

For Information Only

Social Assistance Modernization Strategy Update

Presented To: Community Services
Committee

Presented: Monday, Mar 19, 2018

Report Date Thursday, Mar 01, 2018

Type: Presentations

Resolution

For Information Only

Relationship to the Strategic Plan / Health Impact Assessment

This report refers to operational matters.

This report will have a positive impact on the Social Determinants of Health in the area of Human Health and Well-Being and the proposed changes to Social Assistance will enhance existing programs and policies regarding the quality of services that are provided through the Social Services Division.

In addition, this initiative aims to improve the quality of life and place for citizens of Greater Sudbury as it will promote Population Health in the areas of Investing in Families, Enabling and Promoting Mental Health, Seeking Compassionate City Characteristics, and Encouraging Holistic Health.

Report Summary

This presentation and report provides an overview of policy and process changes at the provincial and local level and the link to the Provincial Social Assistance Service Delivery Modernization Strategy. The report further outlines a report back to the committee on local changes that have been implemented from the operational review process that was brought forward to the Community Services Committee in the fall of 2017. The overall strategy will take approximately three years to complete.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Signed By

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Health Impact Review

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Manager Review

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Division Review

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Financial Implications

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Recommended by the Department

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Background

The City of Greater Sudbury's Social Services Division (Division) has provided two updates to the Community Services Committee about changes that are taking place at the provincial and municipal level. The first report presented to the Committee on November 6, 2017, provided an overview of the Operational Review that was conducted in the Social Services Division at the local level.

<https://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/index.cfm?pg=feed&action=file&agenda=report&itemid=3&id=1205>

The second report presented to the Committee on January 17, 2018, provided an overview of the Income Security Roadmap that continues to guide the Social Assistance Service Modernization Strategy.

<https://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/index.cfm?pg=feed&action=file&agenda=report&itemid=7&id=1258>

The presentation and associated report will provide an overview of the updates to the Social Assistance Modernization Strategy along with further provincial changes, as well as an update regarding the changes that have occurred locally out of the operational review process.

Social Assistance Service Modernization Strategy

The Ministry of Community and Social Services (Ministry) has begun to roll out a change management process to Social Services staff across the Province regarding changes to Social Assistance. The priority areas for change include:

- Intake
- Client Communications
- Digital Tools and Processes
- Payment Administration
- Benefits Delivery

These priority areas for change focus on achieving the province-wide goals of improving client experience and outcomes along with realizing administrative efficiencies. The intended results of these goals and priority areas of focus will provide more time for high impact activities with clients rather than administrative processes to assist clients in achieving their desired outcomes. The Ministry is moving to a risk based paradigm rather than the current enforcement focus of the program.

The Ministry is engaging with all levels of decision makers in order to lead the changes by engaging in “co-design” with partners to pilot changes on a small-scale before implementation to the entire province.

In 2018, a new mobile application is expected to be implemented allowing clients to communicate with staff more easily and eventually allow the client to make certain changes to their file remotely without having to access the Social Services office. A large-scale change occurring will be the launch of a reloadable payment card that will eventually eliminate the need for paper cheque issuance to clients.

Operational Review

The Coordinator of Shelters and Homelessness in the Social Services Division is heading the implementation plan as a result of the local operational review process. An implementation team comprising up of a cross section of staff from the Division is assisting with the process. Currently, there have been several policy and process changes that have been implemented to the Division that fit the priority areas of the Social Assistance Service Modernization Strategy, such as access to forms and changes regarding income reporting requirements. The operational review also recommended access by clients through digital channels. In anticipation of the mobile application for clients, the operational review implementation team is working with the Corporate Services Department to setup new policies and processes for digital communication between clients and staff.

Next Steps

The Social Assistance Service Modernization Strategy outlines a roadmap for change over the next three years that is anticipated to have a positive impact on client outcomes. The implementation of the local operational review is expected to occur in 2018. During this time of change, the Social Services Division will continue to update the Community Services Committee on progress and policy changes at both the provincial and local level.