled couples?)**

Further information will be shared with staff and clients in the coming months.

**CUTTING RED TAPE & RESTORING ACCOUNTABILITY**

**Addictions Service Initiative**

**12. What changes are being made with respect to the Addiction Services Initiative (ASI)?**

Effective July 31, 2019, the ministry will no longer fund the Addiction Services Initiative.

**13. Why is this change being made?**

Evaluations of the ASI over the past few years have shown that the pilot is not demonstrating the enhanced individual and employment outcomes to justify the continuation of current funding.

As the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care continues to expand access to mental health and addictions supports across the province, the government's plan includes a province-wide wraparound model with connections to supports customized to the needs of the individual.

**21. What will happen to participants who are in ASI funded treatment as of July 31, 2019?**

The ministry expects that no participants will be cut off from their treatment. This change is being announced now to provide delivery sites time to plan for the transition. The ministry will work with each delivery partner to understand and address individual site circumstances, such as where, despite reasonable efforts to wind down the program, a small number of participants remain in treatment as of July 31<sup>st</sup>.

## **Sponsorship Debt**

### **14. What change will be made to Sponsorship Debt collection?**

The ministry will be implementing a centralized, simplified and more accurate sponsorship debt calculation process.

### **15. Why is this change to Sponsorship Debt collection being made?**

Social Assistance payments provided to a sponsored immigrant due to the default of support by a sponsor is sponsorship debt. The debt is accrued by the sponsor, not the social assistance recipient.

The previous debt calculation and collection process was manual and labour intensive resulting in low debt recovery levels.

Centralizing collection of debt from defaulting sponsors will allow caseworkers to spend more time focusing on clients and will improve program integrity by holding defaulting sponsors more accountable.

## **MODERNIZING SERVICE DELIVERY**

### **23. What specific changes are taking place to improve service delivery?**

#### **Streamlining intake**

We will be improving our digital application process and taking a risk-based approach to the intake process in both programs so people who need help can access our services faster.

#### **Expanded digital tools and processes**

We are:

- introducing a mobile enabled solution to make it more efficient for people receiving social assistance to securely access information about their case and report changes online, anytime, anywhere and on any device.
- implementing Electronic Document Management (EDM) that will let us rely less on paper-based processes and storage. We will be able to reduce the administrative burden on staff and improve the overall service experience by introducing a convenient, digital channel for people relying on our programs to submit documents.
- introducing a digital online channel for service providers, to improve the way individuals access social assistance benefits and the interaction between staff and service providers.

#### **Streamlined benefits delivery**

There is already a paperless drug card so that individuals receiving social assistance can use their Ontario health card to access health benefits, such as prescription drugs. By August 2018, individuals who did not have a health card were able to use alternative government ID such as an Ontario ID Card, Driver's license or valid passport, etc., to access health benefits.

We have implemented paperless access to dental benefits for ODSP, dental service providers can check eligibility using a digital portal.

### **Payment administration**

We will continue to administer payments more efficiently by reducing the number of paper cheques and implementing centralized and electronic processes, like expanding the Reloadable Payment Card for Ontario Works and transitioning to electronic payments and statements for vendors and other service providers.

## **FIRST NATION ONTARIO WORKS DELIVERY PARTNERS**

### **24. Do these changes also apply to First Nations Ontario Works delivery partners?**

Not at this time. The government has committed to engage with First Nations on a plan for implementing social assistance reform in respect of Ontario Works recipients residing in First Nation communities. In keeping with this commitment, implementation of these changes for First Nation Ontario Works delivery partners is being deferred pending the outcome of this engagement.