

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

**Employment Services Transformation:**

**Update for Toronto and Northern Catchment Areas**

**General Questions & Answers**

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## **Phase 3 Request for Qualification**

### **What is being announced for the Phase 3 catchment areas?**

Today, the ministry announced the beginning of the two-stage competitive process to select Service System Managers (SSMs) for the remaining higher complexity catchment areas of Toronto, Northeast, and Northwest.

This process is beginning with the Request for Qualification (RFQ) to identify organizations that are interested and best qualified to fulfil the role of an SSM. Information sessions about the RFQ stage of the competitive process will take place in May and the RFQ will be followed by a Call for Proposals (CFP) in Summer/Fall 2023.

### **How are successful SSMs selected through the two-stage competitive process?**

The two-stage competitive process to select SSMs includes:

#### Stage 1: RFQ

- RFQ participation is open to any public, not-for-profit and private sector organization, as well as municipalities and municipal service delivery organizations.
- The RFQ will communicate the principles, priorities, and delivery model objectives to potential organizations interested in competing as an SSM.
- During the RFQ stage, applicants will be required to demonstrate their experience and capacity to serve as an SSM.
- The RFQ will be used to qualify organizations for the second stage of the selection process.

#### Stage 2: CFP

- Only organizations that qualified through the RFQ will be invited to participate in the CFP.
- In the second stage, the ministry will invite qualified applicants to submit proposals for the management and delivery of employment services.
- The objective of the CFP is to evaluate an applicant's abilities to serve the specific catchment area they are applying to, including:
  - Improving client outcomes;
  - Building and maintaining community partnerships;

- Serving diverse populations; and,
- Use of various service delivery channels.

**Will there be an opportunity for prospective applicants to ask questions and provide feedback about the RFQ?**

We remain committed to providing regular communications to help you understand and prepare for any changes. Additional details about the competitive process will be provided through RFQ information session(s) which are scheduled for May.

Details about these information sessions are available in the RFQ document.

**How has the ministry consulted with stakeholders prior to implementing the SSM model in the Phase 3 catchment areas of Toronto and the North?**

The ministry initiated a Market Sounding Exercise with partners, stakeholders and potential vendors, which included a Market Sounding Document and Vendor Engagement sessions. The market sounding and vendor engagement process was open to community partners, Indigenous organizations, service provider network, municipalities, and other stakeholders interested in providing feedback to the ministry.

The market sounding document offered an opportunity for organizations to provide written feedback to the ministry about how to improve service delivery and client outcomes in complex Phase 3 catchment areas of Toronto, Northeast, and Northwest. The vendor engagement sessions provided an opportunity for direct discussions between the ministry and organizations.

**What was in the market sounding document?**

The Market Sounding Document was a written method of engagement which was used in tandem with the vendor engagement sessions. The Market Sounding Document contained comprehensive information about Employment Services Transformation (EST) and the integration of employment services, service delivery challenges in Toronto and the Northeast and Northwest catchment areas, the scope of the engagement, and employment services tools and supports. A form segmented into three sections with a total of 26 questions was shared with organizations to respond to. Interested participants needed to register to attend a vendor engagement session.

## **Will the ministry be making changes to the model to address the unique service delivery considerations for Toronto and the North?**

Based on the feedback received through consultation with SSMs, stakeholders and partners, the ministry has incorporated a number of adjustments to the design and delivery requirements to improve service delivery and outcomes. These include refining performance indicators; establishing service delivery zones to protect access to in-person service in rural and remote communities; outlining enhanced partnership requirements for SSMs; and implementing additional expectations around service delivery for Indigenous clients.

These service delivery improvements will be implemented as part of Phase 3.

As well, the ministry continues to engage with stakeholders and partners, with the possibility of further changes to be incorporated at the CFP stage. Potential future adjustments would need to be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the EST, taking into account the implications, feasibility, and timing of any changes.

## **How did the ministry determine the service areas/catchments?**

The ministry developed a framework, supported by data, that considers and includes feedback from stakeholders during initial vendor engagement in 2019. The 15 catchment areas for EST are aligned with Statistics Canada, however, the ministry modified the Toronto Economic Region catchment area to address the complexity and density of Toronto and to sequence the EST model roll out to address this complexity. According to Statistics Canada, the Toronto Economic Region includes, in addition to Toronto, Peel, Halton, York and Durham. The ministry created 5 separate catchment areas from these parts of the broader Toronto Economic Region.

The North was divided into two catchment areas to align with Statistics Canada economic regions. This also addressed the unique differences in the local population demographics and labour markets between the two catchments.

## **How will Phase 3 affect the delivery of employment services to Indigenous jobseekers?**

Employment services delivered in First Nations communities (on-reserve) are exempt from the EST model.