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# The Regional Municipality of Durham Information Report

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From: Commissioner of Social Services  
Report: #2025-INFO-17  
Date: March 21, 2025

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**Subject:**

Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services – Ontario Works Centralized Intake Expansion

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**Recommendation:**

Receive for information

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**Report:**

**1. Purpose**

1.1 To provide an overview of Ontario’s Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) – Ontario Works (OW) Centralized Intake Expansion that was implemented in Durham Region as of February 18, 2025.

**2. Background**

2.1 In an effort to streamline and standardize the application process for social assistance across the province, MCCSS has established a centralized intake process for OW applications to be implemented by all municipalities across Ontario throughout 2025.

2.2 On February 18, 2025, the Income, Employment and Homelessness Support Division (IEHSD) of the Regional Municipality of Durham (Region) implemented MCCSS OW Centralized Intake Expansion, as per provincial direction.

a. Prior to the OW Centralized Intake Expansion, the Region’s IEHSD team was authorized to receive locally, verify information provided, determine eligibility

and offer ongoing case management for OW Assistance applications for residents of Durham Region locally.

### **3. Previous reports and decisions**

- 3.1 [#2020-INFO-116](#): Ontario Modernizing Application Process for Social Assistance. December 4, 2020.
- 3.2 [#2021-SS-4](#): Recovery and Renewal: Ontario's Vision for Social Assistance Transformation. March 4, 2021.

### **4. Central Intake Expansion's impact on Durham Region residents**

- 4.1 With the implementation of OW Centralized Intake Expansion, MCCSS's Ontario Works Intake Unit (OWIU) has assumed responsibility for receiving the application, the initial eligibility determination decision-making, and payment authorizations for most OW assistance applications.
- a. Most Durham Region residents will be required to complete their OW assistance application with the provincial MCCSS OWIU either online [Social assistance | ontario.ca](#), or by phone at 1-888-999-1142.
- Residents of Durham seeking information about pending OW applications will need to contact the provincial OWIU team for information.
- 4.2 IEHSD is now only authorized to receive and process applications for Temporary Care Assistance, Trusteed Youth, Emergency Assistance, and reapplications within three months of file closure. IEHSD will continue to offer ongoing case management, financial verification and eligibility services to OW clients, once applications are approved by the province and transferred to our local offices.

### **5. IEHSD service delivery enhancements**

- 5.1 IEHSD is proactively updating its policies and procedures to address any potential service barriers resulting from the OW Centralized Intake Expansion. This ensures the Division's continued commitment to providing a welcoming, high-quality, and integrated environment that positively impacts and supports everyone.
- 5.2 IEHSD is developing comprehensive training and information sessions for internal staff and community partners to educate service providers on effectively assisting Durham Region residents with completing OWIU online applications. This initiative will support access to OW assistance for applicants in Durham.
- 5.3 IEHSD continues to provide immediate wraparound supports to survivors of intimate partner violence, gender-based violence and human trafficking.

- a. IEHSD Family Violence Policy, Human Trafficking Protocol and Emergency Assistance policies are being updated to ensure that survivors continue to receive quick access to Emergency Assistance during a crisis or emergency situation.

## 6. Definitions

### 6.1 Temporary Care Assistance.

- a. Temporary Case Assistance supports adults who are providing care for a temporary period of time for a child under the age of 18 who is not their dependent. Residents of Durham Region can complete a Temporary Care Assistance application online at [Ontario Works \(Social Assistance\) - Region of Durham](#) or by phone 1-888-721-0622.

### 6.2 Trusteed Youth

- a. Trusteed Youth assistance supports youth between 16 and 17 years old who are living outside of the parental home based on the administrator's determination of eligibility according to the individual's circumstance. Residents of Durham Region can complete a Trusteed Youth application online at [Ontario Works \(Social Assistance\) - Region of Durham](#) or by phone 1-888-721-0622. [Ontario Works \(Social Assistance\) - Region of Durham](#)

### 6.3 Emergency Assistance

- a. Emergency Assistance enables the immediate provision of financial assistance to an applicant in a crisis or emergency situation. Residents of Durham Region can complete an Emergency Assistance application with a designated IEHSD Case Coordinator, online at [Ontario Works \(Social Assistance\) - Region of Durham](#) or by phone 1-888-721-0622.

## 7. Relationship to Strategic Plan

### 7.1 This report aligns with/addresses the following Strategic Direction(s) and Pathway(s) in Durham Region's 2025 to 2035 Strategic Plan:

- a. Healthy People, Caring Communities
  - H2. Collaborate with partners to respond to complex social issues that improve community safety and well-being, including mental health and addictions.
- b. Strong Relationships
  - S3. Collaborate across local area municipalities with agencies, non-profits, and community partners to deliver co-ordinated and efficient services.

7.2 This report aligns with the following Foundation in Durham Region's 2025-2035 Strategic Plan:

- a. Processes: Continuously improving processes to ensure we are responsive to community needs.

## **8. Conclusion**

8.1 Region of Durham staff will continue to collaborate with Ontario's Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services to ensure potential barriers resulting from the implementation of the Ontario Works Centralized Intake Expansion are mitigated to ensure residents of Durham Region receive support to access services to address their needs.

Respectfully submitted,

Original Signed By

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Stella Danos-Papaconstantinou  
Commissioner of Social Services