

ANNOUNCEMENT OF SERVICE SYSTEM MANAGERS GENERAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

KEY POINTS

What's happening now?

- In July 2019, the government announced three catchment areas – Hamilton-Niagara, Muskoka-Kawarthas and Peel Region – as prototype areas for the employment services system transformation.
- The competitive process to select service system managers in the prototype regions is complete and the organizations have been selected.
 - A consortium led by Fedcap for Hamilton-Niagara Peninsula
 - Fleming College for Muskoka-Kawarthas, and
 - WCG, part of the APM Group for Peel.
- The process identified organizations best positioned to deliver the best quality service with positive outcomes and value-for-money.
- The selection of service system managers represents an important step forward in the government's commitment to deliver stronger, locally-focused employment and social assistance services that help more people find and keep jobs.

What happens next?

- The three new service system managers will now familiarize themselves with the service networks in their respective prototype catchment areas. During this transition period, no changes to existing networks or services will take place.
- This transition period is planned until October 2020, ensuring that all programs and services will continue to operate seamlessly and with minimal disruption for clients.
- Beginning in October 2020, the new model will first be implemented in these three regions in Ontario so lessons learned may be applied and rolled out across the province gradually.
- Clients won't experience any changes to the services or service locations which they are currently accessing during this transition period.
- The hard work and expertise of service providers in communities across the

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province is as important as ever. Both job seekers and employers will continue to depend on service providers to help them succeed.

- As they prepare to take over the planning and delivery of services in their catchment areas, the service system managers will be focused on driving positive outcomes for clients and meeting the needs of their local economies.
- We are making changes to Ontario's employment services gradually, so that we can learn along the way. The new service system managers are being introduced in three communities first, so that lessons learned can be applied as we prepare to phase in full implementation over the next several years.

IMPACT ON SERVICE PROVIDERS

1. I'm a service provider in one of the three prototype regions. How will the service system manager model impact me?

In the prototype regions, the ministry has established a phased approach to transformation that will ensure service continuity and client access as roles and responsibilities shift during the transition from ministry oversight of service providers to service system manager oversight.

Phase I – Planning (early 2020 – March 2020)

This phase is intended to allow service system managers to establish themselves within their prototype region and familiarize themselves with the existing employment services provider network.

Phase II – Transition (April 2020 – September 2020)

During this phase, responsibility for managing in-scope Employment Ontario and ODSP employment services service providers will be transferred to the service system managers. However, service system managers will not be able to make changes to service delivery or the service provider network during this period.

Phase III – Integrated ES Delivery (begins on October 1, 2020)

In this phase, transition is complete and responsibility for employment services for Ontario Works recipients will be transferred to service system managers. During this phase, the service system managers will be permitted to make changes to the

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service provider network and will be fully responsible for the planning, design and delivery of in-scope employment services within their prototype region. This will include managing subcontracts with service providers, within the defined Catchment Area.

Service system managers are required to create and submit to the ministry an Integrated Employment Service Delivery Plan which must include details for contracting with service providers. Service system managers will be required to monitor and manage the overall health and capacity of their service delivery footprint.

2. I'm a service provider outside of the prototype regions. How will the new model impact me?

Outside of the prototype regions, the government will continue to work with service delivery partners across the province to plan and deliver stronger, locally-focused employment and social assistance services that help more people find and keep jobs.

3. Will the service system managers be ready to manage employment services in the prototype regions by April 1, 2020?

The service system managers will immediately establish themselves within their prototype region and familiarize themselves with the employment services provider network so they will be ready to effectively manage employment services as of April 1, 2020. See the response to Question 1 for details about the phased approach.

The government will continue to work with service providers in the prototype regions throughout the phased approach to transformation to ensure service continuity and client access as roles and responsibilities shift to service system manager oversight.

4. What happens to the existing employment services providers? Will my location close? Will people lose their jobs at service provider locations?

Outside of the prototype regions, the government will continue to work with service delivery partners to plan and deliver stronger, locally-focused employment and social assistance services that help more people find and keep jobs.

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Within the prototype areas, no changes will be made to the employment services provider network at this time. However, responsibility for managing in-scope employment services will commence on April 1, 2020. See the response to Question 1 for more details.

Once service system managers are fully responsible for the planning, design and delivery of in-scope employment services on October 1, 2020, there could be impacts to service providers and service locations in the three prototype regions. While changes can be difficult, they are intended to support improvement and drive innovation, and ultimately, to provide better services to the people of Ontario.

We will gradually implement the changes to Ontario's employment services, starting with three prototype regions, and learn from this implementation along the way. Full implementation will be phased in over the next several years, with regular communications to help people understand and prepare for any changes.

5. Will there be impacts to current Employment Ontario programming in the prototype regions?

Yes. Service system managers will be required to ensure delivery of specific employment services (e.g. employment counselling) but do not need to continue the array of existing provincial programs, each of which has separate rules and reporting requirements. Their focus will be on helping people find and maintain jobs. A new outcomes-based, local service system management model will ensure we have more effective and responsive employment services that achieve better results for job seekers and employers.

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6. Will the service system managers reduce per-client funding? Could this mean my service provider site could have to exit the network?

The government will collaborate with the service system managers throughout the prototype period to ensure the ongoing evolution of the new system and continued access and availability of services to clients.

The service system manager's role includes determining many aspects of service delivery, including service provider funding. Changes introduced by service system managers will be informed by a transparent and evidence-based process that recognizes the importance of local delivery partners and ensures a diverse local network of service providers able to achieve outcomes for a wide range of clients.

See the response to Question 1 for information about the phases of transformation.

7. Will there be a mechanism for resolving any potential disputes between service providers and their service system manager?

Service system managers are required to have in place client and service provider dispute resolution mechanisms including response time, escalation protocol and reporting requirements in their contract with the ministry. SSMs are required to report client and service provider disputes and resolutions to the ministry every quarter.

8. Will smaller employment agencies lose the attention of the government now that service administration is being downloaded to a service system manager?

The ministry recognizes the importance of local delivery partners in providing high quality employment services to Ontarians. The ministry will be a system steward in the new Employment service delivery model. As part of this stewardship role, the ministry will set standards, establish performance outcomes and set the policies and priorities for the integrated employment system. The ministry is interested in proactive engagement and collaboration with service system managers with input from providers focused on solving issues collaboratively and ensuring a healthy service system and market, that empowers clients.

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- 9. I used to receive information about employment services from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. Why am I now receiving information from the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development?**

On October 21, 2019, the [Premier announced](#) changes to Ontario's Executive Council. The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities became the Ministry of Colleges and Universities. Responsibility for training, apprenticeships and Employment Ontario was transferred to the Ministry of Labour, which has been renamed the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development. Employment Ontario service providers should continue to communicate with their regular Employment and Training Consultant should they have any questions as part of their regular operations.

- 10. What about service providers who have service delivery sites both inside and outside the prototype catchment areas? Who will hold those contracts?**

Beginning on April 1, 2020, service providers who have service delivery sites both inside and outside of the catchment areas will be required to have two separate contracts – one with MLTSD for services delivered outside of the catchment area, and one with the SSM for services delivered in the prototype catchment area.

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SELECTION OF THE SERVICE SYSTEM MANAGERS

KEY POINTS

- The service system managers were selected through a fair and competitive process that was open to any public, not-for-profit and private sector organization.
- The ministry employed a two-stage competitive selection process to select service system managers for the three prototype areas. The first stage was a Request for Qualification to identify organizations best qualified to fulfill the role of service system manager.
- This was followed by a Call for Proposals which was only open to applicants who qualified through the Request for Qualification. This competition was led by the ministry and adhered to the principles of fairness and transparency.

1. What was the purpose of the competitive process?

The purpose of the competitive process was to select a service system manager for each of the three prototype regions that will plan and deliver services that meet the needs of those local economies. They will receive funding based on achieving results.

2. One of the service system managers selected is a for-profit company. Does this mean you're privatizing employment services?

The government is not privatizing employment services. Private, for-profit service providers already exist within Ontario's employment services network and many have been delivering quality services for years. Ontario's employment services network has always had a mix of providers to serve the needs of their communities.

These three organizations were chosen as service system managers for the prototype regions because they are best positioned to manage the employment system in that region and deliver results.

The government will continue to set standards, establish performance outcomes and set the policies and priorities for the employment system. Service system managers will be responsible for planning and delivering employment services that help achieve those outcomes and will be compensated by the government accordingly.

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3. Wouldn't most private sector organizations have had a financial advantage over non-profits in the competition? Was it fair?

The ministry worked with Supply Chain Ontario and third-party experts to develop a selection process that adhered to the principles of fairness and transparency.

Applications were scored in a four-stage process. The second stage, the Technical Envelope, had the heaviest weighting at 260 out of 370 points. In this stage applicants were required to demonstrate, through experience and proposed approaches, their ability and capacity to perform in the service system manager role.

The Technical Envelope was assigned a passing threshold of 60%. This means that applicants who scored less than 156 points in this stage did not move to the next evaluation stage.

In contrast, the commercial envelope in which applicants submitted cost proposals, was only worth 80 points.

Ultimately, the ministry's goal is to provide better employment services to the people of Ontario. As such, service system managers were selected based on those best positioned to manage the employment system and deliver results for job seekers, employers and communities in a specific catchment area.

4. Two of the selected service system managers are foreign organizations. Will they be bound by the same privacy and confidentiality rules? How will client information and confidential financial information of service providers be protected?

Privacy and confidentiality of clients and contracted partners are important and have been given careful consideration. The ministry has set strict privacy and confidentiality requirements in its agreements with service system managers.

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IMPACTS ON CLIENTS AND COMMUNITIES

1. Will the current employment services model continue to operate in the three prototype regions as service system managers transition into their new role?

Yes. During this transition period, clients won't experience any changes to how they access their employment services and supports.

The ministry has established a phased approach to transformation that will ensure service continuity and client access as roles and responsibilities shift during the transition from ministry oversight of service providers to service system manager oversight.

2. When will clients in the prototype regions see changes through this new system? Will they have to change service providers to get help?

Clients will not experience any changes to how they access employment services and supports at this time.

The new service system managers will begin establishing a presence in their prototype region and familiarizing themselves with the existing employment services provider network, but they cannot make changes to the network until October 1, 2020. This will help ensure that all programs and services continue to operate seamlessly and with minimal disruption for clients. Regular, timely communications will help people understand and prepare for any changes.

Full implementation across the province will be phased-in over the next several years and informed by lessons learned from the prototypes.

3. Could this lead to a reduction in services for remote or rural areas within the prototype regions?

The government's vision for the transformed system is to be human-centered and client-focused and emphasize higher efficiency, innovation and accountability while being locally responsive and sustainable.

The service system managers will be required to ensure individuals in rural communities have reasonable access to in-person service delivery sites as stipulated in the agreement.

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The government will collaborate with the service system managers continuously to ensure the ongoing evolution of the new system and the continued access and availability of services to clients regardless of changes in the location of services. Service system managers will be measured against a set of outcomes and key performance indicators and their activities will be monitored to assess progress and ensure their contract requirements are met.

The three prototype regions were deliberately selected to provide a mix of urban and rural delivery settings. The new employment services model is being introduced in three regions first so that lessons learned may be applied during province-wide implementation.

4. How will these changes impact people who need employment supports in First Nations within the prototype regions?

The changes that will be introduced in the prototype phase will not apply to the services delivered on-reserve by First Nations, including Ontario Works Employment Assistance and Employment Ontario employment services currently provided by First Nations. First Nations will continue to be responsible for the delivery of Ontario Works-Employment Assistance and Employment Ontario employment services.

The ministry has initiated discussions with First Nations partners in summer 2019 along with the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services on the future design of employment services in First Nations communities. We appreciate the constructive dialogue we have had to date. We recognize the knowledge and experience of First Nations partners in the delivery of Ontario Works employment services that consider the strengths and challenges of individuals and families in First Nations communities.

5. How will these changes impact Indigenous clients who live in the prototype regions and receive services off-reserve?

There will be no immediate changes to the access and delivery of employment services for clients in the prototype catchment areas, including First Nations clients who access employment and training services off-reserve. SSMS will be required to provide employment services to Indigenous jobseekers in a culturally-supportive way and to engage with Indigenous organizations in order to deliver long-term, sustainable outcomes for Indigenous jobseekers.

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We have started a direct dialogue with urban Indigenous partners to get their advice on how to support Indigenous jobseekers in the new model.

6. How will these changes impact Francophones within the prototype regions who need employment supports?

Service system managers will be required to engage with the Francophone community to ensure appropriate services are available to reflect community need.

The government is committed to providing quality employment services to all job seekers and employers, and that includes delivering services in French. All requirements of the *French Language Services Act, 1990* will be met. The government consulted with Francophone service providers and included Francophone sessions in the vendor market day.

The Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development will work closely with other provincial ministries and service system managers to ensure that services provided to the Francophone community are available in the new employment system, both in the prototype phase and province-wide implementation.

7. How will these changes impact people with disabilities within the prototype regions who are seeking employment supports?

The government is committed to providing effective employment services to all job seekers and employers, and that includes delivering services to people with disabilities. Service system managers are required to ensure compliance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*. For the new employment services model, the Ontario Disability Support Program Employment Supports program will be integrated into the employment system.

Service system managers will be required to have the capacity to offer specialized services to support the varied needs of people with disabilities in achieving positive employment outcomes. As well, the ministry has structured payments to provide more compensation to service system managers for positive outcomes for clients with complex barriers to employment.

The Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development will work closely with other provincial ministries and service system managers to ensure that services that meet

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the varied needs of people with disabilities are available in the new employment system, both in the prototype phase and as part of province-wide implementation.

IMPACT ON MUNICIPALITIES

1. How will these changes impact municipalities in the three prototype regions?

For municipalities that deliver Employment Ontario and Ontario Works employment services within the prototype regions, the ministry will undertake a phased approach to transformation that will ensure service continuity and client access as roles and responsibilities shift during the transition from ministry oversight of service providers to service system manager oversight.

2. How will these changes impact municipalities outside the three prototype regions?

Municipalities that deliver Employment Ontario and Ontario Works employment services outside of the prototype regions will continue to operate as in the past until full implementation. The government will continue to work with service delivery partners across the province to plan and deliver stronger, locally-focused employment and social assistance services that help more people find and keep jobs.

CHANGES TO SOCIAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDERS

1. What is the role of the Ministry of Children Community and Social Services in this new service delivery model?

Social assistance programs, specifically Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program, will be a key input into the Employment Ontario system with respect to client referrals, integrated case management and ongoing service coordination. These programs will work collaboratively to address mutual clients' needs in achieving their employment goals.

The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services will maintain responsibility for social assistance and for providing life stabilization supports to those clients.

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We will gradually implement the changes to Ontario's employment services, starting with the three prototypes. As more information becomes known and decisions are made, we will ensure that all employees are updated.