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# **Enhanced Employment Services for Vulnerable Persons (EES)**

## **Guidelines**

**Ministry of Community and Social Services  
June 2009**



## **CONTEXT**

The 2009 Ontario Budget included a \$700M investment over two years in transitional employment and training assistance, which is supported by enhancements to the Ontario Labour Market Agreement with the federal government.

The purpose of the funding is to re-connect, support and prepare vulnerable populations for participating in appropriate education, training services and employment. To achieve labour market success, some individuals may require upfront intensive supports that will prepare them to participate in pre-employment activities. This will assist people with no or minimal attachment to the labour force who are most at risk during an economic downturn.

Funding has been allocated to the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) in 2009-10 and 2010-11 to provide services for persons on social assistance with no or marginal attachment to the labour market who are also experiencing multiple barriers to employment.

## **OBJECTIVES**

100% provincial funding is being allocated to Ontario Works delivery agents to provide enhanced services that prepare and support vulnerable groups on social assistance for labour market success.

Enhanced Employment Services for Vulnerable Persons (EES) funding will be used to provide enhanced services for social assistance clients who are vulnerable, specifically persons with disabilities including mental health and/or substance abuse issues, at-risk youth (i.e., 16-30 years of age), older workers, Aboriginal persons, newcomers to Canada, persons fleeing domestic violence and homeless persons.

Delivery agents may plan services targeting the training and employment needs of a particular group, and are expected to target and/or tailor a portion of their enhanced employment services to persons with disabilities, including ODSP recipients.

Enhanced services will be incremental to the range of services provided under Ontario Works Employment Assistance outcome funding to address barriers that vulnerable groups face when attempting to access the labour market.

## **FUNDING PARAMETERS**

The EES funding that has been allocated will be based on the following parameters:

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- Support vulnerable participants in increasing their readiness through pre-employment activities to obtain and maintain appropriate training via Employment Ontario (EO) mainstream services, access post-secondary opportunities, and/or find and maintain employment;
- Leverage integration and alignment opportunities of employment services and supports across a continuum of services through Ontario Works, EO and the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration;
- Meet a test of incrementality that demonstrates how the funding is providing enhanced services to vulnerable groups;
- Recognize that specialized services are to be client focussed and can be tailored to group needs; and
- Be linked to key outcomes including:
  - enhancing service capacity to support enrolment in employment services to maintain employment outcomes, particularly for persons with disabilities;
  - increasing retention in pre-employment and training programs; and
  - increasing training participation and completion.

Delivery agents will need to plan their enhanced employment services based on these funding parameters. The EES plan must demonstrate and quantify which enhanced services are being provided to enhance service capacity to increase training and/or employment readiness amongst the locally identified vulnerable populations.

### **FUNDING ALLOCATION**

EES funding will be administered through Ontario Works service contracts with a discrete budget and service data. A service description schedule will be provided. In addition, delivery agents will amend their service plan to include their plan for enhanced employment services to vulnerable persons.

EES funding will be allocated on a fiscal basis as 100% provincial funding and based on each delivery agent's percentage share of the Ontario Works caseload<sup>1</sup>. EES budgets will be expenditure-based and delivery agents are expected to demonstrate a sound rationale for how they will implement their enhanced employment services, including the number of participants they will be

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<sup>1</sup> Funding was distributed between all CMSMs, DSSABs and FNs based on their share of the total most recent caseload figures. For CMSMs and DSSABs, this was the 2008 monthly average. For FNs, it was the 2006/07 monthly average. All allocations were rounded to the nearest dollar.

targeting under EES and how they will increase their preparation for labour market success. If a delivery agent has an EES budget surplus, the unused funding will be recovered.

As the intent of EES funding is not to duplicate existing employment services, delivery agents will need to demonstrate that EES funding expenditures are over and above their approved EA outcome funding budget.

Delivery agents will be accountable for reporting requirements and ensuring that funds are used to deliver and/or purchase cost-effective services that are also value-added to participants.

EES funding may be used to cover expenditures that are directly related to the tracking, monitoring and reporting of EES participant activity.

## **PROGRAM DESIGN**

Delivery agents will focus their enhanced employment services on vulnerable persons, including persons with disabilities, mental health and/or substance abuse issues, at-risk youth (i.e., 16-30 years of age), older workers, Aboriginal persons, newcomers to Canada, persons fleeing domestic violence and homeless persons. Some of these groups may already be identified in delivery agents' current service plans.

Building on their current range of employment assistance, delivery agents will develop time-limited enhanced employment services that take into consideration:

- social assistance caseload;
- local economic conditions;
- coordinated training and educational opportunities; and
- community resources.

Enhanced employment services design may include:

- tailoring existing services/supports to meet the needs of a specific vulnerable group(s);
- expanding services/supports to a specific group(s); and/or
- creating new services/supports.

As EES funding is time-limited (ending March 31, 2011), delivery agents will need to account for an exit strategy in their service plan that addresses how participants who require further services/supports will be accommodated.

## **Service Delivery Approach**

Strategies for enhanced services to vulnerable persons may focus on “wrap around” processes whereby delivery agents work collaboratively with their community partners (e.g., Employment Ontario service providers, community colleges, etc.) to improve training and employment outcomes for participants. This is often achieved by establishing or enhancing a coordinated continuum of services/supports that emphasizes both informal and formal services/supports in the community. Thus delivery agents will respond to local needs and priorities of vulnerable persons, as well as build upon resources in the community service delivery network.

Delivery agents may provide services in-house, purchase specific services from other providers, or use a combination of these approaches.

Delivery agents are expected to engage in strategies that build on existing funding sources that support more seamless and integrated service to maximize opportunities and success for these participants.

## **ELIGIBLE ENHANCED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**

### **Intensive Case Management**

Individuals who have personalized and frequent contact with case managers tend to achieve more positive outcomes. The case manager is responsible for coordinating services and ensuring that services provided are appropriate for their clients.

Case managers will use a variety of strategies, active interventions, techniques and resources to build on their participants’ strengths, and overcome their barriers and build work-related skills.

In addition to ongoing assistance, the vulnerable group(s) that delivery agents have identified may need practical assistance to deal with problems with housing, school, abuse, etc. In some cases, the case manager may need to act as a broker or liaison to help participants resolve, or deal with these challenges.

Some delivery agents may find it effective to use the funding to purchase intensive case management services from an organization skilled and experienced in working with a specific vulnerable population.

### **Services and Supports for Participants**

A full range of employment supports are available to these participants through Ontario Works Employment Assistance. Incremental services/supports for individuals participating in EES should:

## Ministry of Community and Social Services

- enhance service capacity to support enrolment in employment services;
- increase retention in pre-employment and training programs; and
- increase training participation and completion.

Services and supports might include, but are not limited to:

- life skills training;
- peer support/mentoring;
- job trials;
- supported job placements;
- pre-apprenticeship readiness training;
- workplace attendant supports (e.g., people with disabilities);
- employment related expenses (e.g., transportation, out-of-pocket expenses, babysitting costs, etc.); and
- other services/supports as approved by MCSS.

Eligible expenditures for these services and supports include:

- salaries, benefits, travel, and training;
- purchase of service;
- program supplies;
- participant out-of-pocket expenses;
- technical aids or supports to support access (e.g. persons with disabilities); and
- other expenditures as approved by MCSS.

In particular, pre-employment assessments can be an effective component of service delivery by building a picture of each participant that enables them to begin addressing the barriers impacting their ability to access the labour market, as well as building on pre-existing strengths. Areas for assessment could include:

- mental health issues;
- substance abuse;
- employment history/readiness;
- accommodation needs;
- strengths in activities of daily living;
- personal and family history; and
- social supports.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **MCSS Responsibilities:**

- Develop and communicate EES policy and program design.

## Ministry of Community and Social Services

- Monitor the province-wide delivery of EES and any policy and/or fiscal issues.
- Manage and monitor business processes.
- Monitor province-wide data collection and reporting by delivery agents.
- Negotiate the EES plan and budget with delivery agent(s).
- Approve amended service plans and budget schedules as negotiated up to the maximum delivery agent planning allocation.
- Track and monitor the funding and participant activity, through regular service contract quarterly reporting.
- Administer all related funding according to regular business practices.

### **Delivery Agent Responsibilities:**

- Demonstrate through the EES plan how the design of their enhanced employment services meets EES funding parameters.
- Submit amended Ontario Works service plan and completed EES budget.
- Implement, deliver, and monitor the approved EES service plan and budget.
- Track, monitor and report on EES participant activity including quarterly year-to-date service contract reports.

### **TIMELINES**

**Summer 2009** – Regional Offices will work with delivery agents to negotiate and finalize fiscal budgets including amending service contracts.

**Fall 2009** – Delivery agents will begin implementing approved programs and services.

Ministry of Community and Social Services

**2009-10 and 2010-11 EES Planning Allocations**

Region	Delivery Agents	Caseload 2008	% of Total Caseload	EES Planning Allocation *100% provincial share per year
N	Manitoulin-Sudbury District Social Services Administration Board	399.58	0.20%	\$46,886



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# **Enhanced Employment Services for Vulnerable Persons (EES)**

## **Questions and Answers**

**Ministry of Community and Social Services  
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**Q: What is the Ontario Labour Market Agreement (LMA)?**

A: In February 2008, the Ontario Government announced a new Labour Market Agreement (LMA) with the federal government. The LMA will transfer federal funding to Ontario totalling \$194M per year for six years.

Through technical skills training and foundations skills and training supports, the LMA will support new or enhanced labour market programs for persons who are:

- unemployed (non-EI eligible); or
- low-skilled employed (particularly, those with no high school diploma or recognized credential, low literacy, and/or low essential skills).

**Q: What are the enhancements to the LMA?**

A: The 2009 Ontario Budget included a \$700M investment over two years in transitional employment and training assistance, which is supported by enhancements to the Ontario Labour Market Agreement (LMA) with the federal government.

This new LMA agreement was made official when Ontario and the federal government signed it on May 22, 2009.

**Q: What is the purpose of the enhanced funding?**

A: The purpose of the funding is to re-connect, support and prepare vulnerable populations for participating in appropriate education, training services and employment in order to achieve labour market success.

**Q: How is this LMA funding to be used?**

A: LMA funding will be used to provide transitional employment assistance (e.g., intensive case management and services and supports for vulnerable persons) and will support these vulnerable populations by increasing their readiness to obtain and maintain training, education and/or employment.

**Q: How much LMA funding is allocated to Ontario Works Employment Assistance (EA)?**

A: \$23M/year in LMA funding in 2009-10 and in 2010-11 will be allocated as 100% provincial funding to Ontario Works Employment Assistance (EA) as Enhanced Employment Services for Vulnerable Persons (EES).

**Q: What are enhanced employment services (EES) for vulnerable persons?**

A: EES includes intensive case management, services and supports for social assistance clients. The design of these services may include:

- tailoring existing services/supports to meet the needs of a specific vulnerable group(s);
- expanding services/supports to a specific group(s); and/or
- creating new services/supports.

These services will be provided in order to re-connect, support and prepare vulnerable populations on social assistance (including ODSP recipients) for participating in appropriate education, training services and employment in order to achieve labour market success.

**Q: What types of services and supports for participants may be made available through EES?**

A: A full range of employment supports are available to these participants through Ontario Works EA. Services/supports for individuals participating in EES should:

- enhance service capacity to support enrolment in employment services;
- increase retention in pre-employment and training programs; and
- increase training participation and completion.

Services and supports might include:

- life skills training;
- peer support/mentoring;
- job trials;
- supported job placements;
- pre-apprenticeship readiness training;
- workplace attendant supports (e.g. people with disabilities);
- employment related expenses (e.g. transportation, out-of-pocket expenses, babysitting costs, etc.); and
- pre-employment assessments.

**Q: Who will benefit from EES?**

A: EES will be targeted towards social assistance clients who are vulnerable, specifically persons with disabilities including mental health and/or substance abuse issues, at risk youth (i.e., 16-30 years of age), older

workers, Aboriginal persons, newcomers to Canada, persons fleeing domestic violence and homeless persons.

Delivery agents may plan services targeting the training and employment needs of a particular group, and are expected to tailor and/or target a portion of their EES to persons with disabilities, including ODSP recipients voluntarily participating in Ontario Works.

**Q: How will EES funding be administered?**

A: Beginning in summer 2009, the EES funds will be administered through Ontario Works service contracts with a discrete budget schedule. In addition, delivery agents will be required to amend their service plan to include their enhanced employment services to vulnerable persons. The service plan will cover three calendar years, up to March 31, 2011.

**Q: Are Ontario Works delivery agents expected to cost-share this additional funding?**

A: No. The EES funding will be allocated on a fiscal basis as 100% provincial funding to Ontario Works delivery agents (including First Nations delivering the full Ontario Works program).

Funding was distributed between all CMSMs, DSSABs and FNs based on their share of the total most recent caseload figures. For CMSMs and DSSABs, this was the 2008 monthly average. For FNs, it was the 2006/07 monthly average. All allocations were rounded to the nearest dollar.

EES funding will benefit delivery agents experiencing caseload increases, and allow local flexibility to target intervention based on client needs and community capacity.

**Q: Will delivery agents be expected to report on how EES funding is being used to enhance services to vulnerable persons?**

A: Yes. Delivery agents will be required to track, monitor and report on participant activity through quarterly year-to-date service contract reports.

**Q: Can EES funding be used to offset existing Ontario Works Employment Assistance outcome funding?**

A: No. The intent of EES funding is not to duplicate existing employment services, but rather to enhance services to vulnerable persons. Delivery agents will need to demonstrate that EES funding is being used to build

service capacity that is incremental to the range of services they provide under Ontario Works Employment Assistance outcomes funding.

**Q: Will EES funding be outcomes-based?**

A: Available in 2009-10 and 2010-11, EES funding is 100% provincial and is expenditure-based. However, delivery agents are expected to demonstrate a sound rationale for how they will implement their enhanced employment services, including the number of participants they will be targeting under EES and how they will increase their preparation for labour market success.