

ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM - EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

DIRECTIVE 3.2

EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION SESSION, EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS FUNDING AGREEMENT, AND SELECTION OF SERVICE PROVIDERS

SUMMARY OF DIRECTIVE

To describe the steps, including the Employment Information Session and the signing of an Employment Supports Funding Agreement, required for an applicant/client to select an Employment Supports service provider.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

[Section 33 \(d\) of the ODSP Act](#)
[Section 35 \(1\) and \(2\) of the ODSP Act](#)
[Section 5 of the Regulation](#)
[Section 6 of the Regulation](#)

INTENT OF POLICY

To provide applicants with a comprehensive understanding of ODSP Employment Supports, and what applicants and clients can expect from the program.

To ensure clients are aware of their obligations, rights and responsibilities as a client of Employment Supports.

To make applicants and clients aware of the process for selecting a service provider.

APPLICATION OF POLICY

Employment Information Session

The purpose of the Employment Information Session is to provide detailed information to the applicant about what they can expect as a result of participating in Employment Supports. The session also helps applicants decide whether they are willing and able to prepare for, obtain, and maintain competitive employment and meet all program requirements.

All applicants who meet basic program eligibility requirements (age, legally entitled to work in Canada, living in Ontario, etc.) are required to participate in an Employment

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Information Session led by Employment Supports staff. The only exception are employed applicants and applicants who have firm job offers. These applicants are not required to participate in the Employment Information Session, unless, in the opinion of Employment Supports staff, it would be in the best interest of the applicant.

Some Employment Supports applicants are directly referred via a service provider or community organization. These applicants should still participate in an Employment Information Session even though they may have already received information about Employment Supports.

The Employment Information Session should take place after establishing the applicant's basic eligibility.

The key objective of the Employment Information Session is to ensure applicants understand:

- the mandate and purpose of ODSP Employment Supports;
- how ODSP Employment Supports works;
- what clients can expect from service providers;
- resources/services that may be available outside of ODSP Employment Supports;
- the responsibility and commitment required if the applicant chooses to proceed;
- the impact that employment may have on an applicant's ODSP Income Support, including impact on exemptions, benefits, rapid reinstatement, etc.;
- the possibility of a client contribution financial requirement; and
- the dispute resolution/complaint process available.

The Employment Information Session may be provided in a variety of ways and locations:

- a group session with more than one applicant;
- a one-on-one meeting;
- a telephone session;
- via an information package provided to the applicant (e.g. courier, mail); or
- at any location that best meets the applicant's needs, including local ODSP offices, or off-site at service provider/community facilities.

The structure and location of the Employment Information Session will depend on a number of factors such as the number of interested applicants at any one time, the location of the local Employment Supports office, and the accommodation needs of the applicant(s).

While face to face sessions are ideal so that applicants may ask questions or express

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concerns, it is recognized that this is not always possible or practical due to the nature of the applicant's disability or other relevant reasons. Where face to face meetings are not practical, Employment Supports staff should provide applicants with a detailed package explaining the information that would be covered in the Employment Information Session. In these cases, Employment Supports staff should follow up with phone contact in order to answer questions and address any concerns.

When the Employment Information Session is conducted as a group "seminar", Employment Supports staff should be available to answer any questions or concerns relating to Employment Supports or to the employment process ahead.

Regional Offices should involve other community employment resources in the Employment Information Session in order to provide information about the range of employment services that are available in the community outside of ODSP Employment Supports. These additional resources could include:

- Service providers;
- Services funded by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (e.g. Job Connect);
- Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC) funded programs (e.g. Opportunities Fund).

After the applicant has participated in the Employment Information Session, Employment Supports staff will conduct a follow-up discussion with the applicant.

Employment Information Session – Follow-up Discussion

After the Employment Information Session, Employment Supports staff will conduct a follow-up discussion with the applicant to ensure they understand the information that has been provided to them. The follow-up discussion should take place soon after the Employment Information Session in order to ensure prompt access to services.

Employment Supports staff will determine the most appropriate means of conducting the follow-up discussion. These may include:

- holding the discussion directly after the Employment Information Session;
- scheduling a separate meeting; or
- discussing over the telephone;

The purpose of the follow-up discussion is to answer questions and/or address concerns the applicant may have, and ensure the applicant understands what is required of them and what will take place throughout the employment process.

In the follow-up discussion, Employment Supports staff should pose a variety of

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questions to the applicant regarding motivation, commitment, the impact of employment, and the applicant's disability/health status. This discussion is intended to increase the applicant's knowledge of his/her capabilities so that appropriate employment goals can be set.

This discussion is *not* part of the eligibility determination. Questions posed to the applicant are for discussion purposes only. The applicant's responses and comments can be discussed to help the applicant be aware of the level of motivation and commitment required to obtain and maintain competitive employment, and to make a decision as to whether or not employment is appropriate at this time.

After an applicant has participated in the follow-up discussion, the applicant will decide whether they are willing and/or able to pursue competitive employment and continue to participate in ODSP Employment Supports.

Applicants who feel they are not ready or not capable of proceeding can voluntarily withdraw from the program. Employment Supports staff should provide alternative options to employment, if requested and as appropriate.

Applicants who choose to proceed in Employment Supports may be required to complete a client contribution assessment and must sign an Employment Supports Funding Agreement (ESFA) before they can be connected to a service provider.

Client Contribution Assessment

Clients not in receipt of ODSP Income Support with an annual gross income of more than \$51,000 may be required to contribute toward the cost of their employment supports. The purpose of a client contribution requirement is for the client to share the costs of eligible goods and/or services in circumstances where it is financially appropriate for her/him to do so. Employment Supports staff complete the assessment prior to the signing of the ESFA. ([See Directive 5.3 Client Contribution Requirements](#))

Selection of a Service Provider

Clients will have been informed that Employment Supports staff do not directly assist the client to get and keep a job. It is the service provider who will ensure that the client has access to the supports needed to get and keep a job.

Clients are responsible for selecting a service provider that they believe will best suit their needs, disability, and employment goals.

Where requested, Employment Supports staff may *assist* the client to select a service provider by providing a list of service providers in the local area/community, a description of their services, as well as any brochures/information available.

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Employment Supports staff will encourage the client to consider the following when selecting a service provider:

- How far will the client have to travel to the service provider facility location?
- What experience does the service provider have with the client's disability?
- Does the service provider have experience with the kind of job the client would like to do?
- Will the service provider come to the client's home or does the client have to go to their office?
- Does the client have any language concerns?

Clients should be encouraged to contact two or three service providers and ask any questions necessary to help make a choice.

Employment Supports staff will inform the client that it is possible that the service provider they have chosen may decide that they are not able to help the client find a job once the client has completed the employment determination. For example, the service provider may believe they are not the most appropriate "fit" for the client, or the service provider may not be able to properly provide the specific goods/services required by the client. In such cases, Employment Supports staff will let the client know what other options are available.

Once a client has selected a service provider, he/she will proceed to sign an ESFA.

Employment Supports Funding Agreement (ESFA)

Eligible applicants who are interested in proceeding in Employment Supports are required to sign an ESFA. A client cannot begin to receive service from a service provider, until both the client and Employment Supports Specialist have signed an ESFA.

The ESFA acts as a contract between the client and the Ministry. The ESFA outlines the terms and conditions to which the client and the Ministry agree. It also outlines the client's rights and responsibilities under ODSP Employment Supports, including the client's rights regarding decisions relating to eligibility and/or cancellation/suspension of Employment Supports.

In exceptional circumstances, an applicant may authorize someone to sign the ESFA on her/his behalf. In such cases, the person acting on behalf of an applicant must have a signed authorization from the applicant or equivalent authority acceptable to the applicant and Employment Supports staff.

Some applicants may only require a one-time support in order to obtain or maintain

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employment or to accept a firm job offer. In these cases, the Employment Supports staff may provide direct funding to the client for the good/service. In such cases, the client is not required to select or meet with a service provider. A streamlined ESFA is available and should be completed by these applicants who do not require the services of a service provider. ([See Directive 2.2 Employed Applicants and Applicants with Job Offers.](#))

Once an applicant has signed an ESFA, he/she may proceed to work with the selected service provider.

RELATED DIRECTIVES

[2.1 Program Eligibility](#)

[5.3 Client Contribution Requirements](#)