

**Ministry of Labour, Training
and Skills Development**

Office of the Assistant Deputy
Minister

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Memorandum

To: Employment Ontario Delivery Partners
From: Cordelia Abankwa, Assistant Deputy Minister
Date: March 17, 2022
Subject: Employment Services Transformation Update

Dear Employment Ontario partners:

I hope you and your families are staying safe and healthy this winter. Work is progressing rapidly on the Employment Services Transformation (EST) initiative and there are several updates I would like to share with you and your organizations.

EST Secretariat

The ministry has recently established a new EST Secretariat as a key step towards achieving the province's vision for integrated delivery of employment services. The Secretariat which will be in my Division, will give focused leadership to the planning and implementation of the various facets of the transformation of Ontario's employment services. One of the key objectives of the Secretariat is to ensure strategic alignment across ministries, as well as close collaboration with our many service delivery partners and stakeholders.

Leading this work is Executive Director Gloria Lee. Gloria has held several senior level roles within the Ontario Public Service, including the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services where she led employment initiatives to support improved outcomes for Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program clients. Gloria brings her passion for increasing equity and inclusion for underserved populations to this endeavour.

You can expect to hear regularly from Gloria and her office as work progresses on this initiative.

Update on Phase 1 Catchment Areas

In [September 2021](#), I shared the ministry's plan to continue the provincial rollout of Employment Services Transformation in the four "Phase 1" catchment areas:

- York
- Stratford-Bruce Peninsula
- Halton
- Kingston-Pembroke

The competitive process to select new Service System Managers (SSM) in these catchment areas is well underway, and we anticipate announcing the successful organizations on schedule in late April 2022. Further details will be shared as decisions are made.

Once announced, the new SSMs will begin working with service providers and community partners in their catchment areas in preparation for the gradual transition to a new service delivery model. As with the prototype regions, there will be a nine (9) month transition period to allow the SSMs to build relationships and strengthen their capacity prior to the integrated service delivery model. During this period there will be no funding impacts.

Phase 2 of the Provincial Rollout

In tandem with the selection of new SSMs for Phase 1 catchment areas, planning is underway to roll-out the EST model for the next grouping of catchment areas ("Phase 2" catchment areas):

- Durham
- Windsor-Sarnia
- London
- Kitchener-Waterloo-Barrie
- Ottawa

In keeping with the two-stage competitive process which was launched in [June 2021](#), the ministry will proceed to invite qualified organizations to submit a Call for Proposal for Phase 2 catchment areas. The invitation to the Phase 2 Call for Proposal process will take place in late April. Interested organizations were invited to demonstrate their capacity to serve as a Service System Manager through the Request for Qualification process which was completed between June and September 2021.

In preparation for this next phase of the provincial rollout, the ministry is in the process of collecting input from service providers in the Phase 2 catchment areas regarding service delivery considerations for implementation of the new Integrated Employment Service Delivery model. This feedback will help shape design considerations for the upcoming Call for Proposals.

The competitive process and contract negotiations for Phase 2 catchment areas are expected to be completed by the end of 2022. The ministry will provide further information and updates throughout the process.

Further Details

I remain committed to ensuring that you receive regular updates as we continue to move through this process. I want to thank you for your organizations' many efforts and ongoing flexibility in working through the challenges of this ongoing pandemic. Your partnership remains essential as we move forward with this important transformative initiative which will modernize Ontario's employment and training system.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Cordelia Abankwa
Assistant Deputy Minister
Employment and Training Division

Cc:

Andrew Irvine, Assistant Deputy Minister (A), Workforce Policy and Innovation Division,
Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development

Aklilu Tefera, Assistant Deputy Minister, Social Assistance Programs Division, Ministry of
Children, Community and Social Services

Gloria Lee, Executive Director, Employment Services Transformation Secretariat, Ministry of
Labour, Training and Skills Development

Nelson Loureiro, Executive Director, Social Assistance Transformation, Ministry of Children,
Community and Social Services