

Employment Services Transformation: Update on Provincial Rollout September 2021 General Questions and Answers

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General Implementation Questions

Question 1: What are the timelines for the competitive process?

Summer 2021:

The ministry will assess the Request or Qualifications (RFQ) submissions and qualified applicants from the RFQ will be invited to participate in the CFP for the Phase 1 catchments (York, Halton, Stratford-Bruce, Kingston-Pembroke).

Early 2022 to December 2022:

The competitive process for Phase 2 catchments will begin in early 2022, with agreements in place by December 2022.

April 2022:

Ministry – Service System Manager transfer payment agreements will be in place by April 2022 for Phase 1 catchments.

2023:

The competitive process for Phase 3 catchments (including Toronto and the North region) (Phase 3) will occur in 2023, due to the additional engagement and implementation planning required.

Question 2: When will the Call for Proposal be issued to Qualified Applicants?

The Call for Proposal document is tentatively scheduled to be released in September for Phase 1 catchment areas through the Ontario Tenders Portal.

Question 3: How will successful/ unsuccessful organizations be notified? Will these organizations be debriefed?

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Each organization which participated in the RFQ has received a letter of notification advising them whether or not they will proceed to the next stage of the competitive process.

Unsuccessful organizations have been offered an opportunity for a debrief with ministry staff.

Question 4: Which organizations will be invited to the Call for Proposals stage in each catchment area?

The list of organizations which will be invited to the CFP stage is available on EOPG.

Question 5: Which catchment areas will be competed as part of the Call for Proposals this round?

There are currently 12 remaining catchment areas for implementation of the Employment Services Transformation model. The Fall 2021 CFP (Phase 1) encompasses the following 4 catchment areas:

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

EST implementation in Phase 2 catchment areas will begin in 2022. The competitive process for Toronto catchment and two catchments in the North region will be conducted in 2023 (Phase 3).

Question 6: Will there be a Transition Period for new SSMs once they are selected?

Following the competitive process for Phase 1, new service system managers for this phase will be provided with a Planning Period and Transition period to establish themselves and for

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service providers to familiarize themselves with the new model. The prototypes confirmed this was crucial for success.

During the transition period, service system managers take responsibility for the existing agreements with service delivery organizations in their catchment areas for Employment Ontario and ODSP employment programs. At the end of the transition period, the service system managers also take on responsibility from municipalities to provide employment services for Ontario Works clients. At this point, service system managers are able to develop their own employment programs and make changes to the existing service delivery network.

Question 7: How many catchments can a Service System Manager oversee?

Consistent with the selection process for the prototype catchment areas, qualified applicants are able to apply for any number of catchments in the CFP. The specific approach for how many catchment(s) prospective SSMs may oversee will be informed by analyzing feedback from stakeholders and jurisdictional best practices to ensure fair competition and contestability.

Question 8: When will client intake begin for the new SSMs?

At the beginning of the Transition Period, Employment Ontario (EO) and Ontario Disability Support Program- Employment Supports (ODSP-ES) service providers are transferred to the service system managers and SSMs begin their responsibility of service delivery network oversight and EO and ODSP-ES client intake.

Beginning in the Integrated Employment Services Delivery Period, service system managers can make changes to the service provider network and performance-based funding begins.

At this time, responsibility for employment services and supports for clients previously served through Ontario Works Employment Assistance will transfer to service system managers. As well, Social Assistance clients will begin to transition into Employment Ontario service delivery.

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Question 9: Why is EST implementation taking place in Toronto and the northern catchment areas last?

The ministry recognizes the uniqueness and complexities related to the demographic, geographic and population densities of Toronto and the Northern catchment areas which is why we have left implementation in those places for a later date.

The ministry will use the time prior to rolling out EST in Toronto and the North to make thoughtful considerations to developing a delivery approach that will best meet the unique needs of those communities.

Decisions on system design requirements and service delivery improvements will be informed through engagement with key stakeholders including, municipalities, DSSABs, Indigenous partners, Francophone stakeholders, our service provider network and community groups.

Stakeholder Engagement and Impacts

Question 10: How will the ministry engage stakeholders during the provincial roll-out?

As the government prepares for the next stage of Employment Services Transformation, the ministry is committed to engaging with key stakeholders, including our municipal partners, service delivery partners, Indigenous partners and the Reference Group on Employment Services for People with Disabilities.

To support the Request for Qualifications process, the ministry held information sessions with stakeholders and partners. As well, the ministry remains committed to providing regular communications to help our stakeholders and the public understand and prepare for any changes.

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Ministry staff from both MLTSD and MCCSS continue to engage regularly with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), the Provincial Municipal Social Assistance and Employment Committee (PMSAEC) and associated sub-tables with an interest in EST.

The SSM model will not be implemented within First Nations communities (on-reserve). The province will engage with First Nations communities to develop a model for employment services delivery on-reserve for First Nations job seekers.

The service system manager (SSM) model will apply to urban/other Indigenous service providers (off-reserve). The province is committed to working with other Indigenous partners - including the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO), the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres (OFIFC), the Ontario Native Women's Association (ONWA), Tungasuvvingat Inuit (TI) and Indigenous service providers - to support Indigenous jobseekers off-reserve.

There will be no immediate changes to the access and delivery of employment services for clients in the Phase 1 catchment areas, including First Nations clients who access employment and training services off-reserve. SSMs will be required to engage with Indigenous organizations in order to provide employment services to Indigenous jobseekers in a culturally supportive way and deliver long-term, sustainable outcomes.