



Lanark County Social Services A Road to Renewal

Collaborative Meeting

Thursday, November 12th, 2020

Emily Hollington, Director, Social Services



Overview

- Service Manager and Social Services Department Overview
- The impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on people living in poverty
- Phase 1: The Immediate Response
- Phase 2: Gradual Recovery
- Phase 3: Our New Reality
- Ongoing regulatory changes, challenges and opportunities
- Social Assistance Renewal and Recovery

Service Manager Role

- In Ontario, core social services are delivered and co-funded by 47 Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs or Service Managers)
- Services Managers are responsible to oversee systems planning and manage the delivery of human services including;
 - income and employment supports
 - housing and homelessness services
 - child care, and children’s and early years services
- Lanark County is the Service Manager for the County and the Town of Smiths Falls
- Ontario is the only jurisdiction in Canada where municipal government holds responsibility for social services
- Why are we set up this way?
 - People can access a variety of services from one place
 - Municipalities know their communities and services can be designed for specific community needs
 - Allows flexibility in service design (i.e. Lanark County vs. Toronto)
 - Service is planned and coordinated with local supports
 - Our clients remain at the centre of our design and delivery

Lanark County Social Services

- 4 divisions:
 - **Children's Services;** fund and support licensed child care at 30 sites and early years sector; oversee quality of programs; build capacity in the sector; support and fund EarlyOn program
 - **Ontario Works;** financial and employment assistance
 - **Developmental Support Services;** Adult Protective Services Program
 - **Housing Services;** 496 units, 75 rent supplements, 53 affordable housing units, assistance with arrears and housing costs, 35 municipal and 40 provincial Portable Housing Benefits, fund and support 5 non-profits who manage 182 RGI units, 4 domiciliary hostels, Renovate Lanark, Homeownership, rent supports, homemakers, homelessness supports, contract various other services, etc.
- Approximately 65 employees, annual budget of \$39M; offices in Perth, Carleton Place and Smiths Falls
- Strong relationship with the province; legislated programs and services
- Community Housing asset valued at about \$61M (plus new build)

Pandemic and Poverty

- People living in poverty are disproportionately affected by COVID-19
- Diseases can make anyone sick, some are more at risk of infection and severe complications due to health, social and economic circumstances
- Some initial considerations:
 - Transportation issues heightened with social distancing measures
 - Research shows low income is associated with higher rates of chronic health conditions, including diabetes and heart disease, factors that increase complications with COVID-19
 - Advised to stay home when sick, purchase extra food and essential medications and disinfect surfaces frequently
 - Child care options drastically limited and even more so for people living in poverty; large majority of fee subsidy spaces were closed
 - School closures amplify challenges for families that rely on school breakfast or lunch programs
 - Many low-income or part-time workers do not have access to paid sick leave or benefits to protect them if they become ill

Phase 1: The Immediate Response

March 17th – April 10th

- Limit services and programs to essential and emergency response only; ex. OW Participation Agreements and Renovate Lanark on hold while staff focused on housing emergencies and income stability
- Launch provincially regulated/funded COVID-19 response programs under the Social Services Relief Fund Phase 1; \$1.6M, EOI released to the community
 - After hours homelessness supports, hotels, COVID Isolation Centre, food banks, community food programs, rent bank, COVID mental health support line, support for domiciliary hostels and non-profit housing providers, gift cards for cleaning supplies, etc.
- Support licensed child care centres to close their services aligning with emergency order; open to 2 emergency child care centres
- Implement numerous measures to maintain safety for staff and clients; limited staff in the office, daily health screening of all staff and clients, enhanced cleaning in offices, office safety protocols, remote services launched, intercom at each office, etc.
- Offices were closed, installed intercom, continued to see people experiencing emergencies and those without remote service capabilities in person

Phase 2: Gradual Recovery

April 13th – September 18th

- Reintroduce programs that were paused during Phase 1; all programs ongoing however may be offered in a different manner (i.e. most OW intakes completed remotely); for the most part, clients experience little to no impact
- Maintain emergency response programs and services as required, such as those related to the Social Services Relief Fund or enhanced Ontario Works Emergency Assistance
- Licensed child care centres granted permission to open as part of Provincial Phase 2 reopening; closed emergency centres
- Re-introduction of ongoing safe, in-person services

Phase 3: Our New Reality

September 21st Onward










- Remote and in-person service options
- Maintain emergency response programs and services as required, such as those related to the Social Services Relief Fund or enhanced Ontario Works Emergency Assistance; all ongoing programs operating at full capacity or “new” capacity
- Implementation of enhanced technology
- Social Services Relief Fund Phase 2; approximately \$1M; 4 capital projects:
 - Lanark County Interval Housing
 - Shardon Manor
 - Victoria House
 - Rideau Ferry Country Home

Ongoing Changes, Challenges and Opportunities

- *Helping Tenants and Small Businesses Act;*
2021 rent freeze
- Developmental Services Transformation
- Changes in Child Care and Early Years Sector demand, funding challenges, lack of Early Childhood Educators
- Provincial Social Assistance Renewal and Recovery Plan

Provincial Social Assistance Renewal and Recovery

Social Assistance: Where We're Headed

	Where We've Been	The Current Focus The Recovery Period (Sep 2020 – April 2021)	What's Next? The Renewal Period (Spring 2021 – 2024)
Supporting clients toward success	 <p>Caseworkers manage all aspects of each case</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial eligibility Participation agreements Benefits administration Employment services Referrals and system navigation 	 <p>Prototyping new case management approaches</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Common assessment New action plans Shared case management with Employment Ontario Increased access to employment supports Piloting new service delivery approaches 	 <p>A person-centred, supportive client approach across the life course</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall shift to life stabilization, individualized support and system navigation Case segmentation – high and low touch approaches based on client needs Better connections with Employment Ontario
Making systems faster, fairer, more accountable, and creating time for case management	 <p>Modernization to speed current processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EDM MyBenefits RPC Contact Centre Pilots 	 <p>Creating centralized functions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centralized intake process that reduces paperwork, giving caseworkers more time to support clients through crisis and help them get back to work Automated, risk-based eligibility verification <p>With enabling technology and policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New digital tools and service modernization (easy-to-use online application, expansion of MyBenefits digital platform, 2-way digital messaging between clients and caseworkers) 	 <p>Centralizing financial assistance*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central teams and systems administer intake, ongoing eligibility, mandatory benefits, financial disbursement Expanding risk-based approaches <p><i>*Benefits and incentives to support clients achieve life stabilization goals will remain at the local level</i></p>
Working with partners	 <p>Working with partners to address challenges of the pandemic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-design and deliver emergency response initiatives Leverage learning to inform opportunities for the future 	 <p>Planning for renewed provincial-municipal and First Nations service delivery approaches</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renewed provincial-municipal operating, funding and accountability models Plan with First Nations partners a unique approach to SA Recovery and Renewal 	 <p>Implementing a renewed service delivery vision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-designing, enabling and implementing new approaches that bring us closer to Human Services Integration

• Engagement, co-design, and testing with staff and partners, including the bargaining agent: Developing a future state together
 • SA One: Healthy, energizing workplaces; open communication that supports change; resilient organization; improved client relationships
 • Service continuity: Continuing to deliver service excellence and accountability through change