COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE
Wednesday, August 16, 2023

AGENDA

1. Call to order.

2. Roll call.

3. Disclosure of pecuniary interest and general nature thereof.

4. Adoption of minutes of previous meeting held on June 14, 2023.

5. Delegations: None at time of mailing.

6. Community Services Department **Page**

   a) Department Report 2

   b) Child Care and Early Years Division Report 25

   c) Ontario Works Division Report 29

7. New Business.

8. Closed Meeting: None at time of mailing.

9. Date of next meeting (Wednesday, September 13, 2023) and adjournment.

NOTE: a) **County Council: Wednesday, August 30, 2023.**
b) Submissions received from the public, either orally or in writing may become part of the public record.

COUNTY OF RENFREW

COMMUNITY SERVICES REPORT

TO: Community Services Committee

FROM: Laura LePine, Director of Community Services

DATE: August 16, 2023

SUBJECT: Department Report

INFORMATION

1. **Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Annual Conference Delegations**

At the May 31, 2023 session of County Council, a resolution was adopted which approved delegation requests at the August 20 to 23, 2023 Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Annual Conference in London, Ontario for items that had significance to Committees' Strategic focus.

Staff received confirmation that delegations were approved for the Community Services Committee with the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) to request that the government provide a one-time Transition Grant for the first full year of the Employment Services Transformation (2024) in order to allow our municipality to maintain the same level of support to our clients that we are providing now, and with the Minister of Education to request a higher Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) system space allocation to allow for urgent economic development within our Renfrew County communities, along with a greater emphasis on rural child care spaces, including a review of the workforce crisis across the province.

2. **Treasurer's Report**

Attached as Appendix I is the June 30, 2023 Treasurer's Report for the Community Services Department.

3. **Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP) Investment Plan Approval**

Attached as Appendix II is correspondence from Dan Lawrence, A/Director, Housing Programs Branch, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, regarding Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP) Investment Plan approval.

4. **Rapid Antigen Testing**

Attached as Appendix III is a memo from Dr. Jason Morgenstern, Renfrew County and District Health Unit regarding Rapid Antigen Testing.

5. **Serco Canada Inc.**

On July 26, 2023, Jodi O'Gormon, Managing Director, Employment Services and Katy Mitchell, Senior Employment Services Manager for Serco Canada held a meeting with staff from Ontario Works and Economic Development to overview and discuss their company as it relates to the new Employment Ontario transition. Later in the afternoon, Jodi and Katy along with the Community Services Director and members of the Ontario Works management team travelled to the Town of Laurentian Hills to attend a meeting with the mayors from the Town of Laurentian Hills, United Townships of Head Clara and Maria and Town of Deep River to learn more about the challenges and opportunities in their areas as it relates to the roll-out of the new Employment Ontario. Serco is a global company that is currently working in many sectors around the world including defence, intelligence, federal and provincial governments, ship design, licencing, air traffic control and citizen services. In Ontario, Serco is responsible for the Drive Test Centres. Serco Canada Inc. are managing all employment services in Kingston-Pembroke starting January 1st, 2023 and Kitchener-Waterloo-Barrie on May 1, 2023. On October 1, 2023, full responsibility for the oversight of the Employment Ontario Service Provider network will transfer to Serco. They will be responsible for the planning, design, and delivery of programs and services; provide a Digital Service Delivery Channel; deliver partnerships with service providers that will achieve outcomes for a wide range of clients and assume governance, accountability and oversight of the Employment Ontario programs including the employment programs currently delivered by Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program.

Serco is leading a consortium with Deloitte Canada and Thrive Career Wellness to support the government's vision for a new employment services system in the Kingston-Pembroke catchment area.

The system will be locally responsive and community-based, outcomes- focused, client-centred and will provide simplified and effective pathways for individuals to find sustainable employment.

Working in partnership with non-profit organizations and employability providers in the region, the program will provide employment services for both job seekers and businesses, assess job seekers needs and barriers to the job market and assist with the development of new skills and identifying transferable skills of job seekers to move into more sustainable long-term employment.

On a bi-weekly basis Ontario Works staff meet virtually with Serco staff to prepare for and align their services for the transition October 1, 2023. This was the first time Serco

staff have come to the County of Renfrew and they were impressed with the size, the vibrancy and the collaborative approach that exists in the County.

6. **Presentation to the Renfrew County and District Health Unit Board of Directors**

Attached as Appendix IV is the presentation for the June 27, 2023, Renfrew County and District Health Unit Board of Directors meeting. Both Chair Giardini and the Director of Community Services outlined the Community Services Committee role regarding the various services offered through the department. The presentation was well received by the Renfrew County and District Health Unit Board of Directors.

7. **Public Forum on Intimate Partner Violence**

On June 28, 2023, Community Services staff attended a public forum on Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) at the Petawawa Civic Centre. The forum was hosted by Luke's Place, which is a non-profit organization devoted to improving the safety and experience of women and their children as they proceed through the family law process after fleeing an abusive relationship. The organization is based in Durham Region, but they provide specialized training and engage in research and policy reform advocacy throughout the province, nationally and internationally. The purpose of the forum was to discuss how community service agencies can work together to implement the recommendations from the June 2022 inquest into the deaths of Carol Culleton, Anastasia Kuzyk, Nathalie Warmerdam, and to talk about strategies for ending violence against women. The province's chief coroner, policy analyst from the Office of the Information and Privacy Commission, and chief legal counsel were present to participate in a panel discussion. Members of the public were given an opportunity to pose questions of the panel, and to share personal experiences to help inform the work of addressing system inadequacies.

RESOLUTIONS

8. **Intimate Partner Violence and Violence Against Women**

Recommendation: THAT the Community Services Committee recommend that County Council endorses the following recommendations resulting from the Culleton, Kuzyk & Warmerdam Inquest JURY RECOMMENDATIONS of June 28, 2022:

- Community Services set up a She C.A.N fund utilizing the Homelessness Prevention Program Funding (HPP) allowing for grants per year of up to $5,000. This fund and the funding source to be reviewed annually.
- Community Services introduce annual staff training regarding Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and that this training be offered to other County of Renfrew departments to enhance their skill set when working with the community.
- Community Services create a routine screening process for applicants by asking people if they are currently or have recently experienced IPV, entering through Housing, Ontario Works or ChildCare service entry points in order to streamline supports and services.

- Community Services management participate on local boards/committees that focus on IPV activities in the community.
- Community Services strike an in-house committee consisting of staff from Ontario Works, Community Housing, and ChildCare and Early Years to review how IPV applicants access our services to ensure a seamless, IPV focussed approach.

Background

At the March 28, 2023 meeting of County Council, JoAnne Brooks, Coordinator for End Violence Against Women - Renfrew County (EVA) and Lisa Oegema, Anti-Human Trafficking Program Manager, Victim Services of Renfrew County, appeared before council to highlight the work of the two groups to eliminate violence against women in Renfrew County and to ask council to act and endorse recommendation #1 from the jury at the coroner's inquest into the murders of Carol Culleton, Anastasia Kuzyk and Nathalie Warmerdam. The County of Renfrew has passed a resolution declaring intimate partner violence and violence against women an epidemic following the jury recommendations resulting from the inquest into the murders of Carol Culleton, Anastasia Kuzyk and Nathalie Warmerdam. During the meeting of County Council on March 28, 2023, Community Services Committee was asked to bring back recommendations from the Jury Recommendation document that could be implemented by the County of Renfrew.

9. **Child Care and Early Years Division Report**

Attached as Appendix V is the Child Care and Early Years Division Report, prepared by Ms. Margo Smith, Manager of Child Care and Early Years Services, providing an update on activities.

10. **Ontario Works Division Report**

Attached as Appendix VI is the Ontario Works Division Report prepared by Ms. Andrea Patrick, Manager of Ontario Works, providing an update on activities.

COUNTY OF RENFREW
TREASURER'S REPORT - Community Services Committee
June 2023

	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET	over / (under) VARIANCE	FULL YEAR BUDGET
ONTARIO WORKS	**786,879.24**	**566,324.00**	**220,555.24**	**1,347,203.00**
Depreciation	9,532.61	4,752.00	4,780.61	9,500.00
Homelessness	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Municipal Contribution - City of Pembroke	(243,646.50)	(243,648.00)	1.50	(487,293.00)
Ontario Works Program Administration	2,039,487.87	2,058,054.00	(18,566.13)	4,101,566.00
Other Revenue	(2,404.13)	0.00	(2,404.13)	0.00
Provincial Subsidy - Ontario Works Program Admin	(1,006,558.00)	(1,252,240.00)	245,682.00	(2,275,400.00)
Provincial Subsidy - Social Assistance - Benefits	(5,672,011.72)	(6,310,002.00)	637,990.28	(12,620,000.00)
Social Assistance - Benefits	5,672,011.72	6,314,160.00	(642,148.28)	12,628,330.00
Surplus Adjustment - Depreciation	(9,532.61)	(4,752.00)	(4,780.61)	(9,500.00)
SURPLUS ADJ - CAPITAL	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Surplus Adjustment - TRF From Reserve	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
CHILD CARE	**214,550.53**	**271,925.00**	**(57,374.47)**	**448,793.00**
Administration	82,001.53	93,348.00	(11,346.47)	183,695.00
Core Programs	157,482.00	157,482.00	0.00	314,966.00
Special Needs Resourcing	0.00	(1.00)	1.00	0.00
Special Purpose	0.00	(6.00)	6.00	0.00
EarlyON Centres	(0.00)	46,032.00	(46,032.00)	0.00
Licenced Family Home Day Care	0.00	3.00	(3.00)	0.00
CWELCC ($10/day Child Care)	0.00	3.00	(3.00)	0.00
Municipal Contribution - City of Pembroke	(24,933.00)	(24,936.00)	3.00	(49,868.00)
COMMUNITY HOUSING	**2,750,741.09**	**2,706,782.00**	**43,959.09**	**5,183,055.00**
Admin Charges	105,552.54	105,552.00	0.54	211,105.00
Affordable Housing - Tax Rebate	12,418.24	4,000.00	8,418.24	12,500.00
HR Charges	39,540.00	39,540.00	0.00	79,080.00
IT Charges	17,811.00	17,814.00	(3.00)	35,622.00
Legal	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Municipal Contribution - City of Pembroke	(276,343.50)	(276,342.00)	(1.50)	(552,687.00)
Non Profit Housing	691,255.00	668,286.00	22,969.00	1,336,574.00
Office Supplies	10,000.00	498.00	9,502.00	1,000.00
PROV (FED) SUBSIDY -SOCIAL HOUSING	(613,006.12)	(617,006.00)	3,999.88	(1,234,012.00)
PROV REV - IAH	(22,500.00)	(34,002.00)	11,502.00	(68,000.00)
PROV REV - OPHI	(203,169.35)	(300,552.00)	97,382.65	(601,100.00)
PROV REV - SRF-COVID	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
PROV REV - SSRF-COVID	(496,587.36)	(1,000,002.00)	503,414.64	(2,000,000.00)
PROV REV - HPP	(776,222.12)	(892,848.00)	116,625.88	(1,785,700.00)
RCHC TRANSFER - BASE	2,763,436.50	2,763,438.00	(1.50)	5,526,873.00
RCHC TRANSFER - IAH	22,500.00	34,002.00	(11,502.00)	68,000.00
RCHC TRANSFER - OPHI	203,169.35	300,552.00	(97,382.65)	601,100.00
OPHI Direct	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
RCHC TRANSFER - COVID	0.00	1,000,002.00	(1,000,002.00)	2,000,000.00
RCHC TRANSFER - HPP	776,222.12	892,848.00	(116,625.88)	1,785,700.00
Recoveries - Outside	0.00	0.00	0.00	(235,000.00)
Surplus Adjustment - Capital	496,587.36	0.00	496,587.36	0.00
Surplus Adjustment - TRF from Reserves	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Surplus Adjustment - TRF To Reserves	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Travel	77.43	1,002.00	(924.57)	2,000.00
Total Community Services	**3,752,170.86**	**3,545,031.00**	**207,139.86**	**6,979,051.00**

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Housing Programs Branch

777 Bay Street, 14th Floor
Toronto ON M7A 2J3
Email: dan.lawrence2@ontario.ca

Ministère des Affaires municipales et du Logement

Direction des programmes de logement

777, rue Bay, 14e étage
Toronto ON M7A 2J3
Courriel electronique: dan.lawrence2@ontario.ca

June 7, 2023

Ms. Laura LePine,
Director of Community Services
County of Renfrew
9 International Drive
Pembroke, ON K8A 6W5

Dear Ms. Laura LePine:

Re: Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP) Investment Plan Approval

The Ministry has completed its review of your Investment Plan for the **Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP)** and I am pleased to confirm approval of the plan as attached. Your allocation for the 2023-24 fiscal year has been entered into the Transfer Payment Ontario (TPON) system.

As a reminder, Service Managers are required to report back on their Investment Plans three times throughout the fiscal year in addition to a Year-End Report as per the following due dates:

#	Report	Due Date
1.	Quarter 1 Report	July 15, 2023
2.	Quarter 2 Report	October 15, 2023
3.	Quarter 3 Report	January 15, 2024
4.	Year-end Report	May 31, 2024

The Ministry will review your quarterly report-backs to track progress towards your planned quarterly spending amounts. Service Managers are required to submit all reports through the Ministry's Transfer Payment Ontario (TPON) system.

Capital Funding

Funding for capital projects **must be committed** no later than **November 30, 2023**. Commitment is defined as:

For New Facilities projects

- Signing a Contribution Agreement with the project proponent; and,
- Registering security on title for conversion, conventional, or modular housing projects or submitting an Agreement of Purchase and Sale for acquisition projects.

The executed Agreement of Purchase and Sale must have a closing date no later than March 1, 2024, for acquisition projects.

For Retrofit projects

- Submission of a completed Project Information Form
- An executed loan agreement and promissory note securing the funding entered and submitted in the TPON System for ministry review and approval
- The Service Manager is responsible for selecting all eligible projects, monitoring progress, completion of projects, quality of work, and for advancing funds.
- Once an eligible project has been approved by the Service Manager, a completed Project Information Form along with an executed loan agreement and promissory note securing the funding must be entered and submitted in the TPON System for ministry review and approval to commit the funding.

All capital projects must commence development activities within 120 days of the date of commitment and be completed within two years.

Operating Funding

All operating funds allocated must be fully spent by March 31, 2024. Operating expenditures are considered spent if funds have been paid by March 31, 2024, and if not paid, owed to others as of March 31, 2024, by the Service Manager.

Any funding that is not committed and spent by the above timelines, or that is not used for an eligible expense under the Program Guidelines shall be returned to the Ministry on demand.

Use of Funding

HPP funding is to be used only for eligible program activities and that best efforts are made to ensure the prudent use of these public funds. As with all Ministry-funded programs, program funding should be used to meet program objectives while ensuring value for money. The Ministry retains the right to audit Service Managers expenditures under the program.

Please note that funding allocated for administration must only be used to support the delivery of programs and services funded through the HPP and cannot be used for any other purpose. Administration funding not required for HPP administration may only be redirected to eligible HPP activities.

If you wish to make an announcement related to capital funding, I would like to remind you that you are required to notify your municipal services office well in advance for consideration by the province.

Thank you for your continued commitment to supporting the province's most vulnerable households.

Sincerely,

Dan Lawrence
A/Director, Housing Programs Branch

Enclosure

c. Mila Kolokolnikova, Team Lead, Regional Housing Services, East
Eva Balca, Account Manager, Housing Programs Branch

Renfrew County and District Health Unit

"Optimal Health for All in Renfrew County and District"

Memorandum

Date: **July 31, 2023**

To: **Health Care Providers, Community Partners**

From: **Dr. Jason Morgenstern**

Subject: **Rapid Antigen Testing**

Due to the lower rates of COVID-19, high vaccination rates, and decreasing demand for COVID-19 rapid antigen tests (RATs), the province started winding down the Rapid Antigen Test Public Distribution Program on June 30, 2023.
To support ongoing access to COVID-19 testing through the fall of 2023, Renfrew County and District Health Unit (RCDHU) is making RAT test kits available to residents of Renfrew County and District at the following locations: the RCDHU Pembroke main office, community COVID-19 vaccine clinics, and at community partner locations. RCDHU will continue to distribute RAT test kits while provincial supplies are available.

Through RCDHU, health care providers can order a supply of RAT test kits for their patients, while provincial supplies are available. Each kit contains 20 individual tests and the manufacturer's instructions for home use.

To facilitate timely access to Paxlovid, those who are at high risk for severe outcomes from COVID-19 are encouraged to pick up rapid tests in advance of illness (and the respiratory illness season).

RCDHU is seeking community partners willing to support the distribution of RAT test kits in Renfrew County and District. Interested organizations can order test kits through this link: https://www.rcdhu.com/rapid-antigen-test-kit-order-form/. This initiative is to facilitate timely access to Paxlovid for those who are at high risk for severe outcomes from COVID-19. For more information, visit Rapid testing for at-home use | ontario.ca.

Participating organizations will be responsible for collection of the RAT's if located within City of Pembroke or surrounding area. Deliveries can be arranged to other locations outside of the City of Pembroke and surrounding area. RATs obtained through this program cannot be sold

or offered for sale. Unused, damaged, or expired rapid antigen tests cannot be returned and must be properly disposed of.

When distributing RAT kits to the public, please ensure that each test comes with user instructions, a Ministry of Ontario Factsheet, information on who is eligible for treatment (Paxlovid) and where treatment is available, and self-isolation guidance for those who have respiratory symptoms or a positive result on the rapid test. Finally, the lot number and expiration date must be identified on the package.

If you are interested in obtaining RAT kits, want to partner with RCDHU to distribute kits, or have any questions, please contact RCDHU by telephone at 613-732-3629 extension 977 or email outbreak@rcdhu.com.

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Department of Community Services

Comprised of Three Divisions

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Community Housing

Governed by Housing Services Act, 2011

Program outcomes and funding reporting to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Reports to the Renfrew County Housing Corporation (RCHC) Board of Directors

RCHC 2023 Budget: $17,177,659

Municipal Contribution: $5,464,565

Property Management: rent calculations, lease signings, rent collection, unit inspections, etc.

Client-centered services: tenancy supports for health, social, and financial well-being, interventions and programs to promote housing stability.

Housing Registry for Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI)

Rent Allowances, Emergency Minor Home Repairs, Ontario Renovates, Affordable Homeownership

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Community Housing - Continued

RCHC Properties: 1,020 Rent-Geared-To-Income units (19 apartment buildings, 57 single family homes, 152 duplexes, 217 townhouses)

1,020 households, approximately 1,857 occupants

Waiting list average: 1,350 applications

Average wait time: 7-10 years general chronological; 1-4 years special priority chronological (domestic violence; human trafficking)

Biggest demand is for one-bedroom and two-bedroom homes

Service Manager for 5 non-profit housing organizations (housing registry, provincial reporting, viability)

Kinsmen Court Pembroke – 25 one-bedroom units

St. Joseph Non-Profit Housing Corporation Pembroke – 90 one-bedroom units for seniors, 50 family units consisting of 2-, 3-, and 4-bedroom townhouses

Baskin Place Arnprior- 24 one-bedroom units for seniors

Petawawa Housing Corporation – 35 one-bedroom units for seniors

Killaloe and District Housing Inc. – 28 one-bedroom units for seniors

Homelessness Prevention Program

Funding for this program was previously called Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative and was renamed by the province and called Homelessness Prevention Program effective April 1, 2022. The Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP) mentioned here reflects the emergency supports and payments issued by Ontario Works, however HPP funding includes 2 other programs that are delivered by Community Housing (Emergency Minor Home Repairs and Rent Allowance).

To help prevent homelessness in low-income individuals and families in the County of Renfrew by providing financial assistance for eligible items.

Maximum entitlement is $1,500 per year for singles/couples and $2,000 per year for families with children.

Applications can be submitted online through the County of Renfrew website or dropped off/emailed to one of our Community Services offices.

<u>Eligible expenses</u>:

- **Rent arrears**
- **Utility arrears**
- **Rent deposit/last month's rent**
- **Transportation to shelter supports**
- **Short term motel stay**

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- The County of Renfrew has partnered with Built for Zero Canada (BFZC) and local community groups to help reduce chronic homelessness.

BFZC is an ambitious national change effort helping a core group of leading communities end chronic homelessness.

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing requires that every Service Manager maintain a By-Name List (BNL) of all individuals experiencing homelessness in their community.

- A BNL Survey has been created to better know every person experiencing homelessness by name, to understand their unique needs, and to prioritize services and housing supports.

- Homelessness programs delivered by Ontario Works and Community Housing staff.

- Further details about our homelessness supports are available on our website.

Ontario Works

Ontario Works is a mandatory provincial program overseen by the Ministry of Children, Community & Social Services. Ontario Works provides financial assistance and person-centered supports to eligible low-income individuals.

Caseworkers support individuals in accessing services to help improve their quality of life and employability. These services include:

- Crisis and safety supports (domestic violence, trauma-informed care)
- Medical treatment and counselling (physical, mental health, addictions)
- Community resources (food security, cultural services, legal support)
- Life skills (financial literacy, digital access, motivation & resilience)
- Educational upgrading and skills training

Types of Ontario Works Applications

- Regular Ontario Works assistance
- Temporary Care assistance – for individuals who have a child placed into their temporary care/custody and require financial assistance to support the child
- Under Age 18 – assistance for individuals who are 16 or 17 years of age, attending school full-time, and are unable to live with a parent due to special circumstances
- Emergency Assistance – for individuals with income/assets exceeding program limits that are experiencing an emergency which poses a threat to the health or wellbeing of a member of the family (assistance can be provided for up to 48 days)

Applications for Ontario Works assistance can be made online at www.ontario.ca/socialassistance or by phone at 1-888-999-1142.

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Ontario Works

Social assistance rates are set by the province and the Ontario Works rates have not been increased since October 2018. The maximum entitlement for a single recipient is $733/month.

Social assistance payments to recipients are 100% paid for by the province. Program administration is cost-shared between the province and the municipality 50% - 50%.

The average 2022 Ontario Works caseload in the County of Renfrew is 1,119. The program is delivered by a total of 23 staff members located throughout the County.

Child Care & Early Years Division

The Child Care and Early Years Division is the designated service system manager for provincial funding for licensed child care and EarlyON Child and Family Centres.

Total of 16 staff serving all areas in the County of Renfrew

Number of Licensed Child Care Agencies – 29

Number of Licensed Home Child Care Agencies – 2

Number of licensed homes open - 11

Average Monthly Number of Children Served:

- Licenced Child Care and Licensed Home Child Care – 1,671
- EarlyON Child and Family Centres – 1,279

Programs & Services

CHILD CARE FEE SUBSIDY

- Program to assist eligible families with the cost of licensed child care for children up to 13.
- Fee subsidy supports eligible families by paying up to 100% of the child care costs.
- Applications can be made online or by contacting our office.

CANADA-WIDE EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE SYSTEM (CWELCC)

- Provincial/federal agreement for licensed child care programs to provide an average of $10 per day child care by September 2025 for children up to age 6.
- 29 out of 31 of the County's licensed child care providers are enrolled in CWELCC.

INCLUSION SERVICES (Special Needs Resourcing)

- Our team of Inclusion Coordinators support licensed agencies so that children with varying needs and abilities can attend their programs.
- Resources, training, and funding are provided as needed.

Programs & Services - Continued

LICENSED HOME CHILD CARE

- Our team directly operates a licensed home child care agency at the County of Renfrew.
- Support is given to home providers across the county to become licensed to operate child care within their homes.

EarlyON CHILD AND FAMILY CENTRES

- These centres provide free support and programming to parents and children up to age 6.
- We oversee 8 EarlyON Child and Family Centres throughout the County.
- There are 6 stationary EarlyON programs (Deep River, Petawawa, 2 in Pembroke, Renfrew, and Arnprior). One in Pembroke is a Francophone EarlyON.
- There are two mobile units that move throughout the County, including an Indigenous Led EarlyON.

Questions?

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CHILD CARE AND EARLY YEARS REPORT

Prepared by: Margo Smith, Manager of Child Care and Early Years Division

Prepared for: Community Services Committee

August 16, 2023

INFORMATION

1. **Inclusion Services Statistics**

The following chart indicates Inclusion Services monthly statistics from January 2023 to June 2023.

Month	Children Served
January	176
February	173
March	177
April	180
May	179
June	175

2. **Licensed Home Child Care Statistics**

The following chart indicates the County of Renfrew Licensed Home Child Care program monthly statistics from January 2023 to June 2023.

Month	Children Served	Open Homes	Children on Waitlist
January	38	7	131
February	37	7	120
March	36	7	135
April	39	7	138
May	44	7	148
June	45	7	155

3. **Licensed Child Care Statistics**

The following chart indicates monthly statistics for Licensed Child Care in Renfrew County from January 2023 to June 2023.

Month	Licensed Capacity	Operating Capacity	Children Served	Children Served, receiving Fee Subsidy
January	2275	1593	1584	343
February	2275	1598	1612	343
March	2275	1595	1625	353
April	2363	1682	1681	343
May	2363	1708	1727	343
June	2363	1731	1765	341

4. **New Francophone Licensed Child Care Centre**

The Conseil des écoles catholiques du Centre-Est has built a Francophone Catholic elementary school in Arnprior named l'École élémentaire catholique des Deux-Rivières**.** The school will have a Francophone licensed child care centre named Centre éducatif Coeur des Jeunes des Deux-Rivières. This is an agency that the County of Renfrew Child Care and Early Years Division already has service agreements with, for its location in Pembroke at l'école élémentaire et secondaire publique L'Équinoxe. The new centre in Arnprior is hoping to open on August 28 and is looking to be licensed for 140 child care spaces.

5. **North Renfrew EarlyON Child and Family Centre**

Attached as Appendix CC-I is correspondence from the Program Facilitator of the North Renfrew EarlyON Child and Family Centre regarding the space for their programming. On June 7, 2023, a resolution was passed at the Town of Deep River Council meeting to forward this correspondence to the County of Renfrew for review. Staff from the Child Care and Early Years Division has reached out to provide support and guidance.

From: Lana Thomas
Sent: May 23, 2023 7:36 PM
To: Will Fitton; Kathy Hughes; Suzanne D'eon; Christina Giardini; Terry Myers; Glenn Doncaster
Subject: North Renfrew EarlyON Child & Family Centre

Hello Council Members,

Please see the attached letter and feel free to contact me in regards to any possibilities The Town of Deep River may be able to assist with.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Lana Thomas, RECE
Program Facilitator
North Renfrew EarlyON Child & Family Centre
Pronouns: she/her
Phone: 613-602-6328

The Town of Deep River
100 Deep River Road
P.O. Box 400,
Deep River ON
K0J 1P0

May 23rd, 2023

North Renfrew EarlyON Child & Family Centre
33110 D Hwy 17
Deep River ON
K0J 1P0

Dear Council Members,

My name is Lana Thomas and I am the Program Facilitator for North Renfrew EarlyON Child & Family Centre. I am reaching out to share information about our program and discuss some of the concerns that our EarlyON is facing in Deep River without having a reliable full time space.

EarlyON is designed to provide a broad set of free programs and resources for parents/caregivers and their children ages birth-6 years. We offer drop-in programs in more than 900 locations across Ontario, eight of these programs are in Renfrew County.
North Renfrew EarlyON opened their doors at The St. Mary's School (Room 143) and at the Point Alexander Municipal Office in 2018 serving the community 5-6 days a week (this includes weekdays, evenings and weekends) between both locations. In October 2021, we had to give up our Point Alexander location due to spacing concerns from the Municipality. This had led to the EarlyON program having to rent a storage unit to store all the program supplies from Point Alexander, which was a big expense for the Centre to absorb.

Due to our lease with St. Mary's School, we are unable to utilize Room 143 on a full-time basis. In addition, this location is not accessible for the children, and families/caregivers that join them to engage in play. By not having an accessible location, we are hindering people with disabilities chances of enjoying our programs and their opportunity to create a community with other families. We are also limited to the room space allotted to use at St. Mary's, which means we would have to turn families away when we are at capacity, which occurs on a more regular basis recently.

Our goal would be to have the Town Council help us to develop a plan and work diligently to create a safe, reliable, accessible and cost effective space for families to utilize. We are looking forward to hearing from you to see what we can all accomplish to support the families of Deep River and surrounding areas.

Sincerely,

Lana Thomas RECE
Program Facilitor
North Renfrew EarlyON Child & Family Centre

ONTARIO WORKS REPORT

Prepared by: Andrea Patrick, Manager of Ontario Works
Prepared for: Community Services Committee
August 16, 2023

INFORMATION

1. **Ontario Works Caseload Statistics**

Month	2023 Total Caseload	2022 Total Caseload
January	1,161	1,052
February	1,167	1,083
March	1,182	1,118
April	1,185	1,127
May	1,189	1,147
June	1,182	1,143
July		1,120
August		1,132
September		1,149
October		1,131
November		1,143
December		1,124

2. **Centralized Intake Update**

The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) introduced changes in 2020 to modernize and streamline social assistance delivery in Ontario. One of the initiatives undertaken to support this goal was centralized intake for social assistance (Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program) and a risk-based approach to determining eligibility. A provincial Intake and Benefits Administration Unit (IBAU) was created to manage incoming Social Assistance Digital Applications (SADA) and to reduce the administrative burden on the system. Applications go through a Risk Based Eligibility

Determination (RBED) which uses third-party data sources to corroborate applicant-reported information to assess program eligibility. By centralizing and automating the intake process, the Ministry's goal was to improve the client experience when applying or reapplying for social assistance and reduce the amount of time caseworkers spend on administrative tasks and enable them to spend more time supporting clients. A Centralized Intake Collaborative & Strategic Table (CST) was created in June 2023, consisting of IBAU staff and representatives from each Consolidated Municipal Service Manager, to find ways to expand, adapt, and improve all areas of centralized intake. The CST members meet monthly to discuss issues, co-design and iterate on processes, and review progress made. Attached as Appendix OW-I is a slide deck which provides an overview of the work that has been completed by the IBAU over the past year.

3. **My Benefits SADA (Social Assistance Digital Application) Integration**

Attached as Appendix OW-II is a slide deck outlining the integration of MyBenefits and SADA. MyBenefits is an online tool which currently allows social assistance recipients to see their payments and letters, to report income changes, and to send and receive messages. The Digital Services & Operation Unit has been working to merge the Ministry's two existing digital services, MyBenefits and SADA, to better support applicants throughout their social assistance journey. Commencing August 12, 2023, applicants will have the ability to create a MyBenefits account at the time of initial application. This will provide applicants with the flexibility to save an in-progress application and resume it later, and to upload supporting documents. The Ministry hopes that these changes will further streamline the eligibility verification process and ensure digital product alignment.

4. **Ontario Works Staff Training**

On June 12, 2023, training was provided to all Ontario Works staff on empathic strain, secondary trauma, and debriefing. The training was delivered by Francoise Mathieu from the TEND Academy, who is a registered psychotherapist and one of the world's leading experts on secondary trauma. The training was planned to help prepare staff for the upcoming Employment Services Transformation (EST) and shifting to a full time focus on supporting individuals with multiple complex barriers. Staff received instruction on developing strategies to prevent compassion fatigue and burn-out, and a framework of how to debrief safely. The training was very well-received by all staff and laid a foundation for the upcoming service delivery changes.

5. **Addictions Treatment Service Presentation**

On June 21, 2023 Mr. Yves Arsenault, Addictions Counsellor from the Addictions Treatment Services (ATS), attended a virtual meeting with Community Services staff to provide an overview of their services. ATS is located in the Renfrew Victoria Hospital and is funded through the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care. Mr. Arsenault provided information regarding how individuals can access services, wait times, and the types of

programs offered by their agency. The presentation was very informative and allowed staff from all divisions to learn more about the supports available in Renfrew County for individuals who are experiencing addiction issues.

BY-LAWS

6. **Amendment to By-Law 100-20 – Ontario Works Policies and Procedures**

Recommendation: THAT the Community Services Committee recommends to County Council that By-law 100-20 authorizing the County of Renfrew to establish Ontario Works policies and procedures be amended to replace Policy OW-I Internal Control Measures and Policy OW-II Funerals.

Background

The County of Renfrew is the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager responsible for delivery of Ontario Works in the County of Renfrew. The Ontario Works Act and provincial directives prescribe the rates and eligibility criteria for the majority of benefits available through the Ontario Works program. Where municipal discretion exists to establish local benefits and/or payment levels, By-Law 100-20 provides the County of Renfrew with authority to do so.

Attached as Appendix OW-III is amended Policy OW-1 Internal Control Measures. This policy required amendments to remove the manual cheque process as this functionality no longer exists, and to include the additional payment controls which have been introduced into the Social Assistance Management System (SAMS) by the Province.

Attached as Appendix OW-IV is amended Policy OW-2 Funerals. This policy has been amended to reflect a recommendation that the eligible maximum for funeral benefits in the County of Renfrew be increased from $4,000 to $4,500. Additional amendments have also been made in the policy to capture the technical enhancements that have been made in SAMS to issue these benefits.

IBAU Update

Centralized Intake - Updates since JPT paused

May 25, 2023

Agenda

Time	Topics
1:00-1:02	Welcome – Allow people to trickle in Welcome
1:02-104	Land Acknowledgement
1:04-1:10	Agenda Review
1:00 – 1:15	New Series Updates • New name • Meeting Structure
1:15-2:00	IBAU - Updates from 2022-2023 • Intermunicipal Management/Communication Protocol • IBAU Intranet site
2:00-2:30	SADA - Updates from 2022-2023 • SADA/MyBenefits presentation
2:30-2:45	Break
2:45-3:15	SAPA - Updates from 2022-2023 • Update and upcoming releases • Automated RBED BI Dashboard
3:15-4:00	Q&A Period
	Closing

Land Acknowledgement

I'd like to begin our meeting today by acknowledging the Robinson-Huron Treaty of 1850. I also further recognize that Sudbury where I am joining you from today is located on the traditional lands of the Atikameksheng, Anishnawbek and that the Greater City of Sudbury also includes the traditional lands of the Wahnapitae First Nations. We recognize the many Nations of Indigenous People, who presently live on this land, those who have spent time here, and the ancestors who have hunted and gathered on this land.

I also recognize and support the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the International Decade for People of African Descent, and the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action, as we work to apply all to our work.

I also acknowledge the many people of African descent who are not settlers, but whose ancestors were forcibly displaced as part of the transatlantic slave trade, brought against their will, and made to work on these lands.

Despite the ongoing violence inflicted on Indigenous peoples and Black Canadians, I am grateful for the many significant contributions made by Indigenous and Black people.

I believe that advancing Indigenous sovereignty is deeply and inextricably linked to Black liberation and I remain committed to advancing both.

New Series Update

- Meetings will be 1 hour in length
- Meetings will be with their dedicated groups
- IBAU will be at all meetings, but internal parties will be optional
- 1-2 representatives from your municipality who should be included in the meetings

IBAU Update

IBAU SCOPE EXPANSION

IBAU continued to review internal processes and work with ministry partners to reduce the number of applications being referred to the Local Office because they are “out of scope”.

ADAPTING TO OUR ENVIRONMENT

With Covid measures ending and the increase in the number of refugees in the new year, the IBAU has adapted to the new technical requirements and business processes to support our municipal partners.

IMPROVED CLIENT EXPERIENCE

The partnership between IBAU and ServiceOntario has grown in the last 12 months allowing new services to be introduced to improve the client experience.

TECHNOLOGY ENHANCEMENTS

The Centralized Intake team has introduced numerous enhancements to SADA, RBED and SAMS that have improved the efficiency and effectiveness of the CI process.

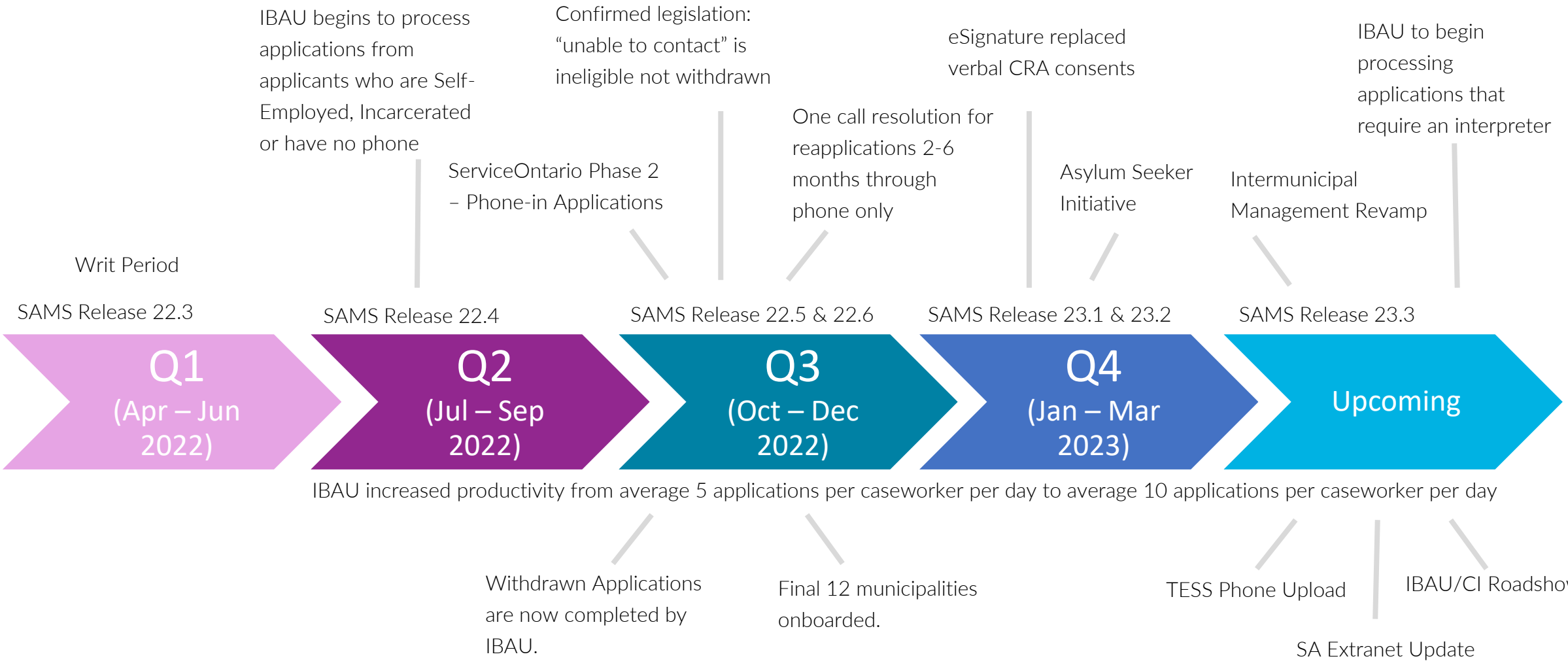
CHANGE MANAGEMENT

IBAU continued to support all municipalities over the last year through open communication, the issues management process and connecting directly as required.

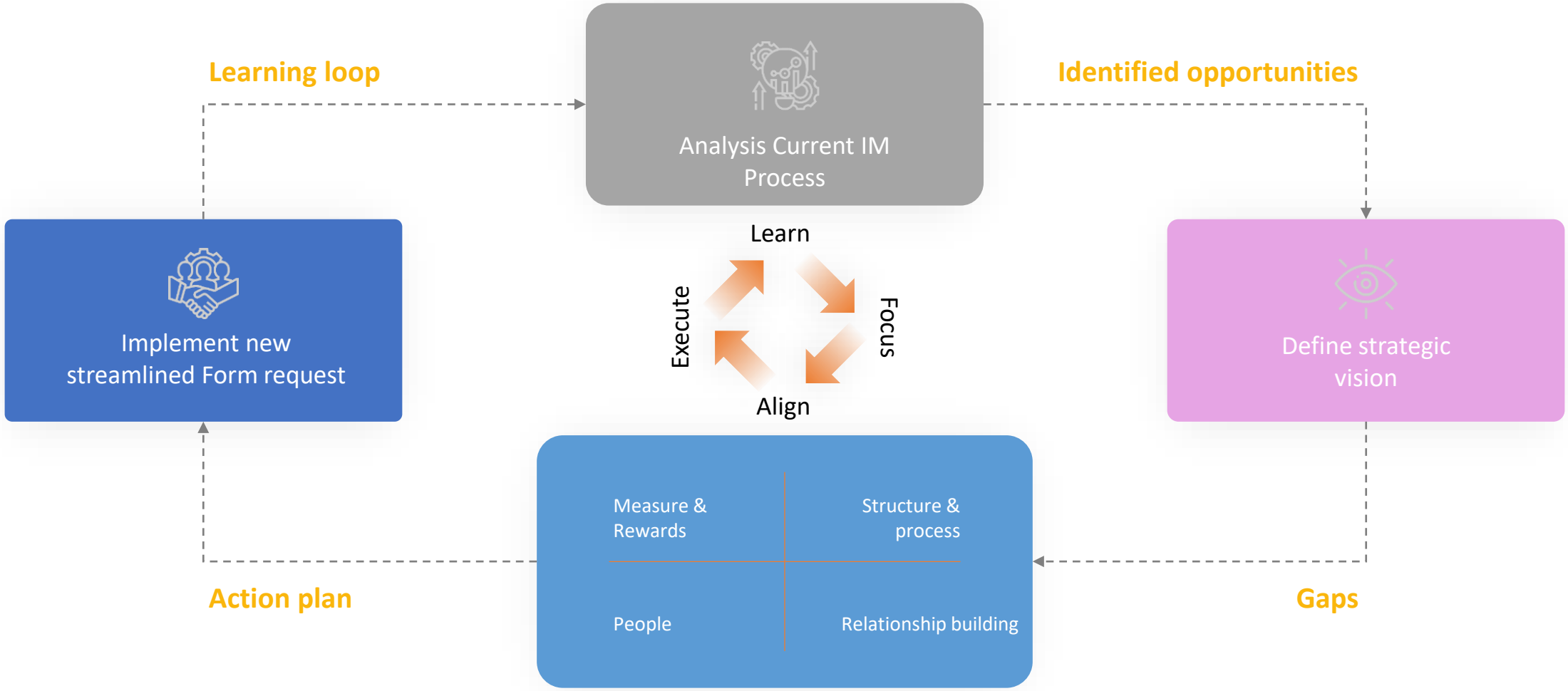
SA PATH FORWARD

The IBAU has worked closely with our ministry partners to find ways to expand, adapt and improve all areas of Centralized Intake over the next 12 months to ensure its continued success.

IBAU Update: Projects, Pilots and Releases



Intermunicipal Management/Communication Protocol



Intermunicipal Management Process Communications

1

Consolidate Communication

Intermunicipal Management Email: IBAU-IM@ontario.ca
New name, same email address

2

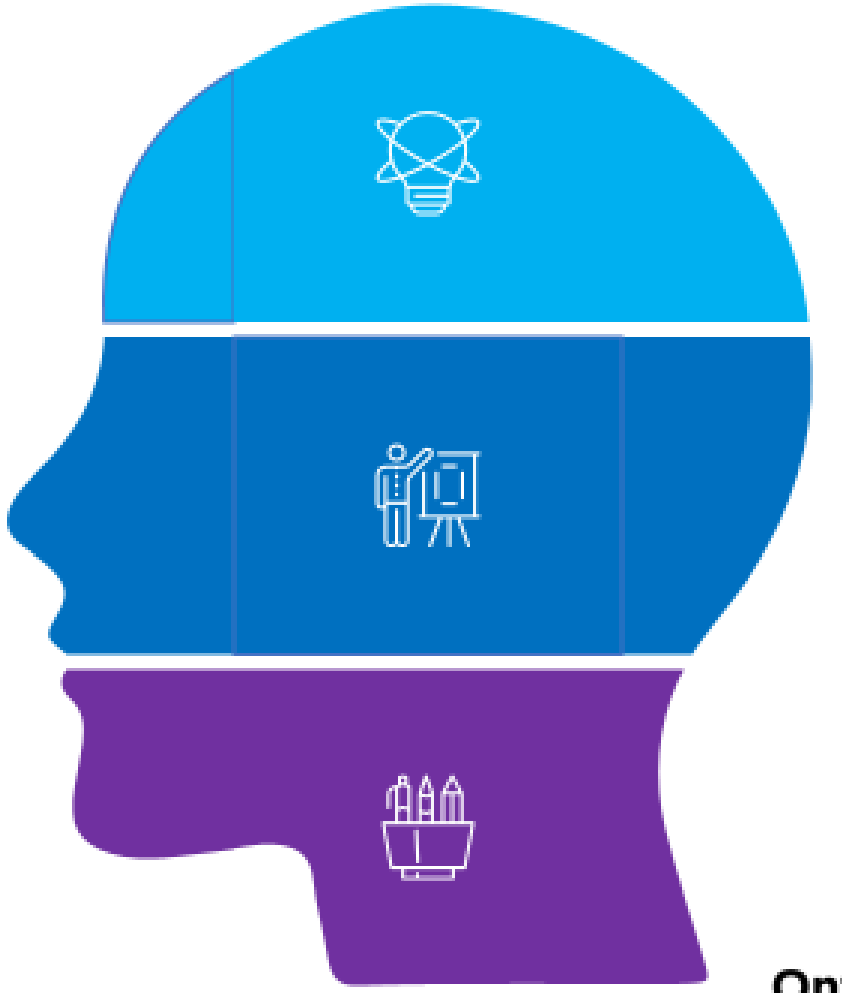
Weekly Trackers no longer required

The new IM form can be used to capture multiple or individual MIDs
The new form can be accessed/used by all staff

3

Streamlined process

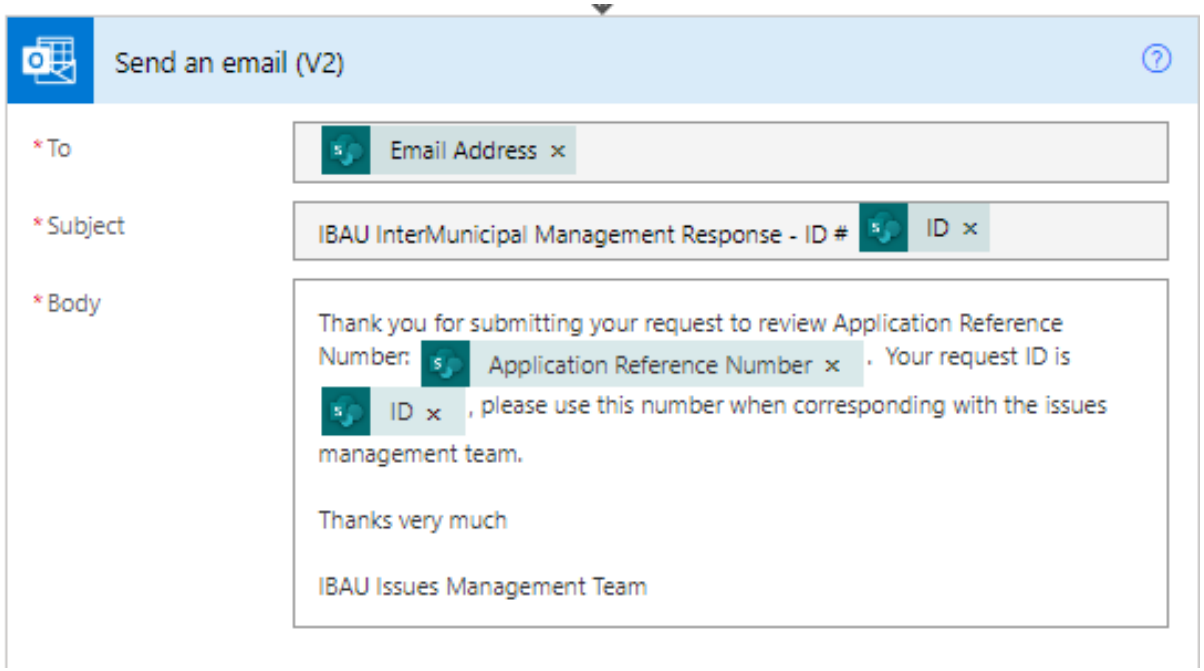
Questions, concerns, clarification, immediate action – all captured in 1 form
Reports and trends easily identified

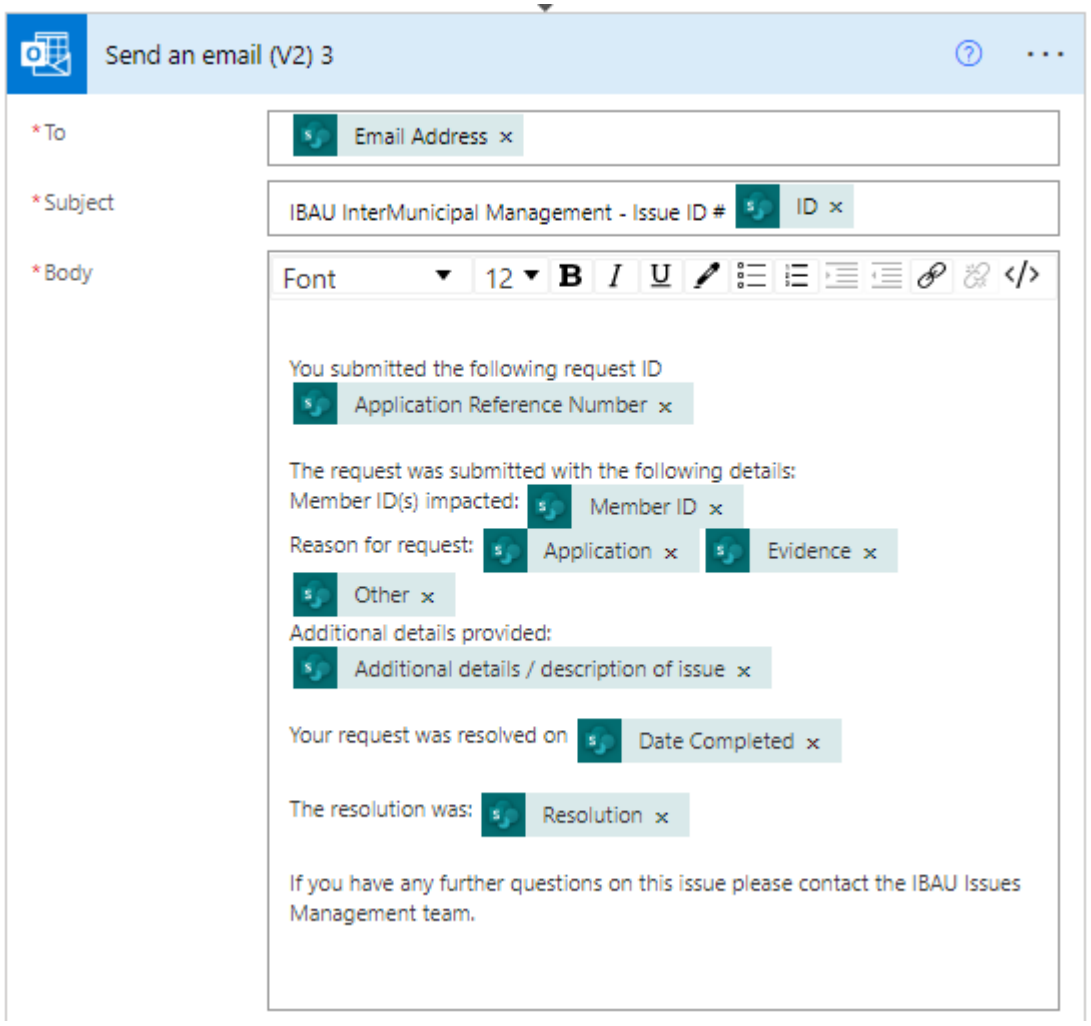


Live Link: https://forms.office.com/r/esQ7K8fMkC
Contact Us: IBAU-IM@ontario.ca

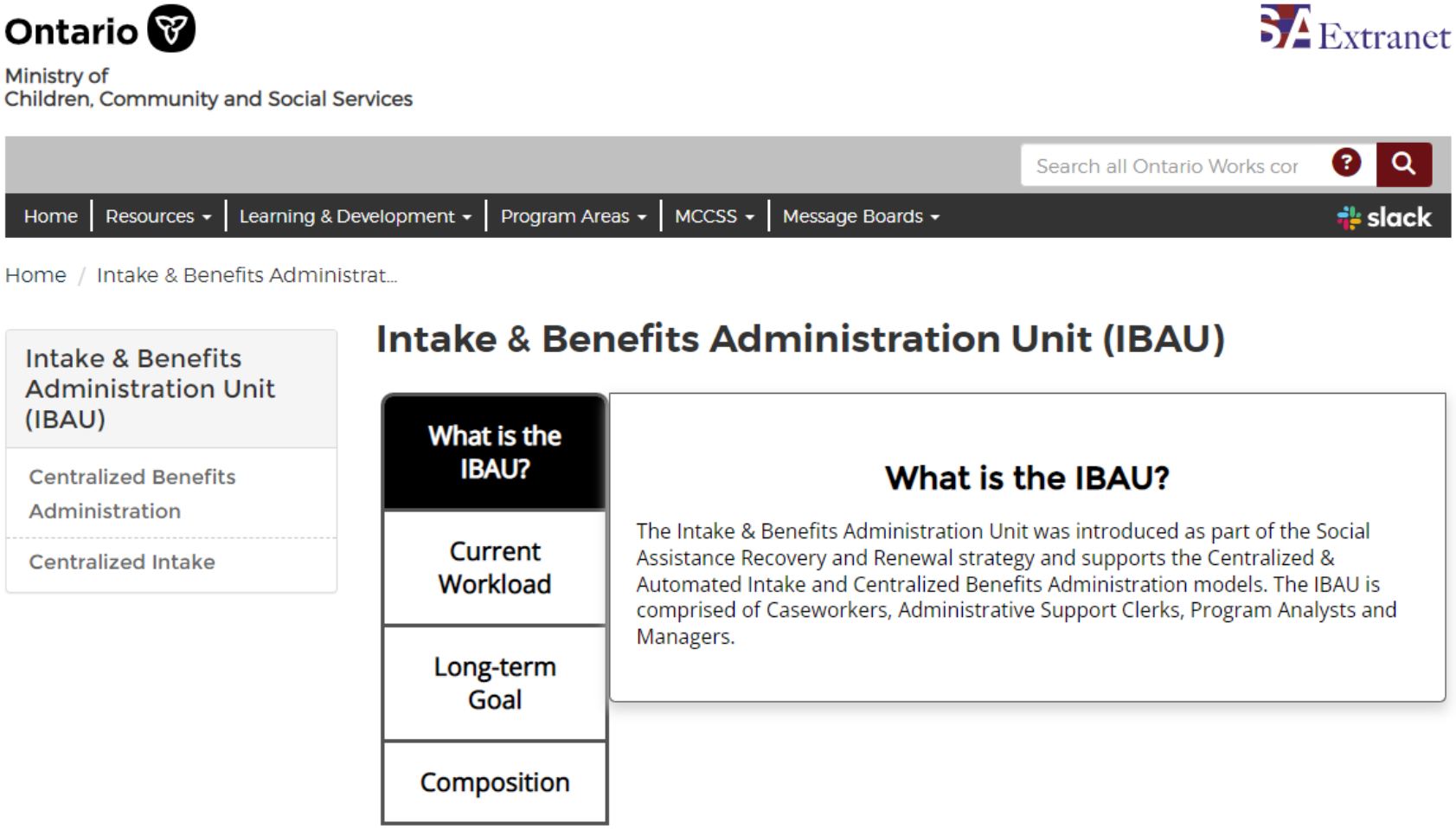
Ontario

Intermunicipal Management Process Communications





IBAU – SA Extranet Site



[Intake & Benefits Administration Unit (IBAU) – SA Extranet (gov.on.ca)]

Next steps and meeting

Next steps:

Municipalities should email Christiana Moxam (christiana.moxam@ontario.ca) and Kelsey Murray (Kelsey.murray@ontario.ca) with 1-2 representatives from your municipality who should be included in the meetings.

Next meeting:

Our ongoing meetings will be within our Dedicated Municipality Model. Municipalities will be receiving an invite for the new series within the coming week.

- **Meeting** will focus on key **pain points** that our municipalities will identify.
  - Municipalities should email Christiana Moxam (christiana.moxam@ontario.ca) and Kelsey Murray (Kelsey.murray@ontario.ca) if they are interested in presenting.

Appendix: SAMS Release Details

Release 22.2 (April 2022)

- Benefit Income, Unearned Income, Anticipated Income & Asset Evidence, Vehicle and Utility Evidence were created/enhanced in SAMS
- Person match & merge process enhanced
- RBED Process update to only allow applications or cases that are eligible for the full month to be assessed as eligible
- Risk Summary Page – Decision Details Tab had new categories added
- IRCC third party check added to RBED Framework
- Submit Failed applications will allow the PDF to be viewed

Release 22.3 (June 2022)

- Special caution flags for Trustees to be automatically created
- Vehicle, Resource and Immigration Evidence have been enhanced
- Additional search criteria (including addition of PAQ queries by office/status) and application flags added to the Pending Application Queue view
- SADA Applications "pod" for Pending Applications added to Home page in SAMS
- Known to SAMS applicants who have not previously been a primary applicant proceed through RBED process without IBAU manual intervention i.e. dependent Adults now applying as a primary
- Applications with Active Collections Referrals will not proceed through RBED
- Evidence Automation History Page added to the Evidence Tab

Release 22.4 (August 2022)

- Dependent Care Expense, Expense Reporting Stub, Immigration Evidence, Benefit Evidence and Anticipated Income and Asset Evidence was created/edited
- Duplicate applications and end dated phone number errors resolved
- Applications with case closure reasons within the last 6 months: Unable to contact and Failure to provide are no longer be able to be processed through RBED
- Decision Details tab updated to include new/refined RBED rules i.e., Credit Information, Special Category, Young Adult, Full-time Student, Immigration, Assets, income.

Release 22.5 (October 2022)

- Disability Determination, Benefit Income Evidence and Anticipated Income and Asset Evidence were created/enhanced in SAMS
- RBED Process update to ensure only Known to SAMS applications with no Household member Evidence proceed through Auto-Grant
- Eligibility Assessment "inbox" created – functionality to come at later date
- PAQ person match enhanced to reduce creation of duplicate ICs

Release 22.6 (November 2022)

- Special Caution alerts added to help identify applicant accommodation needs
- Disability Determination Evidence to be created for over 65 and not receiving OAS
- Paid Employment, Self Employment and Disability Determination Evidence enhanced
- Prescribe class icon enhanced to accurately display on PAQ (over 65 no OAS)
- RBED enhancements including Special Category flags and tasks; new fields for invalid data and application for assistance (form 1) completion date
- RBED process updated to ensure only applications with end dated household member evidence will be processed through RBED

Release 23.1 (February 2023)

- Institution, Disability Determination, Trust and Beneficiary Evidence created/enhanced to support SADA updates
- New icon added to the PAQ to identify applicants declaring emergency situation
- "No signature Received" added to Application Status – when applications submitted without forms being e-signed
- RBED override functionality added to support partial eligibility in month of grant
- RBED model expanded to include additional categories and flags
- Enhancements to Bank Account Page

MyBenefits SADA Integration

Vision and Change Management

May 2023

Background

- The Digital Services & Operation Unit (DSO) began exploring how to **improve the applicant and client user experience** through all phases of their social assistance journey starting May 2022.

- We have been **actively testing and validating** with Ontario Works applicants/clients and IBAU since then. Discovery validated that **integrating two existing digital services, SADA and MyBenefits**, is the best approach to digitally support applicants through their intake journey.

- Starting **August 12, 2023**, applicants will have the ability to **create a MyBenefits account** at the time of application, enabling them to **save and continue their application** and get early access to certain existing MyBenefits features, like **messaging and document upload**, which will **make eligibility verification faster & easier**

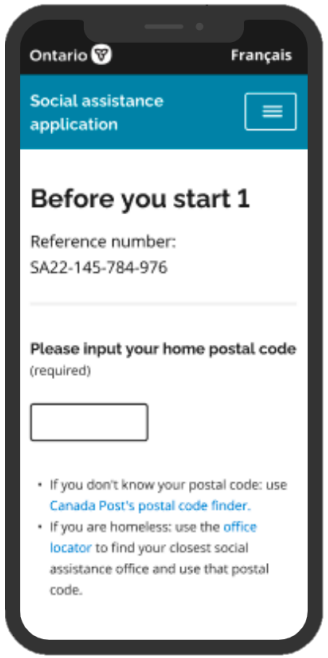
- Over the longer-term, we will explore when best to **integrate additional digital services** (e.g. Digital DDP) and how to ensure product alignment through branding, leveraging insights from user research to inform future digital features.

SADA (Social Assistance Digital Application)

Increased online identity assurance
Reduces the need for manual identity verification processes and paper documentation

Agile development
New enhancements are continually introduced via iterative releases

User-centered design focused
Developed in alignment with the Ontario Design System and user insights from testing with users



Fully integrated with SAMS
Including semi-automation (e.g., match & merge, risk-based eligibility determination, granting)

Fully accessible in English and French
97.3% AODA compliance as of June 2022

Online service
Supports a fast and easy way for citizens to apply for social assistance, verify their identity, and e-sign their application.

Improved user experience
Offering applicants an online intake process that is faster and more convenient

MyBenefits

Fast, easy and secure

Clients can access social assistance case information and report changes, saving staff time

Access anytime, anywhere

On any device (smartphones, tablets and computers)

Scalable solution

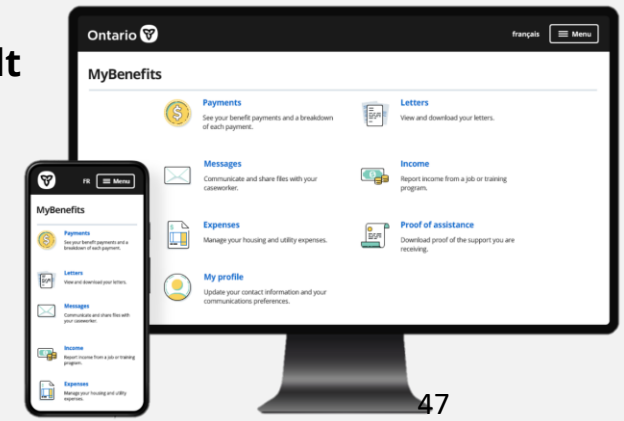
Capable of integrating additional services to give Ontarians a consistent, single-window experience

Fully integrated with SAMS

And integrated with the enterprise electronic document management solution (OPSdocs)

MyBenefits features

- **Send and receive messages** and **digital documents**
- Check **payment** history and overpayment info
- Report **earned income** and **shelter expenses** and track status
- View **profile** info, update **phone number** and **address**
- View and download **letters** and **proof of assistance**
- **Paperless by default**



Future Vision: Wraparound Cohesive Service

Sarah is a single parent of two children. She is having trouble finding work as a result of her disability. Her savings have run out and she needs support.

SADA + MyBenefits Integration enables Sarah to **save and continue her application** making the application process easier

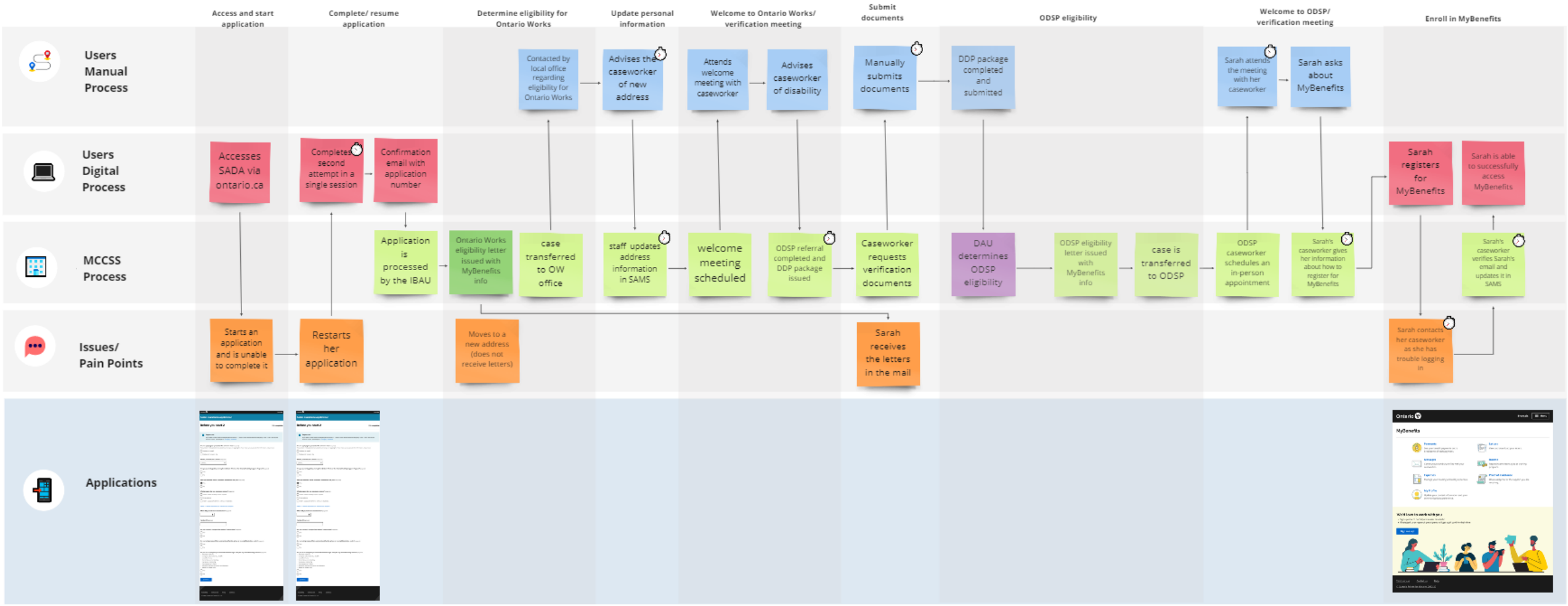
MyBenefits for Applicants allows Sarah to:

- **send messages** to the IBAU / local office intake staff
- **submit documents** to support her application
- **independently update case information** (phone number, etc.)
- **access digital letters**
- **complete DDP forms digitally** (e.g., self report form)

Self-serve Application Status Checker enables her to independently **access the status of her application through all stages of the process**.

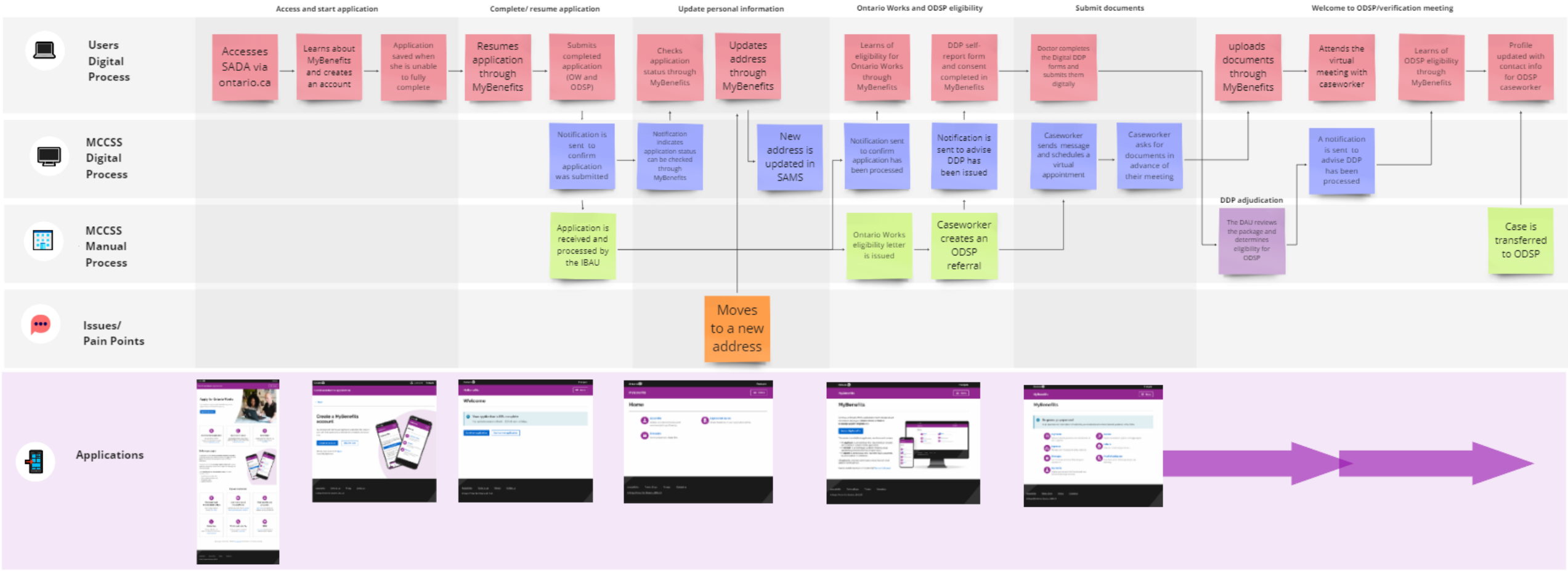
When Sarah is granted, she has **immediate access to MyBenefits for Clients;** no need to re-register.

Sarah's current experience



User Manual | User Digital | MCCSS Manual | MCCSS Communication | Issue/ Pain point | Time delay

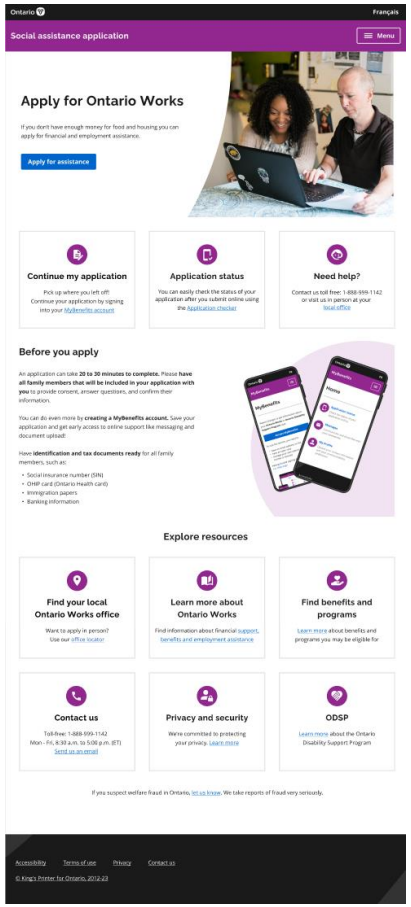
Sarah's new digital experience

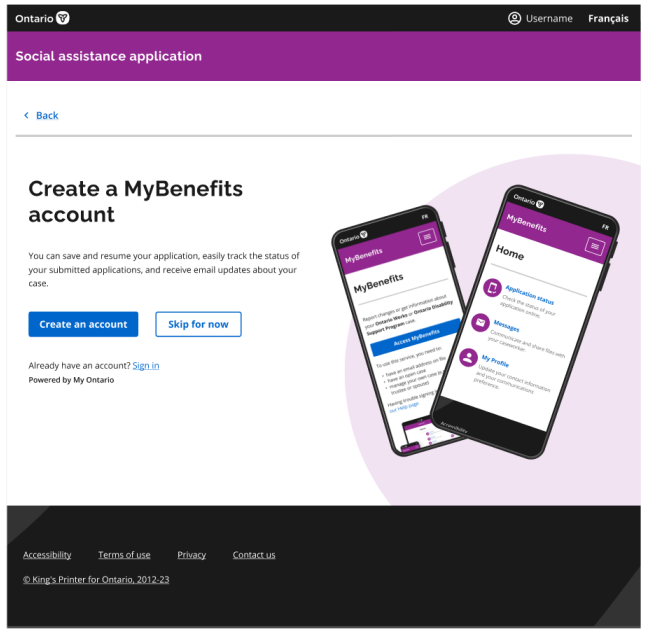


*Flow depicts future state including simplified applications approach and Digital DDP implementation

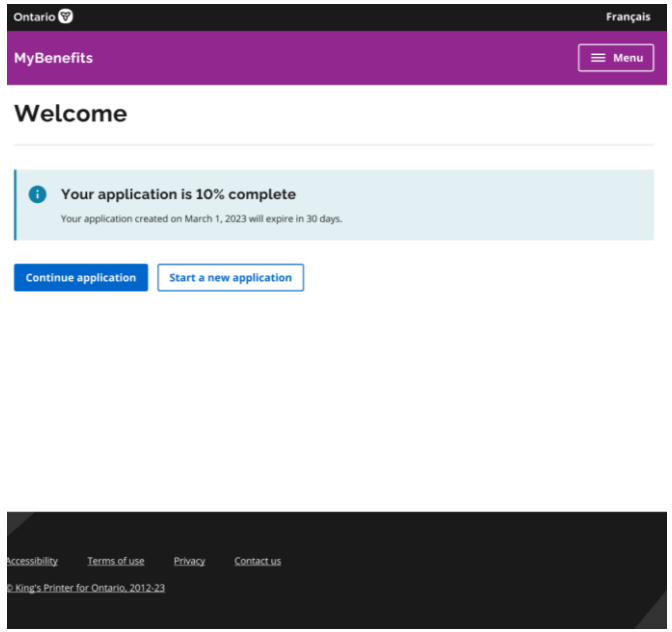
User Digital | MCCSS Manual | MCCSS Digital | Issue/ Pain point | DAU | Time delay

Sarah's experience: Applicant

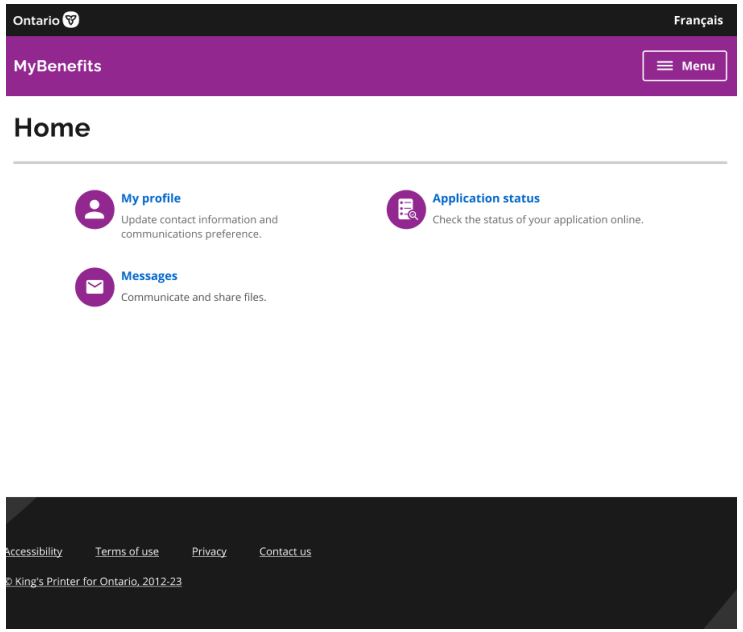




- An applicant can start an OW application or continue an existing application on the SADA home page
- After starting their application, applicant is prompted to create an account; they can skip or sign in



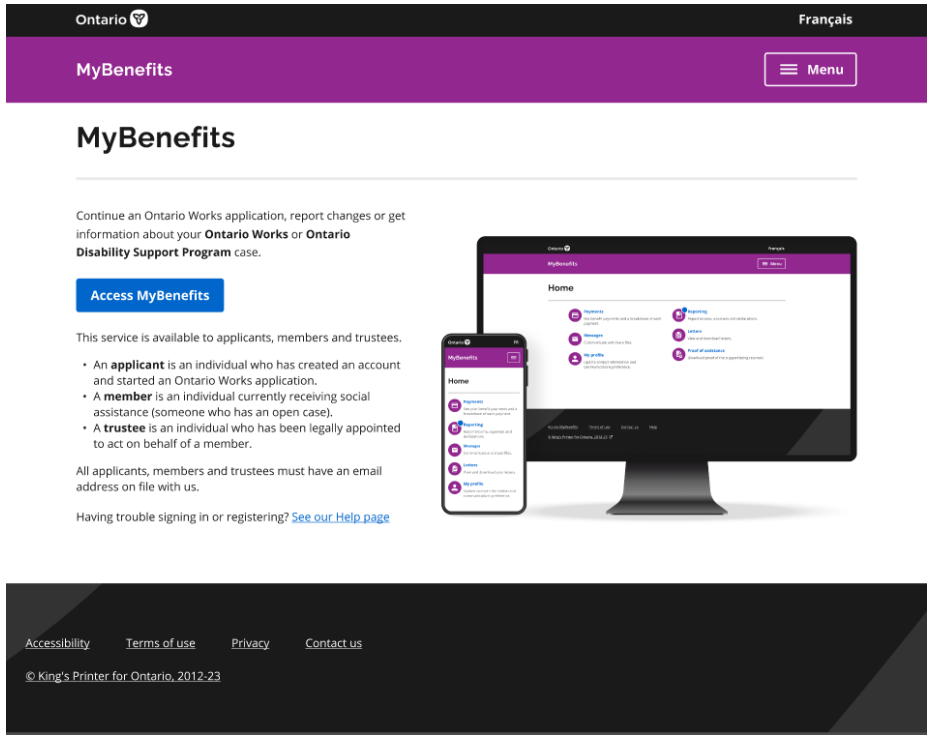
- When an applicant creates an account and then logs in later to continue their application, they will see where they left off, the date the application was created, and when it is set to expire



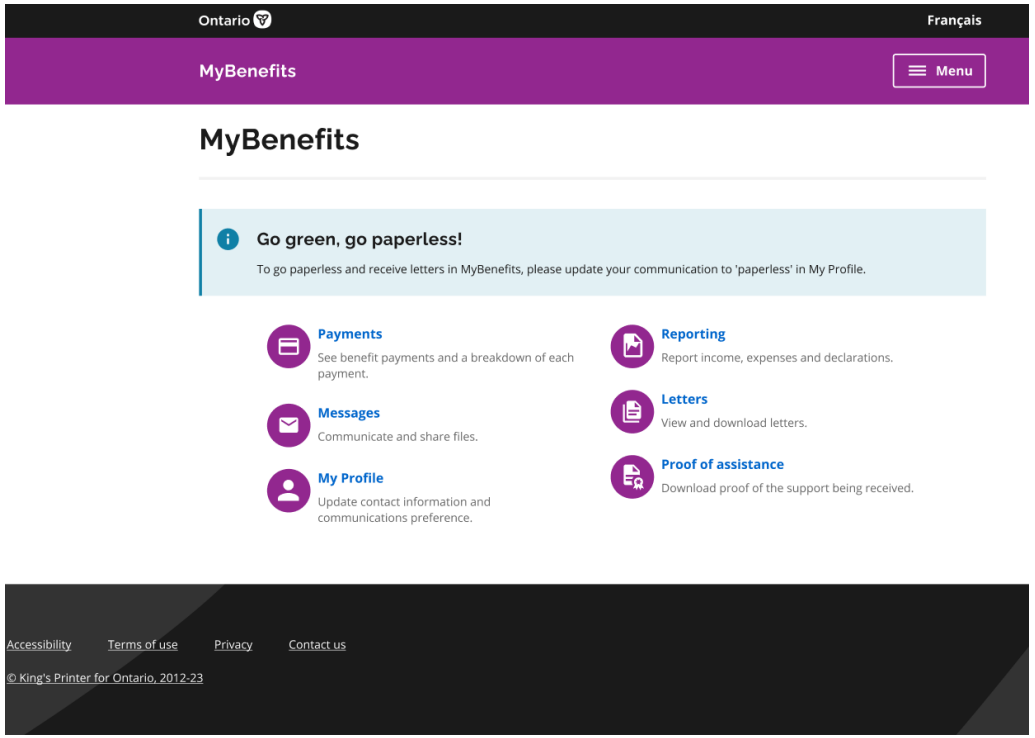
- After submitting a SADA application, applicant can access additional features: My Profile, Messages, and a link to existing application status checker are available

SADA home page | **Account Creation** | **Continue a SADA application** | **MyBenefits for applicants**

Sarah's experience: Client



- Updated MyBenefits home page design, aligning to MCCSS colour-way and Ontario design system
- Landing page updated to reflect that applicants have access to MyBenefits



- Existing MyBenefits features now available post-grant
- Client can easily navigate due to consistent, user-friendly design

MyBenefits landing page **MyBenefits for clients**

Expected benefits

Users

Consistent branded experience

- All digital interactions have a consistent look and feel, allowing easy navigation
- MyBenefits serves as a single point of access throughout the SA journey

Modern experience

- Convenient online channel to submit verification documents
- Secure communication channel for applicants, improving accessibility

Increased Independence

- Current manual processes can be completed online, saving users time printing documents or travelling to a local office

Staff

Time savings & reduced administration

- Digital self-serve options will reduce call volumes and phone tag
- Reduce “unable to contact” suspensions/ abandoned applications through enhanced communication options
- Eliminate manual filing via electronic document management
- Enable faster eligibility verification

Ministry

Established trust

- Cohesive services and communication improve trust with users, including the reputation of products

Support digital

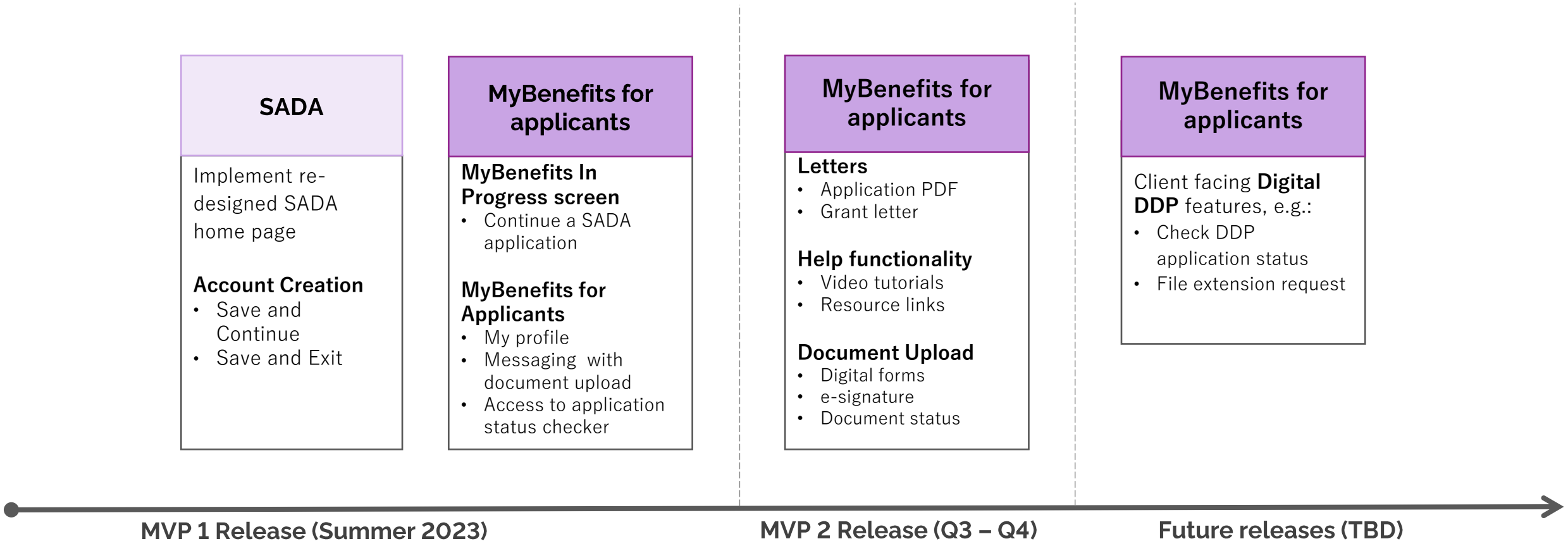
- Aligning with Digital First standards, users can access and complete steps through digital or manual channels
- Supports paperless initiative

New efficiencies

- Reusable design/development components
- Enhanced ability to adapt digital service through agile implementation led by integrated team

Integration MVP Timeline

Note: Timelines may shift, based on feedback sessions, user research, and Ministry priorities



Integration in SAMS

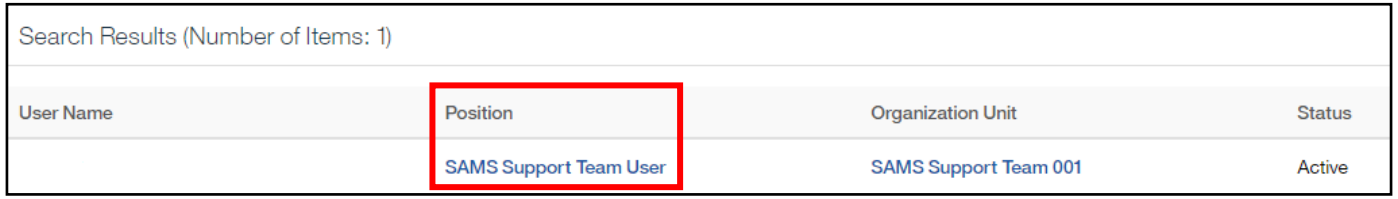
SAMS Experience: Integrated Case Ownership

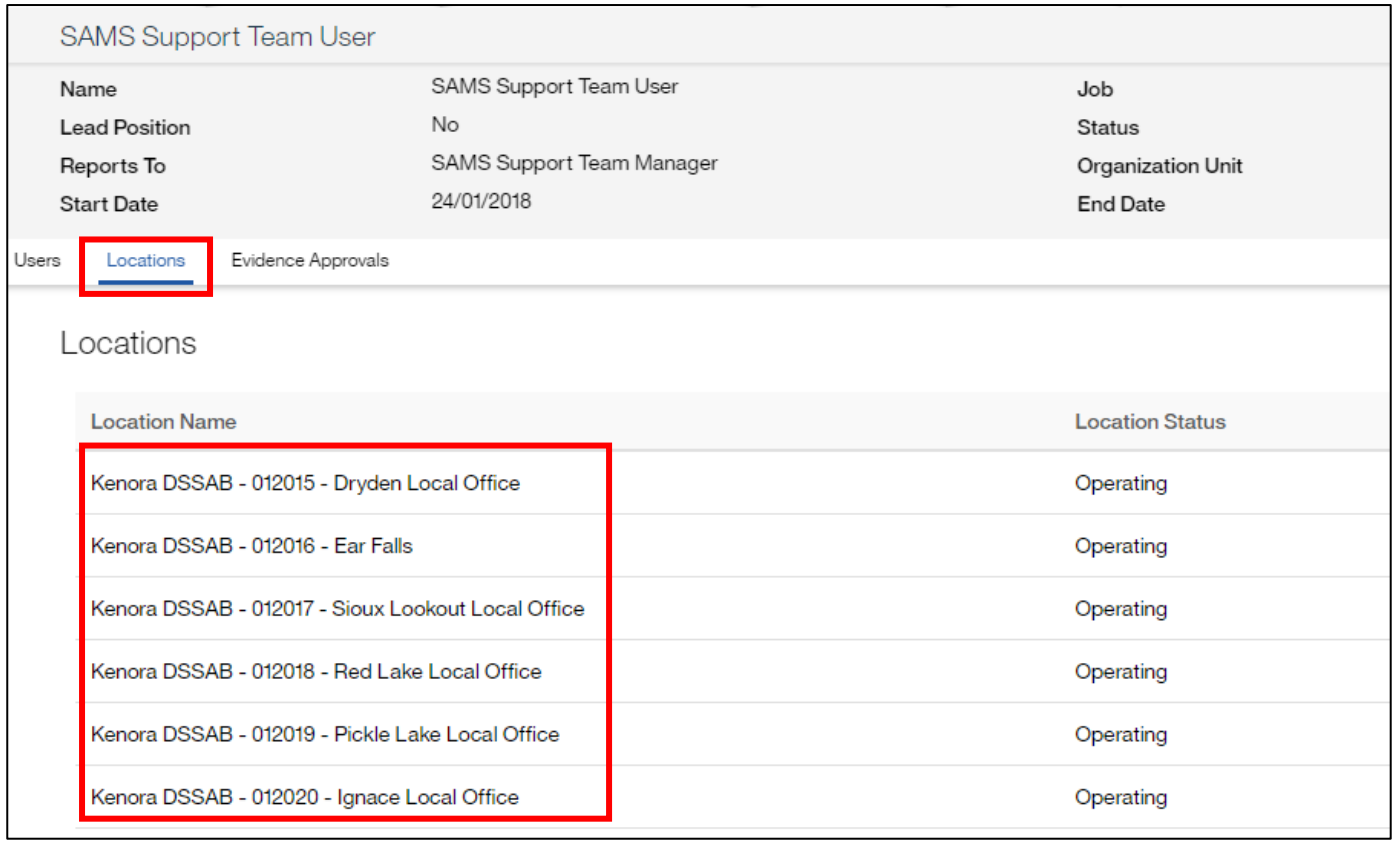
Integrated Case Process:

1) Applicant submits application in SADA
2) Match & Merge occurs in SAMS
3) Integrated Case (IC), Integrated Case Application (ICA), and Member ID (MID) are created
4) The OW and IBAU work queues are assigned applications as the case owner

Integrated Case Ownership:

- OW staff can access application cases assigned to their respective location(s) in SAMS, based on their position.
- The write-access privileges for Messages are determined by the location(s) associated with a staff's position.



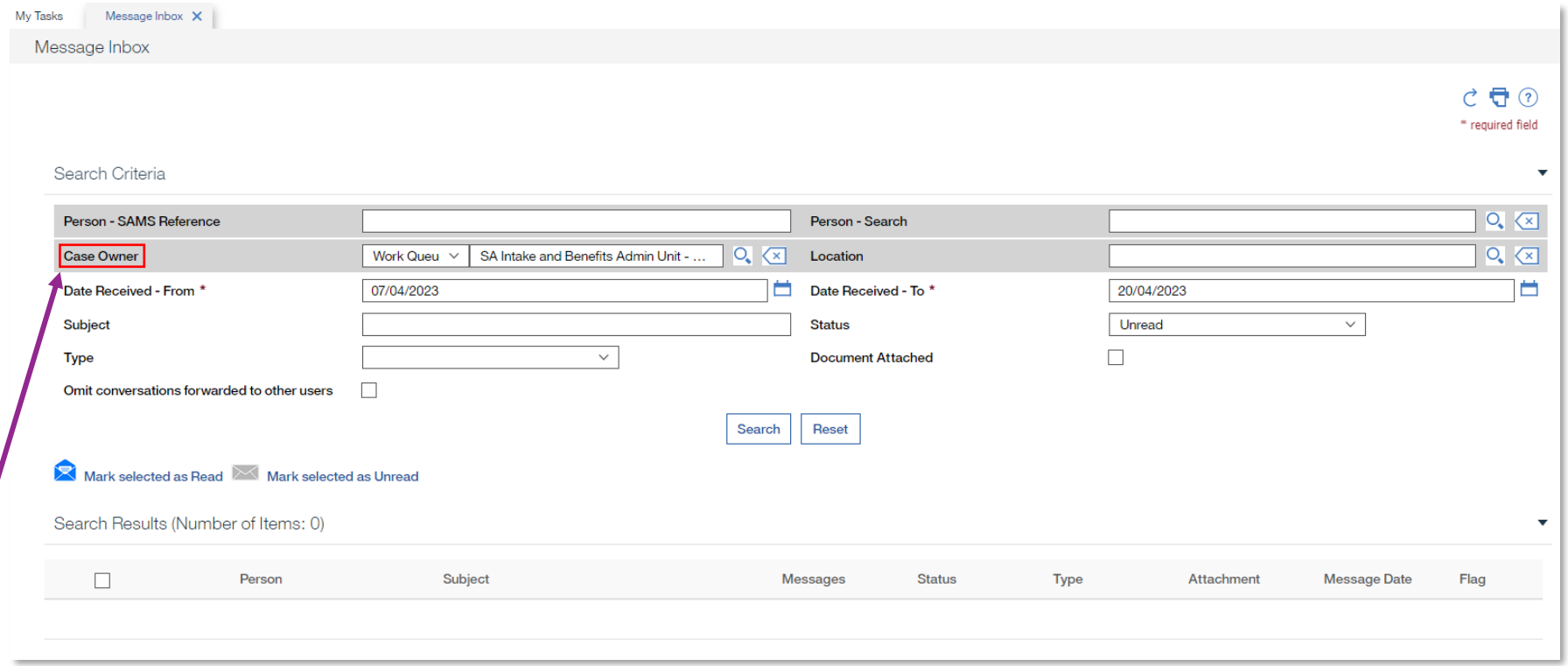


SAMS Experience: Message Inbox view (applicants)

Application Phase:

1. IC and MID are assigned to OW/IBAU work queue as case owner
2. Messages & documents assigned to same case owner
3. IBAU/OW staff can filter inbox, review & action messages/docs assigned to them

IBAU/OW staff can update the 'Case Owner' to search for messages assigned to their work queue.

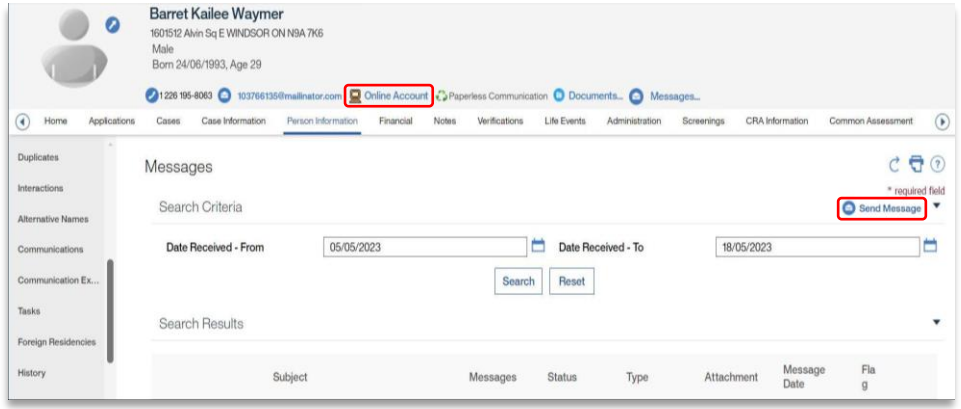


SAMS Experience: Messaging and document upload

Applicant Messages

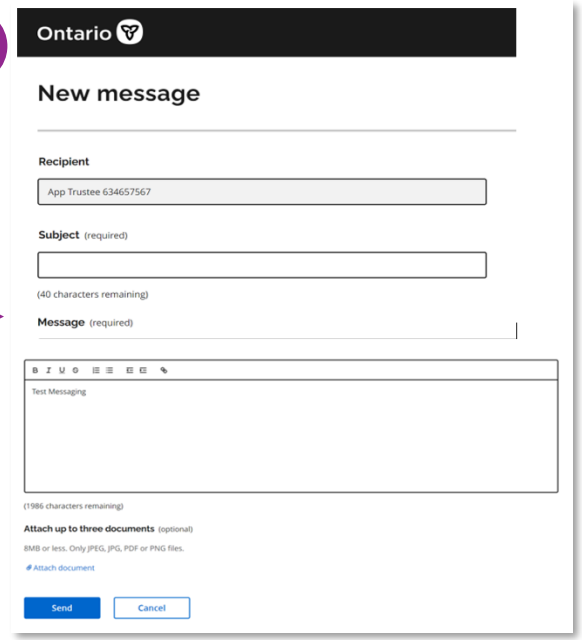
- Applicants and staff will only be able to exchange Messages if the applicant has created a MyBenefits account.
- If the applicant does not have an online account, the “Send Messages” feature will not appear in SAMS

1



- View/search for applicant’s messages in SAMS under Personal Information page; OR
- Click “Send Message” button to create new message (this feature will only show up if applicant has an online account)

2



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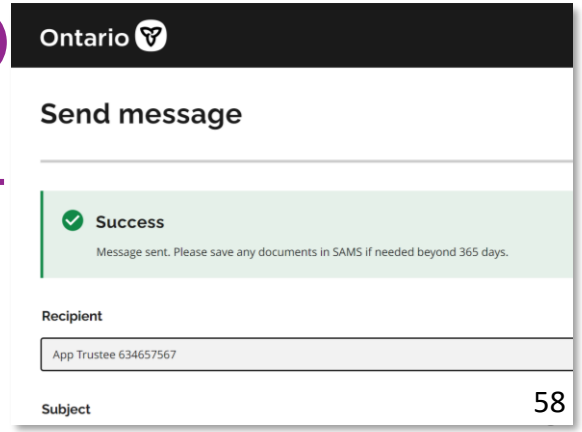

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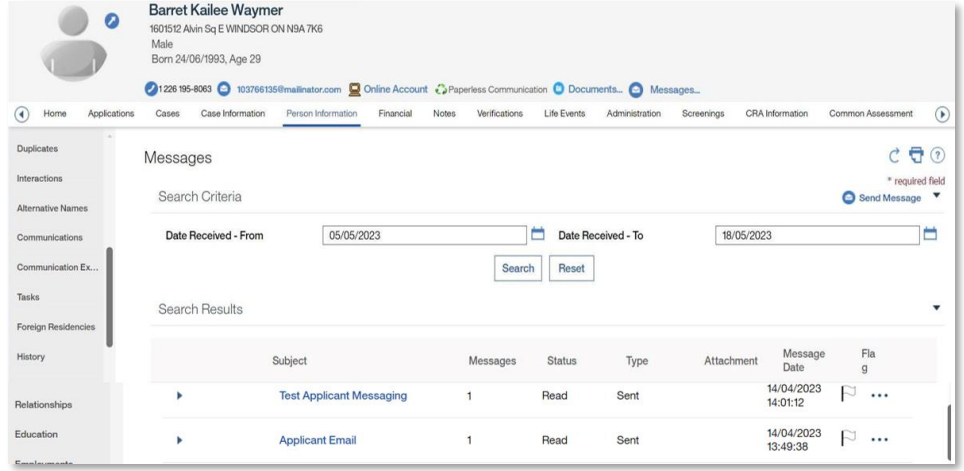
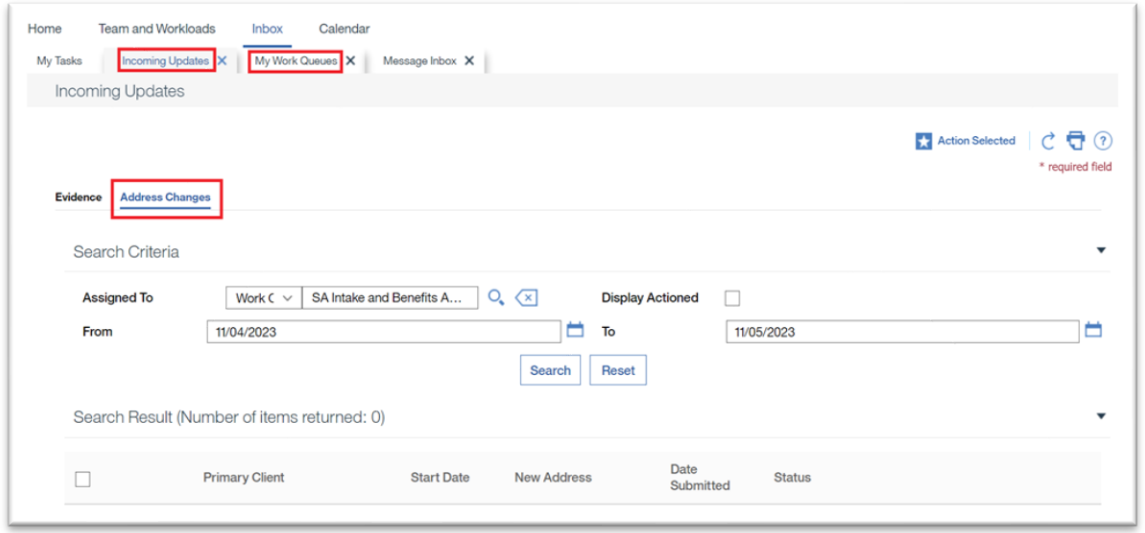
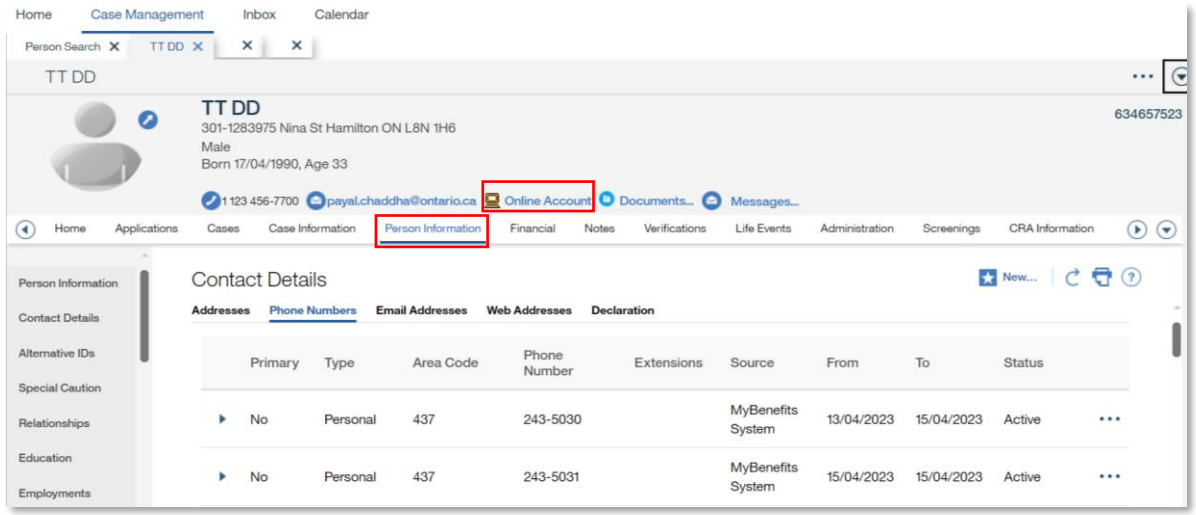


SAMS Experience: Updated applicant information





- Address updates made via MyBenefits will appear under **Address Changes** within the **Incoming Updates Inbox** tab
- IBAU and OW staff can filter this inbox by "assigned to" work queue

"Online Account" indicator will appear in context panel if the applicant created a MyBenefits account

Context panel & Personal Information page in SAMS will reflect updated information (phone#, address) submitted by applicant in MyBenefits

IBAU and OW staff can also update applicant info on the **Personal Information page** and the updated data will display to the applicant in MyBenefits.

Change Management

Change Management

Define:

- Demonstrate upcoming design changes to validate concepts (account creation, save & continue, MyBenefits for applicants)
- Identify change management activities and supporting materials needed
- Identify audiences, modes of communication, and tailor key messages

Prepare:

- Prepare supporting change management materials, e.g.:
  - User guides
  - Q&A
  - Updated training videos
- Provide supporting materials in advance: at least one month before go-live

Share:

- Demonstrate upcoming design changes to partners and provide opportunities for dialogue
- Host drop-in info/Q&A sessions
- Present update at various partner tables e.g., DARG, JPT, BTN

Implement and Support:

- Monitor communication channels (i.e., Slack, MyBenefits & SA.applications inbox) for questions/issues
- Engage ServiceOntario, IBAU and Ontario Works staff after Go-Live to address concerns/frequent questions
- Develop Lessons Learned after Go-Live

Change Management Plan

- MyBenefits features for applicants (i.e., Create an account, Login, My Profile, Messages) are existing features available to clients. These features are not changing; they will just be accessible to applicants sooner.
- Staff with clients already on MyBenefits are familiar with the SAMS experience for these features
- There are existing training resources and supports for these features on the SA extranet (e.g. SAMS user guide, training videos, FAQs, etc.)

Activities	Target Dates
Create/update resource materials for ServiceOntario, IBAU and Ontario Works (e.g. SA extranet content, Q&A, user guides, etc.)	May – June/July
Update relevant training videos	June - July
"Drop-in" information sessions for IBAU staff & Ontario Works staff	July 10 – August 4
Ontario Works Staff & IBAU staff review updated resources and training videos	July 10 – August 4
SADA MyBenefits Go-Live (23.4)	**August 14, 2023**

Thank you!

Any questions, please contact Courtney.Peck@ontario.ca or Megan.Bell@ontario.ca

FAQ

FAQ: Account Creation

Q: Is account creation mandatory?

A: No, account creation is optional. An applicant can create an account or skip in SADA. They can also choose to create an account later in their application to save their progress. Please note, applicants applying over the phone will not have the ability to create an account (i.e., staff will not see the option in Caseworker SADA).

Q: Can a trustee or someone applying on behalf of someone else, create an account?

A: Individuals applying on behalf of someone else cannot create an account and will not see the account creation option. Only applicants who select 'Applying for myself' will be able to create an account.

Q: What if a user needs help signing in?

A: Applicants can access self-serve features, like a password reset, if they are having trouble signing in. Additionally, applicants can call ServiceOntario for additional support.

Q: What about reapplicants - what if they already have a MyBenefits account?

A: For individuals reapplying within 6 months or less, they can call in for quick reinstatement. If an individual has been off Social Assistance greater than 6 months, they can apply using SADA and login with their existing account. The system will recognize that they are a reapplicant and show features for applicants instead of features for clients.

FAQ: Applicant User Experience

Q: Will users still have access to the application status checker?

A: Yes. It will be available on Ontario.ca and the SADA home page. A link to the existing application status checker will also be available within MyBenefits for applicants who have created an account.

Q: What does the transition look like from an applicant to a client?

A: Once an applicant is granted, they do not need to re-register for a MyBenefits account. They can use the same login and will automatically see the client features (e.g. payments, letters, reporting features, etc.)

FAQ: SAMS-related

Q: Will Ontario Works staff be able to send messages to an applicant who has a MyBenefits account?

A: Ontario Works staff will be able to send messages to an Applicant once an IC and MID is assigned and an OW location/work queue is assigned. The location association will dictate the write-access for Messages.

Q: Can an applicant change their address before they are granted?

A: Yes, an applicant can update their address and phone number using My Profile in MyBenefits. If an applicant changes their address before an IC or MID is assigned, they may be transferred to a different jurisdiction work queue or IBAU work queue (this transfer process is also dependent upon established municipal business processes).

Q: Will staff get a task or a notification when an applicant changes their address?

A: Staff will get notified of address changes via the incoming updates inbox, similar to how they are notified of address changes when clients submit an address change through MyBenefits today. Staff should check the incoming updates inbox regularly.

Q: How will staff know when an applicant changes their phone number?

A: Staff will see the updated phone number automatically when they navigate to the person page. It will also appear in the context panel

Appendix

Integration Vision: a familiar, cohesive service

MyBenefits will act as the single digital channel and the digital brand for social assistance.
Users will see a familiar look and feel across all social assistance digital channels.

When applying for assistance, applicants will have the option to create a 'MyBenefits account' providing access to **key MyBenefits features** such as My Profile, messaging and document upload.

As a user's status evolves, so too will the features available (applicant or client), offering unique support at each stage of their journey.

As an applicant, applying on behalf of myself: ability to save & continue an application, see specific calls to action and features that will help navigate the requirements to determine their eligibility

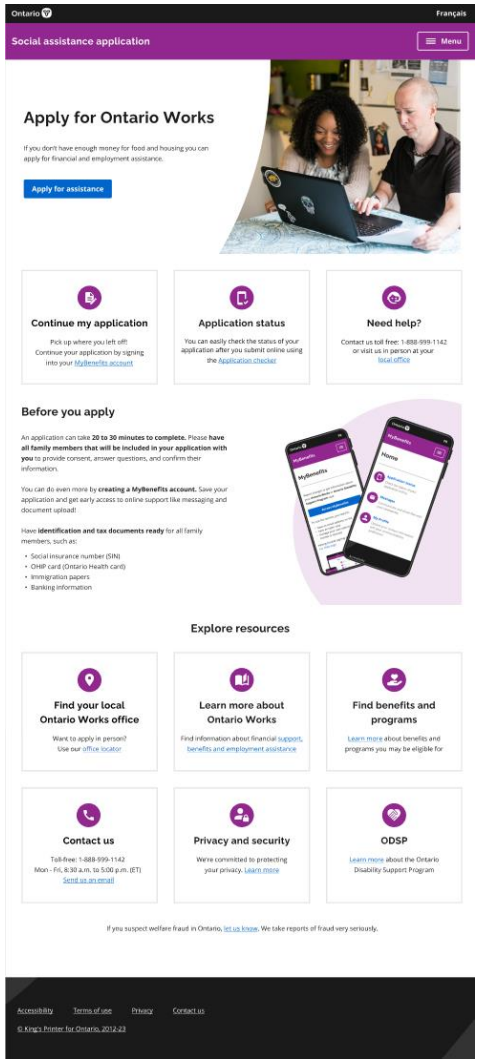
As a client: users will experience a MyBenefits UI which aligns with the Ontario design system and familiar branding and common components encountered during their SADA application

Sarah's experience: Applicant

1

As an ***applicant***, Sarah arrives at the SADA Home page. She can start an application or continue an existing application.

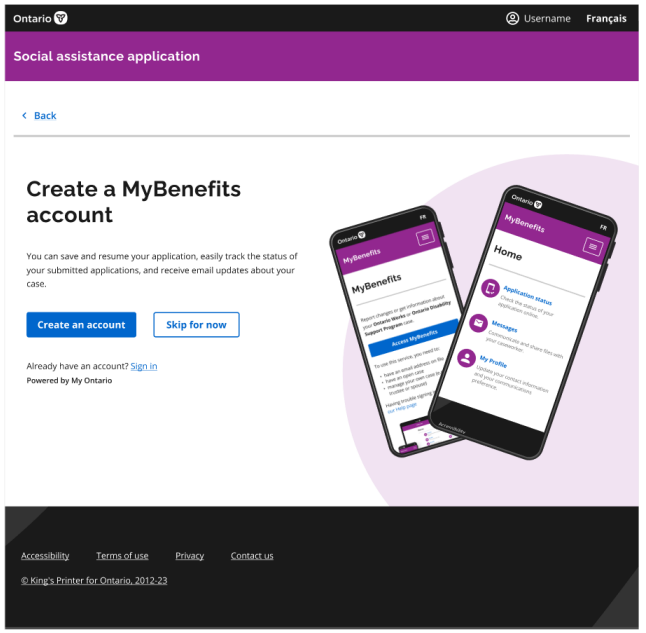
Sarah can also easily access other features that will help her understand her social assistance journey and navigate what will be required to determine her eligibility.



2

After learning about the benefits of creating a MyBenefits account, Sarah confidently creates an account, feeling a sense of relief knowing she can step away at any time.

Sarah is also looking forward to continuing her social assistance journey online.

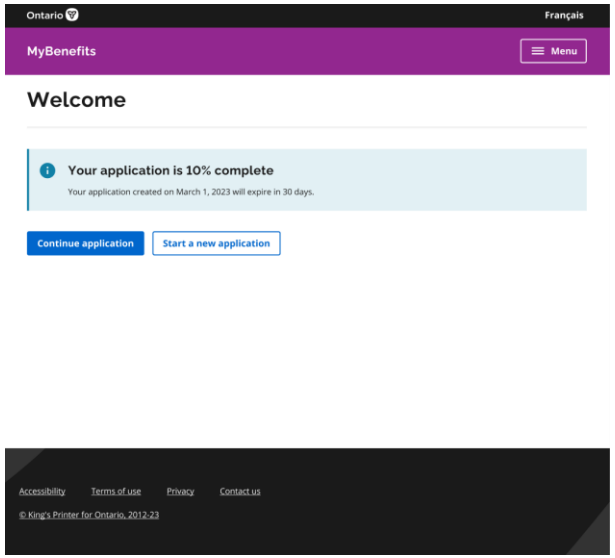


Sarah's experience continued

3

After stepping away from her application to help her children, she eagerly logs into her MyBenefits account to continue her application.

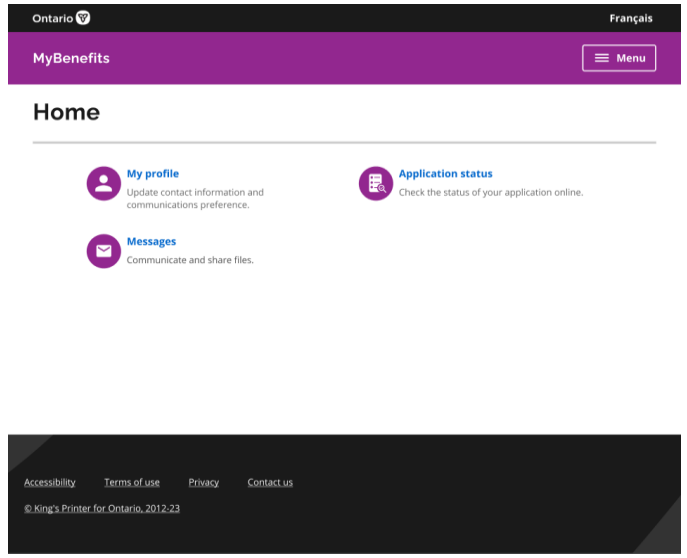
Sarah is greeted with a simple and familiar page where she can see the progress made on her application and the ability to continue her application.



4

Sarah has completed her application and needs to update her address.

Sarah logs into her MyBenefits account and using My Profile makes the update. She also sends a message to a staff member using the Messaging feature. She receives a quick response and uploads her rental agreement for easy verification!

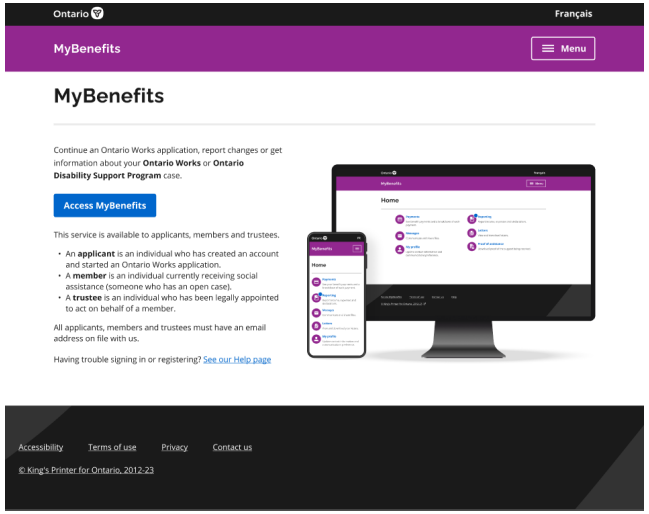


Sarah's experience: Client

5

A few days later, Sarah receives a notification from the Ministry.

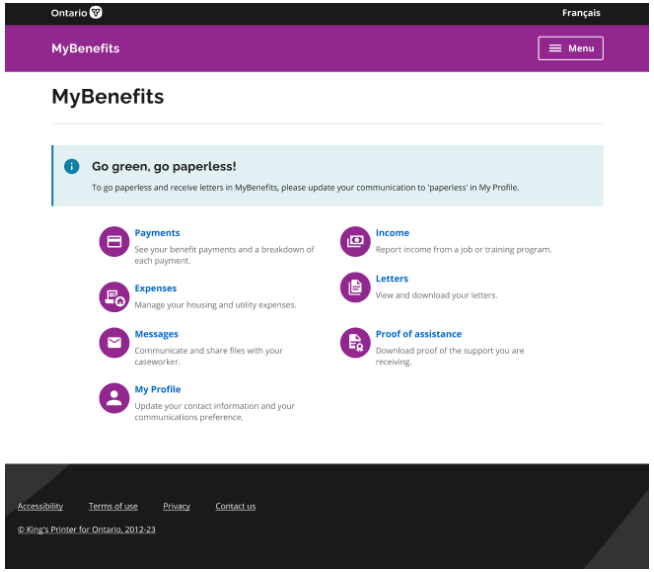
She logs into her MyBenefits account and notices she has been granted Ontario Works.



6

Sarah notices new features have been added to her MyBenefits account now that she has been granted assistance.

She can easily navigate the screen due to its consistent design.



Discovery Journey

Initial Discovery and Testing

- Discovery was conducted to validate whether integrating two existing digital services, SADA and MyBenefits, is the best approach for our users. This includes:
- Conducting jurisdictional and horizon scans
- Designing high-fidelity prototypes and testing them with users in August 2022

Validating Prototypes

- In partnership with our UX designer, designs were iterated on leveraging insights from usability testing
- Refined prototypes were tested with IBAU Dec 2022 and Social Assistance users from Feb 27 – Mar 3, 2023

Finalize Prototypes

- Ontario.ca and SADA home page were redesigned focusing on a clear call to action for users and using design components to guide users
- Consultations with Ontario Digital Service (ODS) and the new Ministry branding informed finalized designs

Continue to Test!

- The full SADA flow was tested in April/May 2023 where the finalized prototype designs were shared with participants
- Any new testing insights will be scoped into future releases to improve the user experience

Pre-Discovery Initiated: May 2022

Testing Completed: March 2023

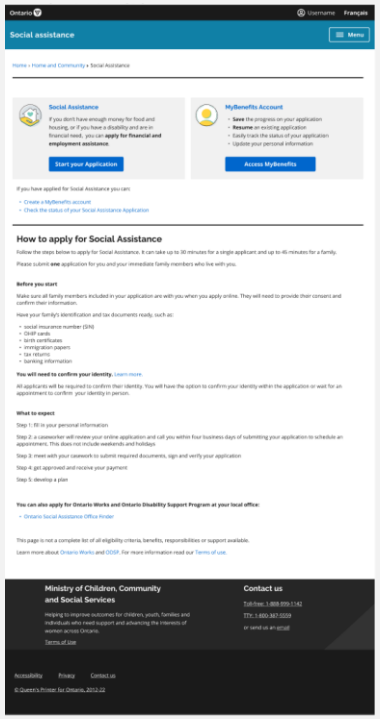
Go live: Summer 2023

Why User Research Matters

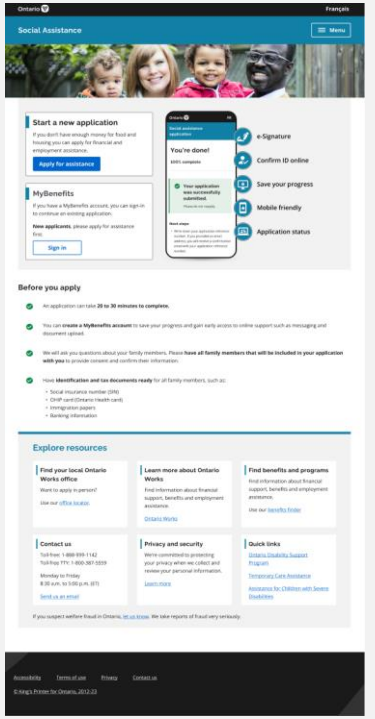
Case study: SADA Landing Page

- User research helps to **build empathy** for our users and provides an essential foundation **to create an optimal product**.
- Testing with users helps to identify where our design has delighted users or failed, and generates new ideas to **make users feel more engaged.**
- **Prototype 1** was built based on previous research with two calls to action (CTA) – “Start an application” and “Access MyBenefits”
  - Via testing we learned two CTA are confusing for users and they want easier access to relevant information
- **Prototype 2** was a re-design to address the confusion, with one primary CTA: “Start an application”
  - Key resource information is easily accessible but users were still unsure how to continue an existing application and how to access MyBenefits for clients
- **Prototype 3** combines a great user experience with great design
  - One clear CTA: “Apply for assistance”
  - Visual elements help to draw user’s eye toward key content
  - Continuing an application is straightforward
  - Other essential supports are available in a new section for help

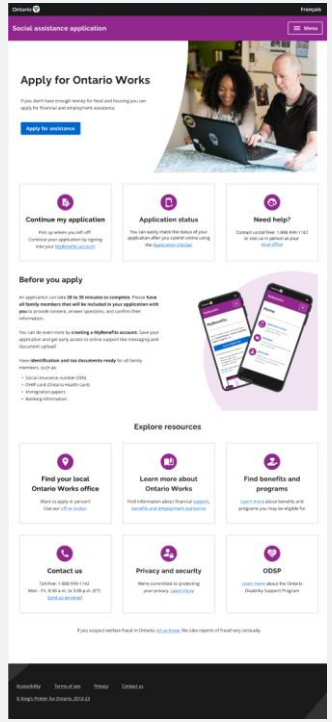
SADA Landing Page Evolution



Prototype 1



Prototype 2



Prototype 3

Supporting research

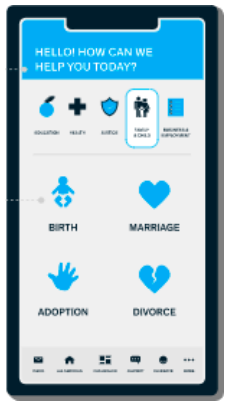
Building trust

- Users expect to complete all government transactions via digital channels – ideally, through a single digital channel that they can build familiarity with.
- Users associate accessible government services with transparency. Making service access easier and providing the service in a user-friendly way helps to build trust with users.
- Users who are satisfied with a public service (digital service) are 9 times more likely to trust the government overall.

Boosting Uptake

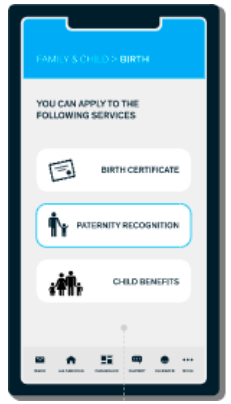
- By introducing integrated platforms, other public services jurisdictions have experienced improved uptake of digital services. For example:
  - In Denmark, 92% of citizens use the 'Digital Post secure messaging' application to communicate with the government.
  - In Estonia, ~88% of citizens use 'e-government services' and 99% of income tax returns were filed online using their eTax platform in 2021.
- Integrated platforms allow public services to provide a broader value proposition, increasing the opportunity to appeal to more users.

Accessing public services could be as easy as online shopping

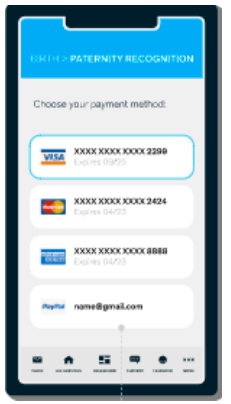


Access to all public service in one place

Navigation based on life or business situations



Coherent look and feel across all digital services



Single solution for recurring steps such as identification or payment

Source: McKinsey & Company

COUNTY OF RENFREW

BY-LAW NUMBER --

A BY-LAW TO AMEND BY-LAW 100-20 BEING A BY-LAW TO ESTABLISH POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR ONTARIO WORKS SERVICES FOR THE COUNTY OF RENFREW

WHEREAS on October 28, 2020, the Corporation of the County of Renfrew enacted By-law No. 100-20, being a By-law to establish policies and procedures for Ontario Works Services for the County of Renfrew;

AND WHEREAS it is deemed desirable and expedient to amend the said By-law for the purpose of establishing a new policy and/or amending and/or removing an existing policy;

NOW THEREFORE the Council of the Corporation of the County of Renfrew herby enacts as follows:

1. That the following amended policies attached to this By-law be hereby enacted as an amendment to the said By-law 100-20:

    - OW-1 - Internal Control Measures and Process for Ontario Works Payments
    - OW-2 - Funerals

2. That this By-law shall come into force and take effect upon the passing thereof.

READ a first time this 30th day of August, 2023.

READ a second time this 30th day of August, 2023.

READ a third time and finally passed this 30th day of August, 2023.

PETER EMON, WARDEN

CRAIG KELLEY, CLERK

Community Services Policies and Procedures			
SECTION: Ontario Works			**Policy #:** OW-1
POLICY: Internal Control Measures			
DATE: October 2020	**REV. DATE:** June 2023	**COVERAGE:** Ontario Works Staff	**PAGE #:** 1 of 4

POLICY STATEMENT

This policy identifies the internal authority and approval procedures for issuing and printing Ontario Works payments.

PROCEDURE

Ontario Works payments can be issued by cheque or by direct bank deposit (DBD). Cheque and DBD payments are created based on the information that is input into the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) software system – Social Assistance Management System (SAMS). In order for a payment to be issued through SAMS, the information entered regarding an individual's assets and income must meet the eligibility requirements and rules that are built into SAMS. All payments are directly connected to a client who exists in SAMS. Payments can be issued to a client directly or to a vendor on behalf of a client.

Once a recipient is deemed eligible to receive a payment, SAMS creates a payment file that is encrypted and then downloaded to a secure computer (Connect Direct) at Pembroke site. The payment file is automatically transferred to the CheqMaster system which is coded to read the encrypted data and convert it into printable payments – cheques and DBD statements. Once the pay files have been downloaded from MCCSS, the information on them cannot be altered. Pembroke Site is the only office that is authorized to operate the CheqMaster system.

Payment files are generated overnight, and payments to eligible recipients are issued the following business day. Pay files are sent by MCCSS to the Bank of Montreal each business morning at approximately 7:00 am for daily processing.

When there is a need to issue a payment right away, a caseworker can request a payment by 'real time cheque' in SAMS. Real time cheque information quickly downloads to a payment file and the payment file information is sent to CheqMaster within 15 minutes; allowing real time cheques to be printed on the same day they were created in SAMS. Real time payments can only be issued by cheque (not by DBD).

Authority and Approval for Payments

The CheqMaster software system is pre-programmed using a secure process for logging in and authorizing the print of the cheques and DBD statements. Each user must be authorized to use the system and each user is issued a username and code specific to them. Payments will only print when the authorized user logs into the CheqMaster

system and authorizes the system to print the payments that are available in the pay file. All transactions in the CheqMaster system are traceable. Vendor support for the CheqMaster software is available through the VisionCraft Development Corporation.

In addition to the pre-programmed user requirements in CheqMaster, the following internal controls are also applied to payment processing:

There are three (3) user authority levels – Operators, Supervisors, and Management. Each level is password protected. Each staff person authorized will have their own password to access the CheqMaster print program. Passwords will not be shared and will be changed on a regular basis.

Operators – Level 1 – Pembroke Site Customer Service Representative (CSR) or designate will be limited to standard cheque printing.

Supervisor – Level 2 – The Pembroke Site Supervisor or designate will be responsible for any required full or partial pay file reprinting.

Manager/Director/Finance - Level 3 – The Manager or designate oversees all account selection overrides, manages system resources, and authorizes user ID's and authority levels.

In addition to the controls within CheqMaster, the following payment controls exist:

- SAMS will not release a payment of $5000 or more to a print file without the supervisor authorizing it in SAMS. Once the supervisor authorizes the payment to be issued in SAMS, it will be downloaded to a print file.

- CheqMaster will not print the signature lines on any cheque that is over $5000, and the cheque will be sent to the Director of Finance for authorization/sign off.

- Each morning all Ontario Works caseworkers and supervisors are required to review the daily payments issued in SAMS (SAMS allows users to search for payments issued by date). If there are any payment errors or irregularities, the caseworker is required to take appropriate action (e.g. cancel/reissue correct payment, recall payment, create overpayment on client's file, etc.)

Payment Printing

There are two types of payment printing, daily and monthly:

Daily Payments: Pembroke Site is the only office that is authorized to operate the CheqMaster system from the Connect Direct computer; however, payments can be printed at Renfrew Site via remote printing. The CSR or designate at Pembroke Site can select in CheqMaster that certain payments be printed at Renfrew Site. The cheque printer located at Renfrew site will only print once authorized via the CheqMaster system located in Pembroke.

Monthly Payments: Monthly payments are issued once per month on MCCSS scheduled dates. These payments represent the following month's benefit payment for Ontario Works clients, and it is a large payment file. These payments are downloaded overnight in a single batch known as 'pay run'. Pay run payments consist of cheques and DBDs and are all printed at Pembroke Site.

Cheque Stock

- The cheque stock used to print social assistance payments must meet specific provincial requirements. Cheque stock has serial numbering on the back and must be stored in a locked cabinet every night. There is an electronic logbook located in the Ontario Works shared drive that tracks the usage of all cheque stock. The Ontario Works supervisors and manager will monitor this logbook.

- The CSR/designate is responsible for loading the cheque stock into the cheque printer every morning and removing it at the end of each day and placing it in a locked cabinet.

- The CSR/designate will also be responsible for notifying the Pembroke site supervisor when additional cheque stock or toner for the cheque printer is required.

- When cheque stock is ordered it will be delivered and stored at Pembroke site. When cheque stock is requested for Renfrew site, the stock is recorded in the cheque stock logbook. This logbook will record when and how much stock has been sent to the other office.

- All cheques that are issued are numbered and documented by the cheque register report. The Accounting Technician and Finance Manager have access to the monthly cheque register reports.

- The CheqMaster system prints cheques and DBD statements on cheque stock (tray 3 of the cheque printer) and the Statement of Income/Changes Report on plain white paper (tray 2 of the cheque printer).

Trace/Recall of DBD Payments

- All Direct Bank Deposit information is sent by MCCSS to the Bank of Montreal overnight.

- The Bank of Montreal receives our daily DBD pay files and ensures that funds are transferred to eligible recipients. DirectLine software tracks the issuance of funds and there is functionality to recall payments within certain timeframes.

- Authorized Ontario Works staff will be assigned a User ID and password to access DirectLine through the Bank of Montreal. Access is authorized through the County of Renfrew finance department. Staff members who have access to DirectLine include one primary caseworker and one alternate caseworker, Ontario Works supervisors, and the Ontario Works manager.

- The authorized caseworker or alternate will go online using DirectLine on a daily basis to verify that all payments were successfully issued (no rejects), and to trace/recall payments when required.

- A DBD trace can take place at any point within the month and will provide details about the DBD. A trace is required when a client reports that they did not receive the payment into their bank account within the expected time frame.

- Monthly payments can be recalled between the pay run date and 24 hours before the payment date. When a DBD payment is recalled in DirectLine, the caseworker will then go into SAMS and cancel the payment. Recall requests are to be sent by email to the authorized user for DirectLine.

Community Services Policies and Procedures			
SECTION: Ontario Works			**Policy #:** OW-2
POLICY: Funerals			
DATE: October 2020	**REV. DATE:** June 2023	**COVERAGE:** Ontario Works Staff	**PAGE #:** 1 of 2

Policy Statement

Applicants who may be eligible for assistance with the cost of a funeral include Social Assistance Recipients (SAR) in receipt of Ontario Works (OW) or Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), and non-SAR who would have otherwise qualified to receive ongoing Ontario Works at the time of death.

Procedure

The only person who is eligible to complete an application for funeral benefits is the next of kin who is identified on the death certificate. In order to qualify for the funeral benefit, the next of kin must authorize the County of Renfrew to apply for the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) Death Benefit on behalf of the deceased. The payment for the funeral benefit will be issued directly to the funeral home. Actual funeral costs are approved for eligible recipients up to a maximum of $4,500.

Social Assistance Recipients (SAR)

SAMS evidence should be reviewed to determine if there was a life insurance policy and/or prepaid funeral. The caseworker will obtain the following documents from the next of kin:

- Original Death Certificate
- Invoice for funeral costs from the funeral home

To issue payment in SAMS:

- Navigate to the recipient's Integrated Case
- Issue the OW Discretionary "Funeral and Burials" benefit - use the month prior to the date of death to ensure that the full benefit amount will be issued
- Navigate to the Registered Person Case for the deceased and edit their person details to indicate their date of death

Non-SAR

To determine eligibility for a funeral benefit, the caseworker will need to obtain the following documentation regarding the deceased person from the next of kin:

- Original Death Certificate
- Invoice for funeral costs from the funeral home
- Proof of income
- Prepaid Funeral or Life Insurance Policy if applicable

To issue payment in SAMS:

- Search for the deceased person in SAMS using their name and/or unique identifiers such as SIN or date of birth

- If there is no Registered Person Case, then a Registered Person Case and Integrated Case will need to be created
- Indicate their date of death under the person details
- Issue the Non-Shareable "Funeral and Burials" benefit - use the month prior to the date of death to ensure that the full benefit amount will be issued

CPP Applications & Reimbursements

The caseworker will complete a CPP Death Benefit application with the next of kin to ensure that any eligible monies for this benefit will be directed to the County of Renfrew Ontario Works. The CPP application package must include the following documents:

- Original Death Certificate
- Copy of Funeral Invoice
- Copy of funeral cheque payable from Ontario Works to the applicable funeral home (or a screen shot of the payment details from SAMS)
- CPP Death Benefit Application (Form # ISP-1200-09-07 E)

When reimbursement payments are received, the Customer Service Representative will prepare a receipt for the reimbursement cheque and forward the original cheque to the Accounting Technician at the County Administration building. A copy of the receipt is given to the caseworker who is responsible to post the reimbursement in SAMS **within the same month** for reconciliation purposes. The caseworker is to save a copy of the death certificate in SAMS; all other documentation can be visually verified. A note should be made in SAMS indicating the amount of payment issued and that the CPP Death Benefit application has been mailed.

Warrant to Dispose of an Unclaimed Body

A warrant to dispose of an unclaimed body may be issued to the County of Renfrew by the Coroner's office. If such warrant is received, the County of Renfrew must cover the cost of this individual's burial (up to the $4,500 maximum). The County of Renfrew can still recover any monies that are available such as the CPP Death Benefit.