



## 2016 Ontario Budget invests in developmental services and supports



Finance Minister Charles Sousa recently released the *2016 Ontario Budget: Jobs for Today and Tomorrow*. Here are some highlights from the budget for Spotlight readers.

Over the next year, the government will develop a provincial employment strategy for people with disabilities that will:

- Establish a cohesive made-in-Ontario vision with goals, priorities and desired outcomes to ensure Ontarians have access to a continuum of employment and training services;
- Provide a better service experience through streamlined access to employment and training services that recognize the varied needs and employment goals of individual clients; and
- Engage employers as active partners in breaking down employment barriers for people with disabilities and promoting inclusive workplaces.

### Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities

The Province has taken a number of steps to better support people with disabilities by helping them connect to the labour market and engaging and supporting employers.

One of these steps includes the creation of the Partnership Council on Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities, to work with and encourage employers in hiring people with disabilities.

### Autism Services

The government is investing \$333 million over five years to redesign and consolidate autism services in Ontario so that more children and youth receive critical interventions sooner and achieve improved outcomes through services that are better matched to their needs.

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## Special Needs Strategy

Ontario is committed to providing comprehensive resources and support for children and youth with special and complex needs.

With this in mind, the Province is continuing to move ahead with its Special Needs Strategy to help children and youth receive timely and effective services at home, at school, in the community and as they transition to adulthood.

Moving forward, the government is investing \$17.8 million over the next three years to support:

- Enhanced complex special needs services transition and integrated delivery of rehabilitation services by hiring 68 more service planning coordinators; and
- Establishing up to seven more Regional Service Resolution Agencies to review and allocate funding for children with multiple and/or complex special needs.

## Developmental Services

In *Budget 2016*, we continue the work of investing the \$810 million committed in *Budget 2014* in the community and developmental services system over three years. This investment will help people to be fully included in the fabric of communities and live as independently as possible.

Significant progress has already been made towards achieving these goals through this new investment.

Looking ahead, the Province remains committed to addressing growth in demand.

The government will also be approving projects in 2016–17 from a second call for proposals for the Employment and Modernization Fund and the Housing Task Force.

## Social Assistance

In 2016, the government will build on its previous investments in social assistance by:

- Increasing social assistance rates by 1.5 per cent for people with disabilities relying on the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP).

Ontario will continue to work with people with lived experience and delivery partners to modernize the delivery of social assistance, better integrate services and reduce unnecessary intrusion into clients' lives. For example, the Province will:

- Introduce a reloadable payment card for ODSP clients who are unable to open or maintain bank accounts and to reduce the use of paper-based practices;
- Build on pilots launched in 2015–16 to provide more self-service options for clients; and
- Continue improvements to the ODSP adjudication and medical review process. Persons already determined to be eligible for adult developmental services should not be subject to the administrative barriers of having to be re-adjudicated for eligibility for ODSP benefits when they apply and qualify.

Learn more about the 2016 Ontario Budget on the Ministry of Finance's website at [www.ontario.ca/Budget](http://www.ontario.ca/Budget)



# Questions and answers about sheltered workshops



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**Embracing inclusion**  
A message from Minister Jaczek about sheltered workshops



With the holiday season upon us, it's time when people unite and communities become more closely knit. I would like to update you on our new direction to help people with developmental disabilities become more included in their communities.

Independence, inclusion and choice are principles at the core of our developmental services transformation. They guide every decision we make. With these principles in mind, I am committed to shifting Ontario away from sheltered workshops and towards more inclusive options such as employment and meaningful community participation. And, as a first step, agencies are being directed to not fill any vacancies that occur in sheltered workshops from now on.

I recognize that it is vital for the shift to be gradual and person-centred so that there is a smooth transition for the individuals participating in those settings.

This is not about taking away supports, and no program will be phased out without appropriate alternatives in place. Instead, agencies will work closely with individuals and families to offer inclusive supports that best meet their needs and preferences.

My ministry staff will be engaging with the sector, partner ministries and other key stakeholders in the coming months to quantify this transition.

Although this is a complex issue with strong views on multiple sides, we are determined to get it right so that people with developmental disabilities have every opportunity for greater choice and inclusion.

That said, we know we can shift to more inclusive options. Throughout the province, many agencies have already moved away from the sheltered workshop model. This is consistent with the direction that other jurisdictions across North America and elsewhere have successfully adopted.

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## The December 2015 issue of Spotlight included a message from Minister Jaczek about sheltered workshops.

opportunity for real inclusion and independence within the community.

### How long will it take to transition away from sheltered workshops?

The transition away from sheltered workshops will be gradual. A complete shift away from sheltered workshops can take several years based on what other jurisdictions, such as Vermont, have experienced.

In the meantime, no sheltered workshop program will be phased out without appropriate alternatives in place for individuals and their families.

### Will you be working with stakeholders on this transition?

The ministry has had ongoing consultation and discussion with stakeholders on the best path for this shift away from the sheltered workshop model towards community participation and competitive employment.

The ministry will be hosting a series of engagement sessions for service providers between March and April on the specific topic of best practices and lessons learned by agencies that have successfully made the transition away from sheltered workshops.

The sessions will be facilitated by Joe Dale from the [Ontario Disability Employment Network](#) and open to all developmental services agencies. We will continue to engage with agencies and families as we work towards greater community inclusion for people with developmental disabilities.

In our last issue, [Minister Jaczek's message](#) explained that Ontario will be moving away from sheltered workshops over time. Here are some questions and answers about this transition.

### What's happening with sheltered workshops?

The Ontario government is working with agencies, families and individuals to gradually move away from sheltered workshops towards inclusive employment and other meaningful community participation.

We have informed agencies that there will be no new admissions to sheltered workshop programs. This should **not** be confused with immediate program closures.

The transition away from sheltered workshops will be planned over time to ensure we make the right choices. We want to make it clear that no sheltered workshop program will be phased out without appropriate alternatives in place for individuals and their families.

This shift supports Ontario's transformation of developmental services to ensure people with developmental disabilities have every

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The Ministry of Labour is also reviewing relevant legislation through the [Changing Workplaces Review](#), which will be engaging stakeholders on issues related to employment and training.

### What do you mean by competitive employment?

For individuals who choose to work, we want them to be included in **real work** for **real pay** – this means jobs in integrated employment settings in the community paid at a competitive wage.

This is about making our employment support programs more effective in helping people meet their goals of securing real jobs in the community.

Competitive employment has many benefits, including:

- emphasizing a person's abilities and strengths
- promoting the development of broad social networks
- enhancing workplaces and communities
- increasing the person's sense of self-worth, and
- enhancing an individual's financial ability to achieve personal goals.

### What about people who don't want to pursue competitive employment?

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to belonging. The move away from sheltered workshops is not just about employment. It is about inclusion.

We will continue to meet the needs and goals of individuals who don't want to pursue competitive employment, through meaningful community participation, skills development and social/recreational activities.

## Shifting away from sheltered workshops near and afar

The shift away from sheltered workshops has been happening in Ontario and other jurisdictions for some time.

Many agencies in Ontario have already moved away from this model. For example:

- [Community Living Algoma](#)
- [Community Living Atikokan](#)
- [Community Living London](#)
- [Community Living Parry Sound](#)
- [Community Living North Bay](#)
- [Community Living St Marys](#)
- [Community Living Upper Ottawa Valley](#)
- [Kenora Association for Community Living](#)
- [KW Habilitation](#)
- [LiveWorkPlay](#)
- [South-East Grey Support Services](#)

Some of these agencies completed their transitions more than a decade ago.

Other jurisdictions have been shifting away from sheltered workshops, too. Vermont, for example, completed its shift by 2003.

Several other states, such as New York, New Hampshire and Massachusetts, and countries, such as the United Kingdom, are also in the process of moving away from this model.

We are looking at experiences in all of these jurisdictions to ensure that Ontarians have the best experience possible in moving away from sheltered workshops.



## Kick start for planning independent facilitation



**Watch this video to learn how independent facilitation can help individuals and their families.**

The **Independent Facilitation Demonstration Project** is now helping more than 450 people with developmental disabilities work with independent facilitators to plan for their futures.

The two-year project, which got underway in May 2015, aims to

help up to 1,100 individuals work with an independent facilitator to develop person-directed plans. These plans and the process of developing them can help individuals and their families:

- outline their individual needs and goals
- plan for major life transitions
- make the most out of funding, and
- outline ways they can participate in community activities.

The Ontario Independent Facilitation Network (OIFN) and members of seven partner organizations are working with the ministry to deliver the project. Last fall, the OIFN held two forums in North Bay and Oshawa to build the availability and awareness of independent facilitation, an important goal of the demonstration project.

As part of the project, the ministry is evaluating how participants are benefiting from independent facilitation and person-directed planning.

To date, the ministry has received a number of positive comments from project participants. “We are grateful to [our daughter’s facilitator] for how well she has connected with her,” said one individual’s parents. “She brings so many gifts to her relationship with her and to our family. She sees possibilities and potential in [our daughter] and her community that we have not identified. We have an ally...and that is a great feeling.”

Another’s individual’s parent commented: “Having a facilitator in our lives has made a world of difference. All of a sudden I don’t have to do everything myself, I’m not the one always asking for help, and I’m discovering everyday things my son can succeed at that he might not have had the opportunity to try before.”

Individuals who live in the communities served by the project and who have requested person-directed planning services with their local Developmental Services Ontario (DSO) office are being selected and invited to participate in the project.

For more information about person-directed planning and independent facilitation visit the:

- [ministry’s website](#)
- [Ontario Independent Facilitation Network’s website](#)
- [Partners for Planning website](#)

## More facts about ODSP and working

### Did you know you can work if you get support from the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)?

In fact, you will always have more money while working than you would from ODSP income support alone. If you are on ODSP and you want to work, we can help with the costs of getting ready for, finding, and starting a job.

### What are ODSP employment supports?

ODSP employment supports can help you prepare for, get and keep a job – even if you have never worked before, or have been out of work for some time.

### Can ODSP help me find work?

Yes! ODSP can help you prepare for, get and keep a job if you:

- are 16 years of age or older
- live in Ontario
- are legally allowed to work in Canada, and
- have a physical or mental disability that is expected to last a year or more, making it hard for you to find or keep a job.

You don't need to be receiving ODSP income support to get employment help.

Start by talking to a caseworker at your local ODSP office. They will help you pick a service provider in your community. That service provider will make sure you're ready to work. When you are ready, they will work with you to find a job that matches your skills, and can help support you to succeed on the job.

Check out our May 2015 issue for more facts about ODSP and working.



**See how ODSP employment supports helped Curtis Haley become The Real Canadian Superstar.**



## Partner Facility Renewal program helps agencies with repairs and upgrades

The ministry is helping more than 140 developmental services agencies across the province provide safer and more accessible facilities for individuals and families.

This investment includes \$10.2 million that was distributed last summer and nearly \$3.3 million that was delivered in December, supporting upgrades and repairs for more than 780 projects.

Approved projects include upgrading accessible washrooms, replacing windows, repairing roofs, replacing furnaces and expanding program spaces.

“Helping community agencies pay for repairs and important renovations means they can focus more on the people they serve, and less on finding the funds they need to keep their buildings safe, secure and in good repair,” said Minister Jaczek.

Premier Kathleen Wynne announced the funding in January, which included making investments in a variety of community agencies.

Agencies wishing to learn more about the Partner Facility Renewal program may contact the ministry’s regional offices.




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