

MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: June 13, 2023
To: Social Services Sub-committee
From: Alex Burgess, Manager of Ontario Works
Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services
Report #: SOC23-017
Attachments: The City of Stratford Ontario Works 2023 Business Plan

Title: 2023 Ontario Works Service/Business Plan

Objective: To provide Mayor and Council with an update regarding the negotiated Ontario Works contract and service plan.

Background: As the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) for the delivery of the Ontario Works Program, the City of Stratford is required to submit an Ontario Works Service Plan every two years to the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS). The due date for the 2023 Service Plan was March 31, 2023. Alongside the service plan is the negotiated budget, which is presented to MCCSS every year and then negotiated before a final transfer payment agreement is signed by the Director of Social Services.

The Ontario Works Service Plan provides an overview of programs and services that are available to individuals who are in receipt of Ontario Works with a focus on improving outcomes for people who rely on social assistance. The plan also details outcomes for the Ontario Works program and highlights the negotiated targets with MCCSS that the local CMSM will be measured on during the current contract year. The 2023 plan is the first service plan completed under the modernized Employment Services Transformation (EST) template and negotiated targets have been modified to meet the changing tides of the program.

Analysis: The 2023 Ontario Works Service plan was written in accordance with the template provided by MCCSS and was submitted on time to the Ministry. The plan focuses on several important categories, with the overarching topics being covered including:

- The Ontario Works Mandate and how the local office will meet Ministry priorities.

- A review of the transition plan from the current service delivery model to the modernized EST program delivery model.
- A comprehensive caseload review and review of local labour market information.
- A review of strategies that will be utilized to achieve performance outcomes, and
- An overview of overall program management.

The five categories covered throughout the service plan highlight the local labour market, the approach of the local office to addressing the needs of the community and social assistance recipients, highlights of service delivery methodologies and the negotiated outcomes that are measured as part of the contract negotiation process. The service plan's overarching philosophy is guided by the work done through the Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan and keeps sight of the four priority areas through the work being done by the Ontario Works Division.

The budget and contract were successfully negotiated with the Ministry on April 19, 2023, with the final transfer payment agreement to be executed once it is made available.

Financial Implications:

Financial impact to current year operating budget:

The funding received from MCCSS represents a substantial portion of the Division's budget, as detailed in the 2023 Budget submission. The fully negotiated contract means that funding for 2023 will continue to be flowed by MCCSS to the municipality. The total funding received from the Ministry for 2023 is \$1,336,400.00.

Financial impact on future year operating budget:

Future year impacts are unknown at this time as this service plan and contract speak only to 2023 activities. Should the funding envelope change significantly, there could potentially be an impact to service delivery.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Strengthening our Plans, Strategies and Partnerships

Partnering with the community to make plans for our collective priorities in arts, culture, heritage and more. Communicating clearly with the public around our plans and activities.

Alignment with One Planet Principles:

Health and Happiness

Encouraging active, social, meaningful lives to promote good health and wellbeing.

Equity and Local Economy

Creating safe, equitable places to live and work which support local prosperity and international fair trade.

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "2023 Ontario Works Service/ Business Plan" (SOC23-017), be received for information.

Prepared by: Alex Burgess, Manager of Ontario Works
Recommended by: Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services
Joan Thomson, Chief Administrative Officer