

# Supported Employment (Phase One) Implementation Evaluation

## Questions and Answers

June 15, 2018

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### 1. Why is the Ministry conducting the evaluation?

Consistent with the ministry's commitment to evidence-based policymaking, the ministry is conducting an implementation evaluation of the Phase One of the Supported Employment (SE) program.

This evaluation is expected to yield a critical assessment of the program and the extent to which it has been implemented as intended. Findings are expected to inform critical areas of SE program delivery, program design, governance, and future policy directions.

### 2. What will the evaluation study?

The proposed implementation evaluation will study the delivery, reach, and relevance of Supported Employment.

Three questions frame this evaluation:

- To what extent and in what ways is the program being delivered as intended?
- In view of recognized, accepted practices and local contextual needs, in what ways might the program need to be adjusted to better achieve its goals?
- What lessons might the Ministry draw from Phase One implementation of the program to inform Phase Two implementation across Ontario?

### 3. How is the evaluation being conducted?

The evaluation will draw from multiple lines of evidence and utilize multiple methods of inquiry. Methods include:

- document and literature review;
- administrative data review and analysis;
- key informant interviews and focus groups with ministry staff, service providers (including caseworkers), and stakeholder groups;
- interviews with program participants and employers;
- participant case studies; and,
- observation visits to service provider sites.

#### **4. Who is conducting the evaluation?**

An independent evaluation group, Cathexis Consulting Inc., was selected to conduct the evaluation in accordance with the government's procurement guidelines.

#### **5. When will the evaluation take place?**

The evaluation is set to begin in late May 2018 and conclude by fall 2018.

#### **6. Who will be involved in the evaluation?**

The Ministry's evaluation working group will provide direction to the consultants on the scope of stakeholder consultations. The evaluation working group includes Ministry staff from the program delivery support and regional offices, as well as research, policy, and program design and development areas.

The evaluation is designed to solicit input from all key stakeholders, including participants, employers, and service providers.

#### **7. How will the visits to service provider sites be conducted? What will the consultant do during the site visits?**

The evaluation consultants will conduct site visits to service providers to understand program delivery and processes in relation to key evaluation questions.

The site visits will include observations of client intake and referral, service planning and coordination, pre-employment services delivery, and other program-related processes.

The information collected during site visits will be used for the sole purpose of providing input into the program evaluation and will not affect compliance or performance assessment of service providers and their relationship with the Ministry.

#### **8. Will the consultant ensure respondents' confidentiality?**

Both the Ministry and the evaluation consultants take participants' confidentiality very seriously. There are protocols in place to ensure that all responses are kept confidential.

Evaluation consultants will not disclose to the ministry the information any individual or organization may have provided to the evaluation. Discussion of findings will not identify any individuals or organizations by name.

The information provided during this process will be used for the sole purpose of the program evaluation and will not affect compliance or performance assessment of

service providers and support organisations and their relationship with the Ministry in the future.

With each data-gathering opportunity, the evaluation consultants will indicate the specific ways how the data they collect will be used and what they will do to ensure confidentiality.

**9. What frameworks are in place to promote high-quality evaluation?**

The evaluation consultants will conduct the evaluation in accordance with acceptable standards of practice. Specifically, they will observe principles of research ethics as outlined in the *Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (2014)*, evaluation standards as provided by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, professional standards of practice as outlined by the Canadian Evaluation Society and relevant privacy frameworks and legislations as required by law.

**10. Is my participation required?**

Your participation in the SE evaluation is voluntary. Your participation is important and your input is valued. Your participation enriches the evaluation findings and ensures that findings are comprehensive, representative of the diversity of findings.

**11. What does the Ministry intend to do with the results of the evaluation? Will results affect program delivery, funding, contract management?**

The evaluation is intended to produce evaluative evidence and lesson-learned to inform continuous program improvement of SE, including program delivery practice, funding, and contract management.

Neither individual nor groups of service providers will be penalized as a consequence of the evaluation. This evaluation is independent of contract management and performance management processes already in place.

**12. Will I learn about the results of the evaluation?**

The Ministry will provide updates throughout the evaluation process on the Employment Ontario Partners Gateway website.

Upon completion of the program evaluation, the Ministry will communicate the findings of the evaluation to service providers.

**13. How will I know if the Ministry decides to make changes to the SE program?**

The Ministry is committed to continuous improvement of its *programs*.

As a standard practice, the ministry will continue communicating to stakeholders about changes to programs through the Employment Ontario Partners Gateway website.

**14. Will the consultants be providing any accommodation to enable equitable participation?**

Yes. In order to accommodate the various needs of the respondents, the consultants will engage stakeholders in both official languages as well as in alternate formats (e.g., Braille, online, mail, Skype, TTY, ASL interpreter support) upon request.

Similar accommodations will be offered for the participants of the interviews and discussion groups.

The consultant and the Ministry will cover any expenses associated with the provision of accommodations.

**15. If I have questions, who do I contact?**

If you have questions, you may contact your ETC or staff at the regional offices. Alternatively, you may also contact Program Evaluation Coordinator, Chi Yan Lam, at [chi.y.lam@ontario.ca](mailto:chi.y.lam@ontario.ca).