

Passport

Program Guidelines for Adults with a Developmental Disability and their Caregivers

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Table of Contents

Overview of the Passport Program	3
Who May Receive Passport Funding	4
How to Apply for Passport Funding	4
How Passport Funding Works	4
Filing Claims	6
What Supports Does Passport Funding Cover?	7
Admissible Expenses	8
Community Participation Supports and Activities of Daily Living	8
Person-Directed Planning	9
Caregiver Respite Services and Supports.....	10
Administrative Supports	10
Inadmissible Expenses	11
Extenuating Circumstances	12
Roles and Responsibilities	14
Hiring a Support Worker	14
Quality of Services and Supports	15
Budgeting	16
Misuse of Funding	16
Definitions	17
Community Participation Services and Supports.....	17
Activities of Daily Living Services and Supports	17
Caregiver Respite Services and Supports.....	18
Person-Directed Planning Services and Supports.....	18
Person Managing Funds (PMF)	19
Support Worker (SW).....	19
Primary Caregiver	19
Passport Service Agreement.....	20
Questions?	20

Overview of the Passport Program

Passport is a program that helps adults with a developmental disability be involved in their communities and live as independently as possible by providing funding for community participation services and supports, activities of daily living and person-directed planning. The program also provides funding for caregiver respite services and supports for primary caregivers of an adult with a developmental disability.

The key goals of the Passport program are to:

- Foster independence by building on individuals' abilities and developing community participation, social and daily living skills.
- Increase opportunities for participation in the community with supports that respect personal choices and decision-making, and help people achieve their goals.
- Promote social inclusion and broaden social relationships through the use of community resources and services available to everyone in the community.
- Help young people make the transition from school to life as an adult in the community.
- Support families and caregivers of an adult with a developmental disability so they can continue in their supportive role.

The services and supports funded under Passport are guided by the following principles:

- **Person-centred/directed** – services and supports build on individuals' strengths and are responsive to their preferences, needs and values.
- **Choice and Flexibility** – individuals identify and participate in activities that are meaningful to them. Direct funding is available to give Passport participants more options in how supports are provided.
- **Strong Families and Caregivers** - the individual's family and personal support network is recognized as the primary support for adults with a developmental disability.
- **Fairness and Equity** - funding amounts are based on a provincial application, needs assessment and funding formula.
- **Accountability** – individuals, families and service delivery agents must use Passport funding for its intended purpose and comply with spending rules and reporting requirements.

Who May Receive Passport Funding

Adults, 18 years or older, who are eligible for developmental services and supports funded by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services may receive annual Passport funding.

How to Apply for Passport Funding

Individuals should contact the Developmental Services Ontario (DSO) office in their region to apply for Passport funding. The DSO will confirm each applicant's eligibility to receive ministry-funded adult developmental services. Once eligibility is confirmed and the individual has consented to a referral, the DSO will refer the individual to their local Passport agency to receive the \$5,000 annual allocation through the program.

It is possible to receive more than \$5,000 per year in annual Passport funding, individuals must complete an application package at their DSO including a needs assessment to access additional funding above \$5,000. Once an individual's application package has been completed, information is transferred to the local Passport Agency.

Passport agencies determine how much funding a person will receive using a standard funding formula. Whether a person receives more than \$5,000 will depend on their assessed need, priority level and available government resources. The maximum Passport funding amount is \$40,250 per year.

To promote a fair and equitable service system, all applications for Passport are prioritized according to each person's unique situation and available resources, giving the highest priority to people whose circumstances place them most at risk.

For more information about applying for developmental services for adults with a developmental disability contact the local DSO office or visit www.dsontario.ca

How Passport Funding Works

Passport is a reimbursement program where individuals and families submit invoices and receipts for admissible expenses. Admissible expenses are then reimbursed up to the amount of the annual Passport funding allocation.

Once a Passport recipient has accepted their Passport funding approval, they will need to designate a person who will be responsible for managing their Passport funding. This person is called the Person Managing Funds (PMF) and every Passport recipient must have a designated PMF. The Passport recipient can designate him/herself as the PMF or can choose a trusted friend or family member to be their PMF. The PMF cannot be a person who is paid as a support worker for the Passport recipient.

The local Passport agency will work with the Passport recipient and/or their PMF to help make decisions about how the Passport recipient would like to administer their funding. There are three approaches in the Passport program to manage funding:

1. Recipients can manage their own funding, develop their own support arrangements and hire their own support workers and service providers.
2. Recipients can receive supports from an agency. The Passport agency can work with individuals and families to arrange payments with their chosen service provider(s).
3. Recipients can choose an individual, agency or organization to act as a broker to manage their Passport funding on their behalf. Some examples of the types of services that may be provided by a broker include assistance with budgeting, submitting invoices to the Passport program on the recipient's behalf, recruiting and scheduling workers, etc.

It is also possible to receive Passport funding through a combination of these approaches.

All Passport recipients (or the person managing funds on their behalf) sign a tri-party service agreement with their local Passport agency and the agency that processes Passport payments. This agreement outlines that the person managing funds is responsible for:

- How Passport funding is managed (e.g., self-managed, by a service agency or both)
- Advising the Passport agency if there are any barriers to a person using their Passport funding
- Providing the Passport agency with required information and documentation to participate in the Passport Program (e.g., banking and support worker forms)
- Notifying the Passport agency and/or DSO if there is a change of address, new services they are receiving and/or changes to the person's situation that may impact eligibility for funding.

Passport recipients and their PMF are responsible for using their funding to purchase supports and pay for expenses in accordance with the admissible expenses that are set out in these Guidelines. Passport agencies will contact recipients if there are issues when processing their invoices.

The local Passport agency is the main point of contact for all Passport-related questions, including information about submitting invoices and processing payments.

Filing Claims

Passport recipients who self administer their funding have two electronic options to submit claims that make the process simple and easy to manage.

eCLAIM

- eCLAIM is available to Passport recipients that self administer their funding. There is no charge/fee to sign up or to use this option to submit claims.
- eCLAIM allows you to register an account, download the personalised fillable claim form and submit all Passport claims online. Claims submitted via eCLAIM will be processed electronically and recipients can view their submission history and claim status from their Passport eCLAIM account.
- Recipients can access eCLAIM at <https://www.dsontario.ca/passport-program/learn-about-passport-eclaim>

MyDirectPlan (MDP)

- MDP is available to Passport recipients that self administer their funding, brokers and service agencies that are not Transfer Payment Recipients (TPR). There is no charge/fee to sign up or to use this option to submit claims.
- MDP allows Passport recipients to submit claims online or with the mobile application which includes other tools to assist with budgeting and managing funding.
- Passport recipients can access MDP at www.mydirectplan.com

Passport recipients who are not able to submit claims electronically can do so manually with their customized claim form supplied by their local Passport agency via regular

mail, fax or email. Please note that claims submitted manually, by fax or email will take longer to process and reimburse.

What Supports Does Passport Funding Cover?

The Passport program is designed to complement and work together with other government programs, resources and sources of funding to provide a wide range of supports. Passport funding can be used for the following services and supports:

- Community participation
- Activities of daily living
- Caregiver respite
- Person-directed planning up to a yearly maximum of \$2,500.
- Administration costs of up to a yearly maximum of 10% of a person's Passport allocation. Service providers will not be reimbursed for administrative expenditures if they are not directly related to the services provided to a recipient

Services and supports may be purchased from the following types of service providers:

- Community service providers
- Developmental services agencies
- Private service and support providers
- Adult education providers
- Personal support workers
- Neighbours, family members, friends

Any person chosen by the Passport recipient and/or their Person Managing Funds (PMF), may be reimbursed for providing them with a service or support, if they are at least 18 years old and are not the Passport recipient's spouse, parent, primary caregiver, or PMF.

The following individuals are prohibited from being paid for providing support to Passport recipients:

- Any person under the age of 18, including the recipient's family members under the age of 18
- The spouse of the Passport recipient, regardless of residence
- The spouse(s) of the recipient's primary caregiver(s), regardless of residence
- The Person(s) Managing Funds (PMF) for the recipient

The types of services and supports included under the admissible and inadmissible expenses sections that follow represent the intended use of Passport funding.

Admissible Expenses

The following types of services and supports are examples of what Passport funding may be used to purchase:

Community Participation Supports and Activities of Daily Living

- Programs, classes, camps, and supports that foster and develop independence, social, communication and life skills (e.g., literacy, cooking, banking and managing money, using public transportation, computer skills, decision-making, self-advocacy, assistance with self-care). This includes associated fees and supplies
- Recreation, leisure, social, cultural and athletic activities that enable opportunities to participate and join in community events and activities (e.g., club memberships and fees, admission to museums, fitness and sport/activity-specific lessons)
- Ticketed, live events such as live music, theatre, sporting events and other live entertainment events are admissible expenditures under the Passport program that can be reimbursed **up to a maximum amount of \$150** per ticket for a **maximum of two (2) tickets** per event. This includes one ticket for the recipient and one for the recipient's support worker. **The Passport program will not reimburse the cost of a live event ticket above the per ticket cap of \$150.**
- Recipients whose unique circumstances mean that they require more than one support worker to attend a live event may be reimbursed for an additional ticket(s) **up to a maximum amount of \$150 per ticket** subject to **prior approval** by the local Passport agency.
- Pre-employment and employment supports (e.g., skills, task and routine training, job coaching)
- Transportation to/from activities (e.g., local transit, mileage, taxis)*

- Hiring a support worker to provide assistance with community participation and activities of daily living
- Out-of-pocket expenses incurred by support workers while providing support (e.g., cost of meals, transportation and activity fees, expenses incurred accompanying the individual with a developmental disability during trips and holiday travel)*

***Note:** The Ministry recommends that Passport recipients use the expense limits set out in the government of Ontario's Travel, Meals and Hospitality Directive for government employees as a guide for support workers' expenses. The Directive may be viewed at:

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/travel-meal-and-hospitality-expenses-directive-2020>

Person-Directed Planning

- Passport funding can be used to purchase supports to develop a person-directed plan that builds on the individual's strengths and interests and identifies the supports needed to achieve their goals.
- Person-directed planning services and supports may be purchased from independent planners and facilitators or developmental services agencies.
- Passport recipients can use up to \$2,500 of their annual funding to purchase person-directed planning services and supports.

For information about how person-directed planning can help you use your Passport funding, please see *Creating a Good Life in Community: A Guide on Person-Directed Planning*. The Guide and a plain language version may be viewed at:

<https://individualizedfunding.files.wordpress.com/2014/07/a-guide-on-person-directed-planning-english.pdf>

<https://individualizedfunding.files.wordpress.com/2014/07/plain-language-guide-on-person-directed-planing-english.pdf>

Additional person-directed planning resources are also available online. The Ontario Independent Facilitation Network is a provincial network whose purpose is to inform, educate, encourage, support, link and promote independent facilitation and planning in Ontario. Information and resources to support person-directed planning are available on their website at: www.oifn.ca

Caregiver Respite Services and Supports

The primary goal of caregiver respite services and supports is to help caregivers meet their own needs and support a healthy relationship between the person receiving care and the caregiver.

Examples of caregiver respite services and supports include:

- Help for the person with a developmental disability with activities of daily living such as personal care needs.
- Supervision of the person with a developmental disability.

Caregiver respite services and supports may last from a few hours to overnight. They may be provided during the day, evening or weekend and can be received either in-home or out-of-home.

Respite funding is intended to provide relief for unpaid primary caregivers. If a person is in receipt of Passport funding and moves into a Ministry-funded residential setting or other living arrangement where there is no primary caregiver (e.g., Long-term Care Home), the caregiver respite portion of their Passport funding will be removed.

Administrative Supports

- Some individuals who choose to manage their funding may need help to coordinate their supports or they may need help with administration. Up to 10% of the total Passport funding may be used for administrative supports (e.g., bookkeeping, payroll, scheduling support workers, bank fees for Passport-dedicated bank accounts).
- Service providers that are offering administrative services and invoicing the Passport program on behalf of the Passport recipient are **not** automatically entitled to 10% of the recipient's **total** Passport funding amount.
- Individuals who choose to purchase services through a service provider will need to negotiate the total amount of administrative costs that the agency is authorized to invoice on their behalf. This administrative fee cannot exceed 10% of the recipient's total Passport funding amount.
- Passport funding may also be used to cover applicable employer costs (e.g., Canada Pension Plan, Employment Insurance and Workers Safety and Insurance Board premiums, vacation pay).

Inadmissible Expenses

Passport funding may not be used to purchase the following types of services and supports:

- Indirect respite services and supports (e.g., cleaning, meal preparation, snow removal, care of other family members)
- Tuition for post-secondary education/degree programs that are eligible for government student assistance programs such as the Ontario Student Assistance Plan; supports that are available through an on-campus accessibility office
- Items for which the individual receives an allowance from the Ontario Disability Support Program (e.g., drug benefits, medical aids)
- Housing and home maintenance (e.g., rent, home purchase or mortgage payments, repairs, renovations or modifications, housekeeping, yard work)
- Groceries, food, and restaurant meals for the individual with a developmental disability
- Clothing
- Household items and electronics (e.g., furniture, appliances, televisions, computers)
- Telephone/telecommunications (e.g., home telephone and internet service, cell phone and service)
- Holiday travel (e.g., personal or family vacations, accommodation, transportation, travel insurance)
- Dental care and services
- Fees for therapies/specialized services (e.g., speech and language, physiotherapy, occupational therapies, nursing, massage)
- Personal goods and services (e.g., toiletries, spa treatments, aesthetic and cosmetic services)
- Assistive devices and specialized equipment
- Vehicle purchase and/or modifications, leases and rentals

As of April 1, 2020, a temporary expansion of admissible expenses has been implemented. Some of these items or services may be admissible under the temporary expansion while in effect. Details are here:

<https://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/developmental/serviceSupport/passport.aspx>

Extenuating Circumstances

Community Participation and Activities of Daily Living: Passport recipients can request the use of Passport funding for community participation and activities of daily living supports or expenses that are not normally allowed under the program. ***This is only when the person would otherwise be unable to participate in the community and/or activity in the absence of the exceptional approval.***

Exclusions from Extenuating Circumstances Process:

- Live event tickets above the per ticket cap are excluded from this process
- PMFs and certain family members, per the section above on prohibited paid support workers, **can not be reimbursed** for providing support.

Factors that are considered to determine if such supports or expenses should be approved include whether they:

- Are reasonable and appropriate
- Align with the goals and principles of the Passport program set out in Section 1 of the Guidelines (see page 3)
- Promote social inclusion and enable community participation that would otherwise be unachievable
- Foster independence.

Prior approval must be obtained to receive reimbursement for supports/expenses that are not normally covered under the program.

Indirect Respite: Indirect respite may be approved due to the presence of extenuating circumstances. Indirect respite services and supports are **short-term** arrangements (up to six months) that help the primary caregiver manage household and family responsibilities that are not directly related to caring for a person with a developmental disability.

Indirect respite is intended to support primary caregivers in situations where extraordinary demands on their time and/or physical, mental, or emotional resources would compromise their well-being or that of the person(s) they are caring for.

An approval for indirect respite services and supports may be extended if the caregiver is unable to make alternate arrangements or obtain the required supports in the initial six-month timeframe.

Factors that are considered in deciding whether indirect respite should be approved due to extenuating circumstances include:

- Change in support needs or support arrangements (e.g., loss of service and the caregiver must take on the role or work of a support worker/service provider until the needed supports are put in place).
- Competing caregiving demands (e.g., caring for other family member(s) with special needs or aging parents).
- Health and safety of the caregiver (e.g., inability to cope and the caregiver is at risk of burnout; recovery from major illness or medical procedure).
- Health and safety of the person with a developmental disability (e.g., professional house cleaning services are needed due to a medical condition).

Prior approval is required to receive reimbursement for expenses for indirect respite support.

The approval process for all extenuating circumstances, including indirect respite supports, is as follows:

- The Passport recipient can request a review of their extenuating circumstance and the inadmissible support or expense they are seeking approval to purchase with their Passport funding by advising the Passport agency by phone, mail or email. The request must set out the situation and type of services and supports that are needed.
- The Passport agency documents the individual's request and determines whether the circumstances are extenuating.
- The recipient's extenuating circumstance is reviewed by a committee of three Passport agencies and a final decision is provided.
- The Passport agency may notify the Passport recipient of the decision by telephone but must also provide a written response within 15 business days of reviewing relevant information and finalizing its decision on an extenuating circumstance request.

The decision that is provided to the Passport recipient by the Passport agency following the review is final.

Roles and Responsibilities

For individuals who manage their own funding and support arrangements, the quality of supports, liability, and compliance with tax, labour and other laws are their responsibility. Developing a back-up plan to deal with unexpected situations, such as when a support worker is sick, unavailable or cannot provide the supports, should also be considered.

Accountability for the funding received through Passport rests with the individual receiving Passport funding and/or the Person Managing Funds (PMF). The terms and conditions of the funding are set out in the Passport Service Agreement, which includes:

- Annual funding amounts
- Effective dates for the approved funding
- Roles and responsibilities of the respective parties
- Selected Service Option(s) (e.g. Self Administered, TPA, Broker or combination)
- Consent to share information
- Banking and payee information
- Other documents as applicable

Individuals who manage their funding are responsible for meeting all the administrative rules and requirements outlined in these guidelines and those set out in the Passport Service Agreement.

Hiring a Support Worker

The selection of service providers is the decision and responsibility of the Passport recipient and their PMF.

The following is meant to be informational only and is not intended as legal or financial advice. Passport recipients are responsible for understanding and meeting the legal and financial obligations associated with hiring support workers.

Be aware that when hiring a support worker, an employer's obligations and responsibilities will depend on the employment status of the support worker and whether he or she is an employee or a self-employed individual under Canada Revenue Agency rules.

Resources for Hiring a Support Worker

The Canada Revenue Agency provides general information and a number of guides and forms for employers on its website at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/forms-publications/publications/rc4110/employee-self-employed.html>

Guides to the Ontario Employment Standards Act, 2000 and the Occupational Health and Safety Act can be found on the Ministry of Labour's website at:

www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/es/pubs/guide/index.php

www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/pubs/ohsa/index.php

Quality of Services and Supports

Individuals who manage their own funding and supports are responsible for monitoring the quality of the services being purchased. Complaints or concerns about the quality of supports must be taken up with the service provider, not the Passport Agency.

While developmental services agencies funded by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services are regulated and monitored by the Ministry, other agencies and service providers are not. In some cases, mainstream community agencies or private service providers will be regulated by a different level of government, a professional association or a statutory body. Where organizations are not regulated, there may not be an overseeing body that can hear complaints and help resolve problems.

Some questions to be asked when selecting a service provider include:

- What type of supports will they provide?
- What are the costs of the supports?
- Are there any conditions related to the provision of the support?
- What will my responsibilities be?
- Does the service provider have adequate insurance coverage (e.g., in case a support worker is injured while at your home)?
- Does the service provider have references?
- Do they have a complaint process you understand and feel confident about?

Budgeting

It is recommended that individuals who manage their own funding prepare a budget that reflects how they will use their money to meet their support needs and goals. Some things to consider when developing a budget include:

- What you want to achieve with your funding (e.g., your support needs and goals).
- How you will spend your money (e.g., activities and supports to meet your needs and goals).
- When during the year you will spend your money. (e.g., you may plan to spend some of your money each month throughout the year, or you may plan to spend most of it over the summer holiday period).
- The cost of the activities and supports.

The Passport Agency can provide additional information and resources about preparing an annual budget.

For some people, paying for supports up front may cause financial hardship. In such situations, advance funds for admissible supports and expenses could be considered. These advance funds will be reconciled against actual spending and subsequent instalments will be adjusted to avoid overpayments. Individuals must contact their local Passport agency to request advance funds.

If an individual receiving funding through Passport is no longer using some or all of their funding, or is not using it appropriately, the Passport Agency will review the situation. They will discuss the reasons and explore possible solutions such as:

- Transferring funding to a service agency or having a third party administer funds on their behalf.
- Providing information and tools on the recruitment and retention of staff.
- Providing information on other supports that may be useful such as case-management.

Misuse of Funding

Passport funding is to be used solely to meet the service and support needs of adults with a developmental disability and the respite needs of their caregivers, as set out in the Passport Guidelines and Passport Service Agreement.

The Passport agency may suspend or terminate funding where the individual receiving or managing Passport funding does not comply with the terms and conditions of the Passport Service Agreement. Further information may be requested and law enforcement and/or legal action may be pursued in cases where Passport funds have not been used in accordance with the Guidelines and Passport Service Agreement (e.g., submission of expense claims that appear to be incomplete or false).

Expenditures that are reimbursed by Passport may be periodically audited to ensure compliance with provisions contained in these guidelines.

Definitions

Community Participation Services and Supports

Under the Services and Supports to Promote the Social Inclusion of Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act, 2008 (SIPDDA), community participation services and supports means:

“services and supports to assist a person with a developmental disability with social and recreational activities, work activities, volunteer activities and such other services and supports as may be prescribed.”

Community participation can involve many different areas of life such as work, leisure, and being involved in the community. The purpose of community participation services and supports is to enable adults with a developmental disability to be involved in activities in the variety of settings that make up community life and to develop a growing network of personal relationships.

Activities of Daily Living Services and Supports

Under SIPDDA, activities of daily living services and supports are defined as:

“services and supports to assist a person with a developmental disability with personal hygiene, dressing, grooming, meal preparation, administration of medication, and includes training related to money management, banking, using public transportation and other life skills and such other services and supports as may be prescribed.”

Activities of daily living involve tasks for self-care and the various things people do in everyday life, from using the telephone to cooking to navigating the public transit system. The purpose of activities of daily living supports is to provide supports to adults with a developmental disability that enable them to live as independently as possible with their families. This can be in shared living situations or on their own.

Caregiver Respite Services and Supports

Under SIPDDA, caregiver respite services and supports means:

“services and supports that are provided to, or for the benefit of, a person with a developmental disability by a person other than the primary caregiver of the person with a developmental disability and that are provided for the purpose of providing a temporary relief to the primary caregiver.”

Caregiver respite services and supports are intended to give primary caregivers a mental and physical break from their caregiving responsibilities.

A primary caregiver is the main person who takes responsibility for the support and care of an adult with a developmental disability; he/she may or may not be related to or live with the person who has a developmental disability. The designation of primary caregiver extends to the spouse of a primary caregiver.¹

Person-Directed Planning Services and Supports

Under SIPDDA, person-directed planning services and supports means:

“services and supports to assist persons with developmental disabilities in identifying their life vision and goals and finding and using services and supports to meet their identified goals with the help of their families or significant others of their choice.”

¹For the purposes of the Passport program, an individual or family who is receiving financial compensation from a Ministry-funded agency for the support of an adult with a developmental disability (e.g., LifeShare provider, Adult Protective Service Worker) is not considered a primary caregiver. An individual, family or service provider who is receiving financial compensation to provide residential arrangements, supports or care for an adult with a developmental disability is not considered a primary caregiver under the program.

Person Managing Funds (PMF)

This is the person, or people, who sign the Passport Service Agreement and is/are responsible for understanding the roles and responsibilities of administering Passport funding.

The Person Managing Funds (PMF) can be the Passport recipient themselves or a trusted friend or family member. In some cases, a representative of the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee of Ontario may act as the recipient's PMF. The PMF cannot be a person that is a paid support worker for the recipient and cannot be reimbursed as a support worker from the Passport funding.

Support Worker (SW)

An individual or family who is receiving financial compensation from the ministry to provide residential arrangements, supports or care for an adult with a developmental disability through a Ministry-funded service agency, the Adult Protective Service Worker program or the LifeShare program.

Any person chosen by the Passport recipient and/or their Person Managing Funds (PMF), to provide them with a service or support. The following people are prohibited from being reimbursed as a paid support worker to the recipient:

- Any person under the age of 18, including the recipient's family members under the age of 18.
- The spouse of the Passport recipient, regardless of residence.
- The spouse(s) of the recipient's primary caregiver(s), regardless of residence.
- The Person(s) Managing Funds (PMF) for the recipient.

Primary Caregiver

The main person(s) who takes responsibility for the support and care of the adult with a developmental disability, living together or not, and includes the spouse of the primary caregiver. This may include the parent(s) of the recipient, other adult family member(s), or another person(s) with primary responsibility for the care and wellbeing of the recipient. Primary caregivers and their spouses are prohibited from being reimbursed as a support worker to the recipient.

Passport Service Agreement

The Passport Service Agreement describes how the Passport recipient has chosen to manage their Passport funding and outlines the roles and responsibilities of the PMF and other parties regarding the recipient's Passport funding. The Passport Service Agreement is signed by the recipient, PMF and Passport agency.

Questions?

If you have any questions about the Passport program or these Guidelines, please contact your local Passport Agency. See the list of Passport agencies at the MCCSS website here:

https://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/en/mcsc/programs/developmental/serviceSupport/passport_agencies.aspx