



INFORMATION UPDATE

TO:	Mayor and Members City Council
DATE:	November 23, 2018
SUBJECT:	Changes to Social Assistance
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
SUBMITTED BY:	Paul Johnson General Manager Healthy and Safe Communities Department
SIGNATURE:	

On November 22, 2018, the Province announced its plan for changes to the social assistance system. The plan places an emphasis on getting people working by empowering individuals, providing life stabilization supports and improving employment services.

To achieve this, the government is planning changes to Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program to better help people who are able to prepare to get back to work and achieve better outcomes.

The redesign of social assistance is intended to make supports more effective and efficient and better integrate local systems. Changes will focus on:

- Supporting people's pathway to employment
- Increasing integration and flexibility of locally-focused services
- Supporting people with disabilities with dignity
- Making programs simpler and cutting red tape while improving accountability.

The government's social assistance plan will introduce new Ontario Works earnings exemptions to encourage employment faster:

- Recipients will be able to earn up to \$300 per month without reducing their assistance, up from the current \$200 flat rate. Subsequent earnings would be exempt at 25 per cent.
- Exemptions would start after one month on assistance, instead of the current waiting period of three months.

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

SUBJECT: Changes to Social Assistance (City Wide) - Page 2 of 2

The direction communicated by the provincial government broadly aligns with the approach the City of Hamilton is taking to integrate human services and focus on providing “wrap-around” services to help individuals and families. At this moment the impact (if any) to the municipal budget is unknown. Likely, any changes would occur following the provincial budget in the Spring of 2019.

The changes to social assistance will be implemented gradually, and we will be working closely with the Ministry to develop a plan to phase in changes so that there is flexibility to meet local needs. Regular communication will be provided to keep everyone informed of the changes and help people understand and prepare.

Should you require further information please contact Bonnie Elder, Acting Director, Ontario Works Division at ext. 4058 or by email bonnie.elder@hamilton.ca.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

None