

A message from John Milloy

Minister of Community and Social Services Government House Leader

I wanted to take this opportunity to say how honoured I am to have been selected Ontario's new Minister of [Community and Social Services](#).

In my first few weeks at the ministry, I have heard a great deal about the amazing commitment our developmental services partners have to building supportive and inclusive communities for people with a developmental disability.

I've seen this first-hand in my home community of Kitchener. Today, because of the dedication, hard work and cooperation from everybody in the sector, people with a developmental disability are enjoying more opportunities than they ever have.

I also know that our developmental services partners have played a key role in our [transformation](#) plan for this sector. I am committed to continuing this work with you and hope you will give me the same thoughtful, honest advice that you have my predecessors over the past eight years.

As you all know, our province continues to face a difficult economic environment. Now more than ever, we need to pull together and work hard to give the people we serve our very best. I am sure our mutual commitment to a modern developmental services system will help us find ever more innovative, efficient and effective ways to support people with a developmental disability.

I look forward to meeting many of you in the weeks and months ahead as we continue to build a better province for people with a developmental disability. On behalf of the Government of Ontario, I wish you all a wonderful holiday season and a happy new year.

Sincerely,



John Milloy
Minister of Community and Social Services



About our new minister

John Milloy was elected to the Ontario legislature in 2003 as MPP for Kitchener Centre. In October 2011, Milloy was appointed Minister of Community and Social Services and Government House Leader. Previously he served as the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, Minister of Research and Innovation, and Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

Before becoming an MPP, Milloy was responsible for public affairs at the Centre for International Governance Innovation in Waterloo. He has worked for a series of provincial and federal politicians, including as Legislative Assistant to Prime Minister Jean Chrétien.

A graduate of Carleton University and the London School of Economics, Milloy received his doctorate in modern history from the University of Oxford where he was a Commonwealth Scholar.

You asked...

We have received more questions about changes to the Special Services at Home (SSAH) program. Thank you for taking the time to send in your questions. We want to make sure that everyone is clear about what's happening.

Q. I currently receive Special Services at Home (SSAH) funding, but I was approved for less than 12 months of funding this year. How long will I be approved for Passport funding?

A. Starting April 1, 2012, all adults who currently receive SSAH funding will automatically receive funding for 12 months through Passport.

This includes people who were approved for less than 12 months of SSAH funding this year. They will receive the equivalent of 12 months of SSAH funding in 2012/13.

Example:

Nicole was approved for nine months of SSAH funding this year. She received \$900. That equals \$100 per month.

Starting April 1, 2012, Nicole will receive \$1,200 from Passport over 12 months. That means she will continue to receive \$100 per month.

Q. Why is the government going to share information about adults (18 years and older) who receive SSAH funding with local Passport agencies?

A. Passport agencies need to know about adults who currently receive SSAH funding because, starting April 1, 2012, adults who receive SSAH will receive funding from Passport instead.

When Passport agencies receive the information they need, they can make sure that current SSAH recipients automatically receive Passport funding for 12 months. The Passport agencies can also send people detailed information about future application requirements for 2012/13.

We're sharing this information to make it easy for adults who receive SSAH to start receiving funding from Passport. It makes for a smoother transition for everyone.

Q. What information about adult SSAH recipients will you share with Passport agencies?

A. We will share:

- basic contact information about recipients, including their names, caregivers' names, addresses and phone numbers, and
- how much funding SSAH recipients were approved to receive in 2011/12.

Q. What if I don't want you to share my information with my local Passport agency?

A. If you do not want us to share your information with your local Passport agency, please tell us right away.

We mailed you an opt-out form in October. Please sign the form and mail it to the ministry regional office near you. The address is on the form.

If you want to opt out, but you didn't receive the form, please call your regional office as soon as possible. You can find contact numbers on our website. Visit ontario.ca/aeH4.

Q. If I opt out, will I still receive Passport funding for 12 months beginning April 1, 2012?

A. No. The Passport agency needs your information to verify that you are already receiving SSAH. Once your information is verified, you will automatically receive Passport funding for 12 months.



Spotlight on inclusion

Helping people have their say on election day

Today, many people with a developmental disability live in their own homes, hold jobs, get married and fully immerse themselves in the life of their local communities. So why are they underrepresented when it comes to voting?

Quite simply, many people don't know about their right to vote, or don't understand the voting process.

[Frontier College](#), Canada's original literacy organization, is helping to change that.

Prior to the provincial election on October 6, the college ran lessons on voting. Twenty-five people with a developmental disability got a crash course on the basics of democracy, why it is important and how to take part. Students learned about the different political parties, their policies and even practised casting ballots before election day.

About Frontier College

Founded in 1899, Frontier College is a non-profit organization that recruits and trains volunteers to deliver literacy programs to children, youth and adults. Reading, writing, math and computer literacy are all part of the curriculum.

The voting lessons were offered through the college's [Independent Studies Program](#). This program provides learning opportunities to people in downtown Toronto who have disabilities. Students work towards greater self-confidence and personal independence so that they can take part in or move on to other educational, employment or life opportunities.

"It helped me to learn about voting and understand who to vote for. It helped me realize there are things in life you can do and no one is stopping you."
– **Debbie MacKinnon**,
Frontier College student

“People with a developmental disability like everyone else are passionate about having their say and want to engage in the process. Our goal was to give them the information they needed to make choices and help boost their confidence,” said Angela Bisby, Program Coordinator at Frontier College.

“In our class, after the election, students were excited to get the results from the newspaper. Many of them had also stayed up late to see if their candidate was elected.”

For some students, the provincial election was the third time they’d voted in a year. They voted for the first time in the 2010 municipal election and then cast ballots in the federal and provincial elections.

Bisby saw first hand why the voting lessons were so important to the students. “They gained confidence and were proud to participate in the elections as citizens of Canada.”

For more information or to volunteer with Frontier College in Toronto, please call 416-923-3591 or email toronto@frontiercollege.ca.



“Knowing more about the election gives me more confidence to vote. The more you know about an election, the more likely you’ll participate. The more people who vote makes the election more fair.”

– **Jack B. Homer, Frontier College student**

Elections Ontario also helps people learn [voting basics](#). You can visit their website to get more information: www.wemakevotingeasy.ca

You asked...

We’ve rolled out big changes over the past few months, including the opening of [Developmental Services Ontario](#) (DSO).

In this issue, we answer your most-asked questions about DSO, our new definition of developmental disability and our new application for services and supports. Here’s what you need to know:

Q. New people seeking services now go to DSO to apply. What about people who are currently receiving services or have already filled out applications and are on a wait list – do they have to reapply for service through DSO?

A. No. Adults over the age of 18 who were already receiving service, or who were eligible and waiting for service as of July 1, 2011, do not have to reapply or reconfirm their eligibility. They are still eligible for developmental services.

For information about how to contact Developmental Services Ontario in your area, visit www.DSOntario.ca.

Q. What if I was under 18 years of age as of July 1, 2011?

A. If you were younger than 18 on July 1, 2011, then you must contact your local DSO office and find out if you are eligible to apply for services and supports.

Q. How do first-time applicants start the process?

A. To begin the application process, contact your local DSO office and find out if you are eligible to apply for services.

Q. How do I find out if I'm eligible?

A. You need to provide DSO with:

- **a psychological assessment report** stating you have a developmental disability (DSO staff can provide more information about this document)
- **proof that you are 18 years of age or older** (such as a passport or birth certificate), and
- **proof that you live in Ontario** (such as a bank account statement, utility bill or rental agreement).

Q. What is the new definition of a “developmental disability”?

A. We updated our definition of “developmental disability” when we brought in our [new law](#) that governs Ontario’s developmental services system. Our definition is no longer based strictly on IQ. To qualify for services under the new law, the term “developmental disability” also considers a person’s adaptive functioning. This means it now accounts for how a person handles common demands in life and how independent someone is compared to others of a similar age and background.

Q. What about people with autism or fetal alcohol syndrome – are they eligible to receive government-funded supports under the new definition?

A. Adults with autism spectrum disorder or fetal alcohol syndrome may contact their [local DSO office](#) to confirm whether or not they are eligible for services. DSO will review each person’s eligibility on an individual basis.

Q. What if the DSO tells me that I am not eligible to receive government-funded supports under the new definition – is there a review process?

A. Yes. If you do not agree with a decision that is made about your eligibility you can ask DSO to have the decision reviewed.

Q. What if I don't have a psychological report or an assessment stating that I have a developmental disability?

A. If you don't have a report that shows you have a developmental disability, contact your local DSO. Staff will review whatever documents you do have and can refer you to a professional who can complete a psychological assessment with you.

Q. If I meet eligibility requirements, why do I have to complete an application package to assess for service and support needs?

A. DSO staff will complete an application package with you to collect information, including:

- a full picture of your skills and abilities
- how much support you get from others
- what you want to achieve, and
- what support you may need from adult developmental services.

Everybody who applies has to go through the same process. This makes it fair for everyone.

Q. What if I'm already receiving service or on a wait list? When will DSO assess my support needs?

A. Developmental Services Ontario will be completing the application package with people who are either receiving service or are already on a wait list for service over the next several years. The assessment process takes a lot of important information into account and allows you to include information from people who know you well. It will take time to assess everyone across Ontario.

Q. Will people who are assessed first get service first?

A. No. DSO does not decide when people get service. Communities have their own way of determining service priority. They consider the level of need of everyone on the wait list against available resources. The ministry is working with communities to improve the consistency in the way these decisions are made across the province.

In the future, decisions about service priority will be the responsibility of a separate funding body. Further details will be available as this work progresses.

Keep your questions coming!

Email us at:

DStransformation.css@ontario.ca

Looking for more information about Developmental Services Ontario? Read our [July issue of Spotlight on Transformation](#).

Watch our [video](#) and see how Developmental Services Ontario makes it easier for adults with a developmental disability and their families to apply for supports.



Developmental Services Human Resource Strategy update

The strategy's steering committee established three new committees this fall to help position the developmental services sector as a "career of choice" in Ontario.

Each committee, whose members represent the diversity of the sector, has developed terms of reference and is drafting work plans to guide their efforts in the coming months.

Three committees established:

The **Workforce Development and HR Practices Implementation Committee** will implement recommendations on training, education and best human resource practices.

The **Core Competencies Provincial Implementation Committee** will guide the implementation of core competencies in the developmental services sector across Ontario.

The **Marketing and Communication Committee** will support the ongoing development of the sector's awareness and marketing strategy.

A number of agencies from across the province are attending training sessions this fall about core competencies — the values and skills needed to work in the developmental services sector.

For more information about the strategy — a partnership between the Provincial Network on Developmental Services and the Ministry of Community and Social Services — visit www.OntarioDevelopmentalServices.ca.

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