

# **ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM - EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS**

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## **PREAMBLE**

The Employment Supports component of the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) was implemented in January 1999 in order to provide goods and/or services to remove disability-related barriers to competitive employment and assist people with disabilities to prepare for, obtain and maintain competitive employment.

ODSP Employment Supports serves a diverse group of people with a wide range of disabilities. The program provides employment supports to individuals who meet basic eligibility criteria and who demonstrate commitment and motivation to increase their economic independence by becoming employed or increasing their current level of employment.

The attached policy directives provide interpretation and application of the legislative and policy requirements of the program. The policy directives will guide Ministry staff in the delivery of ODSP Employment Supports. The policy directives are also intended to provide detailed information about the program to service providers, applicants, clients and the general public. New policy directives are issued whenever regulations or policies change.

The purpose of the policy directives is to enable consistent decision-making across the province and to ensure accountability for those decisions. The policy directives provide staff with the guidance they need to make decisions regarding the client's eligibility for services and supports. ODSP Employment Supports legislation and policies allow for discretion in some areas. In keeping with the spirit of the legislation, staff should use this discretion to maximize the benefit that clients receive from the supports to which they are entitled. In accordance with its purpose of providing employment supports to people with disabilities, the *ODSP Act*, regulations and policies should be interpreted flexibly and broadly.

ODSP Employment Supports will be provided based on the client's individual needs and circumstances. Consistent with the intent of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005)*, barriers to accessing ODSP Employment Supports must be removed or minimized so that all clients are able to benefit from the supports available. Clients should be provided with the accommodations required to address disability-related needs. Such accommodations may include:

- using alternative communication formats;
- allowing flexibility of timelines; and,
- personal supports such as sign-language interpreters.

Staff will provide clients with clear and up-to-date information about ODSP Employment Supports, as well as other community services that may be available, in order to assist people with disabilities to live, work, and participate in their communities.