To: Chair and Members  
Emergency & Community Services Committee  
Outstanding Business Item “E” – Employment Trends

From: Joe-Anne Priel  
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Date: May 23, 2007

Re: Employment Trends for Participants of the Ontario Works Program (ECS07031)  
(City Wide)

Council Direction:

At its meeting of May 24, 2005, the Social and Public Health Services Committee, approved item (ii), as follows; more specifically, Item 41:

(ii) 2005 Budget Process – Council Directed Task List (Item 9.2)

That the following two items be added to the Social & Public Health Services Committee’s Outstanding Business list:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Trend Information - Employment Trends</th>
<th>Staff were directed to provide employment trends for clients off of Ontario works to full time employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item 41</td>
<td>City Investment – Additional Investment to Public Health Dollars</td>
<td>Staff to report back on savings accrued by investing</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Information:

Report ECS07031 is to inform Council of employment services provided through the Ontario Works Program, Employment Trends for Ontario Works participants and best practices to address participant employment needs.
Overview of Hamilton Ontario Works Employment Services

The Ontario Works Program provides both financial and employment assistance to those in need. As well as basic financial assistance, the Ontario Works legislation specifies that the Ontario Works delivery agent must help people become and stay employed through employment assistance services including:

- Job search support services;
- Basic education and job-specific skills training;
- Literacy training programs;
- Employment Placement;
- Self-employment services;
- Learning, Earning and Parenting (LEAP);
- Community Placements; and,
- Any other measures that may be prescribed in the regulations.

Ontario Works employment programs are tailored to the labour market conditions and needs of the residents of our community. Ontario Works Employment Services provides service to not only Ontario Works participants, but also Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) clients, low-income citizens, job seekers (both the unemployed and underemployed), employers and community agencies in Hamilton.

Employment services are provided to any citizen at the Career Development Centre at 181 Main Street West and the two Employment Resource Centres that are located at the Barton Street and Upper James Street Ontario Works offices.

The level of employment assistance for Ontario Works participants is customized to the individual’s personal circumstances and readiness for employment. Employment activities may range from basic needs such as supports for stable housing to participation in an addiction program to job placement and retention services.

Close linkages are maintained with agencies that provide key services for Ontario Works participants including childcare, health and addictions services and services for the disabled.

Participants are also referred to and provided with supports to attend community programs such as Adult Basic Education, English as a Second Language (ESL), addiction, and newcomer and literacy services.

Some client services are better delivered by community partners. Community agencies work together to support those in need of specialized employment services.

When developing Ontario Works employment programs, services and capacity of community agencies must take into consideration to avoid duplication of service and ensure the most effective service delivery. Unemployed participants may require a continuum of inter-connected services to secure meaningful employment. The Hamilton community has an exceptional employment networking system. The Employment
Assistance Resource Network (EARN) Committee brings service providers together on a monthly basis to update on new services.

The following menu of Ontario Works Employment Services is available in the City of Hamilton:

**Career Development Centre (CDC)**

The Community Services Department’s Career Development Centre is the hub of employment services for the Ontario Works participants in Hamilton. A Labour Market Information Centre provides assisted job search supports and information for all citizens of Hamilton. Most Ontario Works employment programs, such as employment supports groups, supports to job skills training and Employment Information Sessions, are delivered from the Centre.

**Getting Started Information Sessions (GSI)**

GSI Sessions provide information to participants on employment programs, training and education opportunities and community supports. Information is provided to participants to assist them in making choices to meet their needs in developing an action plan to return to work. Participants are referred to a Getting Started information session at the time of application or at any point during the Participation Agreement update. There is a general session as well as sessions targeted to single parents and youth.

Ontario Works participants often need guidance and support while moving through their employment plan of action. Early introduction of employment information helps to reinforce the concept of “temporary financial assistance” and places clients directly into an employment-focused setting. Getting Started sessions provide information, and offer choices for employment activities and establish a participant’s responsibility in the process. Providing immediate resources helps to address barriers quickly and facilitates job readiness.

**Ontario Works Employment Placement Services**

Employment Placement Services screens and matches employment-ready Ontario Works participants to available jobs. Enhancements such as funds for on the job training may be offered to some employers. The City of Hamilton also purchases employment placement services from three agencies in the community.

Marketing to employers not only opens up first time job opportunities, but allows those in part time jobs to access full time opportunities; thereby, increasing their employment earnings. A proportion of Ontario Works recipients return to work without special programming and may only need assistance to find a placement.
Employment Action Information sessions (EAS)

EAS are for those individuals who are job searching. The sessions are to support individuals as they work towards a successful job search. Group Sessions provide encouragement, review expectations, and cover resume basics and interview tips. Employers who are hiring attend the sessions to give information on their companies, their hiring practices and to recruit candidates for job openings. Participants are followed up for four months after the session to support their job search efforts.

Ontario Works Community Placement

Community Placement provides a wide range of placements with varied work experience to assist participants in contributing to their community, enhance their resumes and prepare for paid employment. Work experience programs provide individuals who are unable to find unsubsidized employment an opportunity to develop an attachment to the labour force. In addition, the program increases client awareness of workplace culture, requirements and norms.

The City of Hamilton offers three types of Community Participation:

- Matched placement occurs for 6 to 11 months at a non-profit agency or organization.
- Self-initiated placements recognize the participant’s ability to establish and maintain their own placement.
- Participants may also volunteer at special events in the community that usually involve short periods of time.

Accreditation for Foreign Trained Professionals

Supports to accreditation for foreign-trained professionals have proven to be a successful intervention for some members of the newcomer population. Guidance, linkages and costs related to accreditation are provided with positive results.

Ontario Works Job Web-Site and Web-Site Training

Employment and Community placement programs utilize a web-site to allow Ontario Works participants access to information for on-line job applications. Ontario Works Job Web-site training is available to all participants as the web site is a necessary job search technique.

Employable Caseloads

There are nine specialized Employable Caseloads. The goal of the initiative is to provide participants with focused and intensive employment supports to support their
transition to paid employment, increase existing earnings and decrease their time on assistance. Individuals are provided with additional employment supports such as transportation costs for job search, and an increase in personal contacts and monitoring by the Case Manager.

**Independent Self-Employment**

Independent self-employment is intended to support participants who have an established business plan to move to profitable self-employment. With review, approval, and regular monitoring, participants manage their own self-employment development. A specialized caseload has been established to support self-employed participants.

**Assisted Self-Employment**

Assisted self-employment is intended to support participants who are ready to develop a business plan to move to profitable self-employment. With review and approval, participants may register with a contracted service provider to undertake individualized self-employment planning.

The Small Business Enterprise Centre of the City of Hamilton's Planning and Economic Development Department delivers the Assisted Self Employment Development Program. The Small Business Enterprise Centre is paid on a fixed fee payment schedule, based on set targets and timeframes. A specialized Ontario Works Case Manager monitors participant compliance to Ontario Works and achievements through the assisted self-employment process.

**Pre-Employment Supports**

**The Sole Support Program** assists single parents in their search for stable employment. The overall goal of the program is to promote labour market attachment; thereby, reducing the depth of child poverty. The program consists of classroom instruction and one-to-one counselling. The classroom component is followed by one-to-one counselling until employment is secured.

**The Youth Track Program** assists participants 18 – 30 years of age. Participants attend a one-to-one assessment to identify needs, interests and aptitudes.

The program content includes goal setting, job search skills, skill enhancements, individualized marketing strategies, job keeping skills and life skills. Youth Track Counsellors provide referrals to community agencies, when necessary, and provide support, follow-up and monitoring during the development and implementation of the action plan.
Skills to Work Program's purpose is to assess suitability for skill development training and support those who will be attending a community-training program. Participants are actively engaged in a two-week classroom component that focuses on training retention and job retention. Participants are monitored and supported during and after their training to reduce any barrier to either training or employment.

The City’s investment in skills training for clients is an effective employment strategy. The development of marketable and transferable skills results in:

- increased probability of sustainable employment; or,
- a quick return to employment if a current job ends.

The issuance of skills training funds is reviewed carefully to ensure clients have the prerequisite skills to maximize success. The City’s Skills to Work program teaches the skills and attitudes required to maintain success in a skills training environment; thereby, furthering chances for success.

Essential Skills assists participants in the development of the skills and knowledge necessary to successfully transition into the labour market. The program is delivered in modules in order to meet the participants’ individual needs. The program consists of an intake assessment, a one-week Career Discovery group session for participants who do not have a career goal, a two-week Job Search Success session to assist with job search activities, and ongoing one-on-one employment counselling to assist participants in finding and retaining employment.

Development of essential skills through the pre-employment group program is crucial for participants who are not job ready. Immediate placement in a job appears to have limited long-term impacts. Clients often require programs that increase their ability to obtain and keep work. Facilitators for the pre-employment programs teach essential skills such as goal setting, conflict resolution, communication, resume development and interview skills. Learning and practicing these skills contributes to job retention.

The Helping Hands Program is designed to provide a temporary work placement of 26-weeks to recipients of Ontario Works and ODSP. Program participants gain work experience by providing home maintenance and services to senior and disabled citizens in the city of Hamilton. It is a combination of job skills training and employment preparation activities. Participants are paid a daily incentive and attend on a full-time basis. The harder to employ and longer term participants are referred to the program.

Learning, Earning and Parenting (LEAP) Program

LEAP is targeted to teen (18 to 21 years) parents and their children. LEAP Home Management workers provide services that focus on supporting young parents in
graduating from high school (learning) as well as parenting and life skills. Childcare supports are an important component of this program.

Child Minding Services

Four child-minding rooms in total are available for visitors to the Career Development Centre and the three Ontario Works local offices. The goal is to provide children of visitors to the Career Development Centre and the 250 Main Street East, 1550 Upper James Street and the 2255 Barton Street East locations with a brief child minding service while the parents attend meetings or visit a resource centre.

Addiction Services Pilot Project

A pilot project commenced July 2006 in partnership with Alcohol, Drug and Gambling Services (ADGS). The purpose of the project is to educate Ontario Works staff so they are able to recognize substance misuse and best practices related to addictions. It is also to assist clients in recognizing when addictions have created a barrier to employment, to voluntarily seek assessment or be referred to appropriate follow-up and counselling.

Job Retention Services

It is recognized that Ontario Works participants need not only the job specific skills training to acquire a sustainable job, but also supports to remain in the job. Job Retention Services may include on the job problem solving, childcare, family support, etc.

Job Retention Supports increase success for clients learning new jobs. Continued supports to clients after they secure employment is critical in improving job retention. For example, eligible participants who secure employment and exit Ontario Works receive ongoing health benefits.

The Ontario Works Program has set up specific caseloads to ensure that these clients not only get health benefits, but also have access to a job retention specialist who can support them through difficulties at work. Research shows that the first 3 months of employment is the most stressful period for employees. During this period, employees are learning new processes, arranging schedules and developing backup resources such as alternate childcare arrangements. These services will continue to be explored and implemented in 2007.
Ontario Works and Community Partners

The Ontario Works Program continues to work with the community to create opportunities for training and employment for Ontario Works participants. The Department is represented on various committees that deal with employment and training issues in the community:

- HR Matters Steering Committee (to address the shortage of skilled labour);
- Hamilton Training Advisory Board (HTAB);
- Mohawk College Advisory Board;
- Employment and Resource Network Committee (EARN);
- Regional Placement Table;
- Youth Employment Network;
- ODSP Employment Supports Advisory Committee;
- Immigrant Work Skills Integration Network; and,
- Immigrant and Refugee Employment Services Committee (IRESC).

Work continues with other City of Hamilton Departments and community organizations to meet the service needs of Ontario Works participants as follows:

- Planning and Economic Development Department and The Small Business Enterprise Centre delivers self-employment training for Ontario Works Participants.
- Citizen Action Group/Hamilton Help Centre/Youth Employment Centre provide the delivery of employment services for hard to serve and youth at risk, including the Job Connect Program.
- Mohawk College: Women into Trades Program, Introduction to Skill Trades Program, Literacy Works, Future Directions, Return to Work Services and Job Connect.
- St. Charles Adult Education Centres.
- St. Joseph’s Immigrant Women’s Centre: Personal Support Worker Program for new Canadians and Orientation Program for Foreign Trained Nurses.
- Settlement and Integration Services Organization (SISO): An accreditation program for Ontario Works foreign trained professionals and skilled workers.
- Path Employment Centre: Employment services for Hard to Place and disabled participants.
- Amity/Goodwill: Employment services for Hard to Place participants\basic skills training.
- Threshold School of Building: The development of a basic construction skills training program for youth.

**Employment Outcomes for Hamilton's Ontario Works Participants**

The Ontario Works Employment Assistance budget for 2007 is $9,558,740 (gross), $1,911,748 (net). Funding covers salaries and benefits and operating costs for employment services as well as client benefits to support employment activities such as
transportation and purchase of training. The Ministry cost shares 80/20 with the municipality. As well, Service Canada provides funding in the amount of $181,770 (net) for the Labour Market Information Centre at the Career Development Centre.

Starting in 2006, the Ministry of Community and Social Services introduced a results-based approach to employment services and funding with an emphasis on accountability and outcomes. The new funding model is now more flexible in that the Ontario Works Program is able to use funding in the best way to support positive outcomes.

The following three core employment outcomes guide the overall planning, delivery and funding of Ontario Works assistance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment</th>
<th>Helping people find and keep jobs.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Earnings</td>
<td>Improving the quality of jobs to increase earnings and make it more possible for individuals and families to become financially independent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased Employability</td>
<td>Helping people become progressively more employment ready dependent upon their personal circumstances and ready for the local labour market.</td>
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The following are specific examples of employment outcomes:

- Percentage of caseload with employment income;
- Average amount of earnings for participants on the caseload with employment income;
- Percentage of caseload who leave assistance because of employment;
- Average amount of earnings for those who leave the caseload with employment; and,
- Job retention rate determined by percentage of participants who leave because of employment, but return.

The years 2006 and 2007 are a “transitional” period for this funding model. No funds were recovered if employment targets were not met to allow municipalities the time to learn and adjust to the new model. A provincial consultation with municipalities is underway to gain feedback on the effectiveness of the outcomes measures.
On average, 12.57% of Hamilton’s Ontario Works individuals and families have employment income while continuing to receive financial assistance. Part-time work is often the first step to full-time employment. Sometimes even full-time earnings are not high enough to take a family off the caseload. Fifty percent of employment earnings are deducted from their cheque and exemptions are allowed for childcare costs.

- Average earnings were $582.00 per month in 2005.
- Average earnings were $660.60 per month in 2006, which is a 13% increase.

Thirteen percent of Ontario Works cases left Ontario Works in 2006 due to employment income in comparison to 10 percent in 2005, which reflects a 3 percent increase. In actuality, the numbers who leave the caseload for employment are far higher, but it is common for many participants to end contact with their Ontario Works case manager when their services are no longer required.

- Average earnings to exit Ontario Works were $1,206.84 in 2005.
- Average earnings to exit Ontario Works increased slightly in 2006 to $1,210.90.
- A manual statistical tracking system for those participants who exit Ontario Works showed an average hourly wage of $11.59 (Oct 06 – Jan 07).
Average Length of Time for Ontario Works Participants to Find Employment

- During 2006, the average amount of time to find employment was 15.3 months – one month less than in 2005.
- Early interventions and continued supports are the key to reducing this time period.

Type of Work Ontario Works Participants are Finding

- Occupations vary depending on skills, education and level of participation in training and employment opportunities. For example, Helping Hands is a work experience program designed for participants with multiple barriers to employment. Many participants in this program have never worked and have limited abilities. Occupational outcomes for this group include janitorial, factory, retail and home or nursing home support.

- Those participants who move into the Ontario Works Skill to Work Program enter occupations such as welding, truck driving, personal support worker, general construction and call centre positions. Research and information from the Planning and Economic Development Department and the Hamilton Training Advisory Board provide insight regarding future areas of growth.

- Other Ontario Works participants may typically find work in general clerical, food services, hospitality services and manufacturing.

Measuring the Effectiveness of Employment Programs

We know from research, best practices and experience that clients must increase their ability to secure competitive employment. Lack of stable housing and challenges such as addictions must be addressed before a successful job search can begin. Every step that a participant takes to resolve a barrier is a step closer to employment.
Although measuring employability is now a recognized component of the provincial funding system, we are currently without a province-wide data tracking mechanism. The Employment and Income Support and Strategic Services Divisions are working towards developing a tool to better capture outcomes and trends. In the meantime, we continue to use results from the provincial database (SDMT) and varying methods of manual data capture.

An Employment Outcomes Working Group was established in 2007. Members meet monthly to analyze employment outcomes and employability and generate ideas to address challenges and improve successes.

Conclusion

The Ontario Works Program is mandated to offer a variety of employment services for Ontario Works and ODSP participants. Local Ontario Works Employment Services were developed to serve the needs of the residents of our city and to address our local labour market conditions. Flexibility is a necessary element as programming must shift and change to address the profile of social assistance clients and needs of our workforce.

Employment services focus on three core outcomes:

1. to increase the number of people with jobs;
2. the amount of their earnings; and,
3. helping people become more ready for the labour market.

Although the Ministry implemented a new Employment Outcome Funding Model in 2006, there is a lack of confidence in the methodology and data integrity for gathering information on those outcomes. Employment and Income Support Division will continue to work with the Ministry of Community and Social Services and to locally gather and analyze information to ensure that the most effective services are available to the residents of Hamilton.

Joe-Anne Priel
General Manager,
Community Services Department
Ontario Works Employment Services

- The OW Employment Assistance budget for 2007 is $9,558,748 which is cost shared with province 80/20
- Also Province funds $181,770 for the Career Development Centre
- Covers salaries, benefits, and operating costs for all employment programs plus client benefits such as employment related expenses and skills training
Ontario Works Employment Services

Sample of our services:
• Career Development Centre and two resource Centres
• Skills to Work Training Programs
• Employment Placement Services
• Community Placements
• Helping Hands
• Self-Employment Programs
• Pre-employment Workshops
• Learning, Earning and Parenting
Employment Trends

• Types of work are dependent on skills, education and motivation.
• Typically find work in general clerical, food services, hospitality services and manufacturing
• Helping Hands participants have a higher level of barriers. Job placements may be include janitorial, factory, retail and home support
• Those who attend skills training enter welding, truck driving, personal support worker, general construction and call centres
Employment Trends

What contributes to successful outcomes:

• Early introduction to employment information as soon as possible after coming on the caseload. Providing immediate resources is key.

• Essential Skills are necessary to become job ready. Participants need programs to increase their ability to get and keep work.
Employment Trends

What contributes to successful outcomes:

• Skills Training increases probability of sustainable employment and finding new work if their job ends

• Work experience such as Community Placements increase chance of paid work in the future
Employment Trends

What contributes to successful outcomes:

- Employment Placement Services increases employment outcomes. Marketing to employers opens up first time jobs and increases potential for part time earners.

- Job Retention Supports increase success for clients learning new jobs. Health and human resource supports are necessary especially for the first three months of employment.
Employment Outcomes

In 2006, the Ministry introduced Employment Outcome Funding based on:

- Employment (number of people who find work)
- Earnings (monthly amount of earnings)
- Increased employability
Employment Outcomes

Average earnings

- On average 12.6% of the caseload have earnings
- 2005 - average earnings were $582.00 /mth
- 2006 - average earnings were $660.60 /mth
Employment Outcomes

Average Earnings for Ontario Works Participants

2005 2006

$
Employment Outcomes

Average earnings when exiting OW Caseload:

- 13% left the OW caseload in 2006 due to earnings (that we know of)
- 2005 - average earnings were $1206.84
- 2006 – average earnings were $1210.90
- An average hourly wage of $11.59 per hour
Employment Outcomes

Average Earnings at Exit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Average Earnings</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>$1205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>$1212</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Employment Outcomes

Average length of time for participants to find employment:

- 2005 – 16.3 months
- 2006 – 15.3 months
Employment Outcomes

Length of time to find employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Just Two” of our many success stories....
Christine

Employment Supports Provided

- Ontario Works Financial Supports
- One-to-one Case Manager Employment Supports
- Employment Related Expense Payments
- One-to-one Employment Development Counsellor Supports
- Vocational Training Funds
- Website Instruction Program
- Community Placement (Volunteer Work)
- Employment Placement
- Job Retention Services
Christine continued….

- Christine is now working for the City of Hamilton in Ontario Works Employment Services
- She reports that she is happy to be off assistance
- Hiring Ontario Works clients makes sense for our community
Martha

• Visited the Career Development Centre to read about the transportation business
• She was funded through the EI Reach Back Program for job training
• In three months, finished driving training with an AZ License
• Now drives a straight truck for Brest Transport driving shipments to the U.S. earning up to $200 a day
Martha continued.....

“I’m glad I stuck with it. I love my job, and getting my AZ license was the best thing that I ever did”