

**Ministry of Community
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March 26, 2010

Ms. Gail Nyberg
Chair, Social Assistance Review Advisory Council
c/o Daily Bread Food Bank
191 New Toronto Street
Toronto, ON
M8V 2E7

Dear Ms. Nyberg:

I am writing to follow up on the short-term changes submitted by the Social Assistance Review Advisory Committee (SARAC) to the ministry in early 2010.

I want to assure you that the government remains committed to making progress on social assistance improvements and that changes to social assistance, in certain circumstances, can be made outside of being formally mentioned in the budget. My ministry will be proceeding with policy work required to effect a number of changes based on the Council's recommendations. Initial policy work will focus on:

- expanding the exemption of small payments and in-kind gifts;
- shortening the suspension periods for non-compliance with participation requirements;
- clarifying the rules for disposing of assets in relation to eligibility (e.g., for persons paying off a government debt); and
- changing the shelter allowance calculation for people who share the cost of their accommodation.

As you can appreciate, final policy changes would be subject to the necessary regulatory approvals process as required.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Council for their input on changes that can be made in the immediate term to improve the way Ontario's social assistance system works. I look forward to receiving the Council's recommendations on a scope and Terms of Reference for the review in the near future.

Sincerely,

Original Signed By

Madeleine Meilleur
Minister