



## Focusing on Housing for Adults with Developmental Disabilities

### A Message from Minister Dr. Helena Jaczek



As you know, in 2014, our government announced \$810M over three years to improve community and developmental services. Since then, more than 800 adults transitioned to residential supports, over half way to our goal. We also funded 18 creative housing projects that were recommended by the Developmental Services Housing Task Force, to help expand the range of creative and inclusive housing initiatives for adults with developmental disabilities.

However, we know there is more work to be done, and funding alone won't be enough. So my ministry will be setting up a Developmental Services Residential Housing Forum in late November with agencies, people with developmental disabilities and their families, as well as our partner ministries.

The forum will build on the work of the Housing Task Force and offer an opportunity to discuss how we can support people with developmental disabilities to live more independently in their communities.

At the forum, participants will all have an opportunity to share their views, discuss the current residential situation in the province, and provide input on ways we might improve residential services in Ontario for adults with developmental disabilities. This will be an opportunity for participants to exchange ideas and collaboratively identify effective approaches to housing for people with developmental disabilities.

I know there isn't a one-size-fits-all solution to housing. We all need to work together to support greater inclusion for people with developmental

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disabilities. The lessons we learn, we hope, will help us develop a broader set of residential options that can help more people in the long-term.

There will be various simultaneous sessions across the province, and a webcast will be available to the public. There will also be opportunity to provide feedback for those unable to attend in person, and results of the forum will be shared with the public.

I look forward to hearing from people with developmental disabilities, their families and our partners on this important topic.

**Dr. Helena Jaczek  
Minister**

For more information about residential supports for people with developmental disabilities, visit the [MCSS webpage](#).

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## Second Call for Proposals – Employment and Modernization Fund (EMF)

The Ministry of Community and Social Services is now accepting applications for the second call for proposals for the Employment and Modernization Fund (EMF).

The Developmental Services Employment and Modernization Fund (EMF) is part of the Ontario government's \$810 million investment strategy for community and developmental services.

This fund supports the ongoing transformation of the developmental services system into one that promotes greater inclusion and independence for individuals, and delivers person-directed supports through a collaborative and efficient service delivery network.

The driving purpose of the fund is to encourage developmental services agencies to:

- implement new approaches to providing services and supports through innovative practices
- share best practices, and;

- adapt organizational structures to reflect the changing realities of developmental services.

The ministry is accepting applications for two major themes:

- **Employment:** Projects that assist with the shift towards competitive employment for people with developmental disabilities, and initiatives that enable people to pursue paid work.
- **Modernization:** Projects that promote innovation and collaboration within the developmental services sector and build linkages with other sectors in order to make services and supports more person-directed and responsive to the needs of individuals and families.

Proposals must be submitted to MCSS regional offices by **December 19, 2016**.

For more information and to obtain the application guidelines/form, visit the [Employment and Modernization Fund section of MCSS' website](#).

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## Questions and Answers

### Who can apply?

Ministry-funded transfer payment agencies that serve adults with developmental disabilities must be the lead applicant. However, regional and cross-sectoral partnerships are strongly encouraged.

### How long can my project run?

Projects can start in fiscal year April 1, 2017 or later and end by March 31, 2019. Projects will not be funded beyond March 31, 2019. Applicants may submit proposals for one-time projects, single year funding or multi-year funding. Multi-year funding will be subject to reporting back on project milestones and stated outcomes.

### Is there a cost limit to project proposals?

There is no cost ceiling for project proposals. The ministry wants to encourage the best possible ideas. Multi-year projects may be funded over two years.

### How many projects will the ministry fund?

The ministry will support the strongest proposals. The strength of the proposals will be the deciding factor.

## Update on ReportON

Earlier this year, the Ministry of Community and Social Services launched ReportON to Developmental Services agencies, a new 24/7 telephone line and email address to promote safety for adults with developmental disabilities. Callers can report alleged, suspected and/or witnessed incidents of abuse and neglect of adults with developmental disabilities. This can include physical, psychological and financial abuse, sexual harassment, and emotional neglect.

Over the past six months, trained staff have responded to calls and emails to ReportON during its soft launch phase to agencies. Working with partner agencies, each situation was addressed.

The ministry will soon launch ReportON to the wider public. Partner agencies are eager to help champion this effort and will work with the ministry to help spread the word across the province.

It is the responsibility of everyone – government, municipalities, agencies, families and the community at large – to ensure that the safety of people with developmental disabilities is front and centre.

Read more about the ministry's safety measures in the [July 2016 issue of Spotlight](#).

# Improving Access to ODSP and SSAH

The ministry is simplifying the process for young people with developmental disabilities and their families when they apply for the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) and Special Services at Home (SSAH) funding.

Two important changes have come into effect as of September 1, 2016:

1. Once a person is eligible for ministry-funded adult developmental services, they will no longer have to go through a second process to verify their disability to qualify for ODSP.

Until now, people with developmental disabilities had to prove their disability twice when applying for ministry-funded adult developmental services and supports and income support from the ODSP.

If individuals/families receive a letter from a Developmental Services Ontario (DSO) office saying they are eligible for adult developmental services and supports, this means they may also be eligible for ODSP.

Existing ODSP requirements, including financial eligibility, will still apply.

2. Families receiving SSAH funding for children under 18 with a developmental disability will also no longer need to re-apply every year for funding.

This means all SSAH recipients will be automatically renewed at their current level of funding until they turn 18, as long as eligibility criteria continue to be met.

“Our government is continuing to break down the barriers that people with developmental disabilities and their families can face in accessing supports and services. This change is another step we are taking to help improve their experience with our developmental services and social assistance systems,” said Dr. Helena Jaczek, Minister of Community and Social Services.

**“It didn’t make sense to require people to prove their disability over and over again. Now, they won’t have to,” said Minister Jaczek.**

If you have any questions about these changes, please contact your local [ODSP office](#).

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## Independent living works for Kaylee

Kaylee Lyoness is now living independently for the first time in her life, thanks to the support she received from the Neighbourly Homes project, a partnership between Community Living St. Marys, City of Stratford, Pol Quality Homes and Habitat for Humanity. The ministry funded this demonstration project, which was recommended by the Housing Task Force in 2015.

For many years, Kaylee and her mom, Janette Lyoness, have been planning for Kaylee’s future. Kaylee didn’t require paid support all the time, yet they wanted someone close by in case support was needed. After some time and thoughtful planning, they came up with a unique supportive

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**From left to right: Jennifer Vankoughnett (“Neighbourly Support” Provider), Yvonne de Martines (Kaylee’s housemate), Kaylee Lyoness**

housing solution for Kaylee. She moved into a two-bedroom apartment with her housemate Yvonne de Martines, who she was connected with through her local Developmental Services Ontario (DSO). Kaylee receives Neighbourly Support from a family who lives down the hall. She is monitored and supported on a 24/7 basis, which helps her to live independently in her own home.

Kaylee and her Neighbourly Support provider spend time together doing activities such as eating dinners, running errands, going shopping and spending time outdoors. In exchange for providing support, the Neighbourly Support provider receives affordable housing.

“It has improved her life by making her world bigger through creating new community relationships in a natural setting with her roommate and her family, the people in her apartment building and her neighbourly support family,” said Janette,

“People now see how capable Kaylee is to make decisions in her day to day life. She has structure in her day to day routine and has endless possibilities to continue to give her quality in her life by having more people see her differently by being in her own apartment.”

For Community Living St.Marys, this partnership is all about helping people and their families decide how they want to live in the community. Everything starts with the person at the centre.

As for the future of this project, Kaylee continues to make new friendships in her community and gain more independence.

“Kaylee has the power of choice to make decisions about how she wants her life to look with the supports in place to help her do that successfully,” said Janette.

“It all happened so fast...it's been good for both Kaylee and myself. It's about bringing different people together,” said Yvonne.

With time and careful person-directed planning, this model of support can be replicated in other communities. The Neighbourly Homes project has now expanded to support an additional two people to live independently in their own homes.

Community Living St.Marys suggests those agencies who are interested should meet with people and their families and try to figure out what their vision of a meaningful life is like, then build support around that vision from the beginning.

# Shifting Away From Sheltered Workshops

The Ministry of Community and Social Services continues to work towards a more inclusive Ontario – one where people with developmental disabilities can live as independently as possible in their community.

A key part of this vision is having a person-directed approach, which means shifting away from sheltered workshops and toward more individualized and inclusive options. It includes employment for those that are able and want to work, or meaningful community participation for others not able to be engaged in paid employment.

To help agencies transition from the traditional sheltered workshop models, the ministry is providing materials to help identify affected programs, which will include:

- transition planning instructions and high-level information on elements to consider when agencies develop future support options
- template materials to help gather key information and guide agencies as they modify or shift away from sheltered workshop models

Families will be hearing from their local agencies on their community engagement in the coming months.

The ministry recognizes that a complete shift away from programs such as sheltered workshops can take several years and careful planning is vital to the success of any transition. The process needs to be gradual and person-directed, so that there is a smooth transition for people who are participating in these programs as well as the agencies providing them.

This is not about taking away supports, and no program will be closed without the appropriate alternatives in place for people who are currently participating in sheltered workshops. We expect that agencies work closely with people and their families to provide inclusive supports and options that will best meet their needs and preferences. It will be an example of true community integration and achieving services and supports tailored to the needs and goals of individuals.

Ministry of Community and Social Services

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