**CITY OF HAMILTON**

**COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

**Social Development & Early Childhood Services Division**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TO:</th>
<th>WARD(S) AFFECTED: CITY WIDE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chair and Members  Emergency &amp; Community Services Committee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COMMITTEE DATE:** February 17, 2010

**SUBJECT/REPORT NO:**

Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA) - Pre-Budget Submission to Province of Ontario (CS10021) (City Wide)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBMITTED BY:</th>
<th>PREPARED BY:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joe-Anne Priel General Manager, Community Services</td>
<td>Jane Soldera (905)546-2424 Ext. 2399</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SIGNATURE:**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

(a) That the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association’s Recommendations for the 2010 Provincial Budget report, attached as Appendix A to Report CS10021, be endorsed.

(b) That the Mayor, on behalf of Council, correspond with the Premier of Ontario and Minister of Finance to request their timely consideration be given to the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association’s Recommendations for the 2010 Provincial Budget report (attached as Appendix A to Report CS10021), while preparing the 2010 Provincial budget.

(c) That the correspondence to the Premier of Ontario and the Minister of Finance be copied to all local Members of Provincial Parliament, the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario.

**Vision:** To be the best place in Canada to raise a child, promote innovation, engage citizens and provide diverse economic opportunities.

**Values:** Honesty, Accountability, Innovation, Leadership, Respect, Excellence, Teamwork
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA) has recently developed a pre-budget submission to the Province’s Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs in advance of the Provincial Budget which is expected to be released in March. The high level strategic recommendations included in the report are:

- invest in a long-term, integrated affordable housing strategy that makes a real difference to the housing and shelter needs of Ontarians
- invest in the long-term effectiveness of Ontario’s social assistance and employment supports system
- invest in the full vision of a Prenatal - to 12 Child and Family Service System, including long-term sustainable investments for the early learning and child care sector serving the youngest children in our communities.

Further, the report urges the province to continue the progress it began in 2009 related to human services including investments in increases to the minimum wage, up-loading of Ontario Works, the acceleration of increases to the Ontario Child Benefit, and the investment in social housing renovations and retrofits, as well as significant policy work including undertaking a Social Assistance Review, consultation to develop an Affordable Housing Strategy, and the announcement of an historic program for Early Learning.

While OMSSA acknowledges that the Province will be required to address the deficit in the upcoming budget, it is calling on the Province to ensure that while doing so, it not inflict further short-term pain on our most vulnerable citizens, those who have been hardest hit in the past year.

Staff are recommending that Council endorse the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association Recommendations for the 2010 Provincial Budget report, and correspond with the Premier and Finance Minister to urge their consideration of the report’s recommendations.

Alternatives for Consideration – See Page 6

FINANCIAL / STAFFING / LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial:
Should the Provincial government act on recommendations included in the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association Recommendations for the 2010 Provincial Budget report, the municipality could incur additional costs specifically related to obligations of cost shared programs and services. It is not possible to determine the potential financial impact at this time.
Staffing: There are no staffing implications associated with Report CS10021.

Legal: There are no legal implications associated with Report CS10021.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA) represents Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs) and District Social Service Administration Boards (DSABs) who are responsible for administering social services throughout the province. The association promotes policy development and program delivery in the areas of social assistance, employment services, children’s services, social housing, and homelessness prevention. The Community Services Department is an active member of the association and has contributed to the development of the association’s pre-budget submission to the Province’s Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The recommendations contained within the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association Recommendations for the 2010 Provincial Budget report are consistent with the policy directions articulated in a number of City policies, strategies, and program delivery frameworks including: Everyone Has a Home-City of Hamilton Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness, Emergency Food System Strategic Directions, The Social Development Strategy, the Human Services Plan, Best Start Plan, Keys to the Home; a Housing Strategy for Hamilton, and the Blue Print for Emergency Services. Further the recommendations align with the strategic direction of various community collaboratives the City is a member of including the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, the Human Services Plan Initiative, Best Start Network, and the Jobs Prosperity Collaborative.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

In preparation of Report CS10021, staff has consulted with the Corporate Services Department, Budget and Finance Division, Finance and Administration Section.
Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA) Recommendations for the 2010 Provincial Budget

OMSSA believes that investing in people enables individuals to reach their potential and ultimately contribute to communities and a province that thrive – economically, socially, culturally and politically.

OMSSA acknowledges the Provincial government’s commitment to human services in 2009, including direct investments in increases to the minimum wage, up-loading of Ontario Works, the acceleration of increases to the Ontario Child Benefit, and the investment in social housing renovations and retrofits.

The association applauds the Province’s commitment to its Poverty Reduction Strategy and reinforces that reducing poverty in 2010 must continue to be a priority for the government.

OMSSA is also pleased that the Provincial government has undertaken a Social Assistance Review, and is optimistic that the review will lead to significant transformation of Ontario’s social assistance system to achieve better outcomes for Ontarians.

The Province’s announcement of an historic program for Early Learning and the provincial consultations to develop a long-term affordable housing strategy are two other examples of Provincial policy work in 2009 cited by OMSSA that demonstrate the government’s understanding that a strong human infrastructure is essential to ensuring the well being and prosperity of our communities.

The joint work currently underway by the provincial and municipal governments toward the development of a more integrated human services system will provide the framework for change in planning for and delivering human services across the province. Increased integration within the system will improve service effectiveness.

While OMSSA acknowledges that the province will be required to address the deficit in the upcoming budget, it is calling on the Province to ensure that the approach to deficit reduction be measured and systematic and supports Ontarians while not inflicting further short-term pain on citizens of the province, in particular our most vulnerable citizens, those who have been hardest hit in the past year.

Highlights of specific OMSSA recommendations are summarized below:

**Invest in a long term, integrated affordable housing strategy that makes a real difference to the housing needs of Ontarians ensuring that it:**
Vision: To be the best place in Canada to raise a child, promote innovation, engage citizens and provide diverse economic opportunities.

Values: Honest, Accountability, Innovation, Leadership, Respect, Excellence, Teamwork

- reflects a shared provincial - municipal understanding of how housing and human services combine to create healthy communities
- includes identifiable community outcomes with short, medium, and long term timeframes; and that these outcomes be resourced at on-going sustainable levels to permit the strategy to unfold
- is explicitly a long term commitment by the Province that recognizes that unmet housing needs have accumulated over a period of time.

Invest immediately to support municipalities to develop community plans that will meet housing and human service needs in their communities including:

- providing indexed increases to the shelter allowance portion of income support programs (Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support programs) to address the rising costs of rental housing
- making permanent the Hostels to Homes project, thus affirming that with flexibility in funding, municipalities can successfully assist chronically homeless citizens to access and maintain safe affordable housing
- enhancing the provincial contribution to emergency and domiciliary shelters thereby ensuring that everyone in need of shelter may be provided this basic human need

Invest in the long term-effectiveness of Ontario’s social assistance and employment supports system through a comprehensive reengineering of the provincial social assistance system and through the immediate adoption of the following specific rule changes:

- changing asset limits to allow individuals to build savings necessary for long term prosperity
- exempting existing assets such as RRSP's and Tax-free savings accounts thus keeping individuals who are experiencing temporary financial crises from having to strip their entire savings before drawing on social assistance
- allowing parents to keep a portion of child support payments without penalty
- expanding the permissibility of casual gifts and family help
- expanding the eligibility rules for Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program recipients to access Employment Ontario programs for improved employment supports and transition into the labour market
- eliminating penalties for dependent children under 18 who leave school
- treating 16- and 17- year olds living outside the home, for purposes of Ontario Works calculations, as dependents so that their income remains exempt
Invest in the full, long-term vision for a Prenatal-to-12 Child and Family Service System, including long-term, sustainable investments for the early learning and child care sector serving the youngest children in our communities by:

- replacing federal funding with provincial resources to ensure system stability the absence of an ongoing commitment from the federal government to continue the original Best Start funding base
- articulating a clear plan for implementing a complete prenatal to 12 Child and Family Service System, led by municipal service system managers in cooperation with school boards and other community agencies
- providing the appropriate resources to municipal service managers to plan for and manage this new system
- committing to protect the long term sustainability of the early learning and child care sector

**ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION**

Council could choose not to endorse the OMSSA recommendations for the 2010 Provincial Budget. This could be considered a ‘missed opportunity’ to influence the direction of the 2010 Provincial Budget.

**CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN**


**Skilled, Innovative & Respectful Organization**

- A skilled, adaptive and diverse workforce, i.e. more flexible staff
- More innovation, greater teamwork, better client focus

**Financial Sustainability**

- Financially Sustainable City by 2020
- Effective and sustainable Growth Management
- Full life-cycle costing for capital
- Address infrastructure deficiencies and unfunded liabilities
Intergovernmental Relationships
- Influence federal and provincial policy development to benefit Hamilton
- Acquire greater share of Provincial and Federal grants (including those that meet specific needs)
- Maintain effective relationships with other public agencies

Growing Our Economy
- A skilled and creative labour pool that supports new employers
- An improved customer service

Social Development
- Everyone has a home they can afford that is well maintained and safe
- Hamilton residents are optimally employed earning a living wage
- Residents in need have access to adequate support services
- People participate in all aspects of community life without barriers or stigma

Environmental Stewardship - N/A

Healthy Community
- Plan and manage the built environment
- Adequate access to food, water, shelter and income, safety, work, recreation and support for all (Human Services)

APPENDICES / SCHEDULES

Appendix “A” to Report CS10021.
Ontario Municipal Social Services Association
Recommendations for the 2010 Provincial Budget

Presented to
The Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs

February 2010

OMSSA
Ontario Municipal Social Services Association
1 Dundas Street West, Suite 2500
Toronto, Ontario M5G 1Z3
www.omssa.com
Executive Summary

Celebrating our 60th anniversary in 2010, the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA) represents Consolidated Municipal Service Managers and District Social Service Administration Boards, which were established by the Government of Ontario to administer social services throughout the province. The association promotes policy development and program delivery in the areas of social assistance, employment support services, children’s services, social housing, and homelessness prevention.

In 2009, a year when Ontario’s economic fortunes seemed to hang in the balance on a daily basis, the provincial government stood by its commitment to human services in a number of ways. Direct financial investments included the uploading of Ontario Works, minimum wage increases, the acceleration of increases to the Ontario Child Benefit, and the investment in social housing renovations and retrofits. Broad policy initiatives included the announcement of an historic program for Early Learning, consultations to develop a long-term affordable housing strategy, and the creation of a Social Assistance Review. Such initiatives demonstrated the government’s understanding that a strong human infrastructure is essential in a time of economic uncertainty.

In 2010, as the government now seeks to return Ontario to more stable fiscal footing, it must weigh the many competing social priorities against their impact on the province’s overall economic health. OMSSA firmly recommends that the government carry forward its commitments over the past year as strongly as ever—the commitments to the integrated human services that support all Ontarians—even as the government looks to streamline public services. Specifically, we recommend that the government:

1. Invest in a long-term, integrated affordable housing strategy that makes a real difference to the housing and shelter needs of Ontarians
2. Invest in the long-term effectiveness of Ontario’s social assistance and employment supports system
3. Invest in the full vision of a Prenatal-to-12 Child and Family Service System, including long-term, sustainable investments for the early learning and child care sector serving the youngest children in our communities

By maintaining its commitments to investing in affordable housing, employment and income support, and early learning and child care, the government can reinforce the positive work it has made over the past year. Though Ontario might have a recovering economy, thousands and thousands of individual Ontarians continue to struggle. By investing in municipal housing and human services, the provincial government can support the single-most effective tool to keep our province’s individuals, families, and communities as economically strong and competitive as they can be.
The Ontario Municipal Social Services Association
Celebrating our 60th anniversary in 2010, the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA) represents Consolidated Municipal Service Managers and District Social Service Administration Boards, which were established by the Government of Ontario to administer social services throughout the province. The association promotes policy development and program delivery in the areas of social assistance, employment support services, children’s services, social housing, and homelessness prevention.

Investing in People Makes Sense
Ontarians pride themselves on being caring, community-minded people who live in a province with a high standard of living. They are shocked when they hear how many children go to school hungry, how many people are stuck in the cycle of poverty, how many people struggle to make ends meet.

OMSSA believes that investing in people will help to create healthy and secure communities where these things do not occur. People can succeed only when they have access to appropriate shelter, education, income, safety, recreation and leisure, and cultural expression. The stronger our social infrastructure—the system of social services, networks, and facilities that support people and healthy communities—the greater the opportunity for all Ontarians to contribute socially and economically.

Investing in people means enabling individuals to contribute to their full potential. Investing in people means working towards a society that thrives—economically, socially, culturally, and politically. Such investments are particularly meaningful in times of economic uncertainty, as they can help to reduce poverty and can build a foundation of economic certainty, confidence, and sustainability into the future.

OMSSA believes that reducing poverty in Ontario must continue to be a priority into 2010, and applauds the government for its commitment to its Poverty Reduction Strategy. Yet as Ontario inches towards economic recovery, and the government turns its focus towards reducing deficits, the government must keep its commitments to those who have been hit hardest over the past year. Any plan to reduce deficits must be a measured and thoughtful plan that supports Ontarians through these hard times and does not inflict further and significant pains on those most vulnerable citizens.
Human services integration: the framework for change

In 2009, the provincial and municipal governments continued their move towards a more effective integrated human service system through the Human Services Implementation Steering Committee, and its various sub-working groups. OMSSA is pleased to see this cooperative effort to improve the effectiveness of the province’s housing and human service sectors. We have long argued that such effectiveness is directly linked to an increase in the levels of integration within the human service system.

Human services integration means addressing the needs of the whole person. It means understanding that a person’s child care, employment, income, and housing needs are connected. It means seeing an individual as a person and not a case number. Human services integration also benefits service deliverers, through decreased service duplication, maximized resources, and more effective service delivery. In the end, we all benefit from human service integration, through improved outcomes for Ontarians and renewed community vitality.

As these joint municipal-provincial committees move forward, their emphasis must be on maximizing the effectiveness of system outcomes. A HSISC process that makes minor changes at the edges of human service sector will fail to produce substantive outcomes. OMSSA therefore encourages the government to be bold in its commitment to an effective integration of the human service sector at the intra-ministerial level, in the provincial-municipal relationship, and at the local level through cross-sectoral community human services planning.

Municipal human services: the stewards of healthy and prosperous communities

Of all levels of government in Canada, municipal governments are the most directly responsible for creating livable, healthy communities. Local councils have an interest and a stake in the economic and social health of the people and businesses in their communities. We might say that municipalities serve a role as “community steward” that is unreplicated by any other level of government or by any other non-governmental agency.

Local governments are responsible for and to the people they serve. There is a direct reciprocal relationship between a local government and its citizenry. There is often a direct personal relationship—as neighbor, relative, friend, customer—between government and citizen.

Municipalities’ inherent sense of community stewardship makes them ideal agents for community transformation. With partnerships with the provincial and federal governments on one side, and with local community agencies on the other,
municipalities are perfectly situated to translate broad public initiatives into community action. Particularly in regard to human service integration, municipal service system managers have a built-in ability to provide the range of integrated human services that support people in their journey to self-sufficiency and beyond.

Consider the many functions of Ontario’s municipal service system managers:

- Managing and delivering employment and income support services to over 240,000 households—an increase of 20 percent during 2009. The municipal staff who are delivering these services work with individuals and families to move from public dependence to personal independence through social assistance, skills training, and employment placement.

- Creating partnerships with other health and human service providers to provide ancillary support services such as public health initiatives, mental health supports, addictions counselling, or food security—often at 100 percent municipal cost. These non-mandated services often mean the difference between someone keeping a job and being let go. A small intervention of a municipal human service worker—say, by referring a client to a concurrent disorder program run by a local mental health agency—can have cascading benefits for the worker, their family, and the public assistance system.

- Managing the early learning and child care system, including a comprehensive fee subsidy system. Thousands of Ontario’s families rely on these subsidies to support their children’s participation in quality early learning and child care experiences. Such subsidies give children a head start on school readiness and allow their parents to enter and stay in the workforce confident that their children are in safe and stimulating environments.

- Managing social housing and homelessness services. Municipal service system managers work with local community housing and homeless service providers, non-profit housing agencies, and cooperative housing organizations, to help to ensure that even the most vulnerable of households have access to a secure, stable, and environmentally sound home in healthy and supportive communities.

These examples demonstrate the direct ways that municipal human service managers keep watch over the health and prosperity of their communities. They represent a public service in the purest sense of the term, serving all who need with basic human necessities. Without such public services, our cities, towns, and neighbourhoods would lose the social infrastructure that holds communities together.

It is this lens of integrated municipal human services through which we have filtered the recommendations that follow. Though we have articulated distinct recommendations for investments in housing and homelessness services, economic security, and early learning and child care, each recommendation overlaps and
intersects with the others. Our recent recession demonstrated the interconnectedness of people’s personal and financial needs. Losing one’s job can lead to rent arrears and mortgage defaults which can lead to eviction and homelessness, and the inability to obtain child care can become a barrier to skills training and reentry into the job market. Ontario might be emerging from the recession as a province, but thousands and thousands of individual Ontarians have not—and their need for housing and human services remain.

Within this context, OMSSA offers the following three recommendations for the 2010 provincial budget.

**Recommendation 1:**
**Invest in a long-term, integrated affordable housing strategy that makes a real difference to the housing and shelter needs of Ontarians**

As the government unveils its long-term affordable housing strategy, it must support this strategy with enhanced, sustainable funding that makes a real difference to the housing and human service needs of Ontarians. This long-term strategy must advance a broad and bold vision that integrates housing into the human service fabric of our communities.

Building on the current work of the Human Services Implementation Steering Committee and the Housing and Homelessness Consolidation Working Group, this Strategy must reflect a shared provincial-municipal understanding of how housing and human services combine to create healthy communities.

Such a strategy must contain identifiable community outcomes with short-, medium-, and long-term timeframes—and these outcomes must be resourced at on-going sustainable levels to permit the strategy to unfold. Moreover, as OMSSA presented in our December 2009 paper on housing, jointly written with the Social Housing Services Corporation, those sustainable resources must be provided with the flexibility that allows communities to identify the specific supports that are needed locally and to fund those supports appropriately. (See Appendix A for a fuller list of OMSSA’s recommendations from that paper.)

Finally, a Long-term Affordable Housing Strategy must be an explicitly long-term strategy. Communities across Ontario have unmet housing needs that have accumulated over a period of time. They cannot be remedied immediately. Communities must have the confidence that the resources will be there over the duration of the plan.

Though we look to the province for a long-term sustainable commitment to the housing and homelessness system, we also recognize that there are immediate investments that the government can take to assist Ontarians. These investments can help to ensure that, as Ontario moves from economic recession to recovery,
municipalities have the resources to support the housing needs of all their residents. These immediate actions include:

- Providing indexed increases to the shelter allowance portions of income-support programs through Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program to address the rising cost of rental housing in communities across the province.
- Making permanent the Hostels to Homes project, thus affirming that with flexibility in funding, municipalities can assist individuals who have been chronically homeless to access and maintain stable, affordable housing.
- Enhancing the provincial contribution to emergency and domiciliary shelters, thus helping to ensure that every person in need of shelter be provided with this basic human need.

Through this combination of these immediate investments and a longer-term commitment to the sustainability of Ontario’s housing system, the province can create an atmosphere of confidence among municipal human service system managers to develop effective community plans that will meet the housing and human service needs of their local communities.

**Recommendation 2:**
**Invest in the long-term effectiveness of Ontario’s social assistance and employment supports system**

OMSSA is pleased that the government has embarked on a Social Assistance Review. This Review offers a real opportunity to develop a long-term vision for transforming Ontario’s social assistance system to achieve better outcomes for Ontarians.

As we noted above with the Human Services Implementation Steering Committee and the Housing and Homelessness Consolidation Working Group, a Social Assistance Review that merely changes rules and tightens service processes without a more comprehensive reengineering of social assistance will not maximize system effectiveness. We recommend instead that the government embrace the social and economic opportunities that a fuller Review offers.

OMSSA has previously offered a framework for transforming social assistance ([Transitioning Ontario Works to a Labour Force Development Program — March 2005 —](http://www.omssa.com/documentlibrary/db2file.asp?file=35101)), and we have worked closely with the Ministry of Community and Social Services on a Local Workforce Development Reference Group. In 2009, this group oversaw 11 successful demonstration projects across Ontario, providing a clear set of best practices for moving toward a social assistance system that supports sustainable employment and economic self-sufficiency. We recommend that any long-term review of Social Assistance draw on these resources developed by Ontario’s municipal service managers.
In the interim—even within the current social assistance system—there are also a number of administrative rules that are keeping people from contributing to their fullest potential today. We recommend that the government adopt these rule changes immediately, to offer immediate benefits to Ontario’s most vulnerable citizens.

These rules include:

- Changing asset limit rules, allowing individuals currently on social assistance to build the savings necessary for long-term prosperity
- Exempt existing assets such as RRSPs and Tax-free Savings Accounts, thus keeping individuals who are experiencing temporary financial crises from having to strip their entire savings before drawing on social assistance
- Allowing parents to keep a portion of child support payments without penalty
- Expanding the permissibility of casual gifts and family help
- Expanding the eligibility rules for OW and ODSP to access Employment Ontario programs for improved employment supports and transition into labour market.
- Eliminating penalties for dependent children under 18 who leave school
- Treating 16- and 17-year-olds living outside the home, for purposes of OW calculations, as dependents so that their income remains exempt

Many of OMSSA’s partners have proposed similar lists of rule changes, with more detailed rationales for each, and we urge the provincial government to consider these proposals seriously.

**Recommendation 3**

**Invest in the full vision for a Prenatal-to-12 Child and Family Service System, including long-term, sustainable investments for the early learning and child care sector serving the youngest children in our communities**

OMSSA was pleased with the Premier’s October 2009 commitment to creating a fully integrated, high quality Prenatal-to-12 Child and Family Service System. While we recognize that economic circumstances necessitate a slow rollout of the complete system, we also believe that a complete rollout must be the goal. The long-term rewards offered by this system are too great to do anything else.

We recommend that the government use the 2010 budget to articulate a clear plan for implementing a complete Prenatal-to-12 Child and Family Service System, led by municipal service system managers in cooperation with school boards and other community agencies. Furthermore, the provincial government must provide the appropriate resources to municipal service managers to plan for and manage
this new system, allowing service managers to draw on their expertise in overseeing their communities’ human service systems.

Embracing the full vision for Early Learning must include a commitment to protect the long-term sustainability of the early learning and child care sector. Thus far, the considerable provincial investments in the new Early Learning program have focused on the 4- and 5-year-old cohort rather than on the youngest children of our communities.

Yet, the early learning and child care sector is bigger than just the 4- and 5-year-old children attending these new programs. Only 15 percent of these children are even eligible for Early Learning in 2010, and in the long term, thousands of children from age 0 to 3 (and their school-age siblings) will remain in some form of non-school-based care.

All children and parents must be supported with sustainable funding that allows them to choose their own early learning and child care experiences. Without such support, the benefits brought about from the 4- and 5-year old programming in schools will be negated by the inability of the sector to support services to the younger children in our community.

Our call for broad, sustainable support for the early learning and child care sector directly builds on the recommendations of OMSSA’s March 2009 paper on this very issue. The recommendations of that paper are included in Appendix A for your reference.

In short, the province must seize the opportunity to move beyond federal inaction and take a proactive leadership role in this sector. By providing its own investments—regardless of what the federal government is doing—the provincial government will demonstrate foresight in sustaining this essential part of our community fabric.
Conclusion

In 2009, Ontarians looked to their government for solutions to the economic challenges that lay far beyond their control. To its credit, the provincial government stepped in with important measures to provide this sense of control. Now, the government must maintain this leadership by keeping its commitments to the human service needs of our province.

It is easy to look to the human service sector as a place to find fiscal savings. People often see government as a bloated bureaucracy that fails to provide adequate returns on investment.

But the reality is that the human services sector provides returns on investment far beyond what people can imagine. Municipal human services give our local communities the quality of life that Ontarians deserve. The municipal human service sector makes sure that there are places for young children to grow and learn. We make sure that people have the skills they need to find jobs and earn income. We make sure that everyone has a place to live, out of the cold and off the streets.

Municipal human service workers are the face of our neighbourhoods. We are the early childhood educator greeting your 3-year-old at the door of her child care centre. We are the public health nurse providing vaccines to your elderly parent. We are the shelter worker making sure the man on the street corner does not freeze on a February night. We are the employment counsellors, the librarians, the recreation coordinators, the zamboni drivers, the speech pathologists, the family support workers—we are the people who make Ontario’s communities places to live and to love.

A commitment to Ontario’s municipal human service system in the 2010 budget is an investment in the people of Ontario that makes the most sense.

Submitted respectfully by Patti Moore, President, on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association.
Appendix A: OMSSA Recommendations

In 2009, OMSSA released two major policy papers in the areas of early learning and child care and housing. Each paper offered an extended discussion of our vision for these sectors as understood by Ontario’s municipal housing and human service system managers. As well, each paper offered a series of detailed funding and policy recommendations.

The following are the recommendations presented in those papers. OMSSA stands by these recommendations and asks that the provincial government consider these when developing the 2010 budget.

Hand in hand: How the province and municipalities can create the best early learning and child care service system for Ontario, March 2009.

**Recommendation 1: Service quality**

The province and municipalities hold a summit to identify common objectives and outcomes for the creation of a quality early learning and child care service system.

The province commits to funding quality assurance mechanisms to maintain high levels of quality throughout the entire early learning and child care service system.

The development of Ontario’s quality early learning and child care service system must be based on evidence-based research both about quality systems and quality programming. Examples of such research include the Best Start Expert Panel on Quality and Human Resource, the Best Start Expert Panel on Early Learning, the OECD’s benchmarks on child care, and the Quality by Design Project.

**Recommendation 2: Shared accountability**

The province and municipalities develop a shared accountability framework for the funding and delivery of an early learning and child care service system based on common definitions of terms and consistent measurement methods and formulas.

This shared accountability framework will include key indicators that focus on successful outcomes for children, their families, and the broader community. Examples of these outcome indicators are:

- Increased levels of school readiness, as measured by the community’s Early Development Instrument
- Reduced proportion of children living in poverty in the community
- Increased number of parents who can work because of the availability of subsidized child care in the community

This framework will also include measures of funding inputs and service outputs, such as:

- Annual child care service costs per normalized child care space
- Levels of investments in children’s services per child in the community
- Numbers of children receiving child care subsidies
- Numbers of children receiving special needs resource services
The province and municipalities will jointly identify these indicators based on available resources, such as the developmental trajectory defined in the MCYS Strategic Framework and the Early Development Instrument, as well as on other new community measures such as the Middle-years Development Instrument.

Finally, as they jointly develop this accountability framework with its associated output and outcome measurements, the province and municipalities must recognize that there are numerous other community influences on children. As such, the partners must understand how these broader contexts shape the experiences of children and families.

**Recommendation 3: Funding sustainability**

The province declares its commitment to Ontario’s children by fully funding an early learning and child care services system at sustainable levels. Such sustainable funding by the province must meet internationally accepted benchmarks for investments in children.

Funding sustainability must include:

1. a consistent, stable, and indexed, multi-year funding envelope based on a consistent and equitable formula that reflects true local costs of children’s services
2. capital funding to expand the children’s service sector to meet local needs and to respond to the demands introduced by full-day early learning
3. consistent, indexed funding to support appropriate wages for children’s service workers

These funding formulas must be jointly developed by the province and municipalities.

Sustainability must also include a commitment to the Best Start program, and the extension of funding supports beyond the program’s current conclusion in 2010.

**Recommendation 4: Local flexibility**

Ontario’s early learning and child care service system, jointly developed by the province and municipalities, must include a standard menu of services with the allowance for local flexibility in implementation.

Sustainable funding formulas for this system must be jointly developed by the province and municipalities and must be based on actual local costs of providing care and service.

Municipalities must engage the children’s programs and services within their mandate and beyond to develop broad integrated community human service plans.
Our recommendations: Tools to build an affordable housing system

Foundational recommendation #1: Create a shared accountability framework
  FR1.1 Convene a provincial-municipal-community working group
  FR1.2 Articulate a clear provincial structure for housing

Foundational recommendation #2: Provide enhanced, sustainable funding
  Provincial recommendations
    FR2.1 Have a single funding envelope supporting a Housing First model
    FR2.2 Provide enhanced, sustainable funds to support the provincial housing strategy
    FR2.3 Provide sustainable resources for housing service systems
  Federal recommendations
    FR2.4 Provide enhanced homelessness funding
    FR2.5 Re-invest savings from expiring mortgages and debentures
    FR2.6 Redefine housing funding to include human support services
    FR2.7 Develop a national housing strategy

Structural recommendations: Implement legislative and regulatory changes to help communities
  Provincial recommendations
    SR1 Enable municipalities to manage demolitions and conversions
    SR2 Allow a range of financing and refinancing options
    SR3 Allow creative use of Planning Act powers
    SR4 Provide continued leadership under the “Green Energy and Green Economy Act”
    SR5 Affirm primacy of the Ontario Human Rights Code
    SR6 Review the administrative structure of rent-geared-to-income administration policies

Human recommendations: Improve the economic security of individuals
  Provincial recommendations
    HR1 Increase shelter component of social assistance
    HR2 Improve minimum wages
    HR3 Align the Working Income Tax Benefit
    HR4 Review asset rules for social assistance
  Federal recommendations
    HR5 Improve Employment Insurance benefits
    HR6 Align the Working Income Tax Benefit