

Ontario Works Service Planning Template

2024

Table of content

Table of content	1
Overview	2
How to use this template	2
Corresponding Guides, Tools, and Templates	2
Section 1 – Conduct Community Analysis	3
1.1 Key Caseload Demographics	3
1.2 Service Needs (EST Prototype sites only for 2024)	4
1.3 Community Needs Assessment	4
Section 2 – Review Performance Outcome Targets	6
Section 3 – Develop Service Strategies	6
3.1 Risk Assessment	6
3.2 Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy	7
3.3 Logic Model	9
Section 4 – Manage Program Delivery	14
4.1 Service Delivery Expectations	14
4.2 Analysis of Resources	15
4.3 Monitoring Activities	15
4.4 Privacy	17

Overview

The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) and Social Assistance (SA) delivery sites share the common goal of improving employment results for people relying on social assistance. This service plan template is the tool used for SA delivery sites to document the service planning required activities, including the strategies to achieve performance outcomes.

How to use this template

This template is **used in conjunction with the Main Guidelines Document**, which outlines key information, including required and optional planning activities.

This template is mandatory and is to be completed using the allotted space and uploaded to TPON as part of the service agreement.

Corresponding Guides, Tools, and Templates

Please refer to the following guides/tool if you require assistance:

1. Main Guidelines Document
2. Supplementary Guidelines Document
3. Community Service Inventory Tool (optional)
4. Performance Outcomes Risk Assessment Template
5. Privacy Risk Assessment and Privacy Maturity Self-Reporting Tool

Section 1 – Conduct Community Analysis

In this section, SA delivery sites provide a summary of the community context in which Ontario Works person-centered supports and services and employment assistance is delivered over the four-year service planning period.

1.1 Key Caseload Demographics

Enter a **focused overview of the key findings** from the current demographic composition of the caseload and anticipated changes over the service plan cycle:

Enter a focused overview of key caseload findings (500 words max recommended)

The City of Stratford CMSM has seen a significant caseload increase heading into the 2024 calendar year. The average caseload per year has increased from a total of 652 in 2022 to 682 in 2023, which is a 5% increase in demand for service. If you include temporary care assistance, the total average caseload in 2023 was 737. This increase has brought us back to pre-pandemic caseload levels and based on caseload projections from the Ministry, economic circumstances in our province, and the high cost of living including housing, we anticipate this number to continue to increase over the course of this service plan cycle.

The caseload is mostly represented by single adults without children who, as of December 2023, represented 64% of the caseload. This is consistent with previous years data and shows consistency in the type of client accessing services through the local Ontario Works office. This also poses significant affordability challenges due to Ontario Works rates in correlation with the cost of housing in our community. The rest of the caseload composition remains consistent with 2022 numbers. Sole-support parents represent 32% of the caseload, couples without children represent 1% and couples with children representing the remaining 3%, a 1% decrease from 2022.

The average months on assistance increased from 30 months in 2022 to 31 months in 2023, though that does not reflect the complexity of the current caseload. There continues to be a trend toward women-led households accessing services with 60% of the caseload having a female-identifying gendered head of household. The predominant age range for the head of the family has remained consistent with previous years. 34% of the overall caseload falls in the age range of 25-34 years old, a 2% increase from 2022, and a further 27% of the caseload representing the 35-44 years old range. We anticipate this number to remain fairly consistent over the service plan cycle as historical data indicates this age range has predominantly been the most in-need.

Based on the Caseload at a Glance and observations by the caseworker team, we are experiencing an increase in the Newcomers to Canada demographic accessing services from the Ontario Works office. We have seen an increase of 10 families that have been in Canada less than

10 years over the 2022 numbers, with the majority of those families residing in Canada for less than 3 years. We have assigned a caseworker with expertise in the immigration sector to carry a newcomer caseload as we anticipate this number to continue increasing over the service plan cycle.

To highlight the complexity of the OW caseload locally, a detailed analysis was completed of the local homelessness By-Name list. While this is not a comprehensive review of all clients experiencing housing instability, it paints a clear picture of the depth of need for the local Ontario Works caseload. Of the 140 households on the By-Name list, 63 (45%) identified as being in receipt of Ontario Works. Of those households, 54% were identified as high acuity, 44.4% as mid-acuity and only 1.6% as low acuity. This demonstrates that almost 10% of the local OW caseload is on the local by-name list, and over half of those on the local BNL were identified as needing a high level of support which cannot be sustained with the current caseload levels. We expect this trend to continue throughout the service plan cycle as housing affordability and rising cost of living continues to be a pressing issue for residents of Ontario.

1.2 Service Needs (EST Prototype sites only for 2024)

A **focused assessment of key service needs** (in relation to your caseload) that have linkages to meeting the performance outcomes:

Enter focused assessment of service needs (500 words max recommended)

N/A

1.3 Community Needs Assessment

Use the information from your community needs assessment and parts 1-2 to identify the following as it relates to social assistance:

Strengths: Identify existing strengths and resources

- The local Ontario Works office and Employment Ontario providers have a functional and close working relationship, resulting in a high level of service provided to clients, a seamless transition between programs, and effective ongoing communication.
- The local OW office and the SSM have a strong working relationship.
- The OW office is physically present in our three largest communities on a weekly basis. These areas include the main office in Stratford, a caseworker located in North Perth 4 days per week, co-located with an Employment Ontario office, and a caseworker in St. Marys 1 afternoon per week, located in a service provider's office.
- The City of Stratford CMSM funds multiple programs which address systemic barriers and improve the lives of residents accessing services in this office. In North Perth and St Marys, there are full-time community developers who work closely with all residents of the region to access services, navigate systems, and provide support to those who require it. The City has partnered with Perth County EMS to have a full-time outreach worker working alongside a community paramedic. Furthermore, the City funds a full-time Nurse Practitioner who can support clients accessing Social Services to receive primary care and better address their health needs.
- The City of Stratford CMSM operates an integrated intake service whereby intake staff are trained and knowledgeable of all programs offered within the Department. This means that clients are not obligated to re-tell their story to each service provider and that silos are being removed, ensuring complete wrap-around supports are being provided to shared clients.

Gaps: Determine where there may be gaps in services or required resources

- There is a gap in pre-employment services available to Ontario Works clients who are not yet ready for Employment Ontario services but rather require pre-employment supports with things such as literacy, basic skills, and basic job requirements.
- There is a gap in services for full-time persons who are employed and exiting social assistance. Often, there are not enough programs to address their needs or support them past their time on assistance which can lead them to re-entering the program within one year.

Challenges: Common themes around concerns/challenges that impact SA

- Ontario Works rates continue to provide a significant challenge for the local area. Due to high rental costs, high grocery costs and other impediments to daily living, Ontario Works rates create significant challenges for those in receipt of assistance.
- The lack of housing availability in the Stratford CMSM region is significant. There is very little housing stock available and of the housing stock that is available, the cost often far exceeds what a single adult on Ontario Works can afford, which we know from the data comprises the majority of applicants. Safe and suitable housing continues to be a major challenge and is a crucial component for bridging the gap between Ontario Works and independent living.
- Transportation from rural areas continues to pose a major challenge. While Perth County has implemented the PC Connect program, there are still communities which it does not serve, or times of the day/shift start times that the PC Connect program simply cannot support. The ability to reliably travel to and from a place of employment is crucial for long-term success.
- Food security is an ongoing challenge for the clients in this region. The local office is exploring partnerships within the community to try and improve food security but in the end, the ongoing challenge of inadequate food security for large portion of OW clients continues to pose a significant challenge.

Opportunities: Current or upcoming opportunities that can be leveraged by SA

- The SSM is planning to roll out two initiatives which will help address the gaps and challenges identified. In April, 2024, the SSM is implementing a pre-employment workshop aimed at addressing initial barriers to employment and upskilling for those not yet ready for employment related activities, and they are utilizing more digital options for Stream A and Stream B job-seekers to allow for EO to spend more time supporting Stream C clients.

Section 2 – Review Performance Outcome Targets

Enter the ministry prescribed targets in the “Outcome” section in the budget submission in TPON.

Section 3 – Develop Service Strategies

This section establishes the contracted expectations of all SA delivery sites and connects the first two planning components (i.e., community analysis and performance outcome targets).

3.1 Risk Assessment

Complete the risk assessment using the **Performance Outcomes Risk Assessment template**. For more information refer to the Main Guidelines document

3.2 Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

Part A: Articulate specific tactics that will consider the needs of equity seeking groups from the initial service planning stages through to delivery.

Enter the local equity, diversity, and inclusion strategy here (500 words max recommended)

- Making appropriate referrals based on identified needs.
- Removing internal barriers such as biases in policies, procedures, and practices.
- Implementing comprehensive training programs to raise awareness and address unconscious biases.
- Understanding diverse community needs and ensuring services are accessible and responsive to those needs.
- Tailoring services to address barriers faced by marginalized or underrepresented groups.
- Incorporating diversity considerations into service planning to ensure equitable outcomes.
- Engaging service providers from diverse backgrounds to gather input and perspectives may lead to the identification of specific service needs that address the unique challenges faced by different communities.

Approach to Developing the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy:

- **Leveraging Community Partnerships:** Collaborate with community partners and utilize community assets to co-create training programs and establish safer spaces where individuals feel comfortable.
- **Building Trust and Community:** Focus on building trust and fostering a sense of community among partners, key agencies, and leaders. This involves open communication, active listening, and creating inclusive environments where diverse voices are valued and heard.
- **Incorporating Training Initiatives:** Implement comprehensive training initiatives that address issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion. These initiatives should aim to raise awareness, challenge biases, and promote understanding of SA-related issues within the community.
- **Engaging partners from diverse backgrounds:** By involving individuals with various perspectives and experiences, we ensure that the services developed are inclusive and address the needs of all community members.
- **Collaborating with community organizations and advocacy groups:** Partnering with these entities allows us to tap into their expertise and insights, ensuring that the services are informed by the real-world experiences and challenges faced by the community.
- **Incorporating equity, diversity, and inclusion principles:** By embedding these principles into organizational policies and practices, we ensure that our services are designed and delivered in a manner that promotes fairness, inclusivity, and respect for all individuals, regardless of their background or identity.

Identifying barriers for specific groups, such as newcomers and Indigenous communities, is crucial for developing effective strategies to address them. Here are some common barriers identified for each group and potential approaches to address them:

1. Newcomers:

- Language and cultural barriers: Newcomers may face challenges due to language proficiency and cultural differences, which can hinder their integration into society and access to resources.
- Employment and economic barriers: Newcomers may struggle to find employment opportunities that match their skills and qualifications, leading to financial instability.
- Social isolation: Lack of social networks and support systems can contribute to feelings of isolation and disconnection from the community.
- *Approaches to address barriers for newcomers:*
 - a. Providing language and cultural orientation programs to facilitate integration.
 - b. Offering employment assistance and skills training programs tailored to the needs of newcomers.
 - c. Establishing community support networks and mentorship programs to foster social connections and provide guidance.

1. Indigenous Communities:

- Historical and systemic marginalization: Indigenous communities often face long-standing inequalities resulting from historical injustices and ongoing systemic discrimination.
- Socioeconomic disparities: Indigenous populations may experience higher rates of poverty, unemployment, and inadequate access to essential services such as healthcare and education.
- Cultural preservation and identity: Indigenous communities may struggle to maintain their cultural traditions and practices in the face of external pressures and assimilation efforts.
- *Approaches to address barriers for Indigenous communities:*
 - a. Engaging in meaningful consultation and collaboration with Indigenous leaders and communities to ensure their voices are heard and their needs are prioritized.
 - b. Implementing policies and programs aimed at addressing socioeconomic disparities and improving access to essential services in Indigenous communities.
 - c. Supporting initiatives that promote cultural revitalization and language preservation within Indigenous communities.

Building trust and relationships with community leaders is essential for effectively addressing these barriers. By establishing strong partnerships based on mutual respect and understanding, organizations can better identify needs, develop culturally appropriate solutions, and ensure that marginalized groups are actively involved in the decision-making process.

Part B: Complete the French Language Services strategy using the ministry provided templates. For more information refer to the Main Guidelines document.

3.3 Logic Model

A logic model maps the linkages between services delivered and performance outcomes. It is a tool to support how service strategies will help to achieve targets and is included as part of the Service Planning template.

Complete one logic model for each of the 4 performance outcomes. For 2024, only complete the “Highest Risk(s) Mitigation” section for only the two identified outcomes. Add or remove rows, as needed. Refer to Main Guidelines Document, Appendix # for completed example.

Definitions:

- a. **Inputs:** Describe the organizational, community and/or external inputs within your organization used to coordinate services to meet the stated performance outcome (e.g., staffing, internal processes, training, relationship with community organizations, gaps in services, etc.).
- b. **High Risk:** Identify the highest risks as indicated in the Performance Outcomes Risk Assessment Template. Note for 2024, this will only be applicable to 2 performance outcomes and will be indicated on the applicable logic model templates.
- c. **Activities:** Operational and strategic activities (e.g., processes, tools, events, actions, etc.) that will be carried out as part of the strategy (e.g., staff training, recruitment, staff supports, community relationships, retention strategies, workshops, etc.).
- d. **Expected outputs linked to outcome:** What are your expected results given the planned activities and what changes do you expect to realize?

Performance Outcome 1: Ontario Works adult and ODSP non-disabled adults with participation requirements have an Action Plan		
Inputs (e.g., organization, community, external)	Operational and Strategic Activities	Expected Outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staffing and Staff Training 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work to achieve staff stability and low turnover of Ontario Works caseworkers, creating consistency for clients in receipt of OW. 2. Continue to engage staff in comprehensive training related to supporting participants in all aspects of life stability. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Utilize resources such as OMSSA and Continuing Education initiatives through post-secondary institutions. 3. Utilize monthly caseworker meetings to share knowledge, review best practices and create consistency in processes used across the office. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased number of action plans completed within 30 days. Increased number of referrals to EO. Increased number of referrals to community partners.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear processes for completion of Action Plan 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clear, concise, written processes regarding what is to be captured within an action plan. 2. Creation of an Action Plan guide to ensure consistency across the office. 3. Regular file review of action plans to ensure deferrals are appropriate, referrals to EO are being made and referrals to community partners are being made. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community resources available to clients 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regular staff training regarding resources available in the community to ensure they are able to better inform clients about what is available. 2. Continue to have community partners attend the Stratford OW office to provide services and ensure continuity of care for OW clients. 3. Advocate with community partners to ensure services are applicable to the caseload demographics and individuals requiring support in our community. 	
<p>Highest Risk(s) from Risk Assessment Template (applicable to the two in the risk assessment only): Two Risks were tied at 9 (Medium) as the highest risk:</p> <p>1.2 – SA staff and clients are not aligned with the goals/support services that will support the client towards employment readiness. 1.3 – Action plan discussion (i.e. goals/support services) is not easily understood by clients.</p>		

Performance Outcome 2: Ontario Works adult and ODSP non-disabled adults with participation requirements are referred to EO		
Inputs (e.g., organization, community, external)	Operational and Strategic Activities	Expected Outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staffing and Staff training 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Staff are aware of EO partners, the programs they offer and the staff working in the EO locations. Staff are trained on when to refer to EO, when to defer from participation and when to refer to community partners. Employment readiness is clearly defined and explained to staff. Clear processes regarding appropriate deferrals and reasons to not refer to EO. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased number of referrals to EO. Low volume of returned referrals. Increased level of partnership between OW and EO.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear referral pathways 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Work with local SSM and EO partners to ensure strong referral pathways are present. Continue to have EO on site at the local Ontario Works office for seamless in-person referrals. Regular reporting and status updates between EO and OW for shared clients. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training for staff regarding the role of Employment Ontario 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Clear and consistent training from Employment Ontario and the Service System Manager on the role of EO in Integrated Employment Service Delivery. Consistent messaging from management to caseworkers regarding the role of EO and referral pathways. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong relationship with local SSM 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Regular participation in SSM meetings to ensure the objectives and needs of OW are identified and acted upon. Regular communication with the SSM regarding opportunities and challenges facing OW staff. 	
<p>Highest Risk(s) from Risk Assessment Template (applicable to the two in the risk assessment only): The highest risk was 16 (Medium-High) for: 2.3 - Client's barriers/needs have not been addressed prior to referral to Employment Ontario.</p>		

**Performance Outcome 3:
Ontario Works cases exit to employment**

Inputs (e.g., organization, community, external)	Operational and Strategic Activities	Expected Outputs
- Staff Training	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Staff are trained on how to capture accurate reason for exiting assistance. 2. Regular review of caseload exit reports to ensure accurate reporting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurate number of exits to employment are being captured. • Increased number of exits to employment.
- Resources available to clients who exit are clearly communicated	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Staff are knowledgeable of EHB, EEHB and other resources available through OW when exiting assistance. 2. Staff are aware of community resources that client may be able to access once no longer on assistance. 3. Resources are clearly articulated to clients when they are exiting assistance. 	
<p>Highest Risk(s) from Risk Assessment Template</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Do not complete for this performance outcome for 2024</u> 		

**Performance Outcome 4:
Ontario Works cases do not return to the program within one year**

Inputs (e.g., organization, community, external)	Operational and Strategic Activities	Expected Outputs
• Staff Training	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Staff are aware of resources available to clients who exit assistance, and these benefits are clearly communicated to ensure they are aware of extended health benefits and supports available within the community. 2. Staff are aware of the employment resources available in the community and how to match clients to the appropriate resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower percentage of OW cases who return within one year. • Increased awareness by clients of community resources.
• Action Plans promote client self-sufficiency	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Staff create action plans in conjunction with the client that reflect a path to self-sufficiency, not just the quickest path off of Ontario Works. 2. Sustainable employment is discussed from the moment someone applies for assistance. 	

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Referrals to EO are made promptly and OW staff ensure the action plan reflects the work being completed in the Employment Action Plan. 4. Financial benefits are provided in a timely manner to support clients who are transitioning into employment to ensure there are limited barriers to full-time, sustainable employment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased number of clients receiving EHB or EEHB.
<p>Highest Risk(s) from Risk Assessment Template</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Do not complete for this performance outcome for 2024</u> 		

Section 4 – Manage Program Delivery

In this section, SA delivery sites will identify key program management activities to ensure the program supports program integrity and is delivered in accordance with legislative and policy requirements.

4.1 Service Delivery Expectations

Develop an outline of how service delivery expectations will be managed to ensure the program is delivered in accordance with legislative and policy requirements and that financial assistance expenditures are accurate and meet ministry expectations (refer to Main Guidelines Document)

Enter outline for each area of focus below (suggest 250 words max recommended per area)

Essential information reviewed and verified by 3rd party checks prior to transferring to ODSP (within the last 12 months)

The local OW office has been working very closely with the Stratford ODSP office to refine the file transfer process and ensure all required steps are completed prior to the file being transferred. The ODSP office has reviewed the process, provided feedback, and worked alongside the OW team to ensure that all necessary information is captured within the transfer process, that the necessary third-party checks are documented, and that the files are ready for processing by the PSU. The local OW office continues to update and inform caseworkers on the process, utilizing the shared document to create local processes which ensure all required information is reviewed and third-party checks are completed prior to a file being transferred to ODSP.

24-month Reassessment (including Third Party Checks) on all OW cases

Ontario Works caseworkers utilize spreadsheets and tasks in SAMS to monitor when a 24-month reassessment is required on their files. Staff utilize these spreadsheets and tasks to determine when to schedule appointments with their clients who require 24-month reviews, and to monitor any files that may be out-of-date. The local OW team reviews the legislation regularly to ensure the local process matches what is required by legislation when completing a 24-month review. Furthermore, the OW management team completes monthly file reviews and regularly checks the status of 24-month reviews, utilizing a standardized template, during these monthly file reviews.

Timely follow up on deferrals from participation in employment related activities

The local office will focus on completing action plans within the allotted review period, ensuring all deferrals are up-to-date and are based on the most recent medical or circumstantial information that is provided by the client. Staff will utilize the common assessment tool (CAT) and the responses to the CAT to inform deferrals that may be in place, as well as to assess progress toward completion of goals related to mental health and wellness or overall job readiness through CAT checkpoints. All OW caseworkers utilize a spreadsheet outside of SAMS or tasks within SAMS to monitor when deferrals expire, ensuring there are timely follow-ups for all deferrals and that they are updated promptly before or after they end. The local office recently reviewed deferral reasons and the team works hard to ensure that deferrals are only input for appropriate reasons. Where possible, staff will make voluntary referrals for clients who are deferred to ensure they are able to participate in some form of employment activities, employment readiness activities or are supported with referrals to community agencies that better prepare them for employment once the deferral ends.

EVP is assigned and completed in established timeframes

The local office has a well thought out process in place and has dedicated 1.5 FTE to the EVP process. One staff member is a full-time EVP worker and the local ERO supports EVP activities each cycle. The management team regularly reviews the results of the EVP cycle to ensure timelines are being met and that comprehensive work is being completed during the EVP process. The local office utilizes communication from both the caseworker and the EVP worker to reinforce the importance of attending EVP appointments, submitting necessary information and responding to inquiries related to the EVP process. If clients fail to respond, the local office will suspend and/or terminate files, where applicable, for failing to respond to EVP inquiries. The local office has met all timelines related to file assignment and achieved a total of 91% of all files reviewed in 2023 within the allotted timeframe.

Application of up to 10% recovery rate for all overpayments

The Ontario Works team regularly monitors the OP Recovery Rate report to ensure that the office is meeting Provincial expectations. Currently, the Stratford office is above the Provincial average with respect to the number of files at a 10% recovery rate. Caseworkers and EVP staff have been trained and are aware of the reasons for setting a file to a 10% recovery rate and this will continue to be reiterated at team meetings. Furthermore, the OW management team completes monthly file reviews and regularly checks for overpayments, the reason for the overpayment and the recovery rate that has been determined to ensure it aligns with the Provincial direction.

Financial assistance expenditures (subsidy claims submissions) are accurate and meet ministry expectations (list all Ontario Works benefits managed outside of SAMS and identify supporting documentation that will be provided with adjustments to subsidy claims and describe business practices for Ontario Works benefits managed outside of SAMS)

The Stratford Ontario Works office has put a thorough review process in place to ensure the accuracy of subsidy claims that are submitted each month. The claim is first prepared by a member of the finance team, adhering to Ministry expectations. Once this is complete, the subsidy claim is then forwarded to the Business Integration Manager who conducts a thorough review of the work and ensures the accuracy of the report. Finally, the subsidy claim is forwarded to the OW Manager for review and submission. There is also ongoing reconciliation done throughout the year, utilizing actuals from Corporate Services and ensuring that these numbers balance with the subsidy claims that are submitted. If there is a variance discovered at any point which relates to a previous subsidy claim that was submitted, it is promptly reported to the Ministry, with applicable back-ups, and future subsidy claims are adjusted to reflect this change.

4.2 Analysis of Resources

Conduct an analysis of resources using the **Supplementary Reporting Tool**. For more information refer to the Main Guidelines document.

4.3 Monitoring Activities

Demonstrate how SA delivery sites will be prepared to support the monitoring activities by documenting its approach to readiness from combination of resource, awareness and understanding perspectives.

For example, the SA Delivery sites will be ready to support by reviewing and becoming familiar with all relevant materials provided by the ministry to understand the monitoring activities and OW’s roles and responsibilities.

Enter the approach for monitoring here (suggested 250 words max recommended per area)
Overall Readiness (i.e., how your site will be ready to continuously support the monitoring activities)
The Stratford Ontario Works Division reviews all Ministry communications promptly after they are received, participates in all applicable training sessions and engages staff in training opportunities, when required, to support new initiatives. The local OW office will continue to utilize this approach and will stay in regular communication with the local office’s Program Supervisor to ensure that the Division is meeting Ministry expectations and is prepared for any and all initiatives that are put forth.
Submission of actual expenditures (i.e., how to ensure your site will be able to submit the actual expenditures in a timely manner and engage in discussion when varied from budget)
The City of Stratford will continue to leverage the current staff complement to report actual expenditures when they are due, analyze variances in a timely manner and provide comprehensive responses to the Ministry when there are questions raised. Currently, the Social Services Department utilizes a Business Integration Manager to oversee financial reporting for the Department as a whole and to manage the submission of expenditures punctually. We will continue to utilize this approach while engaging Corporate Services as necessary to ensure deadlines are met and questions are answered in a timely manner.
Submission of outcomes achieved (i.e., how to ensure your site will be able to submit the actuals in a timely manner and engage in discussions on outcome performance)
The City of Stratford Ontario Works Division closely monitors performance metrics by utilizing the performance reports and PowerBI Dashboards that the Ministry makes available. Keeping a close eye on the progress that the Division is making toward those metrics, it will allow us to report on our performance outcomes. Similarly, by regularly reviewing the data, we are able to identify trends and issues that may arise that impact the targeted outcomes for each metric. Through this continuous monitoring, we will be able to quickly respond to questions related to our performance outcomes and engage in regular conversations related to the Ministry targets.
Performance reports (i.e., how to ensure your site will be ready to leverage ministry provided reports in monitoring outcomes and key program delivery expectations)
The Ontario Works staff utilize all reports available to inform and enhance program delivery. Staff and management access the COGNOS reports on a regular basis, review the applicable reports and make suggestions for program delivery based on the reports. Management regularly review the Social Assistance Operations Performance Reports to monitor the effectiveness of the Division and the ability of the Division to provide service to clients. The team also reviews information tracked via the Power BI dashboards on a regular basis to ensure the program is meeting the targets set forth

by the Ministry. We will continue to leverage the existing reporting mechanisms and continue to find ways to improve the use of this data in informing program delivery and effectiveness.

Quality Assurance (QA) reviews (i.e., how to ensure your site will be ready to leverage the results from the ministry performed QA reviews to determine possible course corrections, related monitoring and need for service plan amendments)

The local Ontario Works office will readily accept feedback on any course corrections that are required as a result of QA reviews. The office will maintain regular communication with the local Program Supervisor and will respond promptly to Ministry communications, ensuring they are thoroughly reviewed, understood, and implemented within the required timeframe. If there is monitoring required, the local management team will undertake thorough and comprehensive reviews of the monitoring initiative, assign appropriate staff (where applicable) in a timely manner and make necessary amendments to service delivery, as required, to meet the requirements set forth in the QA reviews.

Risk Mitigation Testing (i.e., how to ensure your site will be ready to use ministry provided testing scripts to carry out testing of mitigation for the highest risks impacting performance outcomes as well as how the results of the testing will be used by your site)

The Stratford Ontario Works office will implement risk mitigation strategies provided by the Ministry promptly and efficiently to ensure that the highest risks impacting performance are monitored effectively. Staff will be trained immediately after receiving testing scripts and the local office will involve all necessary parties promptly to ensure there is no lag between receipt of testing script and implementation. Results will be monitored closely and strategies will be developed by the team to address risks impacting performance outcomes. The team will utilize all the learnings and results from testing scripts to inform program design and service delivery, with an aim to mitigate risks impacting performance outcomes.

4.4 Privacy

Conduct a Privacy Risk Assessment using the **Privacy Risk Assessment Template and Privacy Maturity Self-Reporting Tool**. Instructions are included within the document, but for more information refer to the Supplementary Guidelines.