



**City of Kingston
Information Report to Council
Report Number 21-096**

To: Mayor and Members of Council
From: Lanie Hurdle, Chief Administrative Officer
Resource Staff: Ruth Noordegraaf, Director, Housing & Social Services
Date of Meeting: March 23, 2021
Subject: Social Assistance Recovery and Renewal Plan

Council Strategic Plan Alignment:

Theme: Regulatory & compliance

Goal: See above

Executive Summary:

On September 30, 2020, the province announced the Social Assistance Recovery and Renewal Plan, which is divided into two separate periods: the Recovery Period (Sept 2020 – April 2021) and the Renewal Period (Spring 2021 – 2024).

The Recovery Period (Sept 2020 – April 2021) focuses on four key areas:

- Accelerated digital delivery solutions
- Centralized and automated delivery
- Risk-based eligibility review
- Access to employment and training

The Renewal Period (Spring 2021 – 2024) will concentrate on three main areas:

- Person-centred, supportive client approaches
- Centralization of financial assistance
- Renewed service delivery

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The province acknowledges the critical role played by municipalities as service delivery partners and plans to co-design a new provincial-municipal service delivery approach with renewed operating, funding and accountability methods. With municipal stakeholders and partners, the province will undertake system transformation that is driven by outcomes, accountability and system performance.

Recommendation:

This report is for information only.

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Authorizing Signatures:

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY CHIEF
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

**Lanie Hurdle, Chief
Administrative Officer**

Consultation with the following Members of the Corporate Management Team:

Paige Agnew, Commissioner, Community Services	Not required
Peter Huigenbos, Commissioner, Business, Environment & Projects	Not required
Brad Joyce, Commissioner, Corporate Services	Not required
Jim Keech, President & CEO, Utilities Kingston	Not required
Desirée Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer	Not required
Sheila Kidd, Commissioner, Transportation & Public Works	Not required

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Options/Discussion:**Introduction of Ontario Works**

Ontario Works (OW) is a provincial program that offers financial, employment, and emergency assistance to local residents in need. While the Province sets the rules and regulations for the program under the Ontario Works Act, OW is administered by 47 different service managers across the province called Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSM) and District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSAB). The City of Kingston is a CMSM delivery agent for residents of the City of Kingston and the County of Frontenac. The local municipal expense of OW is 50% of the administrative cost to deliver the program, which was \$3.9M in 2020. All client benefit costs are currently paid for by the Province. Staff administer on average \$2M of provincial social assistance funding each month to approximately 2,300 recipients within the City and 230 recipients within the County.

A breakdown of local caseload details comparing 2018 through 2020 is attached as Exhibit A. The chart outlines the average number of monthly applications received, and details of those received via online methods, clearly demonstrating the impacts of COVID-19 and the reduction in local Ontario Works caseloads due to the Federal Recovery Benefits. The chart outlines average monthly OW and ODSP caseloads, as well as numbers of ODSP clients that are actively participating in OW Employment Assistant activities, and those referred from OW to ODSP for financial support.

The monthly financial allowance of social assistance, as established by the Province, is broken into two components: a basic needs allowance and a shelter allowance. Exhibit B outlines the current provincial OW Rate Chart where details are given on the financial allowances such as family size, remote location, living arrangements, earning and asset allowances. The highlighted sections of the chart outlines that the provincial assistance for a single individual (which composes 62% of the caseload locally) is a basic allowance of \$343 and a shelter allowance of \$390, totalling \$733 social assistance monthly.

Social Assistance Recovery and Renewal Plan

On September 30, 2020, the province announced the Social Assistance Recovery and Renewal Plan, which continues the work already started to modernize the delivery of social assistance while supporting economic recovery. The plan is divided into two separate periods: the Recovery Period (Sept 2020 – April 2021) and the Renewal Period (Spring 2021 – 2024). See Exhibit C for the provincial Social Assistance Recovery and Renewal Placemat.

The Recovery Period (Sept 2020 – April 2021)

The first phase of the plan began in the fall of 2020 and is focused on four key areas:

- **Accelerated digital delivery solutions**, including Electronic Document Management (EDM), a new Social Assistance Digital Application (SADA), and enhancements to the MyBenefits digital platform. Enhancements include the use of electronic signatures and

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consents, digital identity verification, and two-way messaging between caseworkers and clients.

- **Centralized and automated delivery** began with seven centralized intake pilots in November 2020. Applications in the pilot sites are processed by the provincial centralized Intake and Benefits Administration Unit, reducing local administration and providing caseworkers with more time to support clients.
- **Risk-based eligibility review** is being developed and piloted alongside the centralized intake prototypes. Risk-based Eligibility Determination (RBED) will make social assistance processes faster by using provincial, federal and third-party sources to automate eligibility decisions for low to medium risk cases.
- **Access to employment and training** is being developed in partnership with the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development (MLTSD) through the Employment and Services Transformation (EST) project, which is currently being prototyped in three regions. EST will see employment supports for social assistance recipients moved to Employment Ontario while municipal caseworkers will support clients' life stabilization goals and help them move towards employment readiness.

The Renewal Period (Spring 2021 – 2024)

The next phase of the plan will concentrate on three main areas:

- **Person-centred, supportive client approaches** with an overall shift to life stabilization, individualized support and system navigation. This shift will include better connections with Employment Ontario facilitated through Employment Services Transformation.
- **Centralization of financial assistance.** With the expansion of risk-based approaches, central teams and systems will administer initial and ongoing eligibility, mandatory benefits and financial disbursements. Benefits and incentives to help clients achieve life stabilization goals will remain at the local level.
- **Renewed service delivery** will bring us closer to Human Services Integration by co-designing, enabling and implementing new approaches.

In February 2021, the Province released a roadmap for the Renewal Period and beyond (Exhibit D) and shared its working vision for social assistance with both CMSMs/DSSABs and the broader Ontario public. The provincial [press release](#) and the [Vision document](#) elaborate on the need for change, a new human services model, and the collaborative path forward to the new framework. The working vision for social assistance is “to create an efficient, effective and streamlined social services system that focusses on people, providing them with a range of services and supports to respond to their unique needs and address barriers to success so they can move towards employment and independence.”

The new human services model includes centralization of financial assistance at the provincial level with person-centred municipal supports at the local level. Work to actualize this model is already underway. Over the course of 2021-2022, there will be a gradual centralization of provincial functions beginning with intake, then financial benefits, and finally month-to-month eligibility. By the end of 2022 and into 2024, social assistance will be centrally delivered by the

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province while there will be local municipally-delivered life stabilization supports for OW and ODSP clients. In 2024 and beyond, municipalities will provide integrated life stabilization supports to social assistance clients and people in crisis in a broad human services model. In this longer-term vision, people seeking help and people in crisis are triaged by municipal caseworkers and supported as needed regardless of whether or not they are a social assistance recipient. Social assistance will become one of the tools available to provide that wraparound life stabilization support rather than the entire focus of caseworker and client interactions. Person-centred municipal supports will provide warm referrals and personalized assistance navigating the broader system that includes childcare, housing, health care, mental health and employment.

The province has signaled its commitment to collaboration and co-design for the revised service delivery model. As both the delivery of financial assistance and employment services are transformed, there will be a new funding approach with an updated performance and accountability framework, which will be co-designed by the province and municipalities. The City of Kingston is represented on channels such as the Provincial-Municipal Human Services Collaborative and the Provincial-Municipal Social Assistance and Employment Committee where there will be opportunities for collaboration on the overall design. Implementation of each component will be gradually and iteratively rolled out through prototypes and pilots with the anticipated 2021 impacts explained in the Local Implementation section below.

Local Implementation

Digital Payments

Early in 2021, the province plans to send out 3,000 emails and 3,000 mailed letters across both the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) and Ontario Works (OW) programs to entice those currently receiving paper cheques to move to Direct Bank Deposit (DBD) or Reloadable Payment Card (RPC). Five weeks after the initial communication, 1,500 follow up emails and letters will go out as reminders to those recipients who have not yet changed their payment method. The province will then target the remaining 29,000 OW and ODSP recipients through the most successful communication channel to transition more clients to a digital payment method. Locally, Reloadable Payment Cards were launched as a payment method in late May 2020 and by January 2021, 119 active clients received payment through the Reloadable Payment Card. That is, 119 Kingston residents who no longer need to pay cheque cashing fees in order to access their social assistance payment because they are without a bank account. Currently, 92% of all Kingston and Frontenac OW clients have an electronic payment method of DBD or RPC.

Electronic Document Management

Electronic Document Management (EDM) includes a suite of services:

- Digital mailroom with all incoming documents (mail, fax, drop-offs) redirected to a digitization vendor. These documents are scanned with digital copies made accessible through the Social Assistance Management System (SAMS);

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- Master File Digitization with digital records accessible via SAMS;
- Client and staff document upload capability, including direct upload of digital born documents to SAMS.

EDM is part of the province's strategy to reduce administrative processes and develop opportunities to make service delivery faster, simpler, and more effective for social assistance recipients and staff. Once EDM is fully implemented, there will be a reduction in the cost and space requirements associated with storing paper files and staff will see a reduction in time spent processing, filing and retrieving documents. All 47 ODSP offices have been fully transitioned while EDM has been implemented in 15 OW offices with additional offices being on-boarded throughout this year, including our own office targeted for late 2021.

MyBenefits Digital Platform

MyBenefits is an online service available to active OW or ODSP recipients. It is available 24/7 and allows clients to see their payments and letters, and to report changes through their desktop, tablet or mobile phone.

Current MyBenefits Features:

- View profile information (e.g. phone number, email, household members)
- View decision letters
- Check the status and breakdown of each payment
- Report employment earnings and changes to shelter expenses
- Report address and phone number changes
- Show proof of assistance to third party providers

MyBenefits users in Kingston and Frontenac went paperless by default in November 2020 and no longer receive paper letters or Statements of Assistance unless specifically requested. Clients now receive an email notification that they have a new letter available. Implementing the paperless strategy reduces paperwork and the substantial administrative costs associated with printing and mailing.

Two-way messaging between clients and Case Managers is currently being piloted in one ODSP and one OW office and is planned to be more broadly implemented in spring 2021. Two-way messaging will enable staff and clients to easily send documents to one another and to communicate in real-time through the Social Assistance Management System (SAMS).

As of February 12, 2021, Kingston has 858 OW clients registered for MyBenefits which reflects a 44.59% uptake across the caseload.

Centralized Intake

Centralized and automated intake is comprised of three components:

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- New user-friendly Social Assistance Digital Application (SADA);
- A risk-based eligibility determination (RBED) framework which will use third-party data to determine eligibility, developed in partnership with Equifax; and
- The newly established Intake and Benefits Administration Unit (IBAU) to support with operations.

The new Social Assistance Digital Application (SADA) is a user-friendly and mobile compatible application with the ability for clients to confirm their identity in real time. SADA will enable digital signatures and electronic identity verification. Combined with the Risk-Based Eligibility Determination (RBED), the new technology will reduce administrative burdens and the need for in-person meetings while clients will have improved access to social assistance with some cases automatically and immediately granted assistance. Centralized intake, enabled through SADA and RBED, will be performed at the provincial level through the Intake and Benefits Administration Unit. This change will minimize the administrative burden on local Case Managers and allow them the time they need to focus on value-added activities. The streamlined application process will also address the projected increased volume of online applications when federal recovery benefits end and as economic recovery from the pandemic continues.

Where SADA and RBED have already been implemented, applicants to OW apply through the newly designed online application and most cases are granted by the province through a mix of automation and manual granting. The RBED technology automatically corroborates information provided by applicants against third party data sources and the provincial central unit (IBAU) reviews applications and reinstatements, provides phone support for the new online application, and redirects cases that are high risk or particularly vulnerable to municipalities for a decision.

In late 2020, the first series of pilots were launched in seven municipalities with a phased approach to risk-based granting. The second wave of implementation was launched mid-February 2021 and is presently underway. We anticipate that Kingston will implement SADA and the centralized intake approach in the third implementation wave currently planned for April/May 2021.

Employment Services Transformation

In February 2019, the government announced its plan to transform the overall approach to employment assistance services by integrating employment programs for OW and ODSP into Employment Ontario (EO). Under the new service delivery model, the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development (MLTSD) will deliver employment and training services through EO while OW will deliver case management services that connect clients to life stabilization supports and prepare them to participate in employment services. The new system will be administered by regional Service System Managers who oversee the planning, design, and delivery of employment services. In the pilot phase currently underway in three regions, none of the Service System Managers selected were service delivery agents of OW. At the beginning of January 2021, Employment Services Transformation (EST) pilot sites started to transition clients over to EO for employment services.

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With a service delivery model that integrates OW and ODSP employment services into Employment Ontario, Ontario Works will have a revised role delivering life stabilization services for OW and ODSP Non-Disabled Adults (spouses and dependent adults of ODSP recipients who have not been determined disabled themselves). The purpose of focusing on life stabilization in the social assistance system is to improve clients' individual circumstances by addressing barriers in their life and to better enable and prepare OW clients and adult family members on ODSP to participate in employment services.

The realignment aims to create one employment service system with “no wrong door” access by having a common assessment tool used across EO and OW/ODSP programs. Responses to the assessment questions will guide referrals to EO from OW. OW Case Managers will complete an Action Plan with clients to identify and track barriers and goals. Where it is determined that clients are ready to participate in employment services, Case Managers will make referrals to Employment Ontario and will participate in integrated case management that includes case conferencing to ensure clients are fully supported. EO staff will create Employment Action Plans with referred clients and will issue financial supports for employment activities. Some clients may be ready to meaningfully engage with employment services while concurrently working on life stabilization goals. Those clients will continue to work with both EO and OW to ensure that they are fully supported and well-positioned for success. Where clients are not ready to meaningfully engage in employment services, OW Case Managers will work with clients to determine what life stabilization supports are needed to address barriers and to achieve their individual goals. For social assistance recipients, life stabilization supports are categorized as basic needs, health, life skills, and community supports. See Exhibit E and F for a model of the life stabilization categories and a list of potential goals and services under the revised employment services model; notably, the majority of the chart will remain as life stabilization activities with the local social services office.

In pilot sites, existing employment benefits delivered by OW and ODSP have been re-classified as a Participation Benefit that may be used to support clients in their life stabilization goals, including access to healthcare, life skills workshops and community support. As demonstrated in Exhibit F, the province has recognized that transportation touches all aspects of life stabilization and it is therefore promising that Kingston will be able to continue programs like the Ontario Works Transit Pass under the new service delivery model and its anticipated funding changes.

The system is designed to be person-centred and client-empowering by providing the supports that will be needed for personal and individualized goals to be set and achieved. While the long-term goal for most OW recipients will remain self-sufficiency through employability, the new focus on life stabilization represents a significant shift towards recognizing the complex barriers and highly individualized experiences of people in receipt of social assistance.

Impact for Clients

The changes anticipated over 2021 and as the renewal period projects take shape will have a great impact on the people served by social assistance. Ease of access to report and receive information will be greatly improved by the pending enhancements to MyBenefits. A centralized and automated intake process will improve client experience when applying or reapplying for

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OW by providing a more user-friendly online application and automating eligibility verification to make financial assistance processing faster. Clients will only tell their story once, have their needs addressed quickly and experience minimal handoffs. They will generally be able to access assistance more quickly without an in-person interview and without the need to sign administrative forms. When they meet with a Case Manager, their eligibility status will already be resolved so they will not be as worried or distracted about how they will meet their immediate basic needs. In their first interactions with their Case Manager, they will be able to focus on building a good relationship and designing a plan for the future rather than on administration. By the end of the Renewal period and in the years that follow, vulnerable people seeking help in Kingston will be supported by municipal caseworkers where personalized support is not contingent on social assistance eligibility and where that support will not necessarily end when someone exits social assistance or when someone obtains employment. From that lens, many more people in our community will be able to access services when they are in need. For municipal OW staff, the reduction in administrative workload will mean more time for high-impact activities with clients to help support their life stabilization needs and, where appropriate, help them move towards employment readiness.

Impact on City Services and Employees

There is no doubt that the provincial changes will have significant impact on the nature of the service being delivered locally by the City. These changes will also impact front line staff's work and workload. Management has been working with staff and CUPE representatives to discuss these changes that will continue to impact service managers across the Province. A plan will be established to ensure that changes are implemented while trying to minimize impacts on City staff.

Existing Policy/By-Law:

None

Notice Provisions:

None

Accessibility Considerations:

None

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Financial Considerations:

2021 Ontario Works funding allocations are being kept at the 2020 baselines to provide stability for Ontario Works delivery partners during the COVID-19 recovery period. With the planned implementation of Employment Services Transformation locally in 2022 or 2023, it is expected that there will be a reduction in funding to the Administrative budget, as there was in pilot sites for this project implementation. The impact of budget implications is expected to be understood by staff in late 2021 as the 2022 Service Plan and Contract with MCCSS are negotiated.

Contacts:

Laura Rabbie, Manager, Social Services & Early Years 613-546-4291 extension 4857

Danielle Wilson, Case File Auditor 613-546-2695 extension 4843

Other City of Kingston Staff Consulted:

None

Exhibits Attached:

Exhibit A – Social Assistance Operations Performance Report

Exhibit B - Ontario Work Rate Chart

Exhibit C – Social Assistance Recovery and Renewal Placemat

Exhibit D – Social Assistance Vision Placemat

Exhibit E – Life Stabilization Categories

Exhibit F – Client Goals and Services Chart under Employment Services Transformation (EST)

Indicators	2018 Monthly Avg	2019 Monthly Avg	2020 Monthly Avg
Intake - Service Standard Reporting			
All applications (cases) received	208	198	139
Number of online applications (cases) received	72	66	56
Number of applications (cases) received through other application methods	137	133	83
Caseload (Official Statistics) Ontario Works			
Cases	2,529	2,483	2,287
Beneficiaries	4,225	4,171	3,909
Client Outcomes			
Number of cases with employment earnings	506	476	329
% of caseload with employment earnings	20.01%	19.16%	14.14%
Employment Assistance			
ODSP recipients participating in Ontario Works Employment Assistance	284	355	355
Other Caseloads ODSP			
Cases	7,166	7,249	7,198
Beneficiaries	9,739	9,806	9,633
Ontario Works Referrals (DDPs Sent as an Application) to ODSP	59	53	30

OW RATE CHART – OCTOBER 2018

Exhibit B to Report Number 21-096

Basic Needs (Renters and Owners), Reg. 41(1)1

Applicants/Recipients Living with Parents, Reg. 44(3)1, 51.1ii

Number of Dependants Other Than Spouse	Dependants 18+ or older	Dependants 0-17 years	Single Recipient	Couple
0	0	0	\$343	\$494
1	0	1	\$360	\$494
	1	0	\$623	\$652
2	0	2	\$360	\$494
	1	1	\$623	\$652
	2	0	\$781	\$826
3	0	3	\$360	\$494
	1	2	\$623	\$652
	2	1	\$781	\$826
	3	0	\$956	\$1001

For each additional dependant, add \$175 if dependant is 18 years or older and \$0 if the dependant is 0 - 17 years of age.

Maximum Amounts for Board and Lodging, Reg. 44(1)1

Number of Dependants Other Than Spouse	Dependants 18+ or older	Dependants 0 - 17 years	Single Recipient	Couple
0	0	0	\$533	\$688
1	0	1	\$664	\$752
	1	0	\$752	\$790
2	0	2	\$737	\$813
	1	1	\$825	\$851
	2	0	\$873	\$887
3	0	3	\$806	\$874
	1	2	\$894	\$912
	2	1	\$942	\$948
	3	0	\$980	\$984

For each additional dependant 18+ years of age add \$120 for a single parent, \$100 for a couple. For each additional dependant 0-17 years of age add \$69 for a single parent and \$61 for a couple.

Remote Communities Allowance (formerly Northern Allowance), Reg. 41(1)2, 44(3)2 Renters/owners/Living with Parents

Number of Dependants Other Than Spouse	Recipient	Recipient and Spouse
0	\$272	\$403
1	\$430	\$502
2	\$526	\$602

For each additional dependant, add \$102.

Shelter Maximum, Reg. 42(2)2

Benefit Unit Size	Maximum Monthly Shelter Allowance
1	\$390
2	\$642
3	\$697
4	\$756
5	\$815
6+	\$844

Remote Communities Allowance (formerly Northern Allowance), Reg. 44(1)2

Number of Dependants Other Than Spouse	Recipient	Recipient and Spouse
0	\$272	\$403
1	\$420	\$485
2	\$511	\$578
3	\$605	\$672

For each additional dependant, add \$99.

Special Boarder Allowance, Reg. 44(1)5, 44(3)4

\$71/case added to B&L and applicant/recipient living with parents

Dependant(s) of Dependant, Reg. 44(2)

Number of Dependants of Dependant	Maximum	North of 50 th
1	\$366	+\$212
2	\$419	+\$98
3	\$479	+\$102
4	\$537	+\$102
5 or more	\$568	+\$102

Special Diet, Reg. 41(1)4, 44(1)3, 44(2)5, 44(3)3

Max \$250/month per member of the benefit unit

Earning Exemption, Reg. 49(1)

First \$200 of net earnings is fully exempt for each adult member with earnings
50% of net earnings (i.e. after allowable mandatory deductions)
Child Care Expenses: Licensed (no max.); Unlicensed (max \$600/child)

Emergency Hostel Services, Reg.43(2) First Nations Delivery Partners

The budgetary requirements for an applicant or recipient of emergency hostel services shall be an amount approved by the Director for providing the benefit unit with board, lodging and personal needs.

Benefits, Reg. 55

Full-time Employment (once/12 months)	\$500
Guide Dog Benefit	\$84
Other Employment and Employment Assistance	
Activities (formerly ESUB) (once/12 months)	\$253
Transition Child Benefit (per child) up to max	\$230

Asset Limits, Reg. 38(1)

Number of Dependants Other Than Spouse	Single (\$)	Couple (\$)
0	\$10,000	\$15,000
For each additional dependant add	500	500
Child under Temporary Care or Dependant of Dependant	500	500

Personal Needs Allowance (PNA), Reg. 43(1),(3), 44.1(2) and (3)

Persons in eligible institutions \$149

Pregnancy Nutritional Allowance, Reg. 41(1)6, 44(1)6, 44(2)6, 44(3)5

Milk-Based (Lactose Tolerant) \$40/month
Non-Dairy (Lactose Intolerant) \$50/month

Temp Care – Reg. 57(5)		North of 50 th
First child	\$274	\$440
Each additional child	\$224	\$326

OCB

\$116.91 per month.

Advanced Age Item, Reg. 41(1)5, 44(1)4

Each member of the benefit unit aged 65 and over: \$44.

Emergency Hostel Services, OW Directive 2.7 – First Nations Delivery Partners

- \$47.70 per day for board and lodging
- \$4.95 for in-kind/cash
- Up to a maximum of \$52.65 per day, where emergency hostel operators provide personal items and/or money in addition to board and lodging.



A long-term vision, starting with recovery:

People on social assistance achieve independence and financial resilience through an ecosystem of connected and personalized supports, supported by a streamlined and responsive system

Where we've been...



- Growing caseload and costs (5%/year)
- Focus on administration and processes, not support
- Broader system is siloed, hard to navigate, leading to poor life and employment outcomes

Where we're headed...



- When federal benefits end, Ontarians who remain out of work are likely to turn to Ontario Works – the scale and timing of the impact to social assistance depends on the speed and nature of economic recovery, and public health factors

What we'll do now: focused action in four key areas to get ahead of a surge in social assistance cases



Accelerated digital delivery solutions

To improve access and service delivery during the pandemic

- new, easy online application
- digital disability forms
- MyBenefits expansion
- 2 way messaging
- video chat
- e-document management



Centralized and automated delivery

Reduce red tape and let caseworkers focus on working with clients

- centralized intake
- digital identity verification
- centralized key ODSP health benefits
- e-signatures



Risk-based eligibility review

To automate eligibility assessments, reduce time spent on administration

- real-time digital verification to confirm key eligibility information
- automatic verification and validation of financial information to confirm eligibility



Access to employment and training

Working with MLTSD, will improve access to employment and training services for clients

- enhance access to employment and training supports to help clients get back to work as jobs are available

Where we'll go:



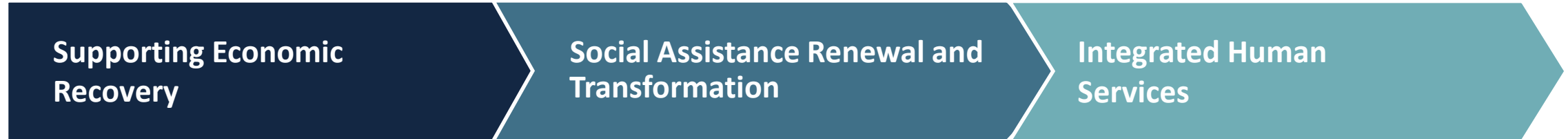
Co-design a new provincial-municipal transformation vision

with municipal Ontario Works delivery partners and set the stage for longer term system transformation that drives outcomes, accountability and system performance

- **Engagement, co-design, and testing with staff and partners:** Developing a future state together
- **SA One:** Healthy, energizing workplaces; open communication that supports change; resilient organization; improved client relationships
- **Service continuity:** Continuing to deliver service excellence and accountability through change

Social Assistance: Where We're Headed

... in the long term



... in the short term

New SA digital application in prototype sites prior to provincial rollout + centralized and automated intake and risk-based eligibility prototype

ODSP contact centre expansion begins in EST prototype sites
First wave of benefits centralized in ODSP EST sites

Expand intake prototype to additional ~15 municipalities

New provincial-municipal transformation vision defined

New digital tools e.g. 2-way messaging, e-signature, digital disability determination package

Centralization of key ODSP health benefits administration

Expand intake prototype to 9 EST OW sites
EST prototypes go live


Iteratively introduce central intake + risk-based eligibility to ODSP offices
Further expand centralized Ontario Works intake to additional municipal partners

October - December

January - April


Where We've Been	The Current Focus The Recovery Period (Sep 2020 – April 2021)	What's Next? The Renewal Period (Spring 2021 – 2024)
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Supporting clients toward success




Caseworkers manage all aspects of each case

- Financial eligibility
- Participation agreements
- Benefits administration
- Employment services
- Referrals and system navigation



Prototyping new case management approaches


- Common assessment | New action plans
- Shared case management with Employment Ontario
- Increased access to employment supports
- Piloting new service delivery approaches



A person-centred, supportive client approach across the life course


- Overall shift to life stabilization, individualized support and system navigation
- Case segmentation – high and low touch approaches based on client needs
- Better connections with Employment Ontario

Making systems faster, fairer, more accountable, and creating time for case management



Modernization to speed current processes

- EDM
- MyBenefits
- RPC
- Contact Centre Pilots




Creating centralized functions

- Centralized intake process that reduces paperwork, giving caseworkers more time to support clients through crisis and help them get back to work
- Automated, risk-based eligibility verification

With enabling technology and policy

- New digital tools and service modernization (easy-to-use online application, expansion of MyBenefits digital platform, 2-way digital messaging between clients and caseworkers)




Centralizing financial assistance*

- Central teams and systems administer intake, ongoing eligibility, mandatory benefits, financial disbursement
- Expanding risk-based approaches

**Benefits and incentives to support clients achieve life stabilization goals will remain at the local level*

Working with partners




Working with partners to address challenges of the pandemic

- Co-design and deliver emergency response initiatives
- Leverage learning to inform opportunities for the future



Planning for renewed provincial-municipal and First Nations service delivery approaches

- Renewed provincial-municipal operating, funding and accountability models
- Plan with First Nations partners a unique approach to SA Recovery and Renewal



Implementing a renewed service delivery vision

- Co-designing, enabling and implementing new approaches that bring us closer to Human Services Integration

← Engagement, co-design, and testing with staff and partners, including the bargaining agent: Developing a future state together
 • SA One: Healthy, energizing workplaces; open communication that supports change; resilient organization; improved client relationships
 • Service continuity: Continuing to deliver service excellence and accountability through change →

A working vision for social assistance

Vision:

To create an efficient, effective and streamlined social services system that focuses on people, providing them with a range of services and supports to respond to their unique needs and address barriers to success so they can move towards employment and independence.

How we will realign:

Province

Delivers:

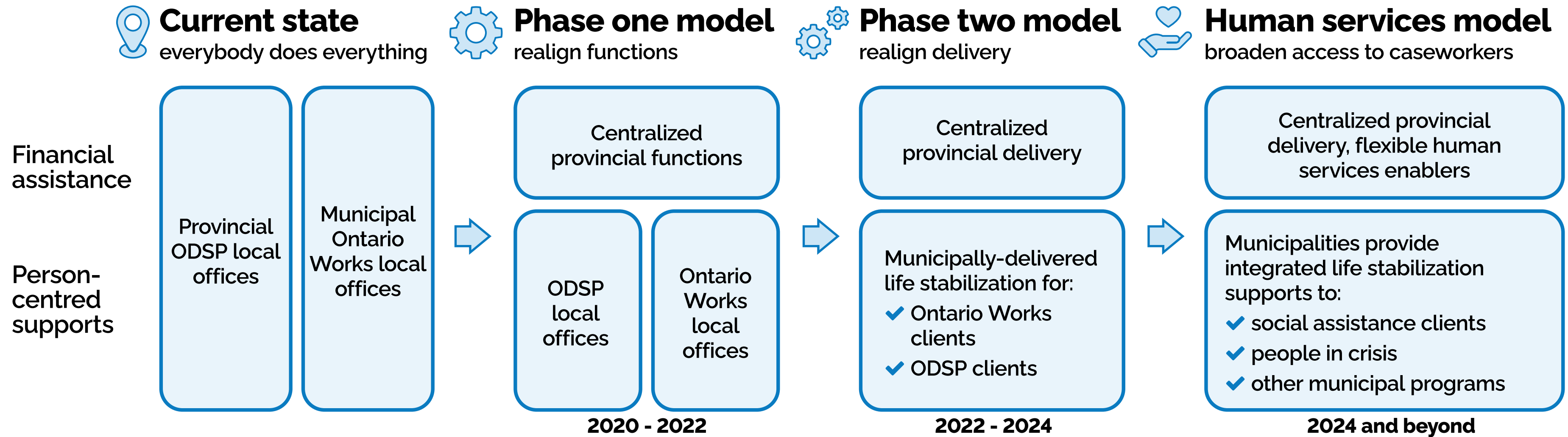
- ✓ Centralized financial assistance
- ✓ Financial controls and back-office functions suited to centralization or automation

Municipalities

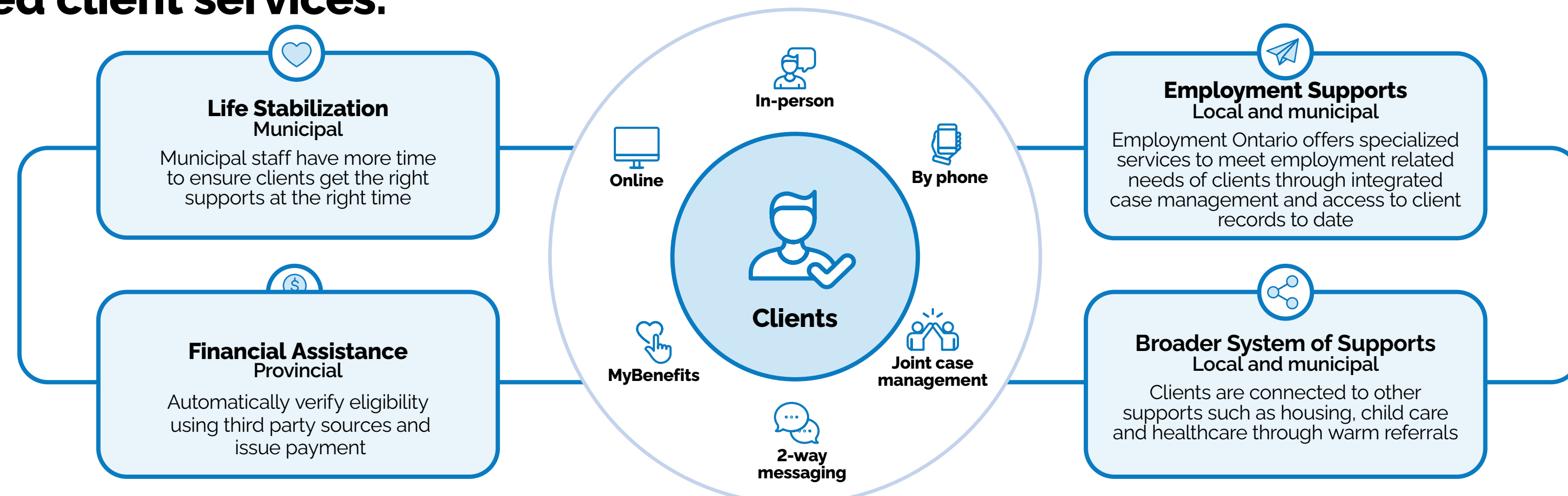
Delivers:

- ✓ Life stabilization – including needs assessment, service planning, warm referrals, discretionary benefits
- ✓ Person-centred, connected supports, and navigation of broader system (e.g., housing, employment, mental health)

How we will evolve over time:



Integrated client services:

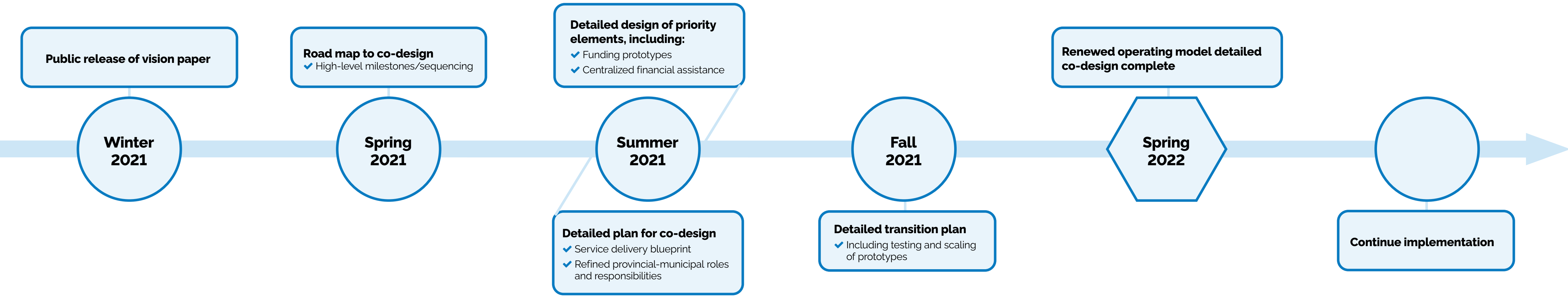


Social assistance: where we're headed

In the short term: co-designing a renewed operating model

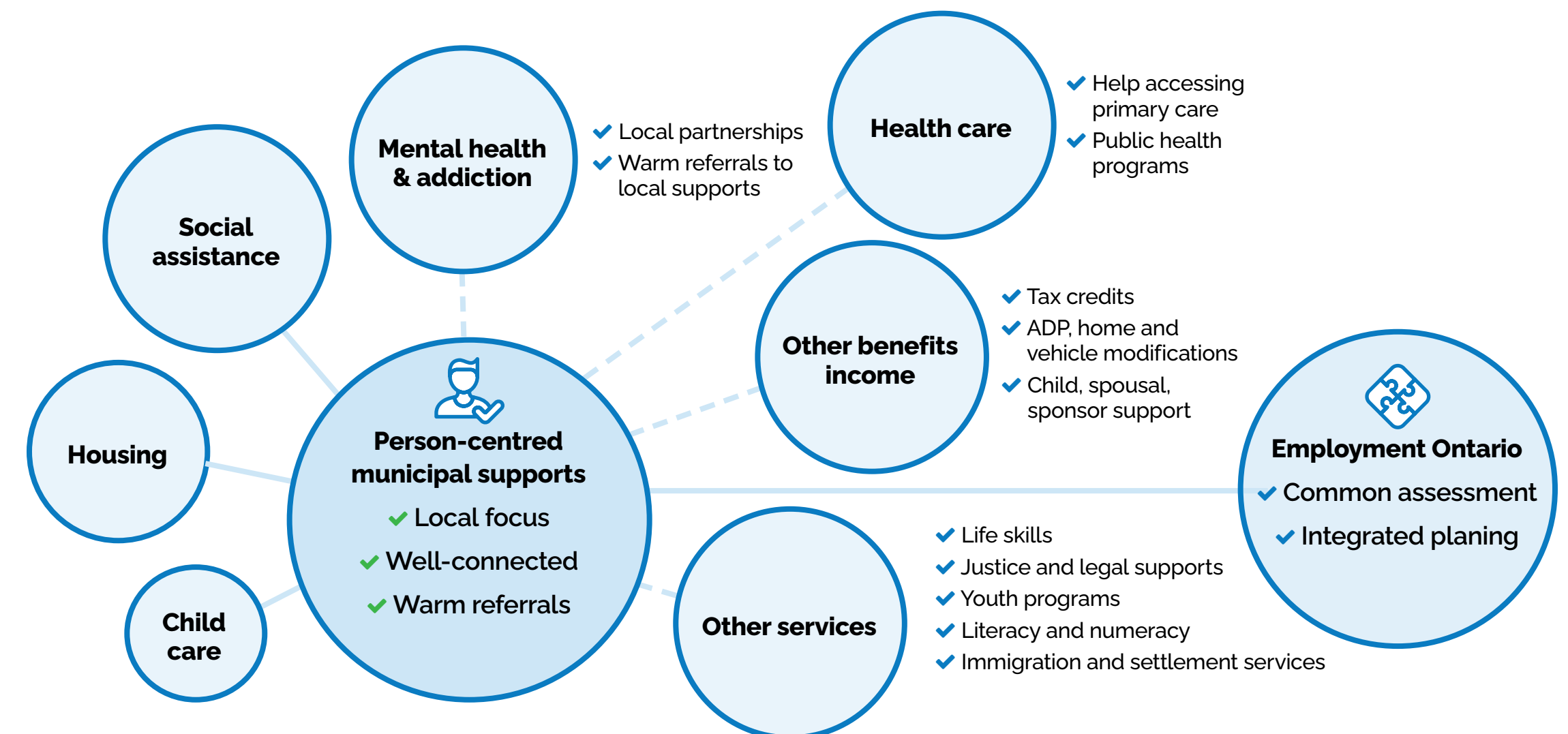
Prototype and implement: developing centralized provincial functions, starting with intake, and tools and processes to support life stabilization

Co-design: engaging to design key operating model layers, provincial and municipal functions, principles and processes

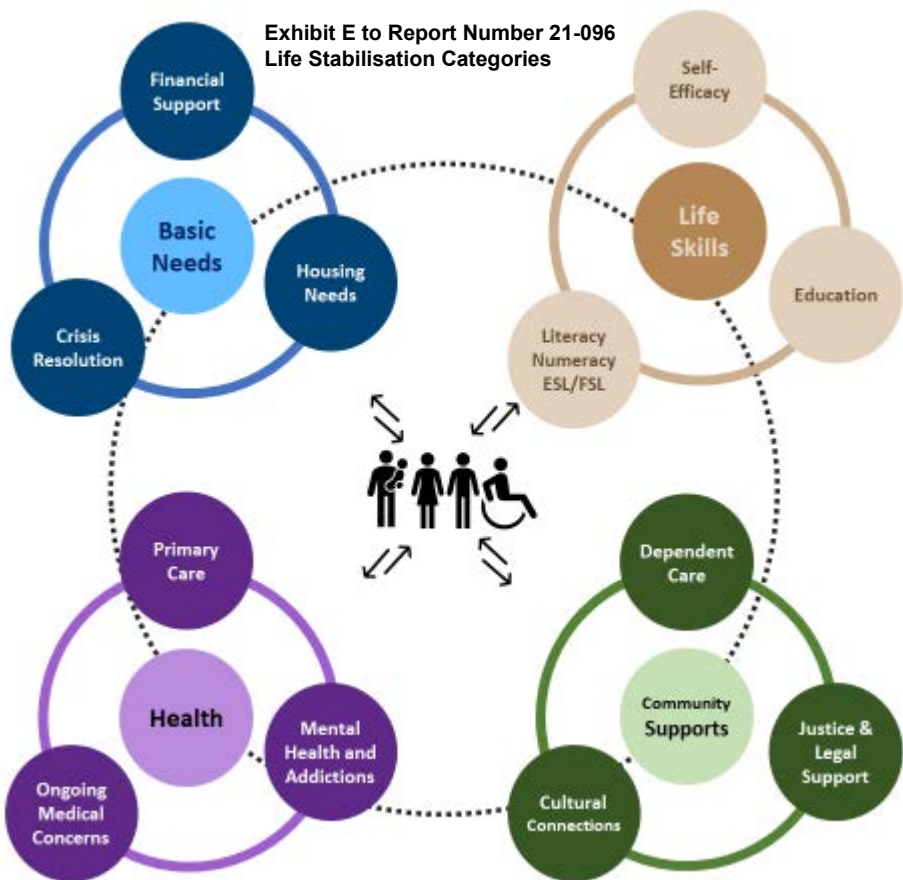


In the long term: moving to a human services delivery model

- ✓ In the human services model, benefits like social assistance become “tools” in the caseworker toolbox, as opposed to the other way around
- ✓ Caseworkers are knowledgeable about the broader system of benefits and supports, and can guide people to the supports they need – whether Ontario Works or something else
- ✓ People seeking help are triaged by municipal caseworkers, supported as needed, and potentially diverted from social assistance



**Exhibit E to Report Number 21-096
Life Stabilisation Categories**



Client Goals & Services Chart under Employment Services Transformation Model

	Goals	Types of Services
Basic Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crisis Resolution Support • Obtain Financial Support • Safety Planning Support • Pursue Secure Housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Accommodations • Food Bank • Partner & Family Violence Services • Anti-Human Trafficking Agency • Community Housing Services • Emergency Shelter • Outside Financial Support
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hygiene Support • Mental Health Support • Need for Primary Care Provider • Substance Abuse Support • Support for Ongoing Medical Conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Rehabilitation Services (Physio, Chiro) • Clinic or Hospital Outpatient Services • Developmental Services • Family Doctor / Nursing • Mental Health Program • Supports for managing behavioural addictions • Supports for managing substance use • Medical supplies not covered by Ministry • Low-Cost Dental and Denture Services • Therapy and Counselling
Life Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance with Motivation • Develop Interpersonal Skills • Develop Literacy / Language (ESL/FSL) • Develop Numeracy • Develop Organizational Skills • Develop Resilience • Educational Support • Financial Literacy and Empowerment • Pursue/Complete Grade 12 Education • Digital Access & Skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Empowerment Program • Employment Ontario – Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) • Educational Institution • Coaching and Mentoring • Emotional Management • LEAP • Organizational Management
Community Supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access Cultural Services • Access Transportation • Assistance with Justice Involvement • Legal Support • Participate in Community Opportunities • Support for Dependant Care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long Term Care Provider • Child Care Supports • Home Care • Developmental Services • Volunteer or Community Centre or Agency • Child and Spousal Supports • Documentation Services • Legal Clinic • Post-incarceration Service Agency • Probation Services • Settlement and Immigration Services
Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Casual / Seasonal Employment • Full-Time Employment • Part-Time Employment • Pre-Employment Volunteering • Advance Current Employment • Self Employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment Ontario

*Transportation has been recognized as a requirement that can touch all categories of life stabilization