

Developmental Services Ontario opens for business

It has been a busy year for the developmental services sector in Ontario and there is no sign of the momentum slowing down this summer.

Developmental Services Ontario, Ontario's new single window to developmental services and supports, officially opened its doors in nine locations across the province on July 4, 2011.

Now individuals with a developmental disability and their families have one place where they can find information about community resources and apply for provincially-funded services and supports.

Here's what you need to know about Developmental Services Ontario.

Developmental Services Ontario:

- provides information to individuals and families about community programs and resources
- confirms eligibility for services and supports
- determines service and support needs
- links people to services and supports, and
- will administer direct funding agreements in the future.

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Q. Why did we create Developmental Services Ontario?

A. In the past, people often had to visit different agencies and fill out multiple forms to get support. What's more, some agencies assessed people differently from others. This meant some people got more support than others, even though they had similar needs.

With Developmental Services Ontario, individuals and their families can contact just one place for services and supports. Everyone who is eligible for service will be assessed in a consistent way. It's easy and it's fair.

Q. Does this affect me?

A. The new Developmental Services Ontario offices mainly affect new applicants who are entering the adult developmental services system for the first time.

Adults who, under the Developmental Services Act, currently receive service or who were found eligible and are waiting for service will not have to reapply or reconfirm their eligibility. They will maintain their current eligibility and be "grandparented" into the new system.

Developmental Services Ontario will ensure that everyone receiving or waiting for service will be assessed within five years to confirm their service and support needs.

Q. How does this affect people waiting for and currently receiving service? Will I have to reapply?

A. Adults with a developmental disability who, under the Developmental Services Act, currently receive service or who were found eligible and are waiting for service will not have to reapply or reconfirm their eligibility. They will maintain their current eligibility and be "grandparented" into the new system.

Developmental Services Ontario will ensure that everyone receiving or waiting for service will be assessed within five years using the new standard application package to confirm their service and support needs.

Q. What if I don't live in a city where there is a Developmental Services Ontario office? How do I contact Developmental Services Ontario?

A. No matter where you live, you can contact Developmental Services Ontario for assistance. You can call toll-free. And in the coming months, videoconferencing, mobile services and satellite offices will make accessing services and supports even easier.

Q. What happens when people call Developmental Services Ontario?

A. If people are looking for information, Developmental Services Ontario staff will answer their questions.

If they are looking for services and supports, Developmental Services Ontario will confirm they are eligible. Applicants will be required to provide documentation, including:

- a psychological assessment report that confirms they have a developmental disability

- proof of their age (such as a passport or birth certificate), and
- proof that they live in Ontario (such as a bank account statement, utility bill or rental agreement).

Q. How can I learn more?

A. Visit the [Ministry of Community and Social Services website](#) to watch a video about Developmental Services Ontario.

You can also visit Developmental Services Ontario online at www.dsontario.ca.

Developmental Services Ontario

Here are the toll-free numbers for each office:

- **Central East Region** 1-855-277-2121
- **Central West Region** 1-888-941-1121
- **Eastern Region** 1-855-376-3737
- **Hamilton-Niagara Region** 1-877-376-4674
- **North East Region** 1-855-376-6376
- **Northern Region** 1-855-376-6673
- **South East Region** 1-855-237-6737
- **South West Region** 1-855-437-6797
- **Toronto Region** 1-855-372-3858

What changes now that Developmental Services Ontario is open for business?

The new Developmental Services Ontario offices mainly affect new applicants who are entering the adult developmental services system for the first time.

New applicants and eligibility for services and supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Individuals with a developmental disability and their families will go to Developmental Services Ontario to get information about community resources, confirm eligibility and apply for provincially-funded services and supports.• Service agencies no longer confirm a person's eligibility for service or complete the application package to assess an individual's needs.
Identifying services and support needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is a new application package for assessing the service and support needs of adults with a developmental disability.• Developmental Services Ontario will use this new application package to conduct assessments for all new applicants.

What doesn't change now that **Developmental Services Ontario** is open for business?

<p>Access to services and supports</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service agencies continue to support people with a developmental disability.
<p>Eligibility for services and supports</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults who, under the Developmental Services Act, currently receive service or who were found eligible and are waiting for service will not have to reapply or reconfirm their eligibility. They will maintain their current eligibility and be “grandparented” into the new system. • Developmental Services Ontario will ensure that everyone receiving or waiting for service will be assessed within five years to confirm their service and support needs.
<p>Priority for services and supports</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently, priority for service and supports is decided through community processes in each region. The ministry is working with communities to improve the consistency and transparency of who gets priority for service and supports. • In the future, there will be a new provincial process for determining who gets priority for services and supports.
<p>Funding for services and supports</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developmental Services Ontario is working within available funding and resources in each region. As resources become available, Developmental Services Ontario will match individuals to available services.

Building up lives by taking down graffiti

In 2008, Mainstream, a St. Catharines-based agency that serves more than 240 people with a developmental disability, launched a graffiti removal program to benefit both its members and the community.

Now heading into its fourth year, the program has given its participants new job skills and promoted community inclusion, all while cleaning graffiti from more than 3,000 sites.

“Team members have connected with their community and feel a great sense of pride and accomplishment in their efforts to eliminate graffiti,” says Kevin Berswick, Mainstream’s executive director. “Witnessing the progress they have made over the years is truly amazing.”

Team members feel a great sense of pride
and accomplishment in their efforts to
eliminate graffiti.

“I feel proud of the work that I do,” says Beth, one of the graffiti removal team members. “It makes me feel good inside. I like to see my city clean, not dirty.”

Mainstream’s program team has been invited to attend many community fairs. Their members talk about the program and the difference they’re making in the community.

“All team members enjoy attending these events,” Kevin says. “Showcasing their valuable work means so much to them.”



In 2009, Mainstream took showcasing to a new level. In an effort to raise awareness about the negative effects of graffiti in the community, the agency created a touring puppet show.

“The goal of the production is to educate and engage children in grades one through five in becoming responsible youth in their community,” Kevin says.

Now in its second year of touring with a new cast and crew, the production, called [Graffiti: What a Waste](#), has been performed for more than 3,000 children in Niagara-region schools.

The puppeteers and crew members are adults who have a developmental disability.

“The actors and backstage crew were a highlight,” said one school principal. “Students and staff had an opportunity to see how developmentally disabled adults can perform at a very high level and serve our community in a meaningful way.”

Much like the graffiti removal program, the puppet show has taught the performers and crew members new skills and helped them express themselves in a new and inclusive way.

“I love working with puppets,” says Jenn, one of the performers. “I’ve never worked with puppets before. It’s my first time and it’s awesome. I practice at home every day. I love it.”



To raise awareness about the negative effects of graffiti in the community, Mainstream created a touring puppet show.

Developmental Services Ontario

Policy directives online

We recently posted the new policy directives for Developmental Services Ontario (referred to as “application entities” in our legislation) on our website.

The directives will help make sure that everyone gets the same quality of customer service from Developmental Services Ontario no matter where they live. They set out the standards that Developmental Services Ontario must meet when it comes to:

- giving information to the public about the kinds of supports that are available and how to apply for them
- confirming who is eligible to apply for supports
- answering questions and concerns people may have about the application process and services provided by Developmental Services Ontario
- assessing people’s service and support needs, and
- collecting information that will inform community planning and forecasting for future needs.

You'll find the directives in the [Publications section](#).



Find out more about
Developmental Services Ontario.

Visit www.dsontario.ca.

Developmental Services Human Resource Strategy Update

The [Developmental Services Human Resource Strategy](#), a partnership between the ministry and the Provincial Network on Developmental Services, continues to make progress to position the developmental services sector as a “career of choice” in Ontario.

Here’s an update on recent developments related to the strategy:

Forum

More than 250 participants, mainly from service agencies across Ontario, attended the Developmental Services Human Resource Strategy Forum in May. A small number of representatives from colleges and unions also attended.

Organizers discussed the challenges involved with rolling out new [core competencies](#) — the basic values and skills needed to work in the field. They also unveiled tools, including an implementation guide that will be provided to agencies to help them through the process.


During the month of June, many agencies attended information sessions throughout Ontario about the new core competencies. At these sessions, they received strategies and tools to help them adopt the competencies. The agencies will receive training in the fall.

Committee Activity

While the Steering Committee will continue to oversee all aspects of the strategy, some new teams are coming together to continue to make progress in three key areas:

- The **Workforce Development and HR Practices Implementation Committee** will implement recommendations from other committees as they relate to training, education and best practices.
- The **Core Competencies Provincial Implementation Committee** will oversee and guide the provincial implementation of core competencies.
- The **Marketing and Communication Committee** will lead the sector’s awareness and marketing strategy.

Meanwhile, the existing HR Shared Interest Committee will continue to ensure that the perspective of direct support employees is reflected in activities related to the strategy.



Linking more people to specialized services

Videoconferencing sites opening across Ontario

Over the next several months, Ontario will expand its network of videoconferencing sites in the developmental services sector from 86 to 161, increasing access in communities throughout the province.

Using special television and camera equipment, the sites can connect people with a developmental disability to a wide range of specialists without leaving their local agency.

“Videoconferencing is great for families,” says Tony Vipond, Chief Executive Officer of [Community Living Huronia](#) in Midland. Tony is leading the expansion of the videoconferencing sites in his role as chair of [Community Networks of Specialized Care Ontario](#).

“Sometimes it can be difficult for families to make long trips to get to specific clinicians. They may not have a vehicle or they may have younger children that require child care. Videoconferencing provides a solution to those issues.”

David Zuccato, Assistant Deputy Minister of Operations at the Ministry of Community and Social Services, agrees.

“Since we started using it about six years ago, we’ve heard that videoconferencing has made a big difference in people’s lives,” David explains.

“What’s great about these new sites is that they will be in areas where it can be difficult to see clinical specialists. In the past, people may have had to travel for hours to get the advice and services they needed. With videoconferencing, they won’t have to worry about the time and cost of all that travel. Their local site can link them to specialists across Ontario.”

The sites will also benefit staff in the developmental services sector.

“The equipment makes accessing clinicians so much easier,” says Tony, whose agency is on the video network. “Our teams that work with clinicians have saved a significant amount of travel time and money. It’s an excellent tool for staff training.”

Tony explained that training sessions on the video network can also benefit families and other professionals, such as teachers. “We’ve made the equipment available to others in the community and had others sit in on training events,” he says.

The videoconferencing expansion includes installing equipment in [Developmental Services Ontario](#). This will allow people to apply and be assessed for services and supports no matter where they live in Ontario.

It also includes 12 new videoconferencing stations that have a more compact design. They'll be used throughout the 161 new sites as part of a pilot project to test this newer style of equipment.

"I'm really excited about this," says Tony. "These additional stations will not only allow us to serve more people, but also they'll provide families and clinicians with a friendlier way to communicate.

"The standard videoconferencing equipment is bigger and usually installed in a large room, like a boardroom. We'll be able to set up the pilot equipment in smaller offices for more personal discussions."

To take advantage of the latest technological innovations, the expansion also includes a plan to update the equipment on an ongoing five-year cycle. The ministry will update about 32 sites each year. Spreading out the updates will help avoid any major disruptions in service.

The videoconferencing sites are part of [Ontario's telemedicine network](#). It provides access to care for patients in every hospital and hundreds of other health care locations across the province. In addition to clinical care, the telemedicine network supports distance education and meetings for health care professionals and patients.

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Tony Vipond, Chief Executive Office,
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