



# The Regional Municipality of Durham Report

---

To: Health and Social Services Committee  
From: Commissioner of Social Services  
Report: #2023-SS-2  
Date: March 9, 2023

---

**Subject:**

2023 Social Services Department Business Plans and Budget

---

**Recommendation:**

That the Health and Social Services Committee recommends to the Finance and Administration Committee for subsequent recommendation to Regional Council that the 2023 Business Plans and Budget of the Social Services Department be approved.

---

**Report:**

**1. Purpose**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to obtain Health and Social Services Committee concurrence of the 2023 Business Plans and Budget for the Social Services Department. The Social Services Department 2023 Business Plans and Budget will be referred to the Finance and Administration Committee for consideration during deliberations of the 2023 Property Tax Supported Business Plans and Budget.

**2. Overview**

2.1 The recommended 2023 Social Services Business Plans and Budget meets the Council approved guideline for the 2023 Property Tax Supported Business Plans and Budget.

2.2 The 2023 Social Services Business Plans and Budget supports the following five goals of the Region's Strategic Plan as well as responds to the ongoing demands and pressures on the Region's programs and services in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the Region's continued recovery efforts:

- a. Environmental Sustainability
- b. Community Vitality
- c. Economic Prosperity
- d. Social Investment

- e. Service Excellence
- 2.3 The recommended 2023 Social Services Department Business Plans and Budget includes \$685.0 million in gross expenditures requiring \$138.3 million in property tax funding with the remaining funded by program fees, provincial and federal subsidies, debenture financing, reserves and reserve funds.
- 2.4 The recommended 2023 Social Services Department Business Plans and Budget provides operating and capital funding for the following divisions:
- a. Children's Services
  - b. Emergency Management and Program Support Services
  - c. Family Services
  - d. Housing Services
  - e. Social Assistance
  - f. Long Term Care and Services for Seniors

### **3. 2022 Accomplishments**

- 3.1 Human service provisions within Social Services included responding to diverse community needs throughout 2022.
- a. Developed and implemented a regional childcare workforce strategy to support recruitment and retention of early childhood educators for Durham's childcare sector, including a project with four Greater Toronto Area (GTA) municipalities to create alternate pathways for training early childhood educators by leveraging provincial funding and partnerships with 8 GTA colleges.
  - b. Enrolled 264 childcare centres and four home childcare agencies into the Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care system (CWELCC).
  - c. Responded to support displaced residents stemming from 15 community emergencies of varying degrees: 10 residential fires, 2 immediate community needs, 1 natural disaster, 1 international humanitarian effort and 1 temporary warming centre. Overall, Emergency Social Services (ESS) served 297 residents affected by a disaster in 2022 to assist in providing essential needs.
  - d. 2,974 Primary Care Outreach Program (PCOP) client interactions in addition to pandemic-related activities including vaccines and test swabbing to at risk and/or homeless populations.
  - e. Provided outreach safety planning, and support to partners of 681 individuals attending the Partner Assault Response program addressing and preventing intimate partner violence.
  - f. Supported 146 at risk individuals with developmental disabilities to access and maintain housing through homelessness prevention support, housing subsidies and life stabilization case management.
  - g. Delivered 9,500 counselling sessions to individuals, couples, and families delivering supports to improve mental health, employability, stability and safety of individuals, couples and families.
  - h. Provided counselling and mental health services to 1,000 individuals in

- receipt of social assistance promoting healthy progress towards community participation and successful re-entry or retainment of employment.
- i. Implemented the Mental Health Outreach Program (MHOP) consisting of 2 social workers/psychotherapists providing outreach counselling and mental health support to vulnerable populations including to people who are homeless and underhoused and who may have mental health and addiction challenges.
  - j. Implemented the 10-unit Oshawa Micro-Housing Pilot Project offering temporary transitional housing, with supports.
  - k. Completed the application process for the inaugural year of the At Home Incentive Program which will invest \$7.5 million to develop affordable housing. Nine applications were received, and recommendations will be presented to Council in the Spring.
  - l. Provided housing opportunities to 527 households on the Durham Access to Social Housing (DASH) waitlist.
  - m. Ended homelessness for 218 individuals from the By Name List by moving them into various housing programs. This total included supporting 131 people moving from chronic homelessness to stable housing. The team built relationships with 23 community agencies to collaborate on individualized support plans for each client.
  - n. Assisted over 29,000 households with homelessness supportive services ranging from prevention to housing outreach.
  - o. Opened a Warming Centre, in partnership with the Town of Ajax, that serves approximately 25 vulnerable residents each day.
  - p. Provided supports to over 80 victims of human trafficking in 2022.
  - q. Long-Term Care (LTC) staff continued to provide much needed care for 847 senior and vulnerable residents with complex conditions and multiple medical needs, in the face of COVID-19 outbreaks and resource constraints.
  - r. The LTC and Services for Seniors Division realized an increase in the Nursing and Personal Care hours per resident per day, from an average of 3.4 hours / resident / day to 3.8 hours / resident / day at the Region's Long Term Care homes
  - s. The Seniors Safety Unit is a collaborative partnership with Durham Region Social Services and Durham Regional Police Services to provide support and assistance to seniors who are experiencing safety related issues. The unit received 692 crisis calls through the Seniors' Safety Office in 2022.
  - t. The LTC Division provided 223 placement opportunities to post secondary students in nursing and allied health programs.
- 3.2 Social Services instituted measures for responding and supporting the community throughout the COVID-19 pandemic;
- a. In January 2022, supported the placement of 1,168 children in emergency childcare when schools were closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
  - b. Worked with the Ministry of Education to ensure all childcare staff had a steady supply of rapid antigen test kits available.
  - c. Close adherence to evolving Ministry directives and policy changes, as well

- as guidance from Public Health, has been accomplished in our LTC Homes.
- d. Expansion of programs across Durham Region targeted at reducing and preventing homelessness as well as addressing the health and safety concerns of both unsheltered residents and those supporting Durham's homeless support system. One-time capital and operating funding from the Provincial government for pandemic relief was strategically allocated to provide both long-term benefits through new and/or improved facilities and investments to address the immediate needs of the homeless support system.

#### **4. 2023 Strategic Highlights**

##### **4.1 Children's Services**

- a. On March 28, 2022, the Ontario government and federal government announced the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) plan (2022-SS-6), a \$13.2 billion agreement to lower childcare fees for families. The announcement included:
- A reduction of childcare fees through four steps of reduction to an average of \$10 a day by September 2025 for children five years of age or younger.
  - The creation of approximately 86,000 new, high-quality childcare spaces for children five years old and younger across Ontario.
  - Hiring new early childhood educators and supporting improved compensation for all Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECE) working in licensed childcare.
  - Maintaining Ontario's childcare tax credit program that supports 300,000 families with expenses in licensed and unlicensed childcare.
  - Protection of all for-profit and non-profit childcare spaces, helping to support predominantly female entrepreneurs across the province who provide high-quality childcare services.

The 2023 budget includes a \$110.7 million investment for CWELCC in Fee Reduction (\$78.0 million), Fee Subsidy (\$27.1 million), Workforce Compensation (\$4.0 million), Minimum Wage Offset (\$0.2 million) and Administrative costs (\$1.4 million). This is a significant increase from the 2022 in-year allocation of \$41.5 million for the program, which represents the continued commitment and implementation of the plan.

- b. The Ministry of Education had previously announced proposed reductions in cost-sharing for early learning and childcare administration in 2021. The planned reductions lower the threshold for allowable administration funding that municipalities could spend on childcare from 10% to 5%, with the 50/50 cost share still in effect. On December 5, 2022, the Ministry announced that they would again provide a one-time transitional grant of \$3.2 million to offset funding reductions and to assist with the required cost share for provincial

- childcare administration. The 2023 budget reflects a one-time investment of \$3.2 million in fee subsidy (\$1.1 million), funding for childcare providers (\$1.6 million) and increased subsidy of administration costs (\$0.5 million).
- c. \$0.6 million in Provincial subsidy, and related outflows, related to an increased investment received for the delivery of Early Learning and Child Care programs.
  - d. A decrease of \$3.3 million in Provincial subsidy, and related outflows, related to the Workforce Strategies program as the program ends as of March 31, 2023.
  - e. \$0.2 million in Provincial subsidy, and related outflows, related to an increased investment received for the delivery of EarlyON and Child Care programs.
  - f. \$0.1 million in Provincial subsidy, and related outflows, related to an increased investment received for the delivery of a new Children's Mental Health program.
  - g. A \$0.8 million decrease in parent fees for the Directly Operated Centres is anticipated, offset by a corresponding increase in CWELCC fee reduction funding.
  - h. An increase of \$0.8 million in revenue at the Directly Operated Centres is anticipated as a result of CWELCC fee subsidy funding.
  - i. \$0.1 million is proposed in the 2023 budget to replace the flooring in areas of the Ajax and Lakewoods Early Learning Child Care centres.
  - j. \$0.1 million is proposed in the 2023 budget to replace the access ladder at Lakewoods and reconfigure centre hall and the washroom at Whitby Early Learning Child Care centres.

#### 4.2 Emergency Management and Program Support Services

- a. Building capacity within Social Services staff and community partners through committees, training and exercises to enhance skills and knowledge to best support residents during and following an emergency.
- b. Integrating research focused on community resiliency in collaboration with Regional partners and Durham College to help improve program supports.
- c. Increase of \$0.1 million, offset by a recovery from Durham Emergency Management, for a temporary Emergency Management Coordinator to support work with Ontario Power Generation.

#### 4.3 Family Services

- a. \$0.2 million in Provincial subsidy, and related outflows, related to an increased investment received for the delivery of Adult Protective Services program.

#### 4.4 Housing Services

- a. \$1.2 million is proposed in the Community Housing Provider (\$0.1 million), Commercial Rent Supplement (\$0.1 million), and Durham Region Rent

- Supplement (\$1.0 million) programs, providing rent supplements to people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, with \$0.2 million to be funded from federal subsidy with the balance of \$1.0 million to be funded by the Region.
- b. Changes to the Housing Services Act allow Service Managers to enter into Service Agreements with Community Housing Providers when they reach the end of their original mortgage. This provides the opportunity to reinvest mortgage savings into sustaining the community housing stock and increasing the number of affordable housing units.
  - c. \$0.8 million is proposed for operational costs, partially offset by rental revenue (\$0.1 million) related to the Beaverton Supporting Housing project, anticipated to open in Summer 2023.
  - d. \$0.1 million is proposed to provide an update to the At Home in Durham Housing plan.
  - e. \$6.8 million in Provincial subsidy, and related outflows, related to investments received for the delivery of the Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI) and Ontario Priority Housing Initiative (OPHI).

#### 4.5 Social Assistance

- a. The ongoing partnership with the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services to modernize social assistance will support clients towards success by creating a more person-centred approach with an overall shift to life stabilization, individualized help and system navigation including better connections to Employment Ontario. Further centralization and automation of administrative systems will allow front-line staff more time to focus on stability support activities for clients. Implementing a renewed service delivery vision is a significant change management initiative that will impact staff work, resources, and organizational culture.
- b. Ontario Works Outreach Workers continue to have a presence in all lower tier municipalities via various locations and libraries as a way to connect residents to a variety of social services, supports, and resources. Information and assistance continue to be provided on a number of topics including: financial resources, housing, food security, counselling and children's services referrals. The Outreach Workers also contact community agencies on behalf of clients and assist with online government application forms.

#### **Integrated Employment Services**

- c. The Province of Ontario has selected the Durham Employment Services Consortium comprised of The Regional Municipality of Durham (as the lead agency), Durham Workforce Authority, and Durham College as the Employment Service System Manager (SSM) for Durham Region. The Region, as the lead agency will now lead Durham's Employment System through a transformation process to ensure responsive and effective Employment Services are available in Durham.
- d. The 2023 budget includes a \$12.2 million Provincial investment for Integrated Employment Services consisting of Planning Period costs (\$0.2 million), and

Transition Period costs (\$12.0 million), with integrated service delivery planned for 2024.

### **Homelessness Investments**

- e. A Regional contribution increase of \$4.9 million is proposed in the Regional Investment in Homelessness Supports budget to maintain programs for people experiencing, or at risk of becoming homeless.
- f. \$0.5 million is proposed for leasehold improvements at 312 Colborne Street in Whitby, to create a family shelter for up to four (4) families, expected to open in late 2023.
- g. Adjusted amount in Provincial subsidy of \$1.0 million, and related outflows, related to the investment in the Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP) to reflect actual allocation received, which was noted after the 2022 Budget was approved.
- h. Adjusted amount in Federal subsidy of \$2.9 million, and related outflows, related to reflect the actual allocation received in the Reaching Home program for 2023 / 2024, which was noted after the 2022 Budget was approved.

#### **4.6 Long Term Care and Services for Seniors**

- a. \$0.2 million is proposed in the 2023 budget for a temporary resource to act as the primary point of contact for LTC in the design, construction and opening plans of the new Seaton LTC.
- b. \$0.1 million is proposed in the 2023 budget to begin the development and implementation of an emotional model of care for residents.
- c. Increase of \$0.2 million in Provincial subsidy, and related outflows, to support the maintenance of Hillsdale Estates.
- d. Increase of \$0.1 million in Provincial subsidy, and related outflows, for the Resident Health and Well-Being Program to enhance resident access to social support services.
- e. Increase of \$0.1 million is proposed for a new dedicated Human Resources Assistant position to support Long Term Care. This is accommodated through a reduction in Personnel Related and Communications expenditures.
- f. The 2023 budget proposes an investment of \$1.6 million to replace aging equipment such as beds, ceiling lifts, kitchen appliances and equipment, shower chairs, and furniture to help care for LTC residents.

#### **4.7 Staffing**

- a. An increase of six (6) new permanent positions for Children's Services (2022-SS-6) to implement and support the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Plan, offset by an increase in Provincial subsidy.
- b. An increase of one (1) new Manager position for the Children's Developmental and Behavioural Supports program to provide oversight and leadership to the program.

- c. An increase of one (1) new Area Manager position, offset by Provincial subsidy, to oversee the implementation and rollout of the Integrated Employment Services program.
- d. An increase of one (1) new Data Analysis Coordinator, offset by Provincial subsidy, to manage data and reporting requirements related to the Integrated Employment Services program.
- e. An increase of one (1) new Program Assistant position, offset by Provincial subsidy, to provide administrative assistance to the Integrated Employment Services program.
- f. An increase of one (1) new Supervisor position for the Adult Protection Services program, offset by an increase in Provincial subsidy, to provide oversight and leadership to the Adult Protective Services program.
- g. An increase of one (1) Clinical Information Specialist in Long Term Care Administration to perform quality control functions of electronic systems and leadership in maintenance and data stewardship.
- h. An increase of one (1) Policy Analyst in Long Term Care Administration to support the development, review and revision of Long-Term Care policies and procedures.
- i. An increase of one (1) Quality Improvement Specialist in Long Term Care Administration to support the LTC Homes with quality, risk and compliance programs.
- j. An increase of one (1) Manager of Nursing Practice in Long Term Care for the monitoring and improvement of nursing clinical practice in the homes.
- k. An increase of three (3) new permanent positions for Long Term Care to establish a Behaviour Supports Ontario (BSO) Virtual Mobile Team (2023-SS-1), offset by an increase in Provincial subsidy.
- l. An increase of fifty-four (54) new permanent positions for Long Term Care and an associated increase in part-time staff to increase Nursing and Personal Care and Allied Health levels per resident per day, offset by an increase in Provincial subsidy. This investment has led to an increase in Nursing and Personal Care hours from an average of 3.8 hours / resident / day to 4.2 hours / resident / day at each of the Region's Long Term Care homes.
- m. The transfer of one (1) Manager-Strategic Partnerships from Social Assistance to Emergency Management and Program Support Services to reflect the work currently performed.
- n. The transfer of one (1) Policy Advisor shared between the Family Services and Social Assistance divisions to Emergency Management and Program Support Services to reflect the work currently performed.
- o. The transfer of one (1) Program Assistant from Social Assistance to Emergency Management and Program Support Services to reflect the work currently performed.
- p. The transfer of two (2) Program Assistants from Social Assistance to Emergency Management and Program Support Services to provide administrative assistance to the Emergency Management team.
- q. The transfer of one (1) Emergency Management Coordinator from Social Assistance to Emergency Management and Program Support Services to



- provide to support emergency management programs and initiatives corporately and departmentally.
- r. The transfer of two (2) Housing Program Coordinators and one (1) Program Assistant from Housing Services to Social Assistance to reflect the transfer of the homelessness portfolio between the two divisions.
  - s. The transfer of 0.85 of a Family Counsellor 2 from Social Assistance to Family Services to reflect the work currently performed.
  - t. The transfer of one (1) Senior's Safety Advisor from Long Term Care to Family Services to reflect the work currently performed.
  - u. The transfer and reclassification of one (1) Food Service Aide from Fairview Lodge to a Personal Support Worker at Hillside Terraces.

#### 4.8 COVID 19 Impacts and Pressures

- a. In addition to the pressure for new regular full-time positions in the Region's long-term care homes, the COVID-19 pandemic is projected to continue to have significant temporary impacts for long-term care including mandated active screening at all long-term care homes for all staff, contractors and visitors entering the building. To meet this requirement, the 2023 budget proposes a total of \$2.9 million for temporary screeners, surveillance testing clinic staff and other temporary positions at each of the Region's four homes.
- b. The 2023 budget proposes to fund the \$2.9 million in one-time COVID related costs from senior government funding. Should the provincial and federal governments not extend additional funding support, the Region will need to consider further cost mitigation measures and use of reserve funds.

### 5. 2023 Risks and Uncertainties

- 5.1 The most significant risk in Social Services is the uncertainty of provincial investment. The 2023 budget submission includes provincial funding based on current funding levels and information available from the Province. During the past few years, the Region was subjected to considerable uncertainty as the new Provincial government unilaterally announced changes to funding levels, cost-sharing formulas and program design. Following the onset of the pandemic many of these reductions did not take place and instead substantial one-time increases in provincial funding were provided for the Region's housing and homelessness activities, children's services and long-term care programs. As an example, in 2022 Durham received \$2.8 million in SSRF-Phase 5 funding, which was a significant and critical investment that went to services that support homelessness prevention and capital repairs. This program funding has ended despite an ongoing need, which has created an additional gap in funding for critical supports to address homelessness in the community. The sustainability of these provincial funding increases is uncertain which affects Social Services' ability to plan and deliver services benefitting the Durham community.
- 5.2 Reductions in provincial investments have a significant impact on the Region's own resources and its ability to address community needs identified in the Region's

Strategic Plan. The 2023 planning allocation for the provincially funded Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP) is not showing an increase over the 2022 amounts. This funding flatline and shortfall will put increased pressure on the local property tax levy as we continue to see cost pressures to fund shelter beds, outreach, rent supplements, housing allowances and support to people to both find and maintain their housing. Additionally, the province is limiting funding for the delivery of Ontario Works to a maximum program delivery funding allocation equal to 2018 actual expenditures. This subsidy freeze continues to place increased pressure on the municipality to support the client benefit and administration costs associated with the delivery of Ontario Works.

- 5.3 There is continued uncertainty with respect to provincial and federal funding to support ongoing COVID-19 response. The Region, along with its municipal partners, is working with the provincial and federal government to secure senior government funding for projected 2023 costs to the Region for responding to and recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. Should sufficient funding not be available, the Region will need to consider further cost mitigation measures across the corporation or use of operating impact reserve funds.
- 5.4 The province is committed to increasing the average hours of daily direct nursing care to four hours over four years and to increasing allied care hours to 36 minutes over the next year. Phase 2 of The *Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021* comes into force in the spring of 2023, and may impact the operations of the homes through changes to regulations and inspection protocols. Regional staff, in partnership with long-term care partners, will continue to advocate for provincial funding and regulatory changes that meet the needs of our long-term care residents.
- 5.5 The impact of Bill 23, More Homes Built Faster Act limits the Region's ability to collect development charges to support the delivery of infrastructure and critical housing for vulnerable populations.
- 5.6 To prepare for the challenges ahead, the Social Services Department, in partnership with the Internal Audit Division of the Finance Department, will continue to undertake a review of key processes, systems, data, budgets and best practices to integrate services for improved client outcomes.

## **6. Future Budget Pressures**

- 6.1 Annualization of 68 new positions proposed in the 2023 budget (excluding the 6 positions approved during 2022) is estimated at \$0.7 million. Of the 68 positions identified, there are 66 impacted by future annualized costs and 2 are budgeted for a full year in 2023.
- 6.2 Continued pressure to address and reduce the wait list across several program areas. With population growth and funding constraints, wait times for services, such as Family Counselling services, Long-Term Care, and community housing will become longer.

- 6.3 As referenced in the Master Housing Strategy (Report #2020-COW-27), a recommended approach for the potential redevelopment, intensification, and regeneration of four Durham Region Local Housing Corporation (DRLHC) sites in Oshawa continues to be worked on with the communications outreach the first priority.
- 6.4 There is a need for additional provincial funding to better address infection prevention and control measures, new staffing models and resources that fully address the increasingly complex medical acuity levels of residents, population diversity and regulatory requirements in Long-Term Care.
- 6.5 Continued and sustained resources and supports are required to prevent and end chronic homelessness in Durham Region. Innovative approaches for community outreach, supportive, transitional and affordable housing are required across Durham Region to meet growing need within the homelessness support system.
- 6.6 The Ontario Works (OW) and Social Housing client population continues to see an increase in complex mental health and addiction issues with one third of adults receiving OW being unable to work due to medical issues. Provincial supports for those with mental health and addiction issues and their families need to be augmented to achieve improved outcomes.
- 6.7 Uncertainty regarding pending provincial changes to the OW program design and funding model complicates business and budget planning.
- 6.8 A new LTC home in Seaton, approved in December 2022, will require a significant regional investment for both capital construction and operating costs with net Regional operating estimated at between \$22.5 million and \$24.8 million as noted in Report 2022-COW-32.
- 6.9 As precarious and intermittent employment becomes more common in the labour market, it is anticipated that Durham residents will increasingly turn to the social services sector for help with different forms of income stabilization and other support services. The impact of COVID-19 on employment in the retail and service sector add to this pressure.
- 6.10 The Family Services Division will continue to address mental health and wellbeing supports. However, referrals for new individual, couple or family counselling cases are continuing to grow putting pressure on waitlists and system capacity.
- 6.11 Children's Services staff continue to actively participate on provincial tables and in the childcare and early years community while awaiting announcements and information related to a new provincial funding formula, and revised guidelines that offer direction to plan and implement system changes.
- 6.12 Children's Services staff continue planning efforts for the addition of two new directly operated Regional Child Care Centres through local partnerships.

**7. Conclusion**

- 7.1 The recommended 2023 Social Services Department Business Plans and Budget meets the Council approved guideline for the 2023 Property Tax Supported Business Plans and Budget and supports the Department's role to ensure a range of programs, services and supports are available and accessible to those in need.
- 7.2 It is recommended that the Health and Social Services Committee approve the 2023 Business Plans and Budget for the Social Services Department and forward this report to the Finance and Administration Committee for consideration during the budget deliberations of the 2023 Property Tax Supported Business Plans and Budget.
- 7.3 This report has been reviewed by the Finance Department and the Commissioner of Finance concurs with the recommendation.

**8. Attachments**

- 8.1 The detailed 2023 Business Plans and Budget for the Social Services Department is attached.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

---

Stella Danos-Papaconstantinou  
Commissioner of Social Services

Recommended for Presentation to Committee

Original signed by

---

Elaine Baxter-Trahair  
Chief Administrative Officer