



14,000 people getting new direct funding

2014 waitlist for Special Services at Home eliminated says Minister in progress report

More than 14,000 individuals with special needs and developmental disabilities now have new direct funding from Ontario's Special Services at Home (SSAH) and Passport programs.

Dr. Helena Jaczek, Minister of Community and Social Services, shared the good news during a visit to KW Habilitation this week, where she outlined **progress on Ontario's three-year, \$810-million funding commitment** for community and developmental services.

"Our investment strategy is not only expanding services to thousands of individuals now and over the coming years," said Minister Jaczek. "It's putting individual choice, independence and inclusion at the centre of all we do."

The news means that Ontario has eliminated the 2014 SSAH waitlist in just eight months, a full 16 months ahead of schedule.



Dr. Helena Jaczek, Minister of Community and Social Services (pictured right), with Direct Support Professional Jennifer Weickert (pictured left) and Brittany Neal at KW Habilitation.

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In the first year of the investment plan, Ontario has also:

- provided new residential supports for 525 adults with developmental disabilities
- supported 38 new projects that will promote employment and help modernize services for people with developmental disabilities
- committed \$180 million to support low-wage frontline workers in the developmental services sector over three years
- launched the first call for proposals to develop new housing options for adults with developmental disabilities.

“This is a very exciting time to be working in the developmental services sector,” said Anne Bilodeau, Executive Director of K-W Habilitation. “Now more than ever, we can promote the independence of the people we support so that individuals with developmental disabilities are empowered to experience life on their own terms.”

For more information, also read the [news release](#) and [backgrounder](#) for the minister’s announcement or visit the ministry [website](#).

Finding new host families

As part of the 2014 Budget initiative, Ontario is working to increase the number of host families across the province.

“Host families” are people who welcome adults with a developmental disability into their homes. Successful matches between home sharers and providers create positive long-term relationships and promote natural community integration.

Across Ontario, nearly 1,500 adults with developmental disabilities live with “host families” who provide a safe and inclusive home.

Approximately 90 developmental services agencies (Host Family agencies) deliver the program across Ontario. Many host families live in small communities or rural areas.

This spring, the ministry will begin to look at the motivations and factors which led current host families to become host families in the first place. This will help to encourage and recruit more families to join the Host Family program in communities across Ontario.

Over the coming weeks, developmental services agencies will be looking for and reaching out to individuals and families who may be interested in sharing their experiences.

We’re also keen to hear from people who expressed an interest in participating in the program but changed their minds along the way. If you or someone you know fits that description and is interested in participating in this research, please contact your local Host Family agency.

Housing Task Force seeking innovative ideas

The Developmental Services Housing Task Force is now accepting proposals for innovative housing solutions for adults with developmental disabilities.

The task force is looking for projects that:

- create more choices for individuals and offer solutions that differ from what the Ministry of Community and Social Services currently funds
- develop partnerships between individuals, families, community agencies, multiple levels of government and the private sector
- show ways to improve the existing developmental services system, including ways to reduce waitlists for housing and residential supports in a timely manner, and
- promote individualized approaches through inclusive, community-based supports.

“Finding innovative housing solutions is critical to addressing the needs of Ontario adults with developmental disabilities and their families,” says task force chair Ron Pruessen.

The task force and external experts will review all submissions and recommend the best projects to the Ministry of Community and Social Services. The ministry will review the recommended projects and make final decisions on which will be funded.

The deadline for submitting proposals is **April 24, 2015**.

To learn more, [visit the task force’s Facebook page](#) and see the [application guidelines](#) and forms.



Members of the Housing Task Force, pictured here, recently met at Surrey Place Centre in Toronto. The task force is looking for innovative housing solutions to address the needs of adults with developmental disabilities and their families.



Housing Task Force members meeting at Surrey Place Centre.

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Housing Task Force (cont'd from p3)

Questions & answers

How much money is available for these research and demonstration projects?

The Ministry of Community and Social Services is providing \$3 million per year to support research and demonstration projects for up to two years.

What happens after the two-year funding period?

Your submissions must outline if and how the projects can be self-sustaining and continue without ministry funding. However, it is possible that for some especially promising practices, the ministry may extend the funding beyond the two-year period.

What kinds of projects are likely to get funding?

The task force and external experts are looking for creative, inclusive and cost-effective housing solutions that can be shared and replicated in communities across the province.

Projects seeking capital costs for the construction of new buildings or additions to existing structures are not eligible for funding.

How large can the projects be?

We don't want to limit the scope of potential project ideas. The funding is intended for creative ideas that feature individualized approaches to inclusive, community-based supports.

Can anyone apply?

Any organization, such as a developmental services agency, a non-profit housing provider or a building sector company may apply. Applicants must be legal entities so individuals cannot submit applications on their own. Partnerships are encouraged.

Who will live in the new residential projects?

Where individual support funds are identified as part of a proposal's funding request, those individuals within the successful projects must be confirmed eligible for adult developmental services and supports through Developmental Services Ontario.



New tools from the Developmental Services HR Strategy

The Developmental Services Human Resource Strategy is releasing three new tools to help professionals working in the developmental services sector.



The tools, which were first profiled at the HR Strategy's annual forum last month, include:

- New dictionary of core competencies for administrative positions: It outlines the key skills and values a person should possess to perform well in an administrative position in the sector, and will help agencies develop, recruit and retain excellent administrative staff.
- New talent management and succession planning guide: The guide will enable agencies to identify and develop skilled and talented internal staff to fill leadership positions
- New HR Metrics Tracking Tool: This Excel-based template will help agencies collect and track information and statistics they need to make informed decisions about human resources.

You can find all three tools on the HR Strategy's website (www.ontariodevelopmentalservices.ca) in April. At the same time, the website will take on a new look. Be sure to check out the website and tools.

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HR Strategy (cont'd from p5)

Coming soon

The Developmental Services Human Resource Strategy is creating a workplace learning guide for human resources professionals in the sector to help agencies develop their employees' skills.

The guide will go hand in hand with course outlines that cover 25 workplace learning topics.

The outlines, also under development, will include topic learning outcomes, suggested content, resources, and evaluation methods to help agencies develop and offer their own courses.

The aim is to develop consistent competency-based workplace learning across Ontario.

The HR Strategy will pilot the guide and course outlines later this year.

Look for more information on these additional resources in the coming months here in Spotlight and on the Strategy's website.

**Community Living London winning Agency Leadership Award**

Barb Simmons, director of the ministry's Community Supports Policy Branch, presents Indu Radhakrishnan, manager of organizational development at Community Living London, and her colleagues with the Agency Leadership Award at the Developmental Services Human Resource Strategy forum in February. In front of 300 forum participants, Community Living London was recognized for demonstrating leadership in workforce development and employee engagement.

Getting “fit for the future” in Ajax

The year started off on a high note with more than 160 developmental service professionals and community partners kicking off 2015 with the “Fit for the Future” conference in Ajax.

The one-day session was a chance to share ideas, opportunities and a vision for change while connecting developmental services leaders across the province. Attendees discussed the need to build leadership capacity and sustainability in the sector and to identify

opportunities to make progress on developmental services transformation in their local communities.

Over 40 agencies sent representatives to learn about and share the successes they have had in pursuing innovation in developmental services. The “Tool Box” session gave sector leaders a chance to highlight new ways they're serving individuals and share templates and tools that attendees could use in their home organizations and communities.



Members of the Developmental Services Housing Task Force provided an update on their work and highlighted existing and developing housing alternatives and opportunities for partnerships.

Afternoon panelists Joe Dale (Ontario Disability Employment Network), Michelle Marshall (The Participation House Project) and Irene Moore (Christian Horizons) discussed alternative and blended service models that involve partnerships between the private and public sector.

“Each panelist spoke about really interesting models,” said Sandy Stemp, Chief Operations Officer at Reena. “The forum provided a wonderful venue for organizations to share information. By sharing innovations we can build on each other’s work.”

Dr. Jim Gardner shared his thoughts on facilitating organizational transformation efforts for developmental service organizations. He specifically highlighted approaches for gaining buy-in for organizational change and addressing the key question of “How do you make change stick?”

“ It was great having so many people together who can make change happen, ”

“It was great having so many people together who can make change happen,” said Colleen Zakoor, Executive Director of Community Living Newmarket/Aurora District. “We’re starting to think differently and do things differently. You can feel the momentum. In this environment we can move mountains.”

This event was organized by the Central East Regional Planning Committee, which includes representatives from agencies that support people with developmental disabilities, the ministry, Developmental Services Ontario (DSO) and the Community Networks of Specialized Care.

To learn more about this forum and the regional planning committee’s work, please contact committee co-chair Michelle Marshall at mmarshall@phdurham.com.

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