

Social Services Program Update Q3 2024

Presented To:	Community and Emergency Services Committee
Meeting Date:	November 18, 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 a semi-annual update on Social Services programs and services.

Relationship to the Strategic Plan, Health Impact Assessment and Climate Action Plans

This report refers to Council’s Strategic Plan regarding the “Create a Healthy and More Vibrant Community” 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

This report is for information only.

Background

Social Services plays a crucial role in assisting low-income residents by providing access to essential supports. This report outlines the services offered, evaluates the effectiveness of current practices, and continues to address the recommendations made by the City of Greater Sudbury’s Auditor General regarding regular reporting and performance indicators to the Community and Emergency Services Committee.

Social Services offers a range of supports designed to improve the quality of life for low-income individuals and families. Key services include social assistance, housing and homelessness, education and training supports.

Housing Stability and Homelessness

Through increased service integration with City of Greater Sudbury Housing Operations, Client Navigators have expanded homelessness prevention services to tenants within community housing. Client Navigators support tenants who are facing eviction due to rental arrears, those who require assistance to complete their

annual review to maintain subsidy, or those who may require support with behaviours that place them at risk of eviction. Client Navigators work in partnership with property managers to ensure tenancies are maintained whenever possible. Client Navigators also complete door knocks with tenants who are new to community housing following an experience of homelessness to ensure appropriate supports to maintain their tenancy. Drop-in space has been established at two community housing buildings to provide space for community partners to attend and provide services to tenants.

Client Navigators continue to work in partnership with Community Outreach and Municipal By-Law Enforcement (MLEO's) in alignment with the Encampment Response Plan developed in October 2021 to respond to encampments across the community.

Following the release of the Roadmap to End Homelessness by 2030 in May 2024, staff have begun the planning and implementation of recommendations detailed in the report. Further updates on progress of the Roadmap to End Homelessness will be provided to City Council in December 2024.

Employment Programs and Supports

In alignment with Employment Service Transformation (EST) across the province, the Ministry of Community, Children and Social Services (MCCSS) procured a Service System Manager (SSM) through a Request for Proposal process in Spring 2024 to deliver employment related supports for the North-East Region of Ontario.

As Social Services currently delivers employment related support to Ontario Works recipients, staff continue to work collaboratively with College Boreal – the selected SSM for the Northeast to support this transition. Full implementation by the SSM will occur by March 2025.

Estimated Implementation Timeline for Employment Service Transformation (EST):

- Change Management for Managers (May 2024)
- Planning with MCCSS and SSM (Summer/Fall 2024)
- Person Centered Strategies Training – Change Management for Staff (Fall 2024)
- Technology Training - Common Assessment Tool and Action Plan (December 2024)
- Development of Local Business Practices and SSM protocols (Winter 2025)
- Go-Live and Funding Changes (March 2025).

During the planning and transition period, Social Services will continue to facilitate collaboration and coordination with community employment service providers to continue to provide continuity of service to clients. Social Services continues to contribute to various working groups and committees to develop and support various employment programs across the community. Initiatives supported by Social Services are detailed below.

Carpentry and Culinary Programs

Through the Ontario Works program, Social Services staff work with clients to identify training-ready participants to enroll in education programs and support them to obtain sustainable employment. In January 2024, 20 clients were identified to enroll in the Carpentry and Culinary Fundamentals programs offered by College Boreal. On May 30th, 2024, 17 individuals completed the 16 weeks of training and graduated from these programs, including nine graduates from the culinary program and seven graduates from the carpentry program.

An overview of client outcomes provided:

- 9 secured employment which resulted in file closures
- 1 relocated to another jurisdiction
- 1 continuing education

- 6 remain active on OW caseload and continuing to seek employment

These legacy programs continue to prove successful in enhancing life skills and contributing to employment readiness. Both programs have been discontinued as of May 30th, 2024, due to the Employment Service Transformation and will be recommended to the SSM as a viable program option moving forward.

Continuing Education Programs

Janitorial Program

Labour market and anecdotal data from the community indicated that there was a demand for trained janitorial staff. To respond to this need, Social Services, in partnership with St. Albert's Learning Centre, developed and implemented a no cost Janitorial training program. Social Services staff have supported Ontario Works recipients to participate in the program. This program has received an extension and continues to be offered to Ontario Works recipients and the community until March 2025. The most recent 8 week cohort facilitated in February 2024, consisted of 4 OW participants.

An overview of client outcomes provided:

- 3 actively employed
- 1 continuing education

Personal Support Worker (PSW) Program

Social Services has supported the delivery of a no cost PSW program through St. Alberts Learning Centre by providing client referrals and financial support to reduce barriers to receive training in this field. In 2024, four clients participated and graduated from the six-month condensed program and have since obtained employment in the health care field Social Services expects this partnership to continue until March 2025.

Community and Employment Placements

Community and Employment placement opportunities are facilitated through an agreement with Employment Ontario agencies; locally services were provided by YMCA Employment Services and March of Dimes. These placement opportunities provide clients with experience to transition into the labour force with enhanced skills and self-confidence. As with other employment programming, as a result of the Employment Service Transformation, termination notice on both contracts has been given due to the change in provincial funding in 2025.

Of the 4 individuals who have completed employment placements in 2024, all have obtained subsequent employment in the fields of janitorial services, retail, office administration and property maintenance. With respect to community placements, four are actively completing placement, and one individual has achieved employment in the field of social services, following a placement opportunity.

Community Builders

Community Builders is a leading not-for-profit construction-based social enterprise in Greater Sudbury providing training, employment, and affordable housing for vulnerable and at-risk populations. As experienced general contractors, the organization works on various residential projects, including second suites, modular housing, and renovations. The pre-employment training program offers experiential learning opportunities, aiming to support individuals facing employment barriers by equipping them with foundational skills that can be applied to a career in the trades.

Social Services provides funding for the personal protective equipment (PPE) necessary to facilitate each of the 9 cohorts to date. Since inception in July 2022, 56 individuals have participated in the program.

Program outcomes from inception to date include:

- 94% of trainees enrolled in the program have completed the program
- 86% of trainees have secured employment

- 46% were Ontario Works recipients
- 6% were Ontario Disability Support Program recipients Clients

Centralized Intake

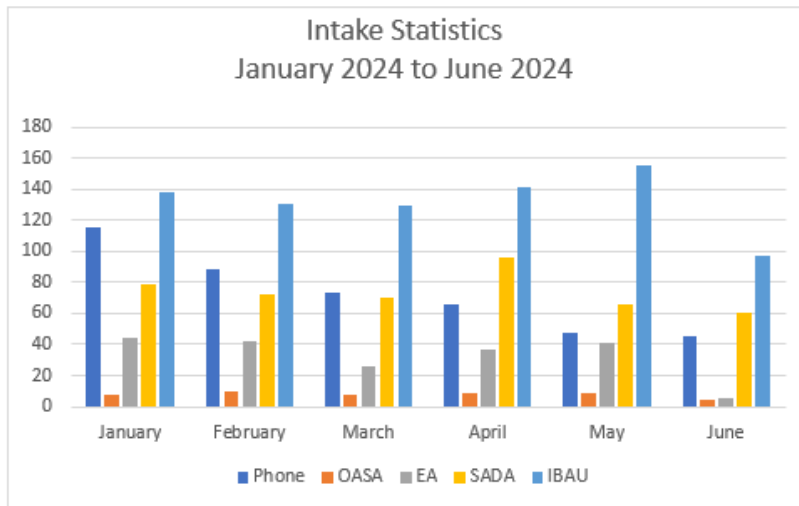
In the Fall of 2020, the Provincial government selected Greater Sudbury as one of the Ontario Works offices to launch a new, easy-to-use, online application and streamlined process for those applying for social assistance. The aim of the centralized intake process is to shorten the application process, by reducing administrative burden on staff and providing more time to support their clients. This process has since been implemented across all 47 Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs)/District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSABs).

The Provincial government is taking a further step to expand its role in centralized intake by managing an increased volume of Ontario Works applications end-to-end. This change 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 (York Region, Peterborough, and the District of Muskoka) and key learnings will inform the province’s longer-term plans.

Between January and June 2024, the total number of monthly intake referrals for Greater Sudbury’s Ontario Works program was 1911. The total monthly intake referrals decreased from 384 to 211, a 9% reduction.

During the same period, there was an increase in intakes provided through the provincial Centralized Intake Unit and via telephone. Intakes provided through various application processes included:

- 41% of cases through the provincial Centralized Intake Unit
- 23% through phone calls
- 23% through Social Assistance Digital Application (SADA)
- 10% through Emergency Assistance (EA) application
- 3% through Online Application for Social Assistance (OASA).

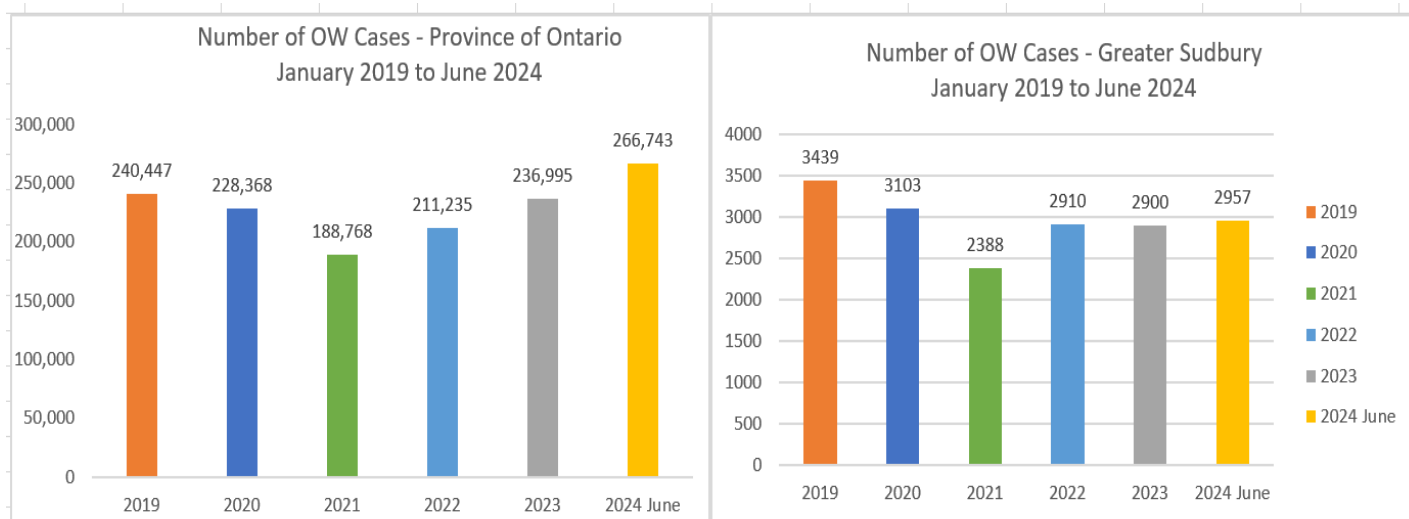


The Greater Sudbury Ontario Works office continues to provide feedback to the Provincial government to ensure the application process is effective and efficient. The provincial Centralized Intake Unit now completes approximately 70% of applications for the local office.

Ontario Works Caseload - Performance Metrics and Outcomes

The Ontario Works program has experienced a steady rise in caseloads since December 2021, reflecting

ongoing financial challenges in the community. While caseloads have not reached levels seen before the pandemic, the monthly caseload average of 2,957 cases indicates a significant demand. Since 2023, the average monthly caseload has increased 2% from 2,900 cases to 2,957 cases. In comparison to provincial rates, the increase in monthly caseload averages in Greater Sudbury from 2023 to 2024 is significantly less than the provincial increase, which was 12%. Further data related to the Ontario Works program is appended to this report in Appendix A; staff continue to monitor these metrics, while comparing local data to other municipal and provincial metrics, in order to inform and align related social service programs and initiatives.



Next Steps

Social Services staff will continue to work collaboratively with community partners to support Employment Service Transformation efforts in anticipation of full implementation in March 2025. Staff will continue to monitor trends within social assistance, housing, and homelessness programs to ensure programs continue to meet the needs of the community.

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, 2024 Report – Community and Emergency Services Committee – March 25, 2024

<https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=9f73433b-59c9-4c62-bf9f-ae6d82ae9f97&Agenda=Agenda&lang=English&Item=20&Tab=attachments>

Roadmap to End Homelessness – City Council Meeting – May 28, 2024

<https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=7d1b0bb0-9820-457c-adb0-2d0707857954&Agenda=Agenda&lang=English&Item=47&Tab=attachments>

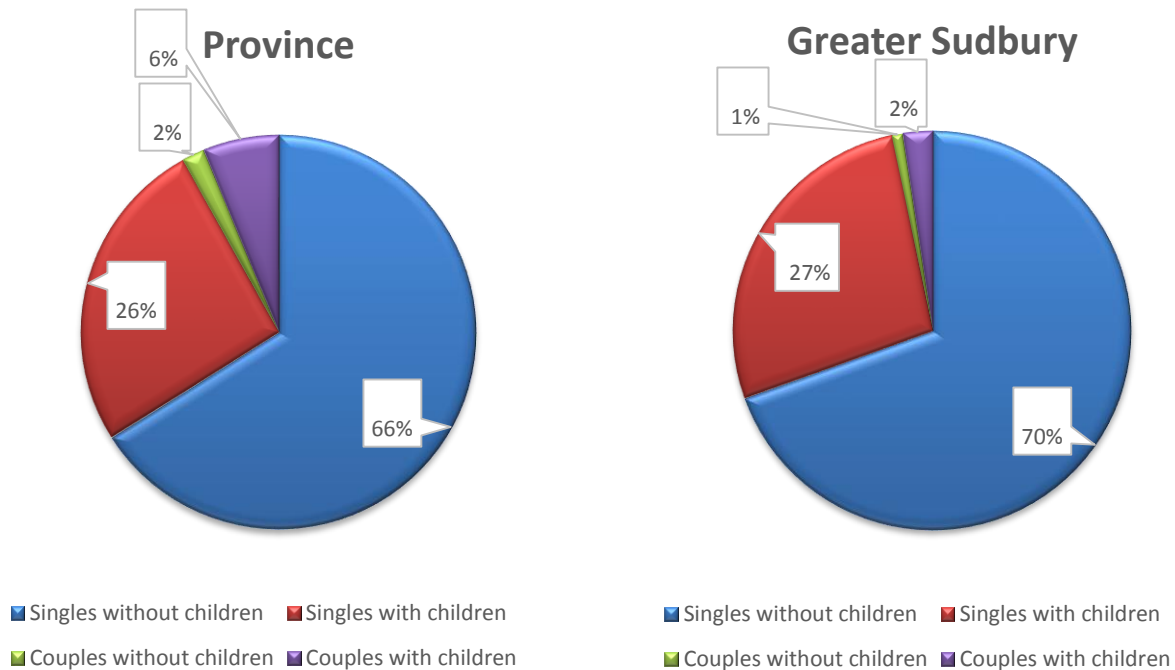
Appendix A

Caseload Overview

Family Structure on Assistance

- Singles without children:**
 - This category has the largest proportion, representing 64.2% of the total.
 - Indicates a significant number of individuals living alone without dependents.
- Singles with children:**
 - This category is the second largest, comprising 25.1% of the total.
 - It shows a substantial number of single parents, highlighting the importance of support systems for these families.
- Couples without children:**
 - This is the smallest group, making up only 1.8% of the total.
 - The relatively low number might indicate fewer couples opting to live without children or a demographic trend.
- Couples with children:**
 - This category accounts for 6% of the total.
 - It reflects a smaller proportion of traditional family units with both partners and children, suggesting potential shifts in family dynamics.

Overall, the data suggest a high prevalence of single-person households, both with and without children, compared to coupled households. This information is valuable for planning community services and support structures, particularly for single parents and individuals living alone.



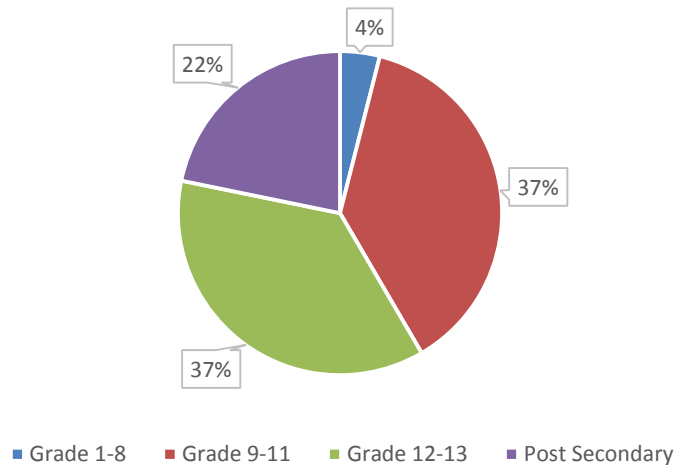
Months on Assistance

The average months on assistance is 38 in Greater Sudbury or 3.16 years, which is comparable to the provincial average of 39 months or 3.25 years.

Educational Attainment

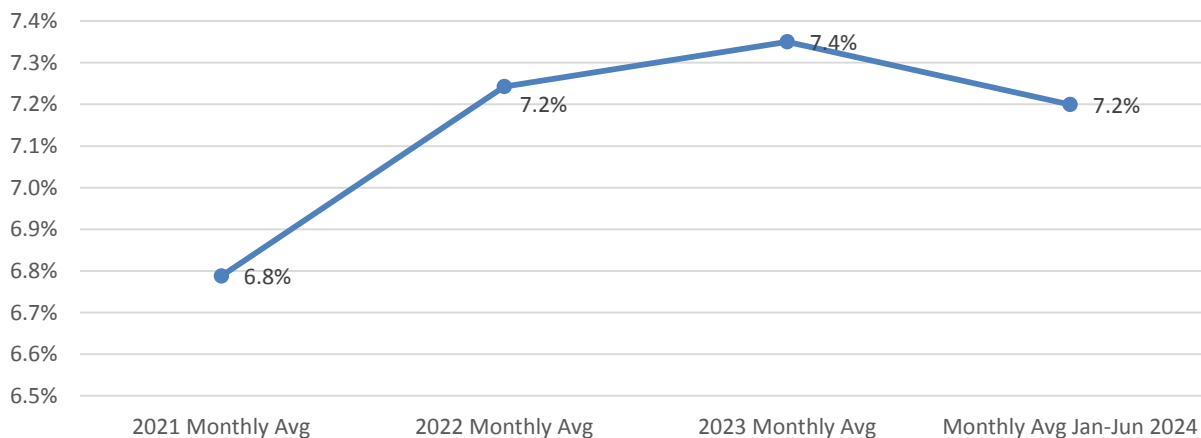
The case composition is relatively unchanged year over year historically. The majority of clients have not completed a high school diploma or equivalency. This presents an opportunity for the program to focus attention on educational programs that contribute to higher earning potential.

Greater Sudbury Ontario Works Caseload - Educational Attainment



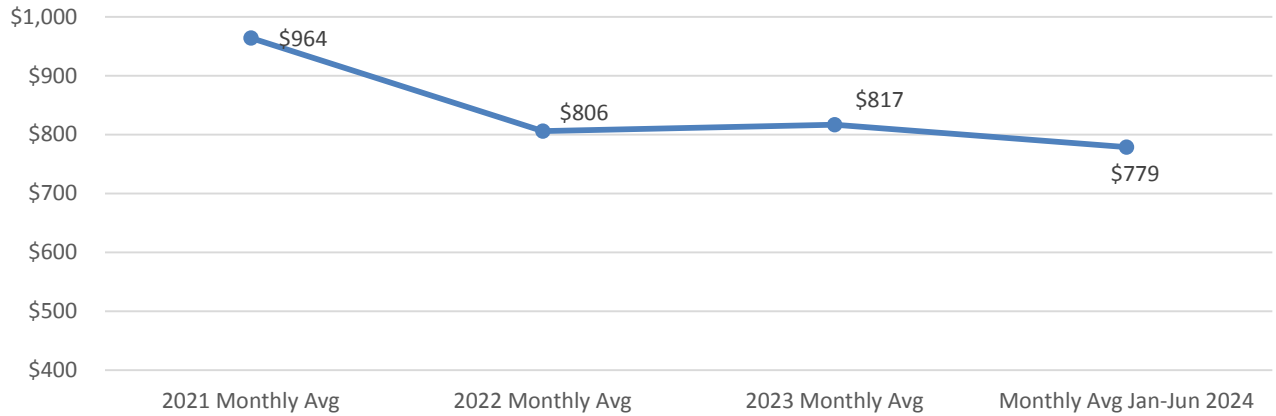
Ontario Works Sudbury – Provincially Mandated Performance Metrics and Outcomes

Percentage of Caseload with Employment Earnings



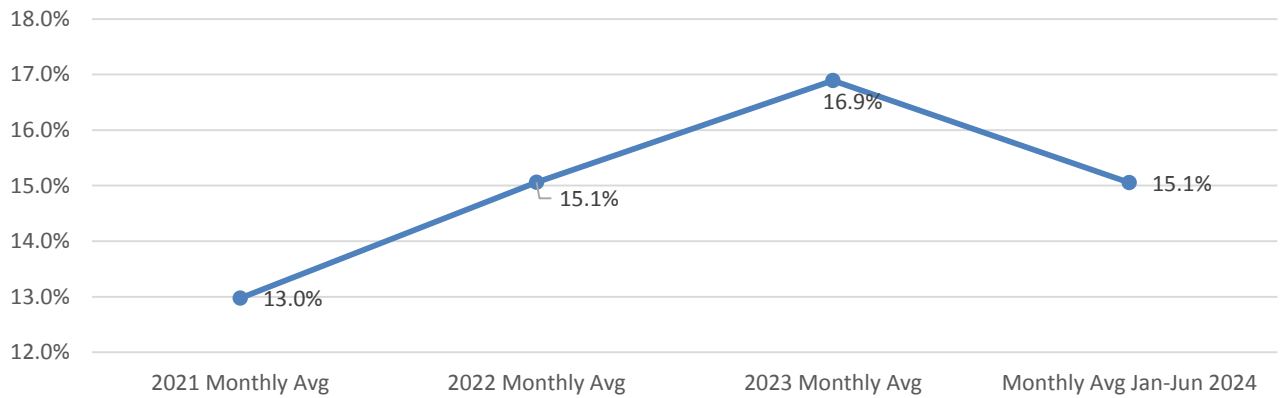
The percentage of the Ontario Works caseload with employment earnings has decreased slightly from 7.4% in 2023 to 7.2% in 2024.

Average Monthly Employment Earnings per Case



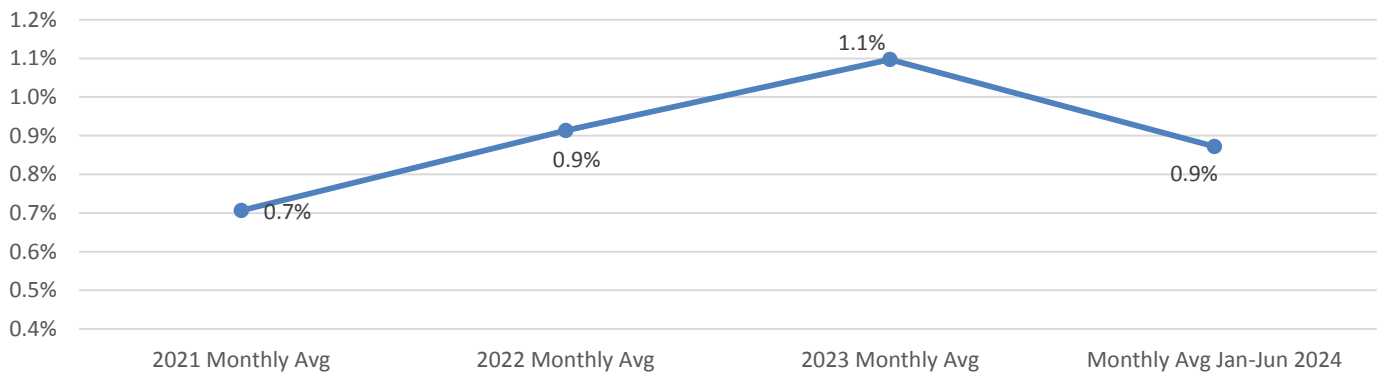
The average monthly employment earnings per Ontario Works case has decreased by 5% from \$817 in 2023 to \$779 in 2024.

Percentage of Case Terminations Exiting to Employment



The percentage of case terminations exiting to employment has decreased from 16.9% in 2023 to 15.1% in 2024.

Percentage of Caseloads Exiting to Employment



OW Sudbury Funeral Costs (Indigent Burials)

Month	Funeral Cost Billed 2023	Total Costs Received 2023	Funeral Cost Billed 2024	Total Costs Received 2024
January	\$49,062.64	\$16,624.08	\$68,036.31	\$29,842.78
February	\$35,041.05	\$9,687.24	\$36,658.13	\$10,06.96
March	\$54,971.19	\$26,638.85	\$25,340.33	\$7,612.75
April	\$51,269.62	\$28,814.18	\$51,021.65	\$23,191.44
May	\$47,264.69	\$19,294.62	\$61,671.37	\$0.00
June	\$57,763.05	\$22,897.42	\$17,283.43	\$0.00
July	\$33,849.05	\$14,137.22		
August	\$54,151.00	\$26,472.02		
September	\$55,652.80	\$30,309.85		
October	\$45,306.03	\$24,823.93		
November	\$62,927.58	\$33,548.86		
December	\$23,864.59	\$16,608.70		
Total	\$571,123.29	\$269,856.97	\$260,011.22	\$70,653.93