

ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM - EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

DIRECTIVE 5.2

SPECIAL PROJECT FUNDING

SUMMARY OF DIRECTIVE

Regional Offices may provide funding to projects that demonstrate innovative approaches to providing employment supports for people with disabilities.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

[Sections 32 \(1\), 48 \(1\), 48 \(2\) of the ODSP Act](#)

INTENT OF POLICY

To outline the criteria for selecting, funding and reporting on projects that demonstrate innovative approaches to providing employment supports to people with disabilities.

APPLICATION OF POLICY

Special Projects

A project is considered innovative when:

- it serves populations of people with disabilities that have traditionally had more difficulty than others in accessing competitive employment; and/or
- tests innovative approaches to creating competitive employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

Beyond these requirements, the Employment Supports System Manager, in consultation with the Local Planning and Coordination Group (LPCG), may define innovative in the context of local needs and gaps in the provision of eligible goods or services.

Funding for special projects is managed through each Regional Office's ODSP Employment Supports allotment.

Regional Offices may provide funding for project development, a time-limited project or a one-time event. Employment Supports Systems Managers will use standard contracting procedures for special project funding. The amount of funding and number

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of projects funded are determined by the Regional Office in consultation with their LPCG(s).

Selection Process

LPCGs will be involved in determining whether a special project proposal should be funded. LPCGs review all proposals submitted and provide recommendations to the Employment Supports System Manager. The Employment Supports System Manager will make final funding decisions.

Selection Criteria

Projects selected should:

- Demonstrate client involvement in the planning, management and implementation of the special project and/or
- Respond to local needs and/or fill gaps in the provision of eligible goods or services.

Groups proposing special projects should meet either of the following basic criteria:

- The group, either a service organization or a group of people with disabilities, is providing eligible services to people who are likely to be eligible for ODSP Employment Supports; or
- A group of clients is proposing a self-employment initiative or a client-run business.

The following selection factors should also be considered:

1. **Experience:** Organizations should demonstrate the ability to manage the project, effectively provide services to the client group represented, understanding of the labour market and knowledge of the community resources available.
2. **Planning:** Organizations will submit to the selection committee/ LPCG a detailed program plan including a description of the project activities, timelines for each activity, clients to be served, any one-time events being organized and the results to be achieved through the project.
3. **Funding:** A complete budget breakdown should be available identifying funds requested, funding from other sources and any in-kind contributions, details of project administration and staffing. The project should have the potential for self-sufficiency within a specified project time frame.

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4. Target Group: Organizations will target their services to those people with more significant employment barriers.
5. Collaboration: Organizations should demonstrate their willingness and ability to collaborate with employers, service providers and other community organizations.
6. Evaluation: Organizations should have a process for evaluating service performance, achievement of outcomes and client satisfaction with services provided.

Projects are usually funded for one fiscal year. At the end of that year, the organization is expected to achieve a level of stability that would make it competitive enough to support the job placement and job retention mandate of ODSP Employment Supports. In the case of client businesses or self-employment initiatives, the expectation is that the initiative becomes self-sufficient.

The Employment Supports System Manager may extend funding for an additional two years (for a total of three years) if the project requires more time to meet objectives and prove its viability. Projects should demonstrate how they help ODSP employment supports clients meet personal goals related to employment.

Funding may be provided for one-time events; for example, employer recognition events and special occasions that draw a variety of employers and service providers together.

Accessing Services Provided Through Special Projects

When a person applies for ODSP employment supports, the Employment Supports Specialist's role is to inform them of projects being funded by the region that may be appropriate in meeting the client's needs.

Clients may have an employment goal that fits with a consumer business receiving special project funding. Where appropriate, Employment Supports Specialists will inform clients that there may be hiring opportunities with that business.

ODSP employment supports clients may participate in (receive service from, or be employed by) a special project after signing an Employment Supports Funding Agreement.

Employment Supports System Managers may approve client run businesses or self-employment initiatives proposed by a group of clients. The proposed project must meet eligibility criteria specified in the project criteria section of this directive. Groups of clients participating in a self-employment project must also sign an ESFA.

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Program Reporting

Special Projects will allow ODSP employment supports to achieve the following objectives:

- Determine best practices;
- Provide information for ongoing policy development; and
- Meet the government's commitments to community stakeholders.

Although special project funding is intended to allow some testing of new models of service, clear performance measures are required to ensure on-going accountability to consumers and the general public.

The Employment Supports System Manager will be required annually to provide the following information for each funded project:

- Funded amounts;
- The number of participants in projects;
- The number of participants who successfully attain the objectives of the project;
- The number of people employed after project funding ends;
- The number of people successfully participating in projects, but not employed after project funding ends; and
- The number of businesses or employers participating in projects, if applicable.

Continuation of Funding

Any special projects wishing to continue providing employment supports beyond the term of their contract may enter into negotiations with the Employment Supports System Manager for funding based on reaching job placement and retention targets, similar to community-based service providers.

Special Projects and Job Placement Targets

Where a special project accomplishes successful job placements (i.e. a client obtains competitive employment and is employed for 13 cumulative weeks), the placements may contribute towards regional targets. The number of successful placements may be determined at year-end based on service specific data reported in the Service Provider Tracking Tool.

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RELATED DIRECTIVES

[3.2 Employment Information Session, Employment Supports Funding Agreement, and Selection of Service Providers](#)

[5.1 Employment Supports Funding](#)