To:  Chair and Members  
Social Services Committee

From:  Joe-Anne Priel  
General Manager  
Community Services Department

Date:  July 18, 2006

Re:  2005-2007 Ontario Works Service Plan (SSC06022) (City Wide)

Council Direction:
Not applicable.

Information:
The Ontario Works 2005-2007 Service Plan for the City of Hamilton is attached as Appendix “A”.

Service Planning for the provision of Ontario Works is an annual requirement for municipalities delivering the program. Service Plans are reviewed by the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) every year as part of the budgeting process. In 2005, the plan covered the period of 2005 to 2007. The Service Plan is developed according to the MCSS service planning guidelines and the Ontario Works Act, Regulations and Directives. The plan was approved by the MCSS on February 15, 2006 and formed part of the approved 2005 Ontario Works Service Contract.

In 2005, the MCSS committed to strengthening services for Ontario Works participants by streamlining intake services and directly linking provincial funding to employment outcomes. The focus on employment outcomes was established in 2004 and continued in 2005. A new two-year employment outcomes based planning and funding cycle starts in 2006, replacing the previous three-year cycle and service level funding. In 2006 and 2007, the service planning requirements will be on these newly developed employment outcomes.

The three core employment outcomes that will support planning and funding for Ontario Works assistance are:

- Employment - Helping participants find and keep jobs.
- Earnings - Improving the quality of jobs to increase earning and make it more attainable to become financially independent.
• **Increased Employability** - Helping people become progressively more ‘employment ready’.

A draft 2006-07 Employment Outcomes Service Plan and budget submission has been forwarded to the CMSM for their review and approval. Once this Service Plan is approved, this will also be shared with Council.

This report is being submitted to Council at this late date due to the delay in approval by the Ministry and subsequent delays in the printing of the plan and production of this report. Given the size of the plan and lack of timeliness, it is suggested that Council focus attention on Sections One and Two that provide an overview of the Ontario Works program and highlight accomplishments and initiatives.

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Joe-Anne Priel  
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Hamilton

City of Hamilton

Public Health and Community Services

ONTARIO WORKS PROGRAM

2005 – 2007

SERVICE PLAN

FINAL DECEMBER 14/05
ONTARIO WORKS SERVICE PLAN 2005-2007
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Ministry of Community and Social Services Approval

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SECTION ONE

Executive Summary

The 2005-2007 Ontario Works Service Plan is built upon a framework that was established by the Public Health and Community Services Department for delivery of the Ontario Works program.

Delivery of Ontario Works continues to be divided among three branches: Benefit Eligibility, Employment and Income Support and Community Programs. Although each branch has specific service responsibilities, they work together to provide enhanced, effective and efficient Ontario Works services.

The four objectives of the Ontario Works Program are to:

- Increase the emphasis on employment activities for Ontario Works participants to gain sustainable employment and self-sufficiency
- Streamline the client service path
- Address participant needs in a holistic manner
- Ensure program identity and professional integrity

2005 is a year of transition as a number of program delivery changes have been undertaken in response to the Ministry of Community and Social Services commitment to:

- Help move people to employment
- Streamline and simplify the system
- Make the system more accountable and sustainable and
- Treat social assistance recipients fairly and with dignity

The following program delivery changes have been implemented during 2005 as follows:

- **Closure of the Intake Screening Unit and the implementation of a single step application process.** Effective June 2005, the Intake Screening Unit closed and a more streamlined application process was implemented. A blended case management model was established where Ontario Works applicants are served by a single case manager from the point of application onwards. This is viewed as a more simple, customer oriented service. This was a major transition that affected all aspects of program delivery.

- **Consolidated Verification Process (CVP) has remained as a separate function.** It is anticipated that for the first time, CVP funding will be maximized.

- **Implementation of Transition Directive 2004-02 which outlines 20 changes to the delivery of the Ontario Works program.** The changes affected program delivery as there were a number of procedural and workload adjustments. They resulted in increased Ontario Works administration and program costs. The changes are positive in nature with the ultimate goal of eliminating disincentives to employment and a simplification of the program rules and administration.
• **Implementation of Transition Directive 2005-02 for Earning Exemptions and Other Transition Supports.** The changes in the short term have caused budgetary and workload pressures. It is estimated that the caseload will increase by 1000 cases and there will be a need for five additional OW workers. The new benefits – Extended Health Benefit and the Full Time Employment Benefit will create an increase in program costs. A local implementation strategy was established with long and short term objectives. The changes are positive for Ontario Works recipients in that the changes will encourage employment and independence in the long term. However, in the short term – there are increased administrative and program costs.

• **Implementation of Transition Directive 2005-03 for Eligibility Criteria for Adults Living with Parents.** It is projected that the Ontario Works caseload will increase by 800 cases in total including the Ontario Works and ODSP cases and as a result there will be a need for 6 additional workers. Ontario Works client benefit costs will increase accordingly. The changes are positive for Ontario Works recipients in that the changes will encourage independence and is less punitive in nature. However, in the short term – there are increased administrative and program costs.

• **The number of ODSP recipients in the City of Hamilton continues to increase.** Ontario Works participants who are in the process of applying for ODSP continue to represent 15% of the Ontario Works caseload. This is a reflection of an aging population and that Hamilton serves as a magnet community for those with physical and mental health issues. This client group and their families require specialized and often costly health and employment services.

• **Hamilton continues to be the third highest destination for refugees and immigrants.** They exhibit unemployment rates that are well above the rate for the labour force as a whole. This creates a demand for specialized Ontario works caseloads, targeted employment services, cultural interpreter services and other health and social services tailored to their unique needs.

• **Ontario Works Employment Services is changing in response to the participants’ employment needs and the Ministry’s emphasis on employment outcomes.** There is an increased emphasis on job skills training, employment placement and pre-employment interventions.

• **JobsNow is being piloted in the City of Hamilton.** It is targeted that up to 2,700 Ontario Works participants will be successfully referred to the program by the end of January 2007.

• **An Employment Assessment and Referral Centre is being operated in partnership with Services Canada by the Ontario Works program effective July 2005.** This is a coordinated employment service for the provision of a client-centred assessment, referral and case management services.

• **Federal funding for the Ontario works employment supports programs has not been confirmed for the second half of 2005.** This has created budget pressures within the Employment Assistance budget. Potential loss of the programs on a permanent basis will create a crisis within the Ontario.
Works program and community as a whole. This would appear to be a reflection of the federal government’s change in direction for the provision of employment assistance for less employable citizens.

- **A continued demand for Ontario Works benefits** such as Special Diet and utility arrears has had an impact upon both workload and Ontario Works Client Benefits costs.

- **The Career Development Centre opened in 2005.** It provides a variety of employment resources for Ontario Works participants and other residents of Hamilton at a single site. Services include employment information sessions, pre-employment workshops, a Labour Market Information Centre and a Child Minding Room.

- **Two local Ontario Works offices moved.** The 31 King Street office closed and the Ontario Works Central Office opened at 250 Main Street East. The 280 Queenston Road office closed and the Ontario Works East End office opened at 2255 Barton Street East.

Fiscal constraint and heightened accountability continue to be key factors in budget planning and program delivery given the current economic environment within the corporation of the City of Hamilton. The City budget continues to feel the strain of the downloading of social service costs and the continued demand for Ontario Works services and related programs such as shelters, child care and social housing. One-time funding such as Enhanced Placement Funding and National Child Benefit Reinvestment projects are being utilized to the optimum. Unfortunately, one time funding is time limited and may create funding and service gaps in the Ontario Works program commencing 2006.

**Key Achievements For 2004**

The City of Hamilton’s Ontario Works Program achieved the following in the year 2004:

**Consolidated Verification Process (CVP)**

Baseline target was exceeded for 2004 that resulted in enhanced funding from the Ministry of Community, Family and Children’s Services in the amount of $279,466 a total of 5779 cases were reviewed of which 798 were terminated.

**Increased Support Services**

The Strategic Services and Program, Policy and Planning Divisions continue to assist the Ontario Works program delivery through evaluative processes, research and consultation for new initiatives. These Divisions also identify areas of efficiencies and opportunities for enhanced quality of client service.

**Income Reporting by Exception**

In order to increase client service and to alleviate workload issues related to Income Reporting Statement (IRS) processing, the Department developed an “income by exception process”, per MCSS recommendation. Only participants who report a variance in income are required to submit a monthly Income Reporting Statement. This initiative was implemented in January 2005 and staff continues to update on a touch the file basis.
Ontario Works Training Initiatives

These were designed to increase case manager awareness of Ontario Works legislation, employment assessment and referral skills and knowledge of community resources. This training has resulted in effective placements, lower caseloads and increased employment services for participants.

Ontario Works Business Process Review (OW BPR)

OW BPR was initiated in 2002 as part of the continuous improvement projects led by the Strategic Services Division. An OW BPR Project Team was established in 2004 to implement recommendations from the review. Three separate components were established: policies and procedures, communications and evaluation. A survey was completed by staff and participants to provide feedback on service delivery. A communications team investigated information management and staff communications issues. Outcomes will include a communications triage system and a staff website with OW tools and processes. All local Ontario Works policies and procedures are being reviewed and rewritten. They will be integrated with the Ministry’s Ontario Works Directives Initiative.

Special Income Business Process Review Implementation

The Special Income Unit, which administers the discretionary program for the OW, ODSP and Low Income individuals in the City of Hamilton, underwent a Business Process Review. The final report was completed in March 2004 outlining options for delivery of such benefits. Staff recommendations on options were approved by the Department Management team. Implementation of approved recommendations is underway with the assistance of Strategic Services.

Residential Care Facilities & Emergency Shelter Business Process Review Implementation

This BPR was completed in 2003 and since, the Departmental Management Team received recommendations of the review, and the work plan is underway. Implementation of several recommendations is complete and remaining recommendations will be implemented in 2005.

Business Process Review to Improve OW Web Job Site

The objective of the review was to improve the process and information on the OW Jobs Hamilton website, one of the top most visited sub sites on the City of Hamilton website (www.hamilton.ca) The goal was to streamline the process to make it easier to apply for OW jobs online and ensure that the language and processes were clear. This initiative began in October 2003 and results were implemented in November 2004.

OW Home Visit Pilot

An evaluation of the Pilot was undertaken with Program Policy and Planning Division in 2004. Preliminary results indicate that feedback has been positive from both participants and staff. One impact identified by staff is the duplication of work due to technological limitations. The final evaluation report is near completion.

Automated Call Distribution (ACD) Queue System

In June 2004, a new telephony system was implemented to ensure improved customer service and facilitate public access to general information about the
Ontario Works Program. Reports demonstrate that this phone line receives approximately 2,700 calls monthly, of which 88% are answered within 30 seconds as per the Corporate standard.

New National Child Benefit Reinvestment Strategy

The City of Hamilton reinvests its National Child Benefit (NCB) funds in both internal and community based programs. The 2005 local priorities for reinvestment include: Emergency Programs and Supports (i.e. food, utilities, housing), Basic Health Programs and Supports (i.e. dental, other basic health needs), Recreation and Children’s programs, and Employment Supports and Programs. Currently funded programs include (but are not limited to): the municipal portion of LEAP, layettes and other health related needs, Nutritious Food Basket top-up, eviction prevention services, subsidized recreation and arts programs for children whose families receive social assistance, utilities arrears assistance, a community health bus (mobile dental & health clinic), mentoring and skills development programs for at-risk children and youth, and employment supports including childcare programming.

Planning for the 2006 NCB Reinvestment Strategy is underway. The Department continues to monitor Provincial decisions with respect to anticipated changes to the program. This information will be integrated into the 2006 plan which the Department anticipates were finalized June 2005.

Ontario Works Participant Skills Training

This initiative expanded beyond targeted groups in June 2004 and is funded through the Enhanced Placement and the Employment Assistance funds. The objective is to provide an increased number of Ontario Works participants with access to skill training. Program outcomes will be reviewed to ensure value for the expenditures.

Employable Caseload Initiative

The objective of this initiative is to provide enhanced case management to more employment ready participants. Intensive employment supports are in place for those participants who have recent employment history or who are currently attached to the work force on a part time basis.

Self Employment Caseload

In partnership with the City of Hamilton’s Economic Development Department’s Small Business Advisory Centre, Ontario Works participants who have expressed an interest in developing their own business receive self employment training and business plans are monitored by Ontario Works Case Managers.

Translator Service Enhancements

This service is streamlined within the new Service Delivery model as the application process is now only a brief phone call to the Intake Unit followed by an interview with the case manager. This will further alleviate duplication of payments for interpretation services.
A Business Process Review is scheduled for the end of 2005 to review and make recommendations concerning the delivery of Cultural Interpreting Services for all programs delivered by the Public Health and Social Services Department.

**Employment Tradeshow for Case Managers**

An Employment Services Tradeshow was held in the Fall of 2004. The purpose of the Tradeshow was to raise the knowledge and skill level of the case managers. The objective is to familiarize the OW program staff with the array of community employment services available to OW participants. Agencies offered a display table for program promotion as well as an opportunity to showcase their services/program through an informational workshop. Agency information was incorporated into a local community resource manual for all staff. The day provided staff with enhanced knowledge about the local labour market, job trends, employer requirements, tools and resources critical for a client's success and core skills required for a career practitioner.

**Scheduling Unit Enhancements**

Responsibilities were reviewed to streamline and expedite the re-scheduling of appointments for applicants by providing one point of contact. Further work is underway with the City of Toronto to obtain an advanced scheduling tool.

**Business Continuity Plan**

A Departmental Business Continuity Plan was developed which addresses potential emergency issues such as labour disruption, pandemic health concerns, and major climatic events. It outlines the provision of the services in accordance with the applicable legislation.

**Department Emergency Plan**

A Social Services Emergency Plan has been prepared to provide social services officials and staff with general guidelines for responding to an emergency in the City of Hamilton. The plan is designed to identify the roles and responsibilities of key officials, directors, managers, staff and support staff in the event of an emergency within the Department's mandate. Overtime, the organizational structure may change, therefore, it is essential that the information be continually reviewed, updated and tested to ensure an effective response.

**Performance Appraisal Training**

In 2004 the Performance Consultant with Strategic Services held employee information sessions with all staff to discuss the value and process for conducting performance appraisals. All management and supervisory staff were coached on how to conduct performance appraisals.

**OW Hiring Practices BPR**

A complete review of Hiring Practices for Ontario Works staff is underway to review and improve the processes used to select and hire a high performing, sustainable workforce that reflects the needs and diversity of the citizens of the City of Hamilton. This review will also result in the ability to develop and maintain a pool of potentially successful candidates as staff is required from external periodic postings. Scope of the review includes recruitment, screening,
interviewing and hiring of employees for the OW Program. This review will be completed in 2005.

Health & Safety Initiatives for OW Programs

A WSIB Injury Reduction Strategy that incorporates OW areas where there is risk of musculoskeletal strain injuries has been developed for implementation in 2005-2006. Interventions will include ergonomic training, risk assessments for clerical work stations and reception areas where staff stand the majority of the day, as well as ergonomic consultations and assessments with new processes/equipment and furnishings.

Personal Safety Workshops will continue throughout 2005 and 2006 along with Health and Safety and Front Line Supervisor training. Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases training was developed and delivered for OW staff early in 2005 in conjunction with changes to screening processes with the ISU. Eight sessions have been delivered to date and will resume in Fall 2005.

Key Environmental and Caseload Trends

Hamilton’s labour market showed a modest improvement in April 2005. Most of those re-entering the job market were able to find work, as there were 1,800 jobs created in the month of April, causing the unemployment rate to remain unchanged at 5.6%. Hamilton’s unemployment rate is lower than the provincial rate of 7% and a national rate of 7.3%.

Despite the slight improvement, Hamilton’s labour market remained relatively weak compared with a year ago. A sharp drop in the unemployment rate, from 7.8% last April, masked the deterioration in the underlying characteristics. A small drop in employment compared with last year left the employment rate near its lowest level since May 2003. At the same time, labour force participation has been falling sharply since last October, leaving the labour force 3.0% smaller than it was a year ago. This voluntary withdrawal of people from the labour market is the main reason for the drop in the unemployment rate. Large declines in workers within manufacturing, trade, and accommodation and food services have offset gains across most services-producing industries. Health care and social assistance; finance, insurance, real estate and leasing; and business, building and other support services have generated most of that growth on a year over year comparison.

The number of individuals in receipt of regular Employment Insurance benefits decreased. On a year over year comparison regular claims were down 13% overall.

The Ontario Works caseload has decreased over the past year. The August 2005 caseload of 10,262 is an increase of 20 cases from the August 2004 level. However, the average OW caseload has decreased 2.2% since 2004.

The HR Matters Report has identified Hamilton as having an ageing population and dwindling labour supply. Hamilton’s population is ageing faster and growing slower than the provincial average. If current trends persist, it will eventually begin to decline. Hamilton’s industry is also much more narrowly focused than that of the province. The labour supply will experience a severe
shortage particularly in education and health and labour markets will become much more competitive. Immigration now accounts for approximately 85% of Hamilton’s total population growth and could rise to 100% in the next couple of decades.

Hamilton Training Advisory Board and the City of Hamilton Economic Development Strategy have reported that in order for Hamilton to sustain their economic base they must remain globally competitive and create companies that employ a highly-skilled, well-educated labour force. The Hamilton Training and Advisory Board also reported that with the shift to skilled employment a key priority will be to focus on long-term workforce planning. By tapping into the pool of under utilized workers and providing necessary skills training and essential skills, we can ensure a trained labour force that meets the skills replacement needs of Hamilton’s economic sectors.

In summary the following will address the supply of potential workers to meet Hamilton’s skills shortage:

- Ensuring that the knowledge and skills of workers match the needs of the core clusters of the Hamilton economy
- Enhanced services addressing literacy, basic skills and employment readiness
- Better integration of immigrants into the labour market, creating employer awareness and promotion of immigrant skills
- Increased program access for disenfranchised youth
- Upgrading and skills training for older workers who tend to experience greater re-employment barriers
- Develop a strategy to pool resources and develop collaborative recruitment and retention strategies to support local employers
- Innovative interventions to support employment transitions of persons with disabilities. Create incentives to re-train the disabled
- Uniform standards for client employment services
- Enhanced workplace literacy skills provided by employers
- Availability of affordable child care
- A coordinated, seamless, non-partisan information and referral resource in Hamilton as an initial point of entry to the service system
- Services that provide a broad spectrum of interventions for the unemployed and do not focus on the quickest route to employment, e.g. case management, life skills training, self employment options, financial/social skills training, employment support, budgeting, job retention services

The Program Policy and Planning Division has continued to work with Ontario Works staff to increase the Department’s capacity to produce OW/ODSP case profile and trends reports to inform service planning.
Key Objectives and Commitments

The Public Health and Community Services Department prime objective is to increase the quality of service while obtaining administrative efficiencies. Specific objectives continue to be:

- Improve inter-departmental co-ordination
- Clarify reporting relationships and accountability
- Increase the department's capacity to focus on strategic and policy issues while providing support to program delivery
- Increase emphasis on employment activities for OW participants especially the hard to serve

The following are commitments for the upcoming year that will create enhanced opportunities for the Ontario Works participant:

Career Development Centre

The objective of the Centre is to provide a variety of employment resources, such as skills assessment, access to training, and job opportunities that are matched to labour market demand. On a daily basis, it is anticipated that over 500 people will use the services of the Centre. The centre opened February 2005.

Employment Assessment and Referral Centre

Funding has been approved by Service Canada for the operation of a coordinated assessment and referral centre and a system of maintaining comprehensive and up-to-date information on local employment programs and services. The centre is located at the Career Development Centre. It opened July 2005.

The Program Policy and Planning Division will commence an evaluation of the referral and assessment functions of the centre in late 2005.

Addiction Services Initiative

This initiative in Hamilton is expected to present different challenges than those in small towns and rural communities where the pilots have been located. In order to prepare for the expected impact of this program, a Project Manager has been assigned to the Program. A committee including Addictions, Drugs and Gambling Services (ADGS), OW, the MCSS program consultant and other PH&CS staff has been meeting since 2003. Currently participants with addiction problems are referred to ADGS and other community resources. The Hamilton Addiction System Coalition (HASC) is kept updated by the ADGS manager. A proposal is currently under development and will be submitted October 2005.

Evaluation of Helping Hands Program

The objective of the evaluation is to determine if Helping Hands participants are more likely to gain and maintain employment as a result of the training that they receive. This multi-year project is now anticipated to be complete in December 2005 with the evaluation report due in the first quarter of 2006.
Resource Centre Customer Survey

Funded by Human Resources Skills Development Canada, this survey identifies the activities and services being utilized by citizens of Hamilton accessing the Department’s three Resource Centres. Survey results assist in enhancing the employment and training information provided at the Centres.

Strategic Plan

Public Health and Community Services Department is currently developing a five year strategic plan. Development of the strategic plan is an excellent opportunity to develop a vision for the future and to assist in sound decision making and effective deliverables. Goals, objectives and strategies have been developed and will provide strategic direction for the OW Service Plan over the next 5 years.

Ontario Works Client Path Satisfaction Evaluation

In 2004 Ontario Works with the Program Policy and Planning Division undertook an evaluation of the client and staff experiences with the OW client path to determine over-all satisfaction with the current system and to identify opportunities for improvement. While the final report is pending, preliminary results (February 2005) were instrumental in the Department’s planning of a new intake and client service path process (June 2005).

OW Restructure with Closure of ISU

In response to the December 2004 announcement of closure of the ISU in Hamilton, Strategic Services has worked with OW staff to develop alternative client service paths. A service delivery model was chosen that streamlines the application and case management contact with OW clients. Improved scheduling software has been specified to replace that provided in SDMT – it is expected that a vendor will be chosen midyear.

Web-based Policies and Procedures for OW Directives

As an outcome of the OW BPR, a staff focused site is under development, with the first phase to be launched in June 2005. The site will help in managing key information needs for OW staff such areas as local directives, forms, letters, procedures, etc. and links to provincial and community websites. The goal is to have a site with the most current and reliable information presented in the most efficient and effective manner.

Marketing Strategy for Employers

A strategy will be under development in 2005 to better assist employers understand the barriers and benefits to hiring OW clients. The primary and secondary market research will examine existing and potential OW employers and develop a strategy to retain and recruit businesses. The strategy will also link to the Career Development Centre and one of their program objectives to have businesses use the centre for job recruitment.

OW Client Communications

Staff continues to find ways to improve the communications directed to OW
clients. Outcomes may include more coordinated and user friendly OW cheque inserts, better signage at buildings, customer service improvements and user centric web pages. In 2005, the Jobs Hamilton website will continue to be improved. A data integrity project is underway to ensure consistency of how data is input into the system. Other modifications and communications are scheduled for 2005.

Implementation and Monitoring of Service Delivery

To ensure compliance with the Ontario Works Act, legislation and directives, the Training Unit develops and implements ongoing training and local guidelines to assist staff in making accurate determinations of eligibility. The Training Unit reviews existing local policy and procedures to ensure that legislative changes are incorporated and that local policy reflects compliance.

As part of the 2005 goals individual, team and program specific performance indicators will be established. The performance indicators are directly linked to outcomes and allow the Branch to monitor and set priorities to ensure targets are achieved. A data base program has been developed that captures monthly statistical information specific to program activities.

Rent Bank Program

The Department is participating in the Provincial Rent Bank Program which is intended to help low income individuals and families (including those on social assistance) remain housed during a financial crisis. This one time only funding of $429,681 for Hamilton must be spent by December 31, 2006. The Department has recently completed an RFP for the administration of the program in our community.

Utilities Arrears Program

In 2003, the Utilities Arrears Program was funded by National Child Benefit Reinvestment and by the City of Hamilton’s Water and Wastewater Assistance Fund (for singles or couples without children). This fund was developed to assist households faced with utility arrears or disconnections. Hamilton CMSM administered the fund to assist both OW and ODSP applicants. Share the Warmth was contracted to assist low-income households.

In 2004, funding obtained from Water and Wastewater Assistance Fund was utilized to operate a "Discretionary-Utility Fund" which is cost shared with MCSS. Low-income applicants continue to be assisted through Share the Warmth and funded 100% by the Water and Waste Water Fund for singles and couples and National Child Benefit for families with children. In June 2004, Hamilton CMSM accepted the allotment of the Energy Emergency Fund. A contract was developed with Share the Warmth to administer this fund for low income residents.

In December 2004, the Community Start Up and Maintenance Benefit was introduced which now approves the issuance of a mandatory benefit for utility arrears and disconnections. However, the City of Hamilton had already received funding from Water and Wastewater and implemented the Discretionary Fund for 2005. The decision was made to utilize discretionary benefits to assist OW and ODSP applicants with utility emergencies prior to accessing CSUMB. Hamilton has developed a "Utility Arrears Coordinating Group" to ensure that funding is accessed and maximized by applicants and to establish joint service protocols with
utility providers and other community partners. An internal working group was also established to ensure that operational issues are reviewed and addressed.

Throughout 2005, utilities arrears remain a significant issue. The funding sources for the program (NCB and the water/wastewater budget) remain in place for 2005, but the availability of these funds in 2006 and beyond is questionable. Work in this area throughout 2005 will focus on the issue of utility security deposits and their impact on the funds available for utility arrears, on-going funding, and establishing greater linkages with utility representatives and opportunities to enhance policies and procedures between utility providers and social service agencies. Interest has also been generated locally by City Council who have formally requested additional information and updates be provided to the social and public health services committee.

**Homelessness Prevention Initiative**

There are a number of Ontario Works/Hamilton Housing Corporation/Program Policy and Planning staff undertaking work on Homelessness Prevention including the OW / HHC Operational Working Group, Eviction Prevention Policy and Eviction Prevention Working Groups. The ultimate objective of these committees and work groups is to explore policy development and service delivery models to prevent homelessness and create efficiencies in collaboration with the community (tenant advocates, social housing providers and community supports).

**Keys to the Home**

The City of Hamilton's first Housing Strategy “Keys to the Home” was approved by Council in late 2004. A Departmental work plan to guide implementation of the strategy has been developed and has been put into action. The strategy promotes the availability of affordable housing options in the community as well as ensuring the availability of emergency and shelter arrangements to reduce the rate of homelessness in Hamilton.

**Managerial Work Plans**

Individual work plans for each Manager and Director have been developed as part of the performance appraisal process for 2005. These work plans highlight Managers / Directors main goals, objectives, areas of responsibilities and action plans for the purpose of program improvement. The individual key outputs and goals are aligned to the business plan and the Service Plan.

**Enhanced Initiative Eligibility Review**

The City Of Hamilton has continued the enhanced initiative eligibility review for the balance of 2005. An additional three Eligibility Review Officer are currently funded under this initiative with approval from the Regional MCSS office.

**Accommodations**

The Department’s Accommodation Team continues to review and assess current locations in conjunction with lease expires and program requirements. It will also address service integration issues to provide a more holistic service model i.e. – Housing and Public Health. This process has resulted in the opening of the following new Ontario Works locations; 181 Main St. W. (February, 2005), 250 Main St. E. (March, 2005), and 2255 Barton St. E. (June, 2005) and the closure of 31 King St. W, and 280 Queenston Rd.
Growth Related Integrated Development Strategy (GRIDS)

GRIDS is a process to determine where the City’s future growth will take place over the next 30 years. The process will consider many factors including (but not limited to): objectives of the City’s Social Development Strategy and impacts to communities, neighborhoods and social services, and objectives of the City’s Economic Development Strategy. Council has identified key priorities for all growth options including revitalization of the downtown, the importance of employment, and accommodation of residential growth. Six residential growth options have been developed. Input on the six options will be gathered over 2005 from a variety of sectors in the community using the triple bottom line evaluation tool which gives consideration to community, economics and the environment. The results will be used as the basis for the City’s growth strategy and official plan. They will also provide strategic direction for service planning for the Ontario Works Program. Themes considered in the preparation of options included social well-being, policies relating to children, families, skills development, accessibility, housing and job creation.

Service Priorities, Strategies and Solutions

Service Priorities and Strategic Shifts

Hamilton continues to be the third highest destination for refugees and immigrants in the country. Recent immigrants, visible minorities, aboriginals and youth exhibit unemployment rates that are well above the rate for the labour force as a whole. Demand has been identified for sector-specific language training, a shift in employer awareness and attitudes, Canadian work experience and increased services to address barriers to employment such as English as a second language. There is also a demand for services for newcomers with higher levels of education such as job shadowing, on the job training and a more accessible and streamlined accreditation and certification process.

There is a continued need for innovative interventions to support employment transitions for persons with disabilities. Employer incentives are required to retrain the disabled and there is a need for more research concerning barriers and training needs related to specific disabilities.

The Ontario Works pending ODSP caseload continues to increase as does the ODSP caseload in the City of Hamilton. This is a reflection of an aging population and that Hamilton serves as a magnet community for those with physical and mental health issues. This client group and their families require specialized and often costly employment services.

Unemployment levels for youth continue to be higher than the general population. There is a continued need for effective employment interventions that provide links to employers and job opportunities such as literacy and employment programming for disenfranchised youth.

There is a great need for enhanced services to address literacy, basic skills and employment readiness for the Ontario Works participant. Intensive case management and increased personal contacts are required to manage the day to day issues that Ontario Works participants face including low social assistance
rates, increasing rental and utility costs and the ensuing increase social and family issues.

There is a continued need for services to address low literacy rates. Thirty-six percent of all active participants attend adult basic education to upgrade, complete high school or to learn English as a second language. Employment readiness cannot be addressed until basic needs are met and essential skills are addressed such as budgeting and home management.

The Ontario Works program is working towards satisfying future skill shortages by increasing the focus on skills training that will result in sustainable employment. The face of Hamilton’s economy is changing. The city’s Economic Development Strategy and the HR Matters Study are forecasting a shift in the type of job that the city will provide as well as a skills shortage to fill those positions. Key clusters to watch include the airport, the biotech industry, advanced manufacturing, the film industry, agriculture, health care, tourism and education.

Ontario Works participants rely upon the program as a safety net for financial assistance and health benefits. They are fearful of leaving the system and may in fact face more hardship in a low paying position without benefits than to remain on the system.

The availability of high quality childcare that is accessible and available 24 hours a day is an important element of self sufficiency particularly for sole support parents who constitute 38% of the current Ontario Works caseload. Successful job retention for families is conditional upon reliable childcare.

Accessible public transportation is a key to successful job placement. Job opportunities tend to be available in outlying areas where public transportation is limited or unavailable.

**Highlights of Planned Initiatives**

Present Employment Services that work to increase employment earnings are as follows:

**JOBSNOW**

The City of Hamilton is participating in a pilot project called JobsNow that started in April 2005 and will continue to May 2007. The purpose of this pilot project is to measure the effectiveness of employment retention services for harder to serve Ontario Works participants. Employment retention services will be offered to participants and employers for up to 18 months after placement. A private sector company, West Coast Group International has been contracted by the Ministry of Community and Social Services to deliver the retention services. It is expected that 2700 Ontario Works participants will be involved in the pilot.

**Employable Caseloads**

There are 10 specialized Employable Caseloads that provide focused and intense employment assistance. The goal is placement in paid employment or an increase in earnings for those who are currently employed.

Cases are assigned based upon set criteria such as recently employed or graduate from employment readiness or job skills training program. The focus of
the caseloads is increased personal contacts and reporting expectations. One of the caseloads focuses on self-employment.

**Increased Focus On Job Skills Training**

With the goal of sustainable employment, an ever increasing number of participants are screened and placed in job skills training. Additional funding was allocated from Target Placement Funding and employment assistance funding was realigned to meet this need. The initiative has been phased in with supports from Service Canada for staffing costs. The success rate into paid employment and termination from the Ontario Works program appears to be high.

Supports to accreditation for foreign-trained professionals have also proven to be a successful intervention for some members of the newcomer population.

**Ontario Works Job Web-Site And Web-Site Training**

The employment and community placement programs utilize a web-site to allow Ontario Works participants access to information for on-line job applications. It is a well-used and effective service that underwent renovation in 2004 to become more user-friendly. Further updates to the system will occur in 2005. Ontario Works Job Web-site training is available to all participants as the web site is a necessary job search technique.

**Career Development Centre**

The Department’s new Career Development Centre opened February 17th, 2005. It will be the hub of employment services for the Ontario Works participants in Hamilton. A Labour Market Information Centre provides assisted state-of-the-art job search supports and information for all citizens of Hamilton. Most Ontario Works employment programs such as employment supports groups, web-site training, supports to job skills training and Employment Information Sessions are delivered from the Career Development Centre.

**Employment Assessment and Referral Centre**

Hamilton has undertaken an Employment Assessment and Referral Centre funded in part by Services Canada. Findings of the Employment Services Assessment Project support the utilization of a common assessment tool and process for all employment services in the City of Hamilton. The Ontario Works program will deliver assessment and referral services for all social assistance clients and for those who live in the downtown area of Hamilton. The Assessment Centre is located at the Career Development Centre. The Assessment Centre opened July 18th, 2005.

**Termination Processes**

Current data input practices and business processes concerning earnings and reasons for termination are being reviewed to ensure accurate data input on the SDMT.
Established Employment Services

Other employment services such as the Career Development Centre, Employment Resource Centres, Employment Placement, Enhanced Job Placement, Community Participation, Helping Hands, targeted Employment Supports programs (Sole-Support, Youth Track and Employment Strategies) and Self-Employment are proven services that increase employment outcomes. They will continue to be monitored, evaluated and adjusted for maximum effectiveness.

Employment Services That Will Be Further Explored and Enhanced

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. Potential job maintenance services may include on the job problem solving, child care, family support etc. These services will continue to be explored in 2005. Employment Placement will explore ways to support employers and participants after placement.

Life Skills Supports

It is evident that many Ontario Works participants face multiple barriers to employment. There is a need for enhanced services to address basic life skills for the participant. The profile of participants continue to demonstrate the need for intensive case management. Increased personal contacts are required to manage the day to day issues faced by Ontario Works participants due to low social assistance rates, increased rental and utility costs and an increase in social and family issues. Enhanced services are needed to address basic life skills such as budgeting and home management. Employment readiness cannot be addressed until basic needs are met and essential skills are addressed.
SECTION TWO
Service Planning Context
Organizational Structure

PUBLIC HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES
DEPARTMENT MANAGEMENT TEAM
BENEFIT ELIGIBILITY BRANCH

Mission Statement

For the benefit of Ontario Works applicants and participants, we will determine the financial and employment eligibility to enable them to achieve shortest route to employment and self-sufficiency

Services provided by the Benefit Eligibility Branch include:

- Intake Unit
- Eligibility Review
- Overpayment Recovery
- Case Presenting Process (Social Benefits Tribunal)
- Consolidated Verification Process
- Participation Agreement Updates at CVP
- Family Support Unit

Benefit Eligibility Branch
EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME SUPPORT BRANCH

Mission Statement
To link individuals and families in need with financial, employment and other resources necessary to achieve independence and quality of life.

Services provided by the Employment and Income Support Branch include:
- Ontario Works financial and employment assistance
- Employment and Community Placement
- Getting Started Sessions (Employment Information)
- Assessment and referral to literacy and training programs
- In-house pre-employment training programs (Youth Track, Sole Support, Job Strategies and Skills to Work)
- Helping Hands
- Career Development Centre and 2 Employment Resource Centers
- Employment Assessment and Referral Centre
- Child Minding Rooms
- Self Employment
- Ontario Works Training and Program Review
COMMUNITY PROGRAMS BRANCH

Mission Statement

To provide a range of holistic services to difficult to reach citizens who have identified multiple needs, in order to improve their quality of life, personal wellness and self-sufficiency.

Services provided by the Community Programs Branch include:
- Ontario Works financial assistance
- Ontario Works Employment assistance
- Special Supports Team (Special Income)
- Assertive Outreach
- Residential Care Facilities and Hostels Unit
- Assessment and Counseling (Community Mental Health Promotion, Alcohol, Drug and Gambling Services)
- Administration of the Provincial Homelessness Funding
- Community Entity for Supporting Community Partnerships Initiatives (SCPI)
- Addictions Support Initiative
- Needle Exchange on the Van

[Diagram of organizational structure showing roles and positions including: Director, Manager, Team Control Clerk, Program Secretary, Nursing Program Secretary, OW Case Managers, Case Manager, Outreach Nurse, etc.]
PARENT AND CHILD BRANCH

Mission Statement

To provide early intervention and support services to children and families and community service providers to prevent hard, improve quality of life, personal wellness and independence.

Services provided by the Parent and Child Branch include:

- Healthy Babies Healthy Children Programs
- Homemaker and Nursing Services
- Home Management Services
- Child Care Fee Subsidy
- Child Care Systems Management
- Learning, Earning and Parenting Program (LEAP)
- Integrated Services
- Red Hill Family Centre
- Early Child Development
- Community Action Program for Children (CAPC)
- Prenatal and Nutrition Support Services
PROGRAM POLICY AND PLANNING DIVISION

Mission Statement
To provide a range of policy, program development and evaluation services including advice and recommendations for the benefit of staff and decision makers in order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Public Health and Community Services programs.

Services provided by the Program, Policy and Planning Branch include:
- Departmental policy and advocacy strategies
- Outcome evaluation and research
- Health status and well being monitoring, analysis and reporting
- Delivery of community grants
  - Program Development
  - Knowledge transfer
  - Surveillance and outbreak control
STRATEGIC SERVICES DIVISION

Mission Statement

The mission of Strategic Services is to provide a range of services that will improve our Department’s organizational performance, fulfill customer needs, encourage innovation, and create a stimulating and supportive work environment for our employees.

Services provided by the Strategic Services Branch include:

- Project Management
- Information technology strategy and end user support
- Business Process Reviews & business process redesign
- Strategic Planning
- Management Consultation
- Issues management/problem solving
- Learning and professional Development
- Team Building, Orientation, Change Management
- Departmental Coordination
- Departmental Representation on corporate strategic initiatives & projects
- Internal and external communications products
- Research library
- Marketing and communication strategy
- Health, Safety and Wellness Initiatives
- Departmental Policy and Procedure Development
- People Practices Program
- Volunteer Management and Development

Strategic Services Branch
Ontario Works Locations
Ontario Works activities are undertaken in five locations, 250 Main Street East, 1550 Upper James, 2255 Barton Street East, 181 Main Street West and 196 Wentworth St. N.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ontario Works Activity</th>
<th>250 Main E.</th>
<th>1550 Upper James</th>
<th>2255 Barton Street East Rd</th>
<th>181 Main St. West</th>
<th>196 Wentworth St. N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment Resource Centre</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVP</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario Works Case Management</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment and Community Placement</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Support</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligibility Review</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting Started Sessions</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Minding</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping Hands</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Workshops</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intake Unit</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Unit</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caseload Levels (average)</td>
<td>5500</td>
<td>2500</td>
<td>2500</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Service Delivery Profile (To June 2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intake Service Profile</th>
<th>Source(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average monthly number of applicants</td>
<td>902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of applicants screened by ISU</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of applicants screened in local office</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of applicants referred from ISU for second stage interview</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of applicants given literacy screening test</td>
<td>41.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of applicants determined to be eligible at the end of the second stage interview</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISU Service Profile</td>
<td>Source(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average monthly number of callers</td>
<td>4424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average monthly number of applicants</td>
<td>2356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of applicants screened by ISU</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of applicants referred from ISU for second stage interview</td>
<td>80.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of calls answered within 60 seconds</td>
<td>76.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The percentage of applicants screened by ISU vs. the local office is unknown. There are no reports available that capture this data for each CMSM and are unable to manually track this information.

The ISU bi pass rate (applicants who call the ISU but are forwarded to the local office to complete) is less than one percent. The reasons for the bi pass are: Hearing impaired, technical problems in completing the application due to previous SDMT data. Using this information, 99% of all applications that come through the ISU are screened.

Some CMSM's have applicants bi-pass the ISU that apply from specific shelters or that have interpreter calling in on the applicant’s behalf. We have no control over these situations and have no idea on the number of applications involved.

Reasons for not meeting the 80% targets: 50% staff turnover in ISU, new staff training, senior staff coaching/mentoring, SDMT slowness and technical difficulties resulting longer talk time/applications and department/corporate staff training.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Management Profile</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average monthly caseload (number of singles and families including temporary care assistance recipients)</td>
<td>10,502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average monthly number of Ontario Works participants with participation requirements</td>
<td>11,672</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average monthly number of Ontario Works participants with deferred participation requirements</td>
<td>3,337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average participant to worker ratio - #participants /case managers including CVP</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average intensive participant to worker ratio</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average monthly number of ODSP participants</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of cases on assistance less than 4 months</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of cases on assistance between 4 months and less than 1 year</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of cases on assistance between 1 year and less than 2 years</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of cases on assistance 2 years or more</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of participants with earnings from employment</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of cases exiting with employment income</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average monthly number of sole support parents</td>
<td>4,428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average support in pay (taxable and non-taxable)</td>
<td>$213.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of sole support parent cases with support provision in place</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of cases exiting with support income</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of cases with overpayments or arrears</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of cases with an overpayment being collected</td>
<td>80.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average amount of outstanding active overpayment per case</td>
<td>$1,171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Assistance Services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of participants provided with Level 1 services only</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of participants provided with Level 2 services</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of participants provided with Level 3 services</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average monthly number of 16 and 17 year old parents without high school</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average monthly number of 18 to 21 year old parents without high school</td>
<td>733</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average monthly number of LEAP participants</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of LEAP graduates</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of placements compared to participants with requirements</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of participants exiting through Ontario Works rent supplement option</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of participants in extended employment placement</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of participants provided with ESUB</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of participants provided with an advance child care payment</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of participants receiving Ontario Works child care and/or regular child care subsidies (DNA)</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of participants provided with child care support through earnings exemptions for child care expenses</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This does not accurately reflect the number of participants who exit Ontario Works to employment. This is one field on SDMT. Accurate date is not available.

LOCAL LABOUR MARKET PROFILE

Overview of Demographics For Hamilton
- The City of Hamilton’s population is just over 500,000
- Hamilton's labour market remained relatively weak compared with a year ago. A sharp drop in the unemployment rate, from 7.8% last April, masked the deterioration in the underlying characteristics. A small drop in employment compared with last year left the employment rate near its lowest level since May 2003. Labour force participation has been falling sharply since last October, leaving the labour force 3.0% smaller than it was a year ago. This voluntary withdrawal of people from the labour market is the main reason for the drop in the unemployment rate
- The unemployment rate is higher for males than for females
- Hamilton’s population growth is slowing rapidly and is becoming much older with projections indicating that any future population growth will become totally dependent on immigration. Immigration accounts for 85% of Hamilton’s total population growth.
- Recent immigrants, visible minorities, aboriginals and youth populations exhibit unemployment rates that are well above the rate for the labour force as a whole
• Hamilton’s population of labour force age lag behind Ontario in terms of educational achievement
• Ontario Works caseload distribution indicates that more Ontario Works participants reside within the inner area of the City of Hamilton, particularly the downtown core and the eastern portion of the City
• 73.1 % of Hamilton’s workforce is employed in the service sector
• Hamilton has experienced moderate growth across several occupations, especially professional and paraprofessional occupations in business, finance and the public sector while it has seen moderate declines in occupations related to primary industry, processing and manufacturing

Relative to Ontario, Hamilton’s employed labour force is more specialized in the areas of:
• Processing
• Manufacturing
• Utilities
• Health Services Occupations

Manufacturing, Retail Trade, Health Care and Social Services accounted for nearly half of all jobs in Hamilton.

The top three occupations are reported to be:
• Trades and Skilled Transport and Equipment Operators
• Elemental Sales and Service
• Intermediate Sales & Service Occupations

Occupations which experienced substantial increases were:
• Paraprofessional occupations in Law, Social Services, Education and Religion
• Professional Occupations in Business and Finance
• Senior Management Occupations

Locally, the trend is towards a decrease in the overall number of certified trades people and of the total number of trades people, only 1% is youth.

The City of Hamilton’s Economic Development Strategy is forecasting a shift in job types. In order for Hamilton to sustain its economic base, it will need to remain globally competitive and create companies that employ a highly skilled, well-educated labour force. It has identified a future skills shortage in 6 emerging clusters:
• Advanced Manufacturing (industrial manufacturing that possesses a technological and knowledge based advantage)
• Agri-business
• Aerotropolis
• Health and Biotechnology
• Information and Communications
• Film
• Education
• Tourism

Typically, these types of clusters generate wealth and highly skilled and well paying employment. However certification requirements are high and exclude the lower skilled workers.
The combination of changes in the demographic structure of the workforce, the anticipated skills shortage and the requirement for higher skill levels will result in the exclusion of growing segments of the workforce – lower skilled youth, unemployed workers, older workers, sole support parents, immigrants, person with disabilities and displaced workers. Demographic trends show that the labour market will need to tap into this pool of workers because the supply of young, educated workers will not meet the full extent of the demand. The Hamilton Training and Advisory Board reported that with this shift, a key priority will be to focus on long term workforce planning.

Considerations for planning should include the following:

- Continue to analyze skills replacement needs and develop skills training that addresses future skills shortages
- Upgrading and skills training for displaced older workers who tend to experience greater employment barriers than those unemployed for other reasons
- Address the basic skills needs for those who experience chronic unemployment. Basic skills to include such things as budgeting and home management
- Improve “soft skills” such as problem-solving, working with others, decision making, planning, organization and continuous learning
- Workplace-based literacy/upgrading programs
- Literacy services for high-risk youth under 19
- A coordinated, seamless, non-partisan information and referral resource in Hamilton, as an initial point of entry to the service system
- Services that provide a broad spectrum of interventions for the unemployed and don’t just focus on the quickest route to a job, e.g. better case management, life skills training, self-employment options, financial/social skills training, employment support
- More experiential learning opportunities for youth and more on-the-job training opportunities
- More employment supports for immigrants, e.g. employer mentoring, job shadowing, occupation-specific language training, achieving licensing requirements and on the job training
- Innovative interventions to support employment transitions of persons with disabilities
- Incentives to re-train the disabled
- Research into the employment barriers and training needs related to different disabilities

COMMUNITY CAPACITY

Ontario Works Employment and Community Placement Opportunities

The Ontario Works Employment Placement and Community Placement staff works with employers in the private sector and non profit public agencies to develop employment opportunities for Ontario Works Participants.

Given the minimum skill level of many Ontario Works participants, it is necessary to focus on entry level positions. Many of the jobs are general labour and hospitality
industry positions. Basic training may be offered to participants to upgrade their skills to enter semi-skilled positions. Employers recruiting high skilled applicants are not accessing the Ontario Works Employment Placement Service, but prefer to use private recruiting firms and pay a fee for this service. These employers do much of their recruiting from training and skilled trades programs.

On average there are 130 to 160 jobs available monthly on the Ontario Works Job Web site. There are approximately 50 to 60 new positions listed monthly.

In addition to Employment Placement Services, participants may access jobs and job searching assistance through the Career Development Centre of the two Employment Resource Centres. Applicants have access to job banks, computers for internet access, job search materials and computer work stations for the creation of resumes, cover letters and career exploration tools. The Hamilton OW Web Site is a well used resource to search and apply for employment.

Community Placement staff develop new placement opportunities and provide support and follow up to placement sponsors. There is 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.

Commencing 2005, the program is placing less emphasis on community placements that are short term or self-initiated. Given the Ministry's emphasis on paid employment and outcomes from the program, it has been determined that they are a less effective intervention and do not lead as readily to sustainable paid employment.

Short term community placements such as special events have been reduced in number as a result. Although there will be fewer combined community and employment placements, it is anticipated that there will be an increase in employment outcomes which are becoming an increasingly important component of the program.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES/SKILL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

The following areas are identified for employment growth and job opportunities in the Hamilton area:

- Industrial Sewing Machine Operators
- Bricklayers and Helpers
- Other Entry Level Construction Occupations
- Food Handlers
- Health Care Workers
- Hospitality Industry
- Warehousing, Shippers / Receivers, Labourers
- Assembly Line Workers
- Food Processing
- Drivers
- Security Personnel
- Cleaners / Janitorial

The following are the identified skill development and occupational training needs of
Ontario Works participants:

- Customer Service Skills
- Drivers License Upgrades
- Fork Lift Training
- Sewing Machine Operators
- Basic Construction Skills
- Personal Support Worker Training
- Food Handling Training
- Certification and Accreditation of New Canadians
- Computer Literacy including Accounting Applications
- Call Centre Training
- Strategies to market to local employers

EMPLOYMENT PLACEMENT SERVICES

Employment Placement Services are marketed to local employers by direct contact, client self-marketing, and to new employers in conjunction with the City Of Hamilton Economic Development Department.

Employment Placement Services include screening and matching available training subsidies, WSIB coverage and ongoing Human Resource Supports. The Department also coordinates employment placement initiatives undertaken by community employment agencies.

STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT SELF-EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT

OW / ODSP participants who express interest in self-employment are referred to the City Of Hamilton Economic Development Department’s Small Business Advisory Centre. To ensure compliance, the small business advisory centre monitors and reports participant’s attendance and progress. A specific case manager has been assigned to this caseload. The case manager determines ongoing eligibility and provides support and access such as child care services while the participant is involved in the program.

ONTARIO WORKS LINKAGES TO COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

The Branches serving Ontario Works participants continue 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 )
- Employment Expo Committee
- Regional Placement Table
- Youth Employment Network
Work continues with other City of Hamilton Departments and community organizations to meet the service needs of Ontario Works participants as follows:

- City of Hamilton 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 sole support employment program and employment services for hard to serve and youth at risk, including the Job Connect Program.
- Services Canada Funding for targeted in-house employment preparation services.
- Mohawk College: Women Into Trades program, Introduction to Skill Trades Program, Literacy Works and Return to Work Services and Job Connect.
- St. Charles Adult Education Centres: Staff worked with this centre to develop a Personal Support Worker training program.
- 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. Development of the Employment Expo job fair.
- 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.
SECTION THREE

3.0 Service Plan

Client Service Path (to June 2005)
INTAKE SERVICES (to June 2005)

The Intake Screening Unit (ISU) is located at 1550 Upper James. It is staffed by 23 Intake Screeners, two clerical support and two Managers. It serves the Regions of Niagara, Brantford, Haldimand-Norfolk as well as the City of Hamilton.

Anyone wishing to apply for Ontario Works is advised to call the Intake Screening Unit so that a pre-determination of eligibility is completed.

A procedure is in place to expedite intake for victims of family violence. ISU Screener will read the mandatory script and ask if they are calling because of an abusive or violent situation.

A request for emergency assistance is most likely to occur during the First Stage Preliminary Assessment. An immediate referral to the office will be made and local emergency response procedures will be followed.

If the applicant does meet the criteria for applicants in Crisis/Emergency, the application will be completed and warm transferred to local office once the application is complete.

A Hamilton-Niagara Job Aid was developed as a reference tool for ISU Screeners. It provides the following information for each municipality:

- Contact lists including address, directions and telephone numbers for each local CMSM
- Community Resource Lists (example: food banks, shelters, etc.)
- Guidelines for applications and scheduling
- Breakdown of regional boundaries and corresponding municipal codes

A list of community resources that assist applicants with emergency help is also identified in the "Hamilton Niagara Job Aid". The names of various agencies and their address and phone number is listed, as well as the type of emergency service they provide. It is the responsibility of the CMSM to notify the ISU of any updates or changes to these resources when required. The ISU will advise the local CMSM of any identified problems with existing resources.

In cases where there has been an unanticipated influx of applications, the local offices may not have provided the ISU with enough appointments to meet the four-day mandate.

The following agreement has been made between the ISU and the CMSMs:

- Local offices will be responsible for monitoring the scheduling tool on a regular basis
- In cases where the local office has not identified the situation, the ISU will notify the local offices of cases where the ISU is booking beyond the 4th day
- Any applicant who is not satisfied with the date of their appointment will be referred back to the local office

To promote a collaborative relationship, the Strategic Management Group provides a regional forum to CMSMs and the Hamilton/Niagara Regional Office for strategic planning in program areas such as childcare, homelessness, social housing and social assistance. Members of this group include the Senior Administrators.
responsible for social assistance and human services programs such as childcare, homelessness and the ISU Manager/Director.

The Hamilton-Niagara Joint Regional ISU/CMSM Management Group discusses and resolves operational issues. This group makes recommendations for revisions to the Joint Protocols. Members of this group include one or more management staff from each CMSM and ISU with an open invitation to ODSP and the Regional office to attend.

The Hamilton-Niagara ISU/CMSM Issues and Resolutions Log is a performance monitoring tool for each local CMSM (Hamilton, Niagara, Haldimand and Brantford) and ODSP for tracking policy interpretation/application issues. This log assists the ISU and CMSMs with identifying ongoing problems or training needs.

Each ISU has Joint Protocols (service agreements) with the delivery agents for the purpose of the two-stage application process. These Joint Protocols facilitate consistent service delivery between the ISU and its affiliated delivery agents. Joint protocols are updated as required to reflect new or amended Ontario Works policy and program requirements.

The Business Criteria are standards that have been established to determine whether telephone screening is appropriate for the applicant. This Criterion is followed by both the ISU and CMSM.
FORECAST ISU PERFORMANCE TARGETS

- Increase forecasted in the number of applicants in 2005 and 2006 is due to plant closures, layoffs and economic instability
- Number of literacy tests issued to applicants has decreased due to recidivism as the literacy test administered once in a lifetime.
- The 2005-2006 forecast is based on 2004 1st quarter actuals (Jan-April)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service/Performance Targets: Intake Service</th>
<th>Source(s)</th>
<th>Prior Year Actual</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>FORECAST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average monthly number of applicants</td>
<td>ISU Monthly Report and Intake Performance Report</td>
<td>902</td>
<td>874</td>
<td>918</td>
<td>918</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of applicants screened by ISU</td>
<td>ISU Monthly Report and Intake Performance Report</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of applicants screened in local office</td>
<td>Intake Performance Report</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of applicants referred from ISU for second stage interview</td>
<td>Intake Performance Report</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of applicants given literacy screening test</td>
<td>Data Resource Guide</td>
<td>41.5%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of applicants determined to be eligible at the end of the second stage interview</td>
<td>Intake Tracking Report</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a delivery agent who is also serving as an ISU, the following includes the service delivery arrangements for the provision of intake screening services.

In order to streamline processes and provide consistency in business processes, the ISU with the participation and agreement of the four affiliated CMSMs (Regional Municipality of Niagara, County of Brant, Regional Municipality of Haldimand-Norfolk and the City of Hamilton) have developed and expanded on the "Hamilton-Niagara Joint Protocol/Business Criteria" and the "Hamilton-Niagara Job aid."

Not all applicants are suitable for telephone screening such as the following:

- crisis situation
- low functioning literacy level
- difficult to understand
• high level of frustration
• difficulty answering questions

When an ISU Screener identifies that an application is inappropriate for telephone screening, the following process will be followed.

• The Intake Screener will complete as much of the application whenever possible
• The Intake Screener will place the applicant on hold
• The Intake Screener will contact the local office and communicate the reason the call is being bypassed
• The Intake Screener will conference call the applicant back onto the line
• The Intake Screener will transfer the applicant onto the staff member of the local office and end their portion of the call
• If the line is busy, the ISU Screener will provide the phone number of the local office to the applicant and make a notation in the notes if the application was started

Hamilton/Niagara ISU Management Standards

• Market and educate the CMSMs of the ISU's functions. Reviewing Joint Protocols, Business Criteria and the ISU's mandate. Build relations between ISU and CMSM, by attending CMSM meetings.
• Generate Team Spirit at the ISU
• Build Trust in the ISU
• Develop people
• Lead by example
• Focus on customer needs

INTAKE SCREENING UNIT INITIATIVES FOR 2004/2005

Interpreter Applications

• Finalized the new application process for interpreter applications through Settlement & Integration Services Organization for improved customer service and cost savings for interpreter costs.

Professional Development

• Review of all current training material and practices to align and enhance delivery of Ontario Works based on the units' functions.
• Increase and utilize training dollars on effective ongoing professional development and research.

Policy and Procedure

• Review of procedures and consistent messaging. Align training section to correspond with SDMT.
• Ongoing development of the ISU Policy & Procedures manual.
• Development of a staff focused website for local directives, forms, letter and business tools with links to provincial and community websites.
Validating ISU Quality Standards

- In order to validate whether or not the ISU is providing quality service to our customers a review of ISU applications is randomly done. The tracking of ISU application outcomes at verification reinforces that we are providing CMSMs with quality work. Validating ISU applications at verification will be completed at least once a year.

Performance Development

- Quality monitoring of calls is completed on an ongoing basis to review screener’s understanding and application of policy/legislation and enhance team performance. This can be done by desk side or silent monitoring. A performance checklist is completed for each call reviewed to assist Program Managers in improving customer service and identifying training needs and continuous development of staff.

Enhance Integrity of Program and Service

- Updated ISU information service pamphlets to market the ISU to the community. Distributed to all CMSMs.
- Promote and educate ISU to community partners via power point presentations.
- Monitor and review “O.W. Net” government website to ensure compliance with SAMO and O.W. legislation changes.

Scheduling Tool Enhancement

- In collaboration with the CMSMs, enhanced the scheduling tool to promote consistency in scheduling appointments.

Reports

- Simplified monthly reporting procedures, utilizing Program Managers' and clerical time more efficiently.
ISU SERVICE/PERFORMANCE TARGETS

- The 2005 - 2006 forecast is based on 2004 1st quarter actuals (Jan-April).
- Information will be updated when forecast of case loads are received from CMSMs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service/Performance Targets:</th>
<th>Source(s)</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ISU Service</td>
<td><strong>Average monthly number of callers</strong></td>
<td>ISU Telephony Reports</td>
<td>4424</td>
<td>4838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average monthly number of applicants</td>
<td>ISU Telephony Reports</td>
<td>2356</td>
<td>2531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Percentage of applicants screened by ISU</strong></td>
<td>ISU Telephony Reports</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*<strong>Percentage of applicants referred from ISU for second stage interview</strong></td>
<td>ISU Telephony Reports</td>
<td>80.7%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage of calls answered within 60 seconds</td>
<td>ISU Telephony Reports and ISU Monthly Report</td>
<td>76.6%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. *This percentage of applicants referred from ISU for the second stage interview is calculated using the number of applicants screened, less the number of those that are ineligible/choose to discontinue.

2. **The percentage of applicants screened by ISU vs. the local office is unknown. There are no reports available to us that capture this data for each CMSM and we are unable to manually track this information.

The ISU bi pass rate (applicants who call the ISU but are forwarded to the local office to complete) is less than one percent. The reasons for the bi pass are: Hearing impaired, technical problems in completing the application due to previous SDMT data. Using this information, we would screen 99% of all applications that come through the ISU.

Some CMSM's have applicants bi-pass the ISU that apply from specific shelters or that have interpreter calling in on the applicant's behalf. We have no control over these situations and have no idea on the number of applications involved.

3. ***Reasons for not meeting the 80% targets: 50% staff turnover in ISU, new staff training, senior staff coaching/mentoring, SDMT slowness and technical difficulties resulting longer talk time/applications and department/corporate staff training...
New Blended Case Management Model

On December 15, 2004 the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) announced their proposal to streamline the social assistance system in Ontario Works from a two-step centralized process to a one-step local application process. In the current two-step process, client intake was managed by the Regional intake Screening Unit. Clients were forwarded to local offices for an Employment Information Session where their rights and responsibilities were described. Clients then met with two case managers during the application process – a verification case manager and then another for on-going case management.

In early March 2005 the Blended Case Management Model was selected as the City of Hamilton’s local service delivery path. Under the new model applicants will be served by one case manager from initial eligibility assessment, issuance of payments and benefits, participation development and on-going case management.

New Client Service Path

All client calls will come through one central intake phone number (905) 546-4800. An intake clerk will complete preliminary information and conduct a quick calculation via SDMT to determine initial eligibility and schedule an application interview. The case manager will complete the full application to determine final eligibility. They will review, explain and sign all mandatory forms and provide the client with an information package that includes information on Direct Bank Deposit, Interactive Voice Response, Income Reporting Statement / Exception Based Income Reporting and literacy. A comprehensive and progressive participation agreement is developed and the participant is then referred to a targeted Employment Information Session (EIS) which will focus on employment and employment related activities that support and augment the employment plan. Issuance of the initial assistance cheque is not dependent upon the client’s participation in the group EIS.

Blended Case Management is a key change in our service delivery path. Two pilots were implemented to assist in managing and facilitating any required changes which will aid in a smooth transition.

The Blended Case Management Model increases the case manager’s span of control and provides flexibility to effectively manage case loads while eliminating low value activities. Development of clerical duties to support the new model is underway. Improvements in technology and telephony will further improve client service and increase effectiveness.

CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Employment Information Session (EIS)

The following reflects the current business process from January 2005 – June 2005

Ontario Works applicants are referred by the Intake Screening Unit to an Employment Information Session (EIS) prior to the verification stage of the application process. Depending on the amount of requests for assistance, there are two or three sessions on a daily basis serving 20 to 25 applicants.

A Child Minding room continues to assist parents attending the EIS. The Child Minding room also facilitates the childcare needs for some participants attending in-
house training programs located in the building

An Enhanced Employment Skills Profile is a self-directed tool that was developed to be delivered at the Employment Information Session (EIS). It was designed to assist applicants in identifying barriers at obtaining employment. Once the barriers are identified at the EIS and input into SDMT, the Verification Case Manager is better able to discuss programs to address the applicant's specific needs. The Verification Case Manager will review all available employment programs within the department as well as those in the community identified on the OW Inform Hamilton Website to jointly develop a participation agreement with the applicant. The website can also be accessed by applicants at any of our three resource centres.

Employment Information Sessions include the following steps:

- participants rights and responsibilities are reviewed
- employment information is provided

applicants complete an enhanced employment skills profile which identifies their employment history, strengths and any barriers to employment

- mandatory literacy screening requirements are undertaken to assess and address literacy barriers
- applicants are provided with a verification check list outlining the information to be brought to the verification interview
- Attending an EIS is no longer required prior to determining Initial Financial Eligibility

Effective June 13th, 2005 attending an EIS is no longer required prior to determining the Initial Financial Eligibility. The case manager will:

- Review, explain and sign all mandatory forms, and provide the client with an information package that includes information on direct deposit, Interactive Voice Response, Income Reporting Statement, Exception Base Reporting, and Literacy
- Participants rights and responsibilities
- Employment information is provided
- Applicants complete an enhanced employment skills profile
- Mandatory literacy screening requirements
- Applicants are provided with a verification checklist with information required.
- The previous mandatory Employment Information Sessions will be replaced by a Targeted Employment Information Session (EIS) focusing on Youth, Sole Support, & Employment Supports called Getting Started Sessions. They are targeted to participants as follows:
  - Youth 17 – 30
  - Sole Support (single parent with children)
  - Employment Supports. This session will serve all participants who do not meet the above requirements.
• Depending on requests, from targeted groups there will be 2 or 3 sessions offered on a daily basis serving 20 – 25 participants.

**Mandatory Requirements and Obligations**

Effective June 13th 2005 the Mandatory requirements and obligations are explained by the case manager at the Initial application. An introduction to the mandatory requirements and obligations under Ontario Works indicating that:

• Ontario Works helps participants to increase their earnings
• Participation in activities that support the individual’s goals to employment is a mandatory eligibility requirement
• The program and its participants have a clear focus on employment

**Support Participant Involvement in Employment Planning and Placement Development**

Effective June 13th, 2005 the above information will be communicated to the participants by their individual case managers.

• Identify and promote resources that are available to participants in their local area, such as: resource centres, basic education, language and literacy training, community placements, in-house pre-employment development programs, etc.
• Provide an introduction and explanation of the types of employment related supports available for participants such as earning exemptions, employment start-up, childcare start-up, help with participation related expenses, etc.

**Key changes from ISU to Blended Case Management Model**

• Only preliminary information and Quick Calculation are conducted at Intake
• Application and case management process is reduced by one step through the Blended case management function
• Literacy screening questionnaire is administered at the application not at a separate group Employment Information Session
• There is a shift from a separate group EIS to the provision of mandatory EIS information at the application appointment.
• Issuance of the initial assistance cheque is not contingent upon the client’s participation in a group EIS
• Ongoing assistance cheques are contingent upon the client’s participation in employment focused workshops
• Shift in the curriculum of the group EIS to more employment focused curriculum

**Blended Case Management model may have the following impacts on quality of service:**

• One worker will deal with application and case management functions, leading to:
  • fewer staff for clients to tell personal information to, leading to a less complicated process for clients
  • improved customer service and reduced opportunity for errors related to multiple parties

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• a less complicated process to receive assistance
• improved communication between client and Case Manager
• Clients financial needs will be addressed sooner as initial eligibility will not be contingent upon attending a group EIS prior to Verification
• Community stakeholders will appreciate and benefit from streamlined approach
• There will be improved communication between staff, leading to better quality service.

Development of Participation Agreement and Supports to Employment

The development of participation agreements (PA) based on participant circumstances and Ontario Works regulations and guidelines. Most will be completed every three months by either the Case Manager, Employment Consultant or at a Consolidated Verification Process (CVP) review. The purpose of the review is to clarify issues, which limit the participant’s return to the work force, establish new directions and expectations and update the participation agreement.

Reviews and employment counseling may occur more frequently, based on the employment service needs of the participant. For some participants, employment counseling will be undertaken by a community agency. Further, each team of case managers has the support of an Employment Placement/Community Placement (EP/CP) consultant. The consultants work with the case managers to ensure effective Participation Agreements and referrals to community based employment programs.

• Focus on employment and training is emphasized at the EIS. Applicants are not only informed of the importance of the participation agreement to ongoing eligibility but also the role the participation agreement has in assisting the participant in locating work or training.

It is the goal to negotiate a participation agreement that is progressive, goal oriented and tailored to the participant and the local labour market.

The Participation Agreement is based on the review of previously agreed upon employment related activities. It is a structured step-by-step process to assist the participant in determining the next activity required to achieve their goal through a continuum of employment services.

Each step is built upon and tailored to the meet the participant’s individual needs. Some participants will require more basic pre-employment interventions while others may be referred directly to employment.

The case worker or employment consultant will then refer the participant to an appropriate employment assistance activity dependent upon their individual requirements. They may be referred to:

• Employment Assessment and Referral Centre
• EP / CP Worker to facilitate placement opportunities and maximize referral to resource centres
• In-house programs such as pre-employment programs and Helping Hands
• Community employment agencies

Employable participants who meet set criteria are streamed to ten specialized caseloads. They receive additional supports and intervention with the goal of paid employment. Those employed are assisted in increasing their earnings within a short timeframe.
Learning Earning And Parenting Program (LEAP)

Collaborative case planning for LEAP participants is a priority. Two committees have been established to ensure participants have access to all services in the community: The LEAP Community Advisory Committee and the LEAP Internal Working Committee. The objective of these committees is to ensure that the needs of participants are identified and addressed through partnerships and multi-disciplinary interventions. Individual Service Plans are developed by LEAP Case coordinators in conjunction with the Ontario Works case managers and the community partners.

LEAP is promoted through Ontario Works cheque inserts, pamphlets and posters with tear off sheets (which are circulated in community agencies and schools) and advertisements at employment expos and fairs.

LEAP encourages participants to seek summer employment and/or volunteer work placements to gain experience in preparation for future employment and/or college/university entry.

The number of participants in the LEAP program has been quite consistent since its inception. In 2004, this number averaged 293, of which only 11% were participating because of mandatory requirements (being a parent under the age of 18). All other participants opted to be in the program because of the benefits and financial supports it offers to the young parents during their high school years.

There were 64 high school graduates in (2004), which is a high achievement for the program.

Supports for persons targeted with employment barriers

Youth

Children under the age of 18 are ineligible for benefits under the Ontario Works program, unless they meet specific criteria that justify them not living at home: Abusive situation or lack of parental control being such factors.

84 Youth meet these criteria and are currently active under the Ontario Works program. These children have specific requirements to meet, one of which is to be enrolled full time in a recognized school. Their attendance and progress are monitored on a monthly basis, and a regular contact with the case manager is maintained.

- Specialized caseloads are maintained for participants under the age of 18, participating in LEAP approved activities, for ODSP applicants and for refugees and refugee claimants. This group of Ontario Works participants warrants a more holistic case management approach in order to offer the necessary services and support needed to identify and address barriers for this population group.

- The collaborative effort put forth by Ontario Works Case Managers with Community Partners and other PH & CS programs ensures that needs are identified and necessary referrals are processed in a timely and efficient manner.

- Case managers assist 16-17 years old and all LEAP participants in their participation requirements through ongoing communication between community

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- The collaborative effort put forth by Ontario Works Case Managers with Community Partners and other PH & CS programs ensures that needs are identified and necessary referrals are processed in a timely and efficient manner.
- Case managers assist 16-17 years old and all LEAP participants in their participation requirements through ongoing communication between community partners and staff.

Community Partnerships are maintained with:

- School Boards (Regular school programs and alternative study programs such as Section 20 schools)
- Youth Shelters and related programs
- Young Parent Resource Centres – Grace Haven and St.Martin's Manor
- Youth are referred to community organizations for Youth such as Living Rock, Ace Ministries, Notre Dame House, Teen Youth, Alternatives for Youth and Transitional Youth
- The department participates on an OW Branch Advisory Committee with regards to Child Welfare and serves as a liaison with both Children’s Aid Societies and for cross-training purposes.

Criminal Justice/Corrections

Ontario Works case managers assigned to youth caseloads are working with the Hamilton-Wentworth Detention Centre staff to provide information about Ontario Works to youth who are detained in this facility. The objective of the information sessions is to ensure that Ontario Works and its participation requirements are clearly understood by this population.

Details of the Ontario Works Program are provided so that youth are informed of all resources that are available (financial, resource centers, community participation, etc.) to assist in their reintegration to the community. In the future, this initiative will be extended to other facilities, where youth are detained, within the City of Hamilton.

ODSP Pending Team

The ODSP pending caseload averaged 1,670 cases. These participants receive benefits under the Ontario Works program for an average of 35.1 months, in part due to delays in obtaining a decision from the Disability Adjudication Unit and for the local ODSP office to process the grants. Statistical data shows that it usually takes a full year for a case to be transferred from the Ontario Works program.

In 2004, 1613 cases were referred to the ODSP program, of these:
- 712 cases were granted ODSP
- 32 withdrew or were terminated for reasons other
- 869 remain in the review process
The lengthy and detailed application process, paired with physical and psychological health issues experienced by this particular population necessitates a highly supportive approach to case management.

Regular contacts with a variety of internal and external health and social service professionals and agencies ensure that the needs of this high-risk group are effectively managed. Also, Employment resources, specific to the participant’s abilities are explored to encourage participation, based on the medical documentation provided.

The ODSP Pending Team maintains the file transfer log for all OW files transferred to the local ODSP office as “deemed Disabled” or “Prescribed”. Information is tracked to ensure that the 5-day transfer policy is adhered to and followed.

This unit also takes the lead in maintaining the Liaison committee with the local ODSP Office to ensure that joint protocols are established and maintained with respect to file transfers, referrals for discretionary benefits, family support referrals and eligibility review investigation.

**Sponsorship Breakdown**

In May 2004, a pro-active decision was made to consolidate all sponsorship breakdown cases on one caseload to ensure proper follow-up and maintenance of these cases in preparation for a legislative change proposing possible recovery of payments issued as a result of the breakdown in a sponsorship agreement with the federal Government.

The legislative change became effective December 16, 2004 and as of December 31, 2004, there were 45 active cases meeting the criteria of sponsorship breakdown. At that point, all have been reviewed and referred to Citizenship and Immigration Canada for follow-up and possible reimbursement of benefits paid, and ongoing case management continues to ensure accurate processing of such cases.

**Newcomers**

During the initial contact with the Intake Unit, the applicant may contact an Interpreter Service to assist with this process if language is a barrier. The Department currently has agreements with:

- Settlement and Integration Service Organization
- Francophone Centre
- Cultural Interpreter Services

If language is a barrier, an interview will be scheduled with an interpreter chosen by the applicant.

Specialized caseloads ensure an efficient and effective approach to this population's needs.
Accreditation for Foreign Trained Professionals

It is found that newcomers to Canada who possess the education and skills to exercise their profession or trade are prohibited to work because of the lack of Canadian experience and/or Canadian recognition of their licenses and/or credentials.

In order to assist with the cost of obtaining accreditation for entry into a trade or profession, the Department has established an accreditation project for participants who have certificates, licenses and/or credentials issued or conferred outside Canada.

This project was created using Ontario Works Opportunity Funding but is now funded through Ontario Works Employment Assistance.

A variety of professions are involved with the project such as, Physician, electrician, various engineers, pharmacology, accounting, insurance, nursing, pastoral counseling and medical laboratory technology. The project provides Ontario Works participants with funding for translation of documentation, transportation, books, applications, exams, legal and accreditation / license fees and other miscellaneous expenses.

Temporary Care

All applicants and/or Ontario Works participants in receipt of Temporary Care are assigned to a specific case manager. The number of temporary care cases has been consistent and currently stands at 299 participants.

In order to assist with the living arrangements for a Temporary Care child, a Home
Management worker becomes involved in the initial intake and on an ongoing basis if required. This ensures that needs and resources are linked efficiently.

A home visit by the Home Management worker may assist in determining if the accommodations are conducive to promoting a healthy living environment. This home visit is usually completed within one month of grant date and as necessary afterwards.

Other relevant community agencies may become involved such as:

- Legal aid clinics (custody and guardianship issues)
- Children's Aid Societies, counseling and mediation services and
- School personnel
- Raising Our Children's Kids

This process ensures that temporary care benefits are paid correctly and for the right intent.

Regular monitoring of status of the temporary care dependent involves the issuance of a "temporary care update letter" at six months intervals requesting case-specific information.

Follow-up and monitoring of attendance at school is ensured for all Temporary Care Dependents aged 16 and 17.

**Mandatory Literacy Testing**

Literacy testing is administered during the application process. Prior to the new application process, it was administered as part of the Employment Information Session. It is now administered by the case manager at the time of application.

The results of the literacy test are used to complete an employability assessment to help identify barriers to employment. The test will be taken into consideration when determining if an in-depth Literacy Assessment is necessary. The number of literacy tests has decreased due to recidivism as the tests are administered once in a lifetime.

**Ongoing Case Management**

There are seven Ontario Works Case Management teams located at three locations in the City.

There are two specialty teams:

- Youth & Newcomers Team (students, temporary care, LEAP and refugees)
- Pending ODSP

There are also specialty caseloads:

- One self-employment caseload for those participants who are involved in an independent or assisted self-employment activity
- Nine employable caseloads that consists of individuals who are employable:
  - with no obvious barriers to employment,
  - have been employed full time in the past year and not on assistance in the past six months
  - Eligible for assistance or
  - Presently employed with earnings of at least 50% of their monthly entitlement.
Remaining benefit units are distributed among the balance of five Ontario Works teams associated with the Employment and Income Support Branch at the three locations.

Each of the three locations is supported by Childcare Subsidy Workers to ensure appropriate referrals and maximize the use of employment programs for sole support parents in formal and informal childcare.

**LEAP Program Design and Integration with Ontario Works**

Although the LEAP program is targeted to teen parents and their children, it is first and foremost an Ontario Works Employment Assistance Program.

Clients in receipt of ODSP may also be eligible for participation in the LEAP program.

At present four workers have direct contact with the attendance offices, guidance offices and/or the teachers, as required. They are also members of the LEAP Advisory Committee and of three working committees: The Hamilton-Wentworth Board of Education Truancy Committee, Wilma’s Place Interagency Committee, and the Parkview Vocational Student Assessment Committee. This experience and existing linkages within the school system form the basis for ongoing program coordination for the learning component of the LEAP program.

Each participant must complete a Participation Agreement. The LEAP program introduces an addendum to the Participation Agreement for teen parents with a mandatory requirement. The "individual service plan" outlines each teen parent’s participation in LEAP, describes roles and responsibilities and identifies service providers. Both of these documents support a single, focused and seamless continuum of service. This process is based on the community involvement of case managers and home management staff, as well as on the need to ensure that needs for LEAP participants are met in all three components of the program.

At regular three-month updates, LEAP participant’s activities are reviewed regarding work/school/goals and plans. These discussions are reflected in their individual service plans.

The Home Management Program provides services that focus on the facilitation of education, parenting, and life skills in individual and group formats. The staff delivering this program have extensive knowledge with both community and government services. The program has developed a number of linkages with high-risk families, including relationships with: Healthy Babies/Healthy Children, Ontario Early Years Centres, child care centres, Ontario Works, school boards and the young parent resource centres, participants who have graduated from the program and are not pursuing college or university studies are referred to the Sole Support Parent or Youth Track Workshops/Program.

LEAP encourages participants to obtain summer employment or volunteer work placements to gain employment experience for later employment or college/university entry. As well, many LEAP Participants are completing high school through home study/correspondence and working and/or volunteering part time.

LEAP is promoted through:

- Ontario Works cheque inserts
- Pamphlets and posters with tear off sheets which are circulated in community agencies and schools
- Advertisements at employment expos and fairs
- Staff presentations in schools and agencies with youth mandates
- Collaborative case planning for LEAP participants is a priority for the case managers. Two committees have been established to ensure participants have access to all services in the community: The LEAP Community Advisory Committee and the LEAP Internal Working Committee. Individual Service Plans are developed by LEAP Case Co-ordinators in conjunction with a variety of community partners.

**Home Visit Pilot Project**

A comprehensive Evaluation of the Ontario Works Home Visit Pilot Program was completed February, 2005. The methodology included Client Satisfaction Surveys and Staff Focus Groups to determine conclusions as to future usage of Home Visits. The overall experience for both staff and clients was very positive and well received. Areas of concern for staff still revolve around coverage while on the road and duplication of work. For clients a main concern was the scheduling of Home Visits and having to wait long periods of time for staff to arrive. The Home Visit Study is available upon request.

As to next steps Ontario Works intends to continue Home Visits on the present limited basis of two staff per team, one day out per week with six visits per day. Management will be reviewing all appropriate material and feedback to determine the possibility of the project expansion. It should be noted that one of the strong positive findings from a client point of view revolved around social inclusion. Home visits, in and of themselves, made the client's comfort level much higher and felt much more open to changes in their lives.

**Support To Victims of Family Violence**

*Routine Universal Comprehensive Screening (RUCS)*

The Public Health and Community Services Department has developed a Routine Universal Comprehensive Screening process (RUCS) for domestic violence identification.

The Department is working with community partners, and where appropriate follow-up with inquest results and recommendations and provide a supportive structure for implementation of initiatives across the department.

An outcome of this initiative is to develop a guideline for a coordinated, collaborative approach between sectors and organizations regarding domestic violence.

**Collaborative Case Planning**

**Child Welfare Linkages**

Protocols have been established between the City of Hamilton’s Children’s Aid and Catholic Children’s Aid Societies (CAS/CCAS) and the Department to ensure that procedures enhance communication and collaboration. Set protocols included:

- Reporting
- Service co-ordination
• Service delivery

Currently, there is a Public Health Nurse (PHN) assigned to the Children’s Aid Society and a half time nurse assigned to the Catholic Children's Aid Society. Their role is to visit families involved with CAS/CCAS with infants up to 6 months of age in order to assess the infant's health and development. CAS workers consult with the PHN regarding health concerns, growth and development, immunization and community resources.

There is also an existing liaison between the Ontario Works Program, Public Health programs and the CAS/CCAS. Program Managers from each organization provide resource supports to facilitate communication and timely response.

Public Health Nurses and designated case managers also provide training to the CAS workers and support foster parent training.

There is a process to track and monitor referrals to CAS/CCAS by Public Health and Community Services Department staff.

Equal Access Program

The Equal Access program is a mandated Public Health Program under the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. This program addresses issues affecting individuals, disadvantaged or marginalized groups and visible minorities, who face barriers in accessing health programs. These barriers may include but are not limited to literacy level, language, culture, geography, social factors, education, and economic circumstances, mental and physical ability (Mandatory Health Programs and Services Guidelines, 1997).

The staff assigned to this Program provides consultation and support to staff regarding disease prevention and health promotion strategies and activities for individuals and families served by the Department.

The extensive outreach approach of this program results in enhanced and trusting partnerships throughout the Department and the City as a whole.

As the Program evolved within the Branch and the Department, its philosophy and objectives are recognized as important in all programs delivered under the PH & CS including the financial and employment support programs. As such, staff from the Equal Access Programs is consulted and act as resources for the Department for new initiatives and service delivery.

Special Income Program

This program offers discretionary assistance with extraordinary living expenses for participants in receipt of social assistance under the Ontario Disability Support Program or the Ontario Works Program. The majority of the items provided are health related. The Special Income program offers emergency dental services, dentures, orthopedics, optical, funerals, mobility aids, etc.

The City of Hamilton also provides health related items to non-social assistance residents based on a needs test administered by a Case Aide.
Recreation

A referral process has been established for Ontario Works families who would benefit from a recreation program. The City of Hamilton promotes Community Access to Everyone for Recreation Policy (CARE).

The program is based on the premise that all citizens regardless of income should be able to benefit from participation in recreation for the following reasons:

- Youth involved in meaningful recreation activities are less likely to participate in negative social behaviour, reducing crime and vandalism; and make more positive lifestyle choices.

- Recreation promotes social and physical skills development in children. Stress can be reduced and overall physical and mental health improved. It provides leadership opportunities to build stronger individuals, families and communities.

Youth Serving Agencies Network (YSAN)

YSAN's Grow Program strives to provide recreational and cultural opportunities to all the OW youth of Hamilton. The Grow Program was first initiated in 1999 and consists of sixteen organizations that work together to meet the goals of YSAN. Together, these organizations help to remove the barriers families on social assistance face and to enable children to have access to all the cultural and recreational programs the City and its associations have to offer.

In order to ensure access to all the programs, a coordinator is assigned to each family. This person establishes an ongoing relationship with the family and is responsible for keeping parents informed of upcoming programs. The coordinator also assists with registration in the programs, transportation, and payment for uniforms and sports equipment.

Family Support

The Ontario Works Act provides for a Family Support Worker function to help applicants and participants obtain support. Family Support Workers (FSWs) assist Ontario Works participants by:

- Facilitating the completion of private agreements between payors and participants.

- Locating absent parent (payors whose whereabouts are unknown).

- Acting as a liaison between the participant and the Family Responsibility Office (FRO).

- Completing court documents necessary to obtain support.

- Assisting the participant in court.

This is a cost-effective program that generates a significant income for sole support parents and results in a reduction of social assistance expenditures and thereby reducing their dependence on Ontario Works.

Once eligibility is established, referrals are made to the Family Support Unit to help participants and their dependents pursue support from those who have a legal obligation. In general, the Family Support Unit pursues support through private
agreements, court orders and variations. FSWs also go to court to defend arrears owing to Ontario Works Delivery Agents and where appropriate, the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

The Enhanced Family Support Initiative was initiated with a proposal to the Ministry in September 2000. The City of Hamilton has exceeded its targets over the past three years and has entered into the second phase of the initiative from 2003 to 2006. Funding for this initiative has increased since the original proposal submitted in the year 2000. The allocation for Hamilton in 2004 and 2005 was $213,000. Since the start of the Enhanced Family Support Initiative, budgets were created on a quarterly basis. A new approach has taken effect for 2005. The EFSI reports along with supporting material are being posted on the OW Extranet site. The EFSI reports will be updated on a monthly basis. Enhancing this activity will help greater numbers of participants to obtain spousal and child support they need and to end “welfare” dependency.

Three Family Support staff was hired with funds from this initiative that include an Enforcement Clerk and two Family Support Workers. The additional staff was hired to increase the percentage of support provisions in place, and to increase the average amount of support in pay 10% above the baseline. All delivery agents have 30 months to achieve their 10% targets for the 2nd phase of funding from 1/4/03 to 1/3/06. In addition, all delivery agents are now being requested to defend arrears where appropriate for other delivery agents and MCSS. In December 2003, Hamilton exceeded the combined target by 138.84%. Hamilton also met and exceeded its target for 2004. We reached 131.60%, and are currently at 101.84% for the first quarter of 2005. The following implementation of new methods are being completed:

- Building stronger working relationships with local courts, lawyers and FRO. Recently, the Ministry of the Attorney General made legislative changes to the Family Law Rules in Ontario. In order to improve our existing performance levels, the City of Hamilton recently purchased Divorce Mate Software Program for the staff.
- Marketing Family Support as a key aspect of moving off social assistance.
- Process serving our court documents to ensure proper service with court applications and to improve time lines in obtaining an order.
- Developing sole support parent workshops for participants.
- Integrating Family Support with Housing and Child Care Programs.
- Set performance objectives for the team.
- Enhance support within team structure of verification and CVP teams.

**Ontario Works Child Care**

Child care is an essential part of the support provided to Ontario Works participants to maximize their employment and training opportunities. The benefits of child care are twofold, both for the children and for support to the parents in employment activities. Child care supports are offered in a coordinated manner where the participant chooses either an informal or formal childcare arrangement dependant upon their circumstances.
The seamless transition of participants from Ontario Works to paid employment or other employment activities is critical to the success of the individual's goal. Childcare services may include:

- Individualized childcare planning where information is given which enable the participant to make an informed choice
- Information sessions
- Connections with different types of childcare providers including recreation
- Brokerage for care giver training
- Advocate for specific or flexible childcare arrangements
- Liaison with various community agencies

As the participants' employment activities change, the type of child care service reflects their individual needs.

**Child Care Service Profile**

Child care Subsidy is a program which provides financial assistance to eligible families requiring child care for children aged three weeks to 12 years old, (i.e., the day of the child’s 13th birthday).

It is a cost-shared program with the Province and governed through the Day Nurseries Act, the Ontario Works Act and the regulations related to both of these pieces of legislation.

While some aspects of subsidized childcare apply to any client, there are important differences between clients eligible for subsidy through the Day Nurseries Act and those eligible through Ontario Works.

Hamilton policies are consistent with the Day Nurseries Act and Fee Subsidy Guidelines issued by the Province, but where these guidelines may lack specificity or clear direction, Hamilton follows guidelines contained in the Ontario Works Act, e.g. in interpreting policy related to eligibility of Self Employed Individuals, Hamilton follows the Ontario Works guidelines.

The process for referral and access to subsidy for child care is streamlined and provides LEAP participants with assistance in obtaining a child care space and subsidy at a desired centre. Where needed, informal child care is offered as alternative.

**MONITORING FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY**

**Application Process**

In order to support the ongoing monitoring of financial eligibility, at the point of application the case manager will:

- Review intake files the day before the appointment to compare intake information and 3rd party interface information to identify any discrepancies
- Provide information to applicant on 3rd party information interface checks that have been received back (Equifax, EI, MECA, MTO)
- Conduct review of pre-existing or new fraud complaints on the file
- Negotiate the initial Participation Agreement and make appropriate referrals to in house employment programs or community agencies
- Establish eligibility/ineligibility decisions for Ontario Works
- Review controversial cases with Program Manager to ensure eligibility is in compliance with Directives
- Check for potential eligibility for ODSP and initiate Disability Adjudication Unit (DAU) referral
- Complete file transfers from other CMSM's to ensure ongoing eligibility. This includes the completion of the Form 1, 3, PA and any assignments as necessary
- Notify participants of any outcomes that affect his/her eligibility
- Process mail daily to ensure information in SDMT is accurate and up to date
- Complete referrals to Eligibility Review or Family Support Unit as necessary

Consolidated Verification Process (CVP)

There are 19 CVP workers and four Clerks distributed throughout the three sites. CVP objectives include:

- To amalgamate several processes into a single integrated verification process designed to complete case reviews
- To ensure that participants receive the correct amount of financial assistance
- To improve program integrity within the social assistance program
- CVP flags cases for various reasons. Cases are reviewed and updated according to the case flags. This process supports the ongoing monitoring of eligibility. With the use of third party information a financial review of the case is completed to ensure the case is receiving the correct amount of assistance and the case reflects the true make up of the benefit unit. During the CVP interview often sources of income are discovered which may impact the case by being ineligible, causing overpayments or possible referrals to the ERO unit for further investigation. Within this function a number of cases get referred to the family support unit for support not in pay. The function of CVP serves as an audit on all cases to ensure correct legislative decisions are being adhered to and correct financial assistance is being delivered. The CVP unit ensures the correct overpayment has been created and all documentation exists on file to support the overpayment.

Eligibility Review

The Ontario Works program includes an eligibility review function. The Eligibility Review Unit currently has:

- nine Eligibility Review Officers (EROs)
- six dedicated to current incoming complaints and fraud investigations
- three dedicated to working on the backlog of complaints and screening/assigning new complaints

Much of the work done by the staff in this unit begins at the application stage in conjunction with the Case manager. Review and consultation of these cases can determine whether the participant is reporting accurate information or attempting to receive benefits to which he/she is not eligible. This ensures that eligibility integrity is
maintained. Effort is taken to prevent fraud from occurring in the first place.

For active Ontario Works files, the Eligibility Review Officers requests any necessary third party information, calculates the overpayments if applicable and prepares a recommendation for the Caseworker, documenting the actions that need to be taken. Where applicable, the Eligibility Review Officers prepare cases for referrals to the police department where intent to defraud exists.

For inactive files, the Eligibility Review Officers updates the SDMT pages and applies the overpayments where necessary. If applicable, the Eligibility Review Officers prepare cases for referrals to the police department when intent to defraud exists.

The Eligibility Review Officers have developed good working relationships with the local police as well as other community and government agencies including the Crown Attorney's office. All information sharing is done within the parameters of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and other relevant legislation.

Overpayment Recovery

As referenced in the Service Profile, an increase in recoverable overpayments is forecast as there are continuous efforts to improve business procedures to both prevent overpayments and increase recovery activities as follows:

- Increase reviews of both active and inactive portable overpayments
- Additional overpayment recovery officer to enhance the pursuit of inactive cases
- The enforcement of restitution orders, requests for garnishments and attending small claims court for enforcement.

There are 3 Overpayment Recovery Officers located at the main office however there are procedures in place to accept and receive payments at all three Ontario Works sites.

Overpayment Recovery Officers are responsible for the following:

- Pursuing collection of overpayments on inactive cases and negotiating payment schedules
- Calculating and reconciling all third party payments (e.g. Insurance Benefits, WSIB, EI, CPP, Liens, Defaulting Sponsors etc...)
- Receiving and processing all payments from participants and third parties and updating all databases
- Maintaining stand alone overpayment recovery system CAPRS (Computer Assisted Payment Recovery System) and mailing out statements on inactive cases
- Receiving, reviewing and verifying accuracy of all overpayments under the Portability of Overpayments - Touch the File Initiative for temporary uncollectible overpayments incurred in Hamilton or with other Service Delivery Agents
- Ensuring that physical file contains all supporting documentation to substantiate the overpayment as per the Ontario Works physical file standards
- Processing and enforcing court ordered restitution payments
• Acting as a resource and providing training to staff on all issues relating to assignments and overpayments

The accuracy of overpayments is monitored through the following measures:

• The Case Managers review all overpayments at the time they are incurred. The Caseworker performs checks and balances on new overpayments and the reason for the overpayment. All newly created overpayments must be accompanied by proper file documentation and a note in SDMT explaining the reason for the overpayment. Any overpayments that cannot be explained are forwarded to the Program Manager and/or the training unit for review.

• All staff in the Eligibility Review Unit (ERO) Eligibility Review Officers, Overpayment Recovery Officers and Case Presenting Officers review eligibility decisions that resulted in overpayments. Further, they also identify decisions made in error and alert the Program Manager who determines if the inaccuracy is an irregularity or if it is a trend by staff that needs to be addressed. Depending on the findings, the Program Manager either addresses the issue with the staff person responsible for the decision and/or refers the matter to the training unit if the issue is widespread. Upon case termination, dedicated Overpayment Recovery staff again review the validity of the overpayment and attempt to pursue recovery.

• The Department's Training Unit provides ongoing refresher training to enhance the knowledge staff regarding eligibility decisions based on legislation, policy and procedures. Any new information released by the Ministry is standing items on monthly meeting agendas.

• Upon application and every twelve months, the Rights and Responsibilities form is reviewed with participants. The focus of the newly developed 'Client Path' was to streamline the process and to ensure accuracy in decision making.

**Service planning should include strategies to ensure that reliable data is tracked throughout the year to ensure its availability for ongoing service planning. The percent of cases with overpayments or arrears and average amount of outstanding active overpayment by case although the Service Plan Guidelines provided these figures, the calculation is not provided, and therefore, we were unable to confirm the validity of the numbers.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS BRANCH

The Community Programs Branch has multi-disciplinary teams comprised of addictions counselors, nurses, outreach workers, social services workers and social workers.

The focus of the branch is to maximize human potential and ensure access to all public health programs for persons and groups who are hard to reach. The barriers for the branch target groups are complex and are rooted in poverty, language, culture, violence, age, mental illness, addictions, education and literacy levels, economic circumstances, and physical ability. Supported case planning and co-coordinated service provision are ensured through collaboration with community partners.

The Community Programs Branch offers the services listed below.
Mental Health Prevention

Mandated Provincial Public Health Programs provide a number of services to those suffering from mental illness and support for their families. The Community Mental Health Prevention and Outreach Services Program are designed on a capacity building approach involving service contracts with numerous outside agencies. These results in strong partnerships established within the Department and the community.

In collaboration with community partners, participants are managed in a human and caring manner. Public Health Nurses and Outreach workers work collaboratively to ensure that basic financial, medical needs and shelter needs are met. Consultation, referrals and follow-ups are consistent to assist and support the participants through an often stressful and daunting application process (financial assistance, housing, etc.).

Emergency interventions are ensured through Crisis Outreach Assessment Support Team (COAST) and a Public Health Nurse is also present on the Community Health Bus, the Needle Exchange Van and the Street Health Centre to address any urgent issues and refer as necessary.

Addictions, Assessments And Counseling

Alcohol, Drug and Gambling Services offers assessment, counseling and treatment for individuals with addiction problems. Services are offered both in English and in French.

New Choices program offers combined services for pregnant/parenting women and their children regarding substance use.

Residential Care Facilities And Hostels Unit

The Residential Care Facilities and Hostels Unit acts as the service manager for the emergency hostel and domiciliary hostel programs.

The Hostel Program staff work collaboratively with community agencies such as Mission Services, Good Shepherd Centre, Wesley Urban Ministries, Salvation Army and Violence Against Women Shelters as well as Outreach Workers and Public Health Nurses. Case managers provide intake services and ongoing financial assistance to individuals accessing emergency shelter.

The unit has two Ontario Works Case Managers that provide ongoing case management services to individuals who are no longer in the emergency shelter system, but reside in unstable housing and are at risk of homelessness.

The unit is responsible for managing after hour requests for emergency shelter.

The Residential Care Facility (RCF) Program Staff work closely with RCF operators, Hamilton Community Care Access Centre, various community support agencies, i.e. Community Mental Health Association, Wellington Psychiatric and Outreach Program, Hamilton Program for Schizophrenia to provide support and case management to tenants of residential care facilities funded as domiciliary hostels.

The Unit houses the Registered Nurse Inspectors who enforce Schedule 20 of the City's Licensing By-Law and its guidelines that are funded through licensing fees through the Licensing and Standards Department of the City Of Hamilton.

The Residential Care Facilities and Hostel Unit administer the Provincial
Homelessness Initiative Funding which provides support services for homeless persons. This funds work of many community based programs including Housing Help Centre, Living Rock, Wesley Urban Homes, St. Matthews House, the Bridge Program and Out of the Cold.

The Branch works closely with the Food, Shelter and Housing Advisory Committee and the City of Hamilton's, Housing Branch partners to further identify and co-ordinate housing requirements of clients. As a result of the Business Process Review completed on the Emergency Shelters and Residential Care Facilities Unit, we have installed the direct service lines in each of the shelters to facilitate a new form of service delivery in the Shelters.

Since March 2005, the Hostel Case Managers have been completing Ontario Works applications on laptops in the Violence Against Women shelters (Martha House, Inasmuch House, Interval House and Native Women's Centre). It was the first step in providing increased case management services, and a new approach to accessing OW to residents and improved communication between the shelters and our department.

Our next step is to further improve service to residents of interval and transition homes in the following manner:

- Ensuring that residents have their applications for social assistance completed upon entry to the shelter not once they have secured an address

- The Hostel case managers will also consult with shelter staff to determine the estimated length of stay, so that if the resident is in receipt of OW, the Hostel case manager will assume responsibility (temporarily assign the case to their case org) of the OW case until the participant has re-established themselves and their families in the community

- The Hostel case managers will continue to be in the shelters on a regular basis to provide support to the shelters and OW participants.

- Residents of Interval and Transition Homes will receive their Personal Needs Allowance (PNA) from the Service Delivery Model Technology (SDMT). This will ensure continued access to OW benefits such as Back to School and Winter Clothing allowance. (There will be a phasing out of the current PNA distribution process over the month of June.)

As of May 2005 the shelters have been providing the Hostel case managers with the names of residents that are currently in receipt of OW and where appropriate, the case managers are taking over case management of those cases if it is anticipated that the resident will be in the shelter into the following month.

- The Hostel Case Manager will retain the case until the participant relocates into the community. Once the resident secures an address in the community the Hostel Case Manager will get them established and re-assign the case to the original case manager.

We feel that with the Hostel case managers assuming full responsibility for these cases will alleviate confusion and provide a more streamlined case management approach for case
managers and better customer service for residents of these shelters.

Homelessness Project

Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) (2001 to 2003) was introduced as the cornerstone of the Government of Canada National Homelessness Initiative in 2000. This three-year program was designed to support local efforts to alleviate and prevent homelessness. Further funding has been secured for the period 2004 to 2006 to focus on meeting community priorities in the areas of transitional housing, aboriginal housing and the health needs to support citizens of our community.

Community Health Bus

The Community Health Bus (CHB) is a mobile health, social service, medical and dental clinic operated by the Healthy Lifestyle and Youth Program of Public Health and Community Services Department. The CHB provides free services to targeted populations such as Children, Youth, and Newcomers living in the downtown area. As such, a great collaboration exists between the staff assigned to both Programs to encourage and assist this population in accessing these services.

Specific Health Bus services include:

- Dental promotion and prevention and treatment
- Issuance of dental forms to Ontario Works clients
- Nurse Practitioner availability
- Immunization
- Health promotion/counseling/referrals and
- Ontario Works employment information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Performance Targets</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Case Management Forecast</th>
<th>Source(s)</th>
<th>Prior Year Actual</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average monthly caseload</td>
<td>Benefit Unit Summary Report</td>
<td>10,731</td>
<td>10,502</td>
<td>11,500</td>
<td>11,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>(number of singles and families including temporary care assistance recipients)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Average monthly number of Ontario Works participants with participation requirements</td>
<td>Benefit Unit Summary Report</td>
<td>12,439</td>
<td>11,672</td>
<td>12,620</td>
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<td>Average monthly number of Ontario Works participants with deferred participation requirements</td>
<td>EA Deferrals and Restrictions Report</td>
<td>3,337</td>
<td>3,400</td>
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<td>3,545</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case Management Forecast</td>
<td>Source(s)</td>
<td>Prior Year Actual</td>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>Year 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average participant to worker ratio</td>
<td>Delivery Agent</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>114</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average intensive participant to worker ratio</td>
<td>Delivery Agent</td>
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<td>Average monthly number of ODSP participants</td>
<td>EA Action Report</td>
<td>246</td>
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<td>Percentage of cases on assistance less than 4</td>
<td>Data Resource Guide</td>
<td>19%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of cases on assistance between 4 months and less than 1 year</td>
<td>Data Resource Guide</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>29%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of cases on assistance between 1 year and less than 2 years</td>
<td>Data Resource Guide</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
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<td>20.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of cases on assistance 2 years or more</td>
<td>Data Resource Guide</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of participants with earnings from employment</td>
<td>Average Time/Average Earnings Report</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>17%</td>
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<td>Number of cases exiting with employment income</td>
<td>Data Resource Guide **** See note</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>143</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average monthly number of sole support parents</td>
<td>Benefit Unit Summary Report and EA Parents and Child Support Report</td>
<td>4,428</td>
<td>4,456</td>
<td>4,234</td>
<td>4,023</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average support in pay (taxable and non-taxable)</td>
<td>EFSI Quarterly Reports</td>
<td>213.13</td>
<td>230.80</td>
<td>243.00</td>
<td>249.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of sole support parent cases with support provision in place</td>
<td>EFSI Quarterly Reports</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of cases exiting with support income</td>
<td>EFSI Quarterly Reports</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of cases with overpayments or arrears</td>
<td>Overpayments and Arrears Report</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>33%</td>
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<td>Percentage of cases with an overpayment being collected</td>
<td>Collected Overpayments Report</td>
<td>80.79%</td>
<td>82%</td>
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<td>85%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case Management Forecast</td>
<td>Source(s)</td>
<td>Prior Year Actual</td>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>Year 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average amount of outstanding active overpayment per case</td>
<td>Data Resource Guide</td>
<td>$1171</td>
<td>$1190</td>
<td>$1195</td>
<td>$1200</td>
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**** This does not accurately reflect the number of participants who exit Ontario Works due to employment. This field in SDMT which does not provide accurate data.

EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE SERVICES

EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE SERVICES/PERFORMANCE TARGETS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment Assistance Services</th>
<th>Source(s)</th>
<th>Prior Year Actuals</th>
<th>Year 1 Forecast</th>
<th>Year 2 Forecast</th>
<th>Year 3 Forecast</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of participants provided with Level 1 services only</td>
<td>YTD Report</td>
<td>54.8%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>54%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of participants provided with Level 2 services</td>
<td>YTD Report</td>
<td>36.3%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of participants provided with Level 3 services</td>
<td>YTD Report</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average monthly number of 16 and 17 year old parents without high school</td>
<td>EA Parents and Child Support Report (total with LEAP requirements who started a LEAP activity)</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average monthly number of 18 to 21 year old parents without high school</td>
<td>Data Resource Guide</td>
<td>733</td>
<td>733</td>
<td>733</td>
<td>733</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average monthly number of LEAP participants</td>
<td>EA Parents and Child Support Report and YTD Report</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of LEAP graduates</td>
<td>YTD Report</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of placements compared to participants with requirements</td>
<td>Data Resource Guide</td>
<td>9.03%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of participants exiting through Ontario Works rent supplement option</td>
<td>Delivery Agent</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of participants in extended employment placement</td>
<td>Delivery Agent</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of participants provided with ESUB</td>
<td>Data Resource Guide</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of participants provided with an advance child care payment</td>
<td>Data Resource Guide</td>
<td>.2%</td>
<td>.24%</td>
<td>.30%</td>
<td>.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of participants receiving Ontario Works child care and/or regular child care subsidies (DNA)</td>
<td>Childcare Management System</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of participants provided with child care support through earnings exemptions for child care expenses</td>
<td>Data Resource Guide</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Information and referral to community agencies are provided to the participant by their case manager or employment development consultant during employment interviews and participation agreement updates. Basic assessment and referral to employment and training is the responsibility of the Case Manager. PAs may also be completed by employment development consultants who work in the "in house" employment programs.

EP/CP Consultants on the teams undertake both employment and community placement activities. They are responsible for screening and matching participants to employment and community placement positions. Further, they market employment services to employers in the community. Training incentives and human resources support may also be offered. EP/CP staff also arranges employment fairs for employers and have employer information sessions for all case managers.

CP/EP Consultants work with community placement sponsors to provide a range of employment experiences at different levels. Participants are encouraged to develop their own placements with community agencies to enhance skills that will increase their marketability.

**Level One – Basic Service**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>52%</td>
<td>54.8%</td>
<td>53.6%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Level One projections are based on the following:

- Ongoing review of the caseload to ensure that participants are placed in the correct level of service
- Changes made to the Employment Information Sessions which highlight participant employment strengths and weaknesses (resulting in effective participation agreements)
- Increased participant contact (also resulting in reduced caseloads)
- Greater emphasis on participant responsibility
- Increased participant awareness of employment and training opportunities
- Increased referrals to community training resources

**Level Two – Intermediate Services**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Active Participants</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>36.3%</td>
<td>37.9%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Level Two projections are based on the following:

- Increased participant contact
- Increased outreach to employers
- Increased awareness of community resources by the case manager
- Increased outreach (advertising of community resources) to participants
- Impact of Literacy screening and referrals to literacy providers
- Increase in quality referrals from case managers to Employment Placement as a result of case management focus
- Focus on “employable” participants through specialty caseloads
- Impact of Advanced Case Management Development training

**Community Participation**

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. They are screened and matched by Ontario Works staff to provide the best fit.
- 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 a short periods of time although less emphasis is being placed on this component of CP.

**Employment Placement**

Employment Placement screens and matches employment-ready Ontario Works participants to available jobs. The service is delivered in-house. The City of Hamilton also purchases the service from seven agencies in the community:
• Marafon Consulting
• YWCA
• Hamilton Separate School Board
• Settlement and Integration Services Organization
• Amity Goodwill
• Path Employment Services
• St. Joseph's Immigrant Women's Centre

It is anticipated that 20% of placements will be employment placements without incentives.

Basic Education – Literacy
The results of the literacy test are one of many tools used to complete an employability assessment to help identify barriers to employment. For select participants an in-depth Literacy Assessment is completed by community partners who can impartially recommend a literacy-training plan to be provided by one of the educational community agencies.

Basic education consists of services providing basic literacy skills, academic upgrading and English as a second language. Ontario Works recognizes the importance of participants gaining these basics skills to be successful in gaining employment. The City of Hamilton has many resources, which address the basic educational needs of Ontario Works participants. On an ongoing basis, over 3000 participants are enrolled in some form of basic education.

Level Three – Advanced Services

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Active Participants</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Level Three projections are based on the following:
- Increased focus on Employment Placement
- CP outreach to non-profit organizations
- Outreach to employer community regarding supportive employment opportunities.
- Renewed assisted self-employment services

Employment Placement With Incentives
It is projected that the balance (80%) of the employment placements is enhanced job placements with incentives.

The reasons that supports this projection are:
- Recognize the additional supports required to achieve employment for the harder to service caseload
- Provide incentive to the employer to invest in the employee
- Need to provide job retention services through human resource supports.
WSIB coverage is an incentive to employers

**Self Employment**

As part of the employment assistance measures that are defined by the Ontario Works Act, Ontario Works participants are able to pursue a self-employment activity as a means of exiting Ontario Works assistance. Participants who are interested and have a business idea that merits further development are referred to supports to self-employment.

There are two types of self-employment activities, independent self-employment and assisted self-employment.

**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 and approval and regular monitoring, participants can manage their own self-employment development. A specialized caseload has been established to support participants involved in this activity.

**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 for self-employment development to undertake individualized self-employment planning.

The Small Business Enterprise Centre of the City of Hamilton's Economic Development Department began the delivery of the Assisted Self Employment Development Program. The Small Business Enterprise Centre is paid on a fixed fee payment schedule based on designated milestones.

A specialized Ontario Works case manager monitors participant compliance to Ontario Works and achievements through the assisted self-employment process.

It is anticipated that 60 participants will complete the 60-week program on an annual basis.

**Pre-Employment Supports**

Services Canada funds the following pre-employment programs:

- Employment Strategies Program
- Sole Support Employment Program
- Youth Track Employment Program
- Training Preparation Program (Skills to Work)

**Programs' curriculums includes:**

- Job Search Techniques
- Basic resume preparation
- Job Seeking/Keeping Skill Development
- Interview Techniques
- WHMIS
- Job Retention Skill Development
- Safety in the Workplace Training
- Job Banks
- Ontario Works Job Website (www.hamilton.on.ca/owjobs)
- Access to Community Participation and Employment Placement positions
• Literacy testing and referral to Upgrading programs

The Sole Support Program assists sole support parents in their search for stable employment. The program consists of classroom instruction and one-to-one counseling. Participants attend an orientation session or a one-to-one assessment to identify needs, interests and aptitudes and then participate in a 2 week class.

All participants complete a return to work action plan. If participants are interested in pursuing job-specific skills training, they also participate in a 2-week Training Preparation Program that includes assignments to simulate the expectations required in training environments. The overall goal of the program is to promote labour market attachment for sole support parents thereby reducing the depth of child poverty.

The Employment Strategies Program assists participants in finding the shortest route to sustainable employment. Participants attend a one-to-one assessment to identify needs, interests and aptitudes and then participate in a classroom setting.

All participants complete a return to work action plan and those who are HRIF eligible determine if they wish to access job-specific skills training through Services Canada. Those participants who are not interested in retraining or those who are not HRIF eligible work with employment development counselors to gain the necessary skills required to successfully find employment. Employment counselors work with participants until a successful outcome is achieved.

The Youth Track program assists participants 16 - 25 years of age. Participants attend a one-to-one assessment to identify needs, interests and aptitudes. The session will focus on program content, the purpose of a return to work action plan and the role of the employment counselor.

The program content includes goal setting, job search skills, skill enhancements, individualized marketing strategies, job keeping skills and life skills. Youth track counselors provide referrals to community agencies when necessary and provide support, follow-up and monitoring during the development and implementation of the action plan.

Helping Hands

The Helping Hands Program is a City of Hamilton Program offered through Public Health and Community Services Dept. The Program is designed to provide a temporary work placement of 26 weeks to recipients of Ontario Works and ODSP. The program participants gain work experience by providing home support services to senior and disabled citizens in the city of Hamilton.

Many of the participants who took advantage of this experience provided positive feedback as well as the senior citizens and disabled clients who use the service report that they are very satisfied.

Community Resources For Employment Activities

• Employment Counseling for the hard to serve (sole support, youth, and older workers) through Citizen Action Group
• YWCA sole support employment program
• Two Services Canada sponsored community agency job clubs
• Aboriginal Career Employment Service/Hamilton Regional Indian Centre
• Amity Goodwill Industries
• Association Canadienne Française de l’Ontario
• Canadian Hearing Society
• CNIB
• Job Connect - Citizen Action Group
• Services Canada Resource Centre – Stoney Creek
• Job Connect – Mohawk College
• Employment Assistance Services – Fletcher and Associates Inc.
• Employment Assistance Services – John Howard Society
• Employment Assistance Services – Ontario March of Dimes
• Employment Now Program
• Hamilton Help Centre
• Human Resources Skills Development Canada
• PATH Employment Services
• Settlement & Integration Services Organization
• St. Joseph’s Immigrant Women’s Centre
• Niagara Peninsula Aboriginal Area Management Board

Rent Supplement Option

The City of Hamilton has chosen not to proceed with this initiative at present because there continue to be a number of complexities inherent to the program. There are a number of issues that were put forth to the Ministry of Community and Social Services and Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing that continue to be unresolved.

However, other local collaborations are underway between Housing and Ontario Works such as eviction prevention programs, an on-site addictions worker, an on-site public health worker and an on-site Ontario Works Case Managers.

Addiction Supports Initiative

Mandatory Addiction Treatment is at the planning stages with proposal being submitted October 2005. Presently clients are referred to the Alcohol Drug and Gambling Services and other community resources.

ODSP Recipients Accessing OW Employment Services

ODSP recipients accessing OW employment services is comprised of adult dependents whose parents are in receipt of ODSP – with mandatory requirements – and ODSP recipients and/or their spouses who access these services and resources on a voluntary basis.

By completing a participation agreement, participants are able to access benefits and services that are not currently offered by the Ministry of Community and Social Services. These employment related services will ensure that ODSP recipients increase their quality of life and possibly obtaining remunerative employment that will contribute to their economic well-being.

Enhanced Placement Funding

In 2005, the Department funded a variety of initiatives through Enhanced Placement funding. Through an internal assessment process, projects were reviewed to ensure that they addressed in accordance with the criteria set by the province.

The following list consists of Projects which are being funded for 2005
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECT</th>
<th>BUDGET $</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Additional OW Staff</td>
<td>$1,513,706</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Development Centre</td>
<td>670,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OW Client Profiles</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase of Skill Training/ Accreditation</td>
<td>800,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Manager (Strategic Services)</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDMT Bank Reconciliation</td>
<td>85,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OW File Room</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OW Bus. Process Review</td>
<td>126,690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving Costs East End</td>
<td>230,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCF/Emergency BPR Implementation</td>
<td>150,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pediculosis (Bug Buster) 2004-05</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhancement Upper James</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing / OW Linkages</td>
<td>150,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal of Approved/ Unapproved Items</td>
<td>3,875,396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Funding</td>
<td>$5,103,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION FOUR

4.0 ACHIEVING INCREASED EMPLOYMENT EARNINGS

Overview

The face of Hamilton’s economy is changing. In 2001, manufacturing, retail trade and health care and social services accounted for nearly one half of all jobs in Hamilton. For the future, the city’s Economic Development Strategy and the HR Matters Study are forecasting a shift in the type of job that the city will provide as well as a skills shortage to fill those positions. Key clusters to watch include the airport, the biotech industry, advanced manufacturing, the film industry, agriculture, health care, tourism and education. The Ontario Works program is working towards satisfying future skill shortages by increasing the focus on skills training that will result in sustainable employment.

Targeted employment support programs for Ontario Works participants such as sole supports, youth and hard to employ is presently funded in large part by Services Canada Elimination or reduction of that funding will negatively impact upon the quality and quantity of “in-house” employment services.

As part of the planning process, an environmental scan was completed to address the Ministry’s shift in focus from activity based to outcome based funding. Current employment programming was assessed for effectiveness and ideas were explored to enhance services for the future. Most of the current programming is effective and will serve the program well in its continued efforts to increase employment earnings. However, it is also recognized that there are gaps in service that will be explored to increase employment earnings and the ability to place participants in sustainable employment.

Present And Planned Initiatives To Increase Employment Earnings

- There are 10 specialized Employable Caseloads that provide focused and intense employment assistance. Cases are assigned based upon set criteria such as recently employed or graduate from employment readiness or job skills training program. The goal is placement in paid employment or an increase in earnings for those who are currently employed. One of the caseloads focuses on ODSP dependent adults and another focuses on self-employment.

- There is an increased focus on job skills training. With the goal of sustainable employment, an increasing number of participants are screened and placed in job skills training. Additional funding was allocated from Target Placement Funding and employment assistance funding was realigned to meet this need. The initiative has been phased in with supports from Services Canada for staffing costs. The success rate into paid employment and termination from the Ontario Works program is high. Supports to accreditation for foreign-trained professionals have also proven to be a successful intervention for some members of the newcomer population.

- Ontario Works Job Web-site and web-site training. The employment and community placement programs utilize a web-site to allow Ontario Works participants to access information and make application for jobs on-line. It is a
well-used and effective service that is currently under renovation to become more user-friendly. Ontario Works Job Web-site training is available to all participants as the web site is a necessary job search technique.

- Established Employment Services including Employment Resource Centres, Employment Placement, Enhanced Job Placement, Community Participation, Helping Hands, targeted Employment Supports programs (Sole-Support, Youth Track and Employment Strategies), Self-Employment are proven services that increase employment outcomes. They will continue to be monitored, evaluated and adjusted for maximum effectiveness.

- The Career Development Centre opened in February 2005. It is the hub of employment services for the Ontario Works participant in Hamilton. A Labour Market Information Centre will provide assisted state-of-the-art job search supports and information for all citizens of Hamilton. Most Ontario Works employment programs such as employment supports groups, web-site training, purchase of job skills training and Employment Information Sessions are now delivered from the Career Development Centre.

- Hamilton has undertaken an Employment Assessment Centre in partnership with Services Canada. Findings of the Employment Services Assessment Project support the utilization of a common assessment tool and process for all employment services in the City of Hamilton. The Ontario Works program delivers assessment and referral services for all social assistance clients and for those who live in the downtown area of Hamilton. The Assessment Centre is located at the Career Development Centre and opened at the Career Development Centre in July 2005.

- In order to capture accurate data on the SDMT concerning earnings and reason for termination, it will be necessary to review current data input practices and implement new businesses processes.

Job Retention Services

It is evident 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. Potential job maintenance services may include on the job problem solving, child care, family support etc.

The City of Hamilton is participating in a pilot project called JobsNow that started in April 2005 and will continue to May 2007. The purpose of this pilot project is to measure the effectiveness of employment retention services for harder to serve Ontario Works participants. Employment retention services will be offered to participants and employers for up to 18 months after placement. A private sector company, West Coast Group International has been contracted by the Ministry of Community and Social Services to deliver the retention services. It is expected that 2800 Ontario Works participants will be involved in the pilot.

Life Skills Supports

There is a great need for enhanced services to address basic life skills for the Ontario Works participant. The profile of Ontario Works participants and the experience of Ontario Works case managers continue to demonstrate the need for intensive case management and increased personal contacts to manage the day to
day issues that Ontario Works participants face including low social assistance rates, increasing rental and utility costs and the ensuing increase social and family issues. Enhanced services are needed to address basic life skills such as budgeting and home management.

Employment readiness cannot be addressed until basic needs are met and essential skills are addressed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome Measure</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Prior Year Actuals</th>
<th>Year 1 Forecast</th>
<th>Year 2 Forecast</th>
<th>Year 3 Forecast</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage increase in caseload with earnings</td>
<td>Data Resource Guide</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase in average monthly earnings</td>
<td>Data Resource Guide</td>
<td>$512.66</td>
<td>$513.94</td>
<td>$513.94</td>
<td>$513.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase in average number of caseload exiting to employment</td>
<td>Data Resource Guide</td>
<td>67.7</td>
<td>69.7</td>
<td>69.7</td>
<td>69.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage reduction in financial assistance expenditures compared to 2004 forecast</td>
<td>Data Resource Guide</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>.5%</td>
<td>.5%</td>
<td>.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 2004 forecast is based on provincial data distributed by proportional share of caseload

The above targets have not been determined pending further information from the Ministry concerning outcomes and benchmarks.

**Interim targets have been determined based on preliminary information only**

**Awaiting further clarification regarding revised outcomes**
SECTION FIVE

5.0 MONITORING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

As part of the continuous improvement initiative a number of programs are undergoing business process reviews (BPR) to identify efficiencies while maximizing customer service. The following BPRs were completed in 2004 and will guide future planning for the Ontario Works Program:

- Ontario Works BPR – completed. Implementation is underway, including internal and external communications, policies and procedures and evaluation
- Special Income BPR is completed and implementation of recommendations is underway
- Emergency Shelters and Residential Care Facilities Unit Business Process Review recommendations are being implemented
- Heuristic Review and Rebuild of Ontario Works Job Website was completed in November 2004 and implemented

Program Policy and Planning Branch is undertaking applied research and evaluation reviews of a number of activities, of which will influence future decision making and planning:

- Career Development Center Consultation (2005)
- Employment Assessment Project (completed 2004)
- Evaluation of Helping Hands Program (underway)
- Ontario Works Client Path Evaluation (completed)
- Ontario Works Home Visiting Pilot Project (completed)
- Customer Satisfaction Survey" for Ontario Works participants and staff (completed)

**Verification of Ongoing Eligibility**

In order to support the ongoing monitoring of financial eligibility, at the point of application the case manager will:

- Review intake files the day before the appointment to compare intake information and 3rd party interface information to identify any discrepancies
- Provide information to applicant on 3rd party information interface checks that have been received back (Equifax, EI, MECA, MTO)
- Conduct review of pre-existing or new fraud complaints on the file
- Negotiate the initial Participation Agreement and make appropriate referrals to in house employment programs or community agencies
- Establish eligibility/ineligibility decisions for Ontario Works
- Review controversial cases with Program Manager to ensure eligibility is in compliance with Directives
- Check for potential eligibility for ODSP and initiate Disability Adjudication Unit (DAU) referral
• Complete file transfers from other CMSM's to ensure ongoing eligibility. This includes the completion of the Form 1, 3, PA and any assignments as necessary
• Notify participants of any outcomes that affect his/her eligibility
• Process mail daily to ensure information in SDMT is accurate and up to date
• Complete referrals to Eligibility Review or Family Support Unit as necessary

Ontario Works Training Unit

The Training Unit is charged with the responsibility for the development and implementation of ongoing Ontario Works legislative training, Ministry initiatives and local guidelines to assist staff in making accurate determinations of eligibility and to ensure that all aspects of the program are in compliance with the Ontario Works Act, legislation and directives.

As part of the ongoing business processes, the Training Unit reviews Ministry legislative and procedural changes and existing local policy and procedures to ensure that legislative changes are incorporated and that local policy reflects compliance.

The Training Units works to ensure compliance with Ontario Works Act, directives and local policy. The addition of an analytical component to the Training Unit has facilitated a pro-active training and data correction by development, measurement and investigation of SDMT data reports, expenditures anomalies and the review of local business processes and best practices required to support the program.

The use of SDMT reports and more specifically, the development of ad hoc reports through SDMT “extract” data, will be instrumental in monitoring trends, anomalies and supporting accountability for program expenditures.

The continuation of the SDMT Trouble Shooter role in the Training Unit is a critical component of the quality assurance piece and expenditure accountability. The position is dedicated to front line response and resolution of day to day SDMT operational issues and the development of training. Most importantly, the position is a critical lead in the identification of errors and local resolution.
SECTION SIX

6.0 BUDGETARY INFORMATION

Ontario Works Employment Assistance

The 2005 budget submission was based upon the following factors:

- The continued decrease in 2005 Employment Assistance funding from the 2003 notional envelope has created a budget pressure of $502,329 (gross) $401,863 (net). As a result, it was necessary to decrease spending in a number of program areas. Areas of decrease include community participation expenses, purchase of service from employment agencies, employment agency fees, self-employment programming, enhanced job placement incentives, and purchase of skills training for Ontario Works participants.

- Services Canada funding for the provision of pre-employment supports is in jeopardy. In past years, Services Canada provided the majority of funding for targeted employment supports. Services Canada guidelines for the provision of employment assistance funding has changed considerably. It is doubtful whether funding will be approved at previous levels for services for Ontario Works participants. This is creating a gap in funding for 2005 and potential service gaps for 2006. Successful employment outcomes are contingent upon the availability of pre-employment services workshops both in house and in the community.

- The Ontario Works program is jointly funding a coordinated Employment and Assessment and Referral Centre with Services Canada. The objective of the centre is to provide employment assessments, referrals and monitoring for unemployed individuals. The EAC will provide ongoing case management support. A Return to Work Action Plan is developed for each client.

- The City of Hamilton Ontario Works program continues to deliver the full range of employment services to meet the needs of Ontario Works participants and ODSP clients. Additionally, services are purchased from community agencies when it is more cost effective.

- A Child Minding room is provided to Ontario Works applicants and participants at the Career Development Centre and the 250 Main and 2255 Barton Street locations. They provide short term care for children while their parents are participating in a range of activities including employment information sessions, participation agreement updates, applications and workshops.

- There are 10 specialized Employable Caseloads that provide focused and intense employment assistance. Cases are assigned based upon set criteria such as recently employed or graduate from employment readiness or job skills training program. The goal is placement in paid employment or an increase in earnings for those who are currently employed. One of the caseloads focuses on ODSP dependent adults and another focuses on self-employment.

- Increased focus on job skills training. With the goal of sustainable employment, an ever increasing number of participants are screened and placed in job skills training. Additional funding was allocated from Target Placement Funding and employment assistance funding was realigned to meet this need. The initiative has been phased in with supports from Services Canada for
staffing costs. The success rate into paid employment and termination from the Ontario Works program is high. Supports to accreditation for foreign-trained professionals have also proven to be a successful intervention for some members of the newcomer population.

- Employment and community placement consultants are assigned to all the Ontario Works case management teams to support case managers in the placement of participants in paid employment and community placements over 30 hours. It has shown that with an increased focus on placements, more successful outcomes are achieved. Although the ultimate goal is a decreased caseload as more participants find sustainable employment, it is also anticipated that there will be greater costs while participants are engaged in employment activities.

- A large number of participants are multi-barri ered and as a result require a higher level of intervention over a lengthier period of time to attain their goals. There are many Ontario Works participants who have not made a permanent transition from Ontario Works to employment. The diverse group of multi-barriered participants tends to have lower levels of education/literacy, less work experience, fewer employment skills, and limited social skills. Many face serious personal and family barriers to employment. This group of participants will not make a successful transition to self-sufficiency without enhanced life skills programming and intensive case management supports.

- Independent and Self-Employment is intended to support participants who are ready to develop a business plan to move to profitable self-employment. The Small Business Enterprise Centre delivers the assisted component of the program. They are paid on a fixed fee payment schedule based on designated milestones. It is also necessary to provide a specialized case load with self-employed participants to address their specific needs.

- There is a need for services that provide a broad spectrum of interventions for Ontario Works participants as many are outside the concept of “the quickest route to employment.” Adequate funding is required to provide better management of their employment activities, purchase of skills training, self-employment options and the resources necessary to provide effective community and employment placements.

- The City of Hamilton continues to serve participants in three different geographic areas of the City – downtown and the east and west ends at Employment Services Centres. A Career Development Centre has been established in the downtown centre with a Labour Market Information Centre.

- The Helping Hands program continues to be a costly yet effective program that provides on the job training and supports for the hard to serve participant.

- The budget forecast for LEAP is based on the available funding within the employment assistance allotment. In Hamilton, funding allows for 292 participants at $4500 per participant. Therefore, the City of Hamilton is able to serve 45% of the 650 eligible participants. All mandatory LEAP participants are served. A higher number of voluntary participants would be served if there were an increase in funding.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 1-Basic</th>
<th>Prior Year Contracted Unit Price</th>
<th>Year 1 Estimated # of Participants &amp; % of Caseload</th>
<th>Year 1 Proposed Unit Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 2-Intermediate</td>
<td>$994</td>
<td>4,391 or 38%</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3-Intensive</td>
<td>$4,353</td>
<td>974 or 8%</td>
<td>$3,494</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment Assistance*</th>
<th>Prior Year</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Budget Submission</td>
<td>8,682,188</td>
<td>9,395,906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approved Budget</td>
<td>8,682,188</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual Expenditures</td>
<td>8,682,188</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Ministry and delivery agent share

**LEAP Incentive Payment: Year 1 Estimated Number of Eligible Recipients**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>50 X $500</th>
<th>Estimated Total Expenditures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$25,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* For planning purposes only. Inclusion does not reflect approval of expenditures.

**Year 1 Estimated Number of Participants Provided with ESUB**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3,043</th>
<th>Estimated Total Expenditures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$770,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ontario Works Cost Of Administration**

The 2005 Ontario Works budget submission reflects the need for an increase due to the following factors:

Employee related expenses including salaries and benefits have increased per the union contract for union staff and council approval for non-union staff to keep salaries competitive and in line with union salaries.

As part of the Public Health and Community Services Department restructuring process, support services for the Ontario Works Program have been established. The Strategic
Services Branch provides continuous improvement activities such as Business Process Reviews and Redesigns, project management support for priority initiatives such as the Career Development Centre, ISU closure and development of the new client service path, marketing strategy, communications, web-based applications, organizational development, and employee health, safety and wellness programs.

The Program Policy and Planning Branch provides program planning, research and evaluation supports as well as support to the Skills Development Flagship, other policy and advocacy support in areas such as poverty reduction, data support and analysis (i.e. for the development of caseload profiles and trends reporting).

The City of Hamilton Ontario Works program has not yet achieved the caseworker to caseload ratio to achieve optimum case management results. In order to reduce the ratio of cases to case managers and provide a higher quality of service, an additional 18 staff were hired on a temporary basis until 2005 with Enhanced Placement Funding. This funding will cease at the end of 2005 which may create budget pressures.

Lease renewals and other administrative costs have resulted in increased accommodation costs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost of Administration</th>
<th>Prior Year Actual</th>
<th>Year 1 Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staffing and Benefits</td>
<td>$13,789,305</td>
<td>$13,602,367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Office Expenses</td>
<td>$2,030,877</td>
<td>$1,460,685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>$238,608</td>
<td>$1,522,593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>$154,324</td>
<td>$104,685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Training</td>
<td>$52,293</td>
<td>$106,395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology and Telephony</td>
<td>$258,470</td>
<td>$446,245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Total</td>
<td>$16,523,877</td>
<td>$17,242,970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total ISU costs</td>
<td>$1,017,096</td>
<td>$462,768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Cost of Administration</td>
<td>$17,540,973</td>
<td>$17,705,738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Monthly Caseload (# of benefit units including temporary care assistance recipients)</td>
<td>10,585</td>
<td>10,502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per case unit subsidy: $/case (Total cost of administration/average monthly caseload x 50%)</td>
<td>$828.58</td>
<td>$842.97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hamilton/Niagara Intake Screening Unit Budget

Human Resources
Recruitment and hiring to the approved complement of 2 Managers, 23 Screeners, 2 Clerical and 1 Local Systems Support/Trainer is the responsibility of the local Ontario Works office in collaboration with the City of Hamilton Human Resource Department.

Facilities
In 2004 a more accurate budget for facility costs, based on actual costs, was projected for Facilities. Prior to 2004 other areas in Public Health & Community Services were subsidizing some of these costs.

Information technology
The IT budget was projected based on cost allocation to City of Hamilton IT services, hardware/software lease renewal arrangements and improvements to the ICE telephony software required at the Intake Screening Unit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISU</th>
<th>Prior Year Actual</th>
<th>Year 1 Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staffing and Benefits</td>
<td>$1,571,865</td>
<td>$767,016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Staffing Costs</td>
<td>13,861</td>
<td>1,723</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>150,763</td>
<td>76,019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Costs</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephony</td>
<td>220,802</td>
<td>85,967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Eligible Expenditures</td>
<td>1,957,291</td>
<td>930,725</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Year 1 budget is from Jan – June/05

Amendment:
Year 1 Budget for ISU Total Eligible Expenditures should be amended to read $854,995. for 2005, not $930,725. as portrayed. This figure is based on the total actuals received according to cost-sharing with other Municipalities**

Child Care

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1 Estimated Number of Advance Child Care Payment Recipients</th>
<th>Estimated Total Expenditures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>$8,280</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>