

## Social Services Update 2024

Presented To:	Community and Emergency Services Committee
Meeting Date:	March 25, 2024
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Prepared by:	Tyler Campbell Children and Social Services
Recommended by:	General Manager of Community Development

## Report Summary

This report provides information regarding a semi-annual update with respect to the operations of Social Services programs and services.

## Relationship to the Strategic Plan, Health Impact Assessment and Community Energy & Emissions Plan (CEEP)

This report refers to Council's Strategic Plan regarding the Quality of Life and Place for Citizens of the City of Greater Sudbury and aligns with the Population Health Priority of Resiliency by investing in families, enabling, promoting mental health, and encouraging holistic health as it provides supports to low-income families. This report has no relationship to the Community Energy and Emissions Plan.

## Financial Implications

There are no financial impacts associated with the report.

## Background

Social Services provides a variety of supports for low-income residents in Greater Sudbury. Staff helps individuals access financial benefits available through the Ontario Works program, and connects clients to health, housing, childcare, education, and training supports as needed.

The City of Greater Sudbury's Auditor General has recommended that the Division provide regular reporting and updates with respect to service and key performance indicators to the Community and Emergency Services Committee.

## Organizational Restructuring

In the third quarter of 2022, the division commenced a restructuring initiative to align the management structure with new service demands and in anticipation of service delivery model changes being mandated by the Province of Ontario.

Recent changes include supervisory roles to "right size" the management structure and provide for a

reasonable span of control regarding the organizational structure for the ongoing Ontario Works program, which will assist with the Division's ability to measure and manage performance and provide enhanced program accountability.

### ***Housing Stability and Homelessness***

Utilizing enhanced Provincial Homelessness Prevention Program funding announced in March 2023, an additional Coordinator of Shelters and Homelessness and six additional client navigators were hired under contract until 2026. This homelessness team works collaboratively within the Homelessness Serving System to support people who are staying in encampments, shelters and unsheltered in the community. They support persons who are unhoused to navigate the system into housing including applying for identification, Ontario Works, social housing and being added to the By Name List to be matched to available housing with supports. The extended team is also doing homelessness prevention work by supporting vulnerable tenants with the City's Community Housing portfolio to complete annual updates and address behaviors that affect their tenancy.

### **Employment Programs and Supports**

The Division continues to foster partnerships and collaborations with community partners in advance of anticipated changes being mandated by the Provincial government, that will see the procurement by MCCSS of a Service System Manager for employment supports for the North-East Region of Ontario. These changes are expected to start, with a planning phase, in 2024, with full implementation of the new service delivery model in 2025.

Social Services continues to facilitate collaboration and coordination with community employment services providers to better develop relationships and improve service to clients. The Division's Employment Support Analyst is a key contributor to various working groups and committees that are developing and supporting employment programs and services for the citizens of Greater Sudbury. Some of these initiatives are detailed here.

### ***Carpentry and Culinary Programs***

As part of the supports offered through the Ontario Works program, Social Services staff work with clients and select suitable, training-ready participants to enroll in education programs to help them move towards sustainable employment. In September 2023, 20 clients were selected to enroll in the Carpentry and Culinary Fundamentals programs, as offered by College Boreal. On December 22nd, 2023, 15 completed the 16 weeks of training and graduated from these programs.

#### **Culinary Program:**

- 2 graduates from the culinary program have secured employment 1 graduate secured full-time employment as a cook for a local restaurateur
- 1 graduate has sought self-employment and is in the process of developing a comprehensive business plan.
- 5 continue to seek employment opportunities.

#### **Carpentry Program:**

- 2 graduates are participating in the Community Builders Program.
- 1 graduate has been granted ODSP.
- 4 continue to seek employment opportunities.

These legacy programs continue to prove successful in enhancing life skills and providing marketable hard skills. It is anticipated that both programs will be discontinued in 2024 due to the Employment System Transformation.

### ***Janitorial Program***

Labour market and anecdotal information from the community indicated that there was a demand for trained janitorial workers. In collaboration with St. Albert's Adult Learning Centre, a program to train participants to prepare them for this need is being offered. Ontario Works participants that might be a good fit for the program are being identified and referred.

Additionally, initial discussions have occurred with the City's Purchasing Services that could see language in an upcoming Request for Proposals for janitorial services that would include an opportunity for "social procurement", to develop opportunities for graduates for future graduates.

There are currently 4 OW clients participating in the program.

### ***PSW Program***

The division has supported the free PSW Program through St. Alberts by offering client referrals and additional financial support to further reduce barriers in accessing the highly employable health care sector. In 2023, 15 clients participated and 13 graduated from the 6-month condensed program:

- 5 clients obtained employment.
- 1 granted ODSP.
- 8 are currently completing the placement component of the program with a graduation date of February 29, 2024

### ***Community & Employment Placements***

Facilitated through an agreement with Employment Ontario agencies, YMCA Employment Services & March of Dimes. These placement opportunities provide clients with experience to transition into the labour force with enhanced skills and self-confidence. This initiative has resumed from a temporary hiatus due to the pandemic.

#### **Employment Placements**

- 5 clients obtained subsequent employment.

#### **Community Placements**

- 1 continues to obtain addiction services.
- 2 are actively completing placement.

### **Services Spotlight Summit**

The Employment Support Analyst participated as a planning committee member to assist in organizing the Services Spotlight Summit led by Workforce Planning Sudbury & Manitoulin District. This networking event was dedicated to connecting community services providers within Greater Sudbury to familiarize participants with programming, establishing relationships and endorse collaboration. The focus was to assist clients in navigating through social determinants of health towards achieving life stabilization resulting in employment. A series of panels were hosted concurrently and included topics such as food scarcity, addictions & mental health, youth services, legal services, and employment services.

### **Greater Sudbury Summit on Toxic Drugs**

Departmental staff were responsible for managing the logistics of the Summit.

The Summit brought together 189 community leaders representing 76 agencies from diverse community

sectors, including health, education, municipal, Indigenous, social services, persons with lived and living experience, academia, and more, to review the magnitude of—and response to—the toxic drug crisis in Greater Sudbury.

This invitation-only event fostered collaboration to inform recommendations to improve our community's response, create actionable consensus, and commit to concrete next steps to prevent drug toxicity related harms and deaths.

Participants worked together with a goal of identifying locally actionable processes, solutions, and structures to mitigate harms and ensure accountability.

[\*Honouring Voices, Embracing Perspectives, Moving Forward: A Summary Report on the Greater Sudbury Summit on Toxic Drugs\*](#) (PDF) documents the insights and priorities from the December 7 and 8, 2023, Greater Sudbury Summit on Toxic Drugs (Summit)

## **Centralized Intake**

In the Fall of 2020, the Ontario Government selected Greater Sudbury as one of the offices to launch a new, easy-to-use, online application and streamlined process for those applying for social. The aim of the centralized intake process is to shorten the application process by reducing time-consuming paperwork for caseworkers, giving them more time to support their clients. This process is now in place for all 47 Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs)/District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSABs).

The Greater Sudbury OW office continues to provide input to the Province to assist with ensuring the process is effective and efficient. The provincial Centralized Intake Unit now completes approximately 70% of applications for the local office.

As for the centralized intake process, the government is taking an important step to expand its role in centralized intake for Ontario Works to reduce administrative burden for municipalities. As the province manages more Ontario Works applications end-to-end, municipalities will be able to provide more one-on-one support to clients. These changes will authorize the ministry to make Ontario Works intake eligibility decisions in specific geographic areas. The proposed changes will apply first to three pilot sites and key learnings will inform the province's longer-term plans.

## **Key Performance Indicators**

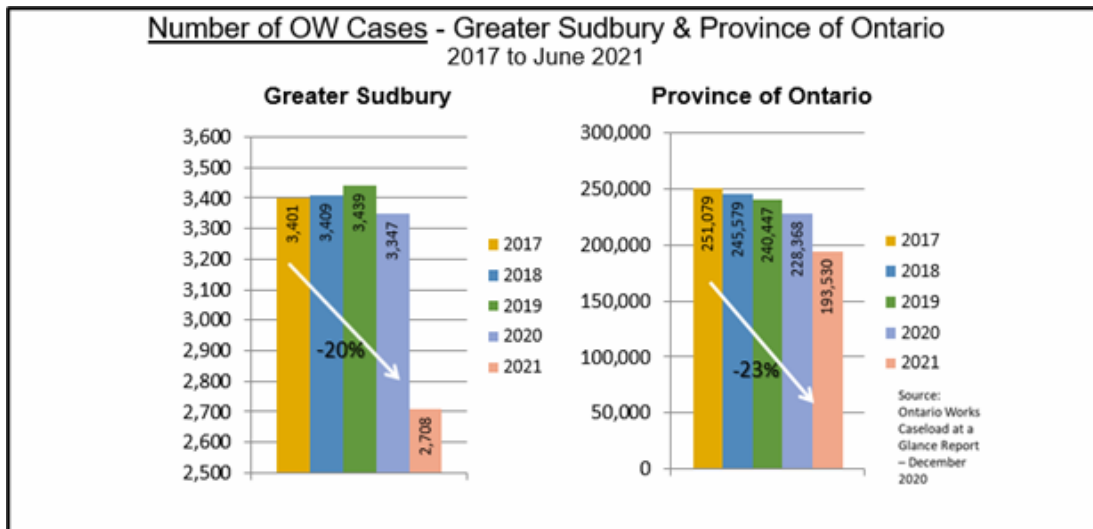
### ***Ontario Works Caseload – City of Greater Sudbury***

Since December 2021 the caseload has seen incremental increases, and though not back to pre-pandemic levels, the monthly average caseload is now almost 3000 cases.

Staff continue to monitor caseloads and adjust staffing resources as needed. The Division continues to see difficulties with recruiting and retaining staff given the current labour market environment. It is anticipated that recruitment will be ongoing throughout 2024 to bring staffing allocations back to defined service levels and offset short term leaves and impending retirements.

The number of Ontario Works cases in Greater Sudbury and the Province dropped from 2017 to June 2021 by twenty per cent, three per cent less than the provincial average. The local caseload remained relatively static with minor fluctuations at 3,400 cases from 2017 to 2020, before plummeting to an average of 2,708 from January to June 2021. This is the lowest number of cases on assistance in Greater Sudbury in at least a decade. The decrease in caseload matched provincial trends due to the delivery of the federal government's full suite of pandemic income replacement measures. As the pandemic took root, the city reported a lower unemployment rate than the province from January 2020 to February 2021; however, this rate has been increasing and the gap closing. In June 2021, the caseload hit a new low at 2,580 cases, well below the 18-month caseload average of 3,134 cases.

## Number of Ontario Works – Greater Sudbury and Ontario 2017 – June 2021



The Division continues to advance work on leveraging existing reports, available from the province, to help with making data-driven decisions and providing a fulsome picture of the Social Assistance landscape in the City of Greater Sudbury. Additional work on accessing social assistance data and the development of dashboards that will support operations is currently ongoing.

Some of the data currently being “mined” includes granular information on the composition of the OW caseload (demographic information, educational attainment, geographic location). Data is also gathered to report on key performance indicators from a budget perspective, as well as to inform the performance outcomes for Ministry purposes and for municipal benchmarking (MBNCan), such as percentage of caseload exiting due to employment, number of days from application to grant and the general inflow and outflow of cases. It is anticipated that the outcome measures for the Province will be revised in 2025 to reflect the transition to the new service delivery model (Employment Support Transformation).

Generally, the performance outcomes for Ontario Works illustrate the impact the pandemic had on the sector. Most indicators suggest an incremental return to pre-pandemic levels, and the Division will continue to monitor the data for trends. The trends in Greater Sudbury are generally mirrored in the trends in other municipalities, as illustrated with the data for provincial averages (See Appendix A). It is important to note that Greater Sudbury hit 3 out of the 4 targets that were set by the Ministry in the 2022 Service Plan, which led to overall achievement of provincial service expectations.

## Resources Cited

Ontario Ministry of Children, Community and Social Service. (May 12, 2023). Social Assistance Operations Performance Reports from Ontario Works Program Integrity – Operations Performance Reports:

<https://www.sa.mcscs.gov.on.ca/program-areas/program-integrity/sams-transition-performance-reports/>

Social Services Program Update Q2, 2022 Report – Community and Emergency Services Committee - May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022

<https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=44318>

By-Name List Report – Community and Emergency Services Committee - May 15, 2023

<https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=49549>

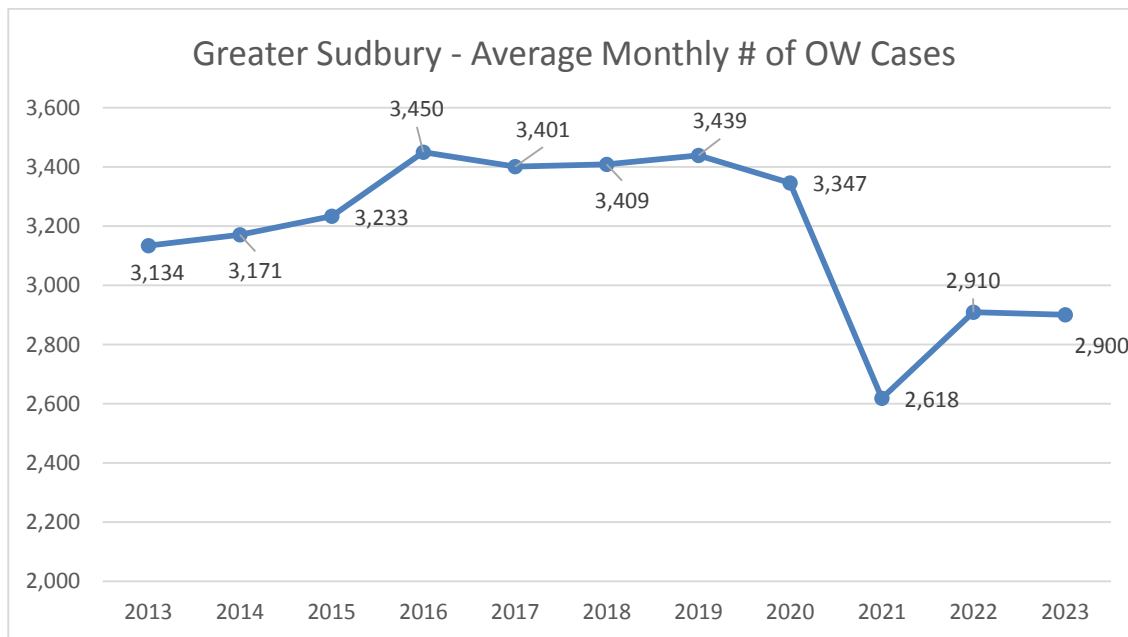
## Appendix A

### OW Caseload Comparison

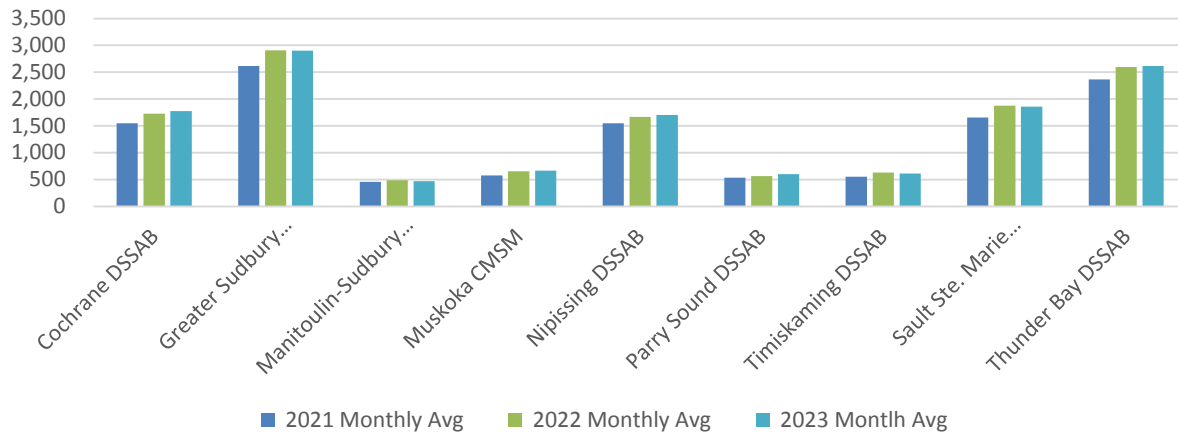
Jurisdiction	2019	Y/Y %	2020	Y/Y %	2021	Y/Y %	2022	Y/Y %	2023	Y/Y %
Province	240,447	2.1	228,368	-5	188,768	-17.3	211,234	11.9	236,995	12.2
Greater Sudbury	3,439	0.9	3,347	-2.7	2,618	-21.8	2,910	11.1	2,900	-0.3
Peterborough	3,262	-4.1	3,118	-4.4	2,618	-16	2,826	8	2,879	1.9
Simcoe	5,350	2.7	5,395	0.8	4,069	-24.6	4,555	11.9	5,156	13.2

### ODSP Caseload Comparison

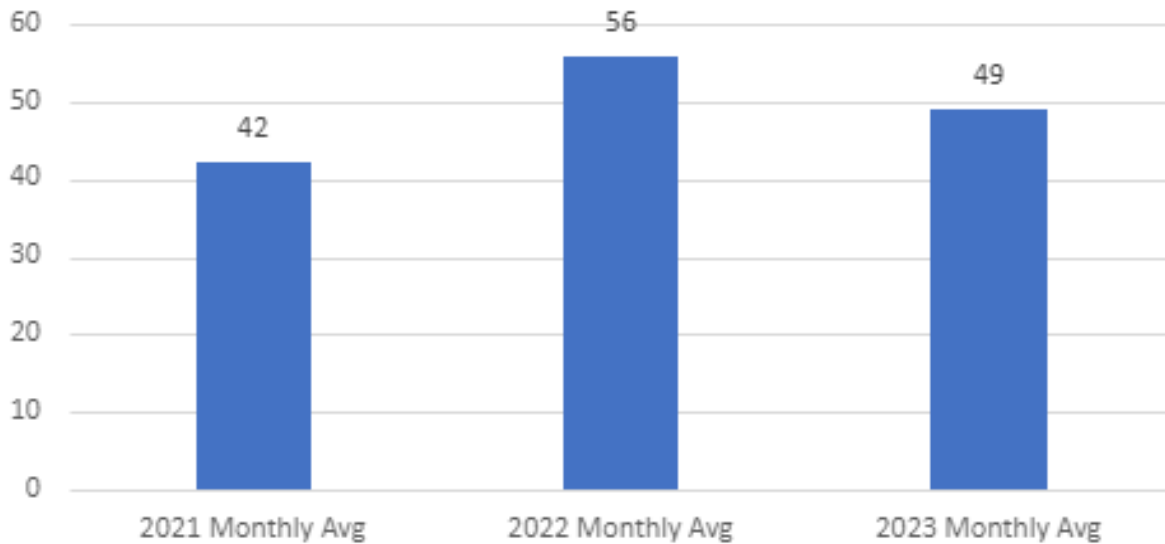
Jurisdiction	2019	Y/Y %	2020	Y/Y %	2021	Y/Y %	2022	Y/Y %	2023	Y/Y %
Province	377,060	2.5	379,353	0.6	372,946	-1.7	368,413	-1.2	367,690	-0.2
Greater Sudbury	8,127	1.4	8,095	-0.4	7,927	-2.1	7,787	-1.8	7,731	-0.7
Peterborough	8,397	2.7	8,396	-0	8,247	-1.8	8,116	-1.6	8,041	-0.9
Simcoe	3,185	2.8	3,025	-5	3,023	-0.1	2,986	-1.2	2,990	0.2



### Northern CMSM/DSSABs - Average Monthly Caseloads 2021-2023

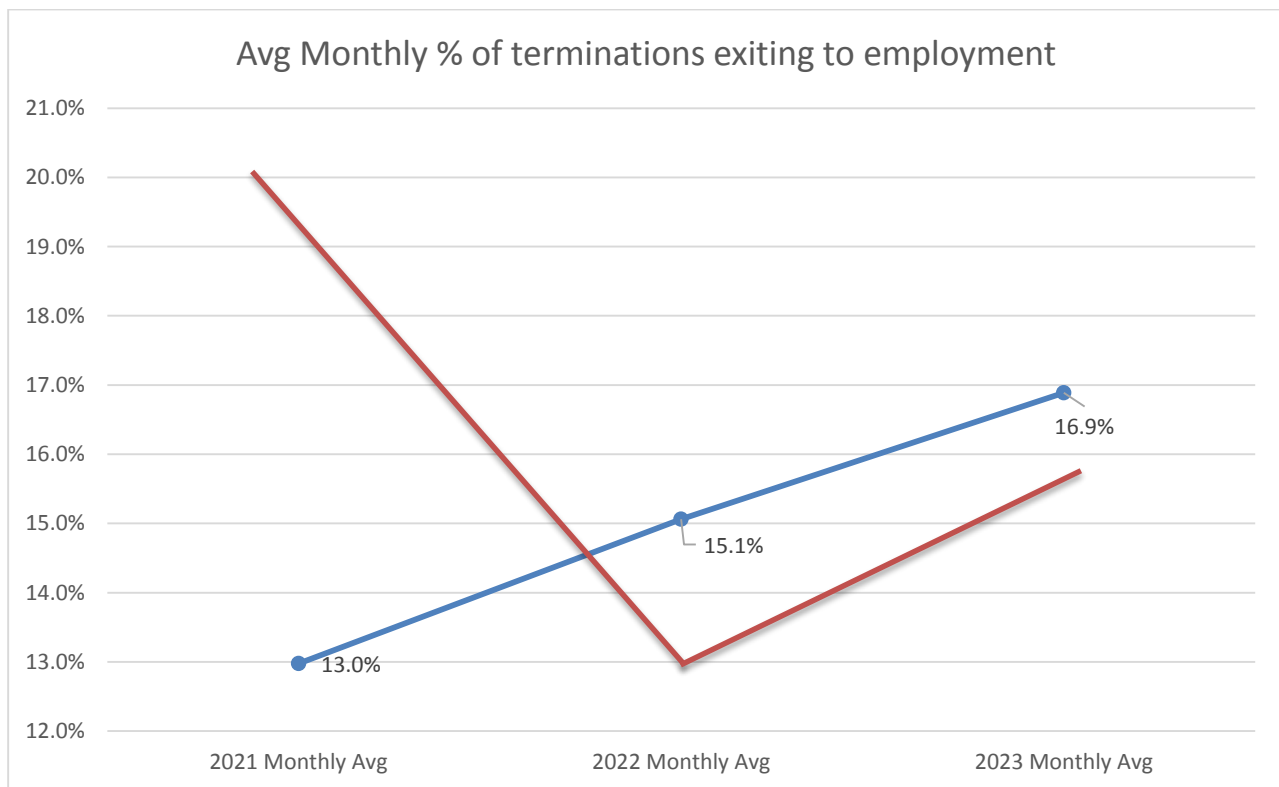
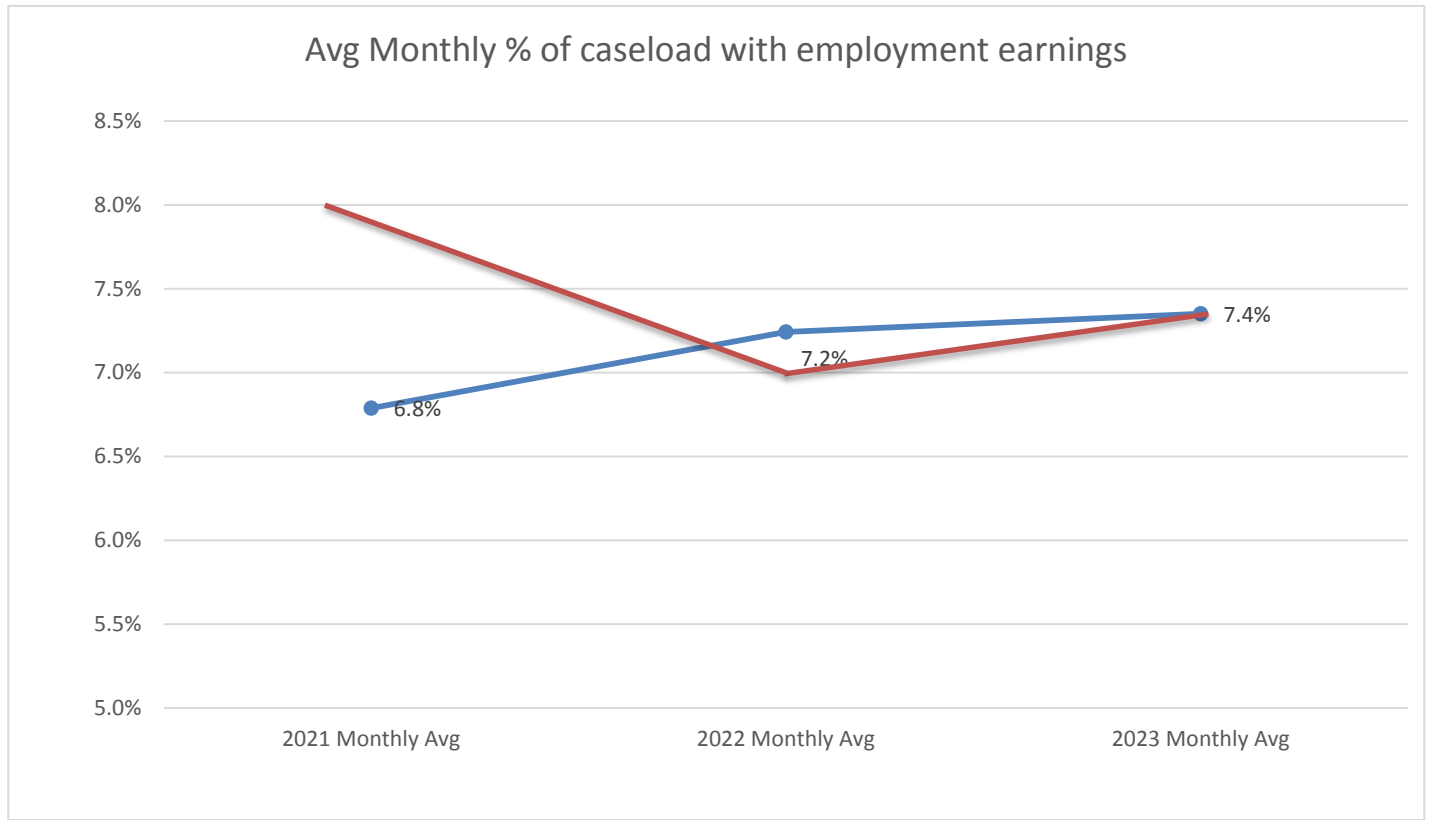


### Avg Monthly Ontario Works Referrals (DDPs Sent as an Application) to ODSP



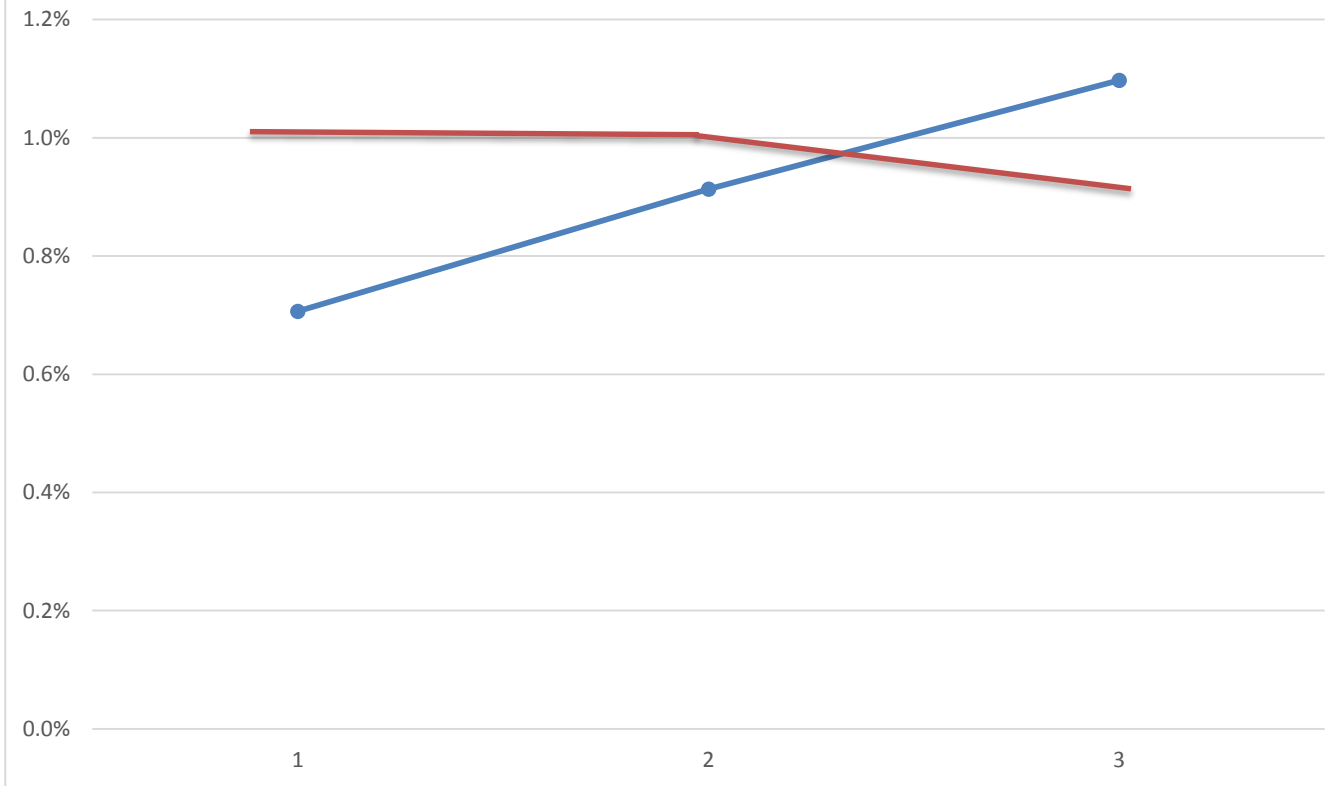
The following charts represent the 4 Performance Outcomes reported the MCCSS regarding program data.

Greater Sudbury Actual Results    Greater Sudbury Targets





Avg Monthly % of caseload exiting to employment



Avg Monthly Employment Earnings per Case

