

Key Policy Directions for the Provincial Poverty Reduction Strategy

The Community and Health Services Department provides a range of provincially mandated and Council approved municipal programs that:

- **Mitigate the worst effects of poverty** for people who have no other avenues of support (poverty alleviation). These include emergency shelters, financial assistance for eligible residents, and basic and emergency dental services for Ontario Works participants and low income children.
- **Develop pathways out of poverty** to employment or self-sufficiency (poverty reduction). These include child care fee assistance, rent-geared-to-income (RGI) housing, employment assistance, and social work services to seniors and RGI households.
- **Support households from falling into longer-term poverty** in the first place (poverty prevention). These include homelessness prevention programs, affordable housing development, domiciliary hostels, supportive housing for low income seniors and persons with disabilities, and food security initiatives.
- **Promote social inclusion** by providing low income residents with access to supportive health services as well as children and youth programs that provide positive experiences for leadership and social development.

Below is a list of specific programs and services delivered by the Community and Health Services Department branches that help address the spectrum of needs for people living in poverty. Note that some clients may access more than one service:

Business Operations & Support Services	• Promotes permanent income by assisting sole support parents to obtain child and spousal support payments • Provides referrals to advocacy agencies for clients (e.g. Legal Assistance Clinics, Family Law Information Centres) • Operates Contact Centre to increase access to services by providing a single point of contact and raising awareness of services available for people in crisis or in need of financial support programs – over 75,000 calls handled related to housing, child care fee assistance, and social assistance in 2007
Employment and Financial Support Services	<u>Income and Employment</u> • Provides income and employment supports under <i>Ontario Works (OW) Act</i> – monthly average served in 2007 was 8,426 (adults and children) • Coordinates Community Development Investment Fund (CDIF) funded projects focused on employment supports for participants requiring return to work services • Administers provincial rent/utilities arrears programs to OW clients as an eviction prevention measure – assisted 165 OW families in 2007. The total number of individuals including all family members was 445 • Administers provincial transition-to-work benefits – Extended Employment Health Benefit/Extended Health Benefit to assist Ontario Works clients with maintaining employment. <u>Emergency Shelters</u> • Provides operational support and administers funding to emergency shelters in the community – in 2007 served 2,055 individuals • Manages CDIF employment supports to assist youth in the shelter system – in 2007 served 814 youth

	<u>Additional Client Intervention and Assistance</u> • Promotes the Learning Earning and Parenting Program (LEAP) for young parents on OW – in 2007 served 52 young parents • Provides centralized Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) pending case supports to assist OW clients with the ODSP application process and enhance communication with ODSP offices – in 2007 assisted approximately 572 ODSP Pending Cases • Provides a comprehensive discretionary dental program for adults on OW • Provides supplemental supports to clients through food vouchers and assistance for costs associated with Funeral and Burial, Assistive Devices, Hearing Aids, etc. • Promotes Rental Opportunities for Ontario Families (ROOF) program for people transitioning from OW • Provides the Mental Health Resource Model to assist staff with supports to improve case management and employment planning for persons with mental illness
Family and Children's Services	<u>Family Strengthening</u> • Researches and assesses gaps in services and develops responsive community programs • Provides a range of programs to eligible low income and immigrant families at no cost, which provide safe and positive opportunities for parents and children to engage in the community – approximately 5,500 children and families served in 2007 • These programs also promote positive social, emotional and physical development in children and youth and increase linkages to community and employment supports for parents • Coordinates CDIF funded projects which support programs that enhance services to families and children <u>Domiciliary Hostels</u> • Prevents homelessness by providing permanent/supportive housing to special needs adults including those who are frail, elderly or have mental health issues – monthly average served in 2007 was over 350 residents • Provides assistance with glasses, dental and other health services • Provides access to counselling and other community agencies (e.g. Whitby Mental Health, York Support Services Network) • Provides funding for recreation, life skills, social skills, education skills (health) programming <u>Child Care Services</u> • Provides child care fee assistance to low income families - priority for OW applicants, families who have an annual income of \$36,000 or less; immediate need priorities for families in crisis who meet the eligibility criteria • A total of 5,163 children received fee assistance. Of these, over 300 were OW clients and 44 were LEAP participants • Coordinates LEAP parenting programs • Provides the Language Line for Child Care Fee Assistance • Provides enhanced funding to support the inclusion of children with significant safety, health and mobility issues in child care programs • Provides wage subsidy to child care operators to increase salaries of child care workers to enhance quality child care and make child care more affordable for low income parents <u>Early Intervention Services</u> • Provides limited transportation to support child care programs and other services to address the child's

	challenges/disability • Provides low income families with access to learning and therapy materials that facilitate child skill development • Supports families to access government and non-governmental financial supports for children with significant needs • Manages the Integrated Support Pilot position that provides support to the most vulnerable clients (e.g. address the causes of poverty - mental health, abusive relationships, addictions, literacy, health, employment) – 50 families served in 2007 • Provides counselling and links with community resources • Supports development of parent's capacity to advocate on behalf of the needs of their child (e.g. when accessing services, understanding local support systems) • Overall nearly 2,000 children received early intervention services in 2007
Housing Services	<u>Affordable Housing</u> • Provides affordable housing through market and RGI programs - 6,000 households, including 191 in supportive housing units • Provides a social worker to support and facilitate tenants experiencing life challenges that place their housing at risk <u>Homelessness prevention strategies</u> • Oversees the Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP) • Provides arrears repayment strategies • Provides eviction prevention measures • Over 460 households assisted in 2007 through HPP, rent bank, and energy emergency supports • Provides funding for community development • Coordinates CDIF and Homelessness Prevention Initiative (HPI) funded programs focussed on those at risk of homelessness • Participates on York Region's Alliance to End Homelessness • Over 13,000 individuals and families supported through homelessness services in 2007 <u>Develop affordable housing</u> • Built 118 new affordable housing units since 2004 (Housing York Inc.) • Has 50 units under construction and 84 units under development • Built Sutton Youth Shelter and ten transitional housing units • Works with third party providers to support development of 270 non-profit units • Advocates for more federal/provincial support (especially long term strategy) <u>Community partnerships</u> • Partners with Canadian Mental Health Association on a Community Development program that strengthens family households' ability to resolve conflict and access services • Administers supportive housing agreements with service providers (e.g. Alternative Community Living, March of Dimes, Community Living Newmarket/Aurora, Loft/Crosslinks) to provide direct access for clients to RGI units
Policy and Program Support Services	<u>Community Development Investment Fund (CDIF)</u> Under CDIF the Region purchases services from community service providers to address the needs of lower income and vulnerable York Region residents in three priority areas including: • Family and Children's Services

	• Homelessness programs • Employment Supports Through this funding strategy the Region has been able to assist approximately 38,000 residents annually. These include clients who access CDIF funded services through other program areas. In 2007, 40 community projects received funding
Public Health	<u>Infectious Disease Control</u> • Provides medical and health related services to the homeless through the CDIF funded Street Outreach Van – over 2000 clients in 2007 • Operates a Needle Exchange program • Provides access to certain medication at no/reduced cost <u>Dental Services and Nutrition Services</u> • Conducts dental screening program in York Region schools • Manages the dental program CINOT (Children in Need of Treatment) – nearly 2,700 claims paid in 2007 • Provides dental services to OW clients – 1748 claims were paid for children in 2007 • 1,689 adult clients treated in dental clinics in 2007 • Provides screening for seniors • Operates children's preventive dental clinic • Supports York Region Food for Learning – a community based program • Supports Fresh Food Partners – Gleaning program • Supports York Region Food Network <u>Health Promotion</u> • Manages many programs that target “at risk” population such as Healthy Babies Healthy Children (HBHC) for children 0 – 6 years (e.g. food vouchers, Car Seat Gift Project) • May waive program fees for those unable to pay (e.g. parent education classes) on a discretionary basis • Manages programs for adults (18 years+) such as “All Babies Count” and “Nobody's Perfect”
Long Term Care	<u>Long Term Care & Seniors Branch</u> • Provides subsidized services including facility programs (110 clients in 2007), day programs (76 clients in 2007), supportive housing programs (39 clients in 2007), and outreach programs • Provides subsidized office and storage space to the York Region Food Network and the York Durham Aphasia Program • Facilitates low income/at risk seniors to access the Personal Emergency Response subsidy program through the Community Outreach program (65 clients in 2007) • Offers subsidized respite beds in both facility and community programs <u>Client Intervention & Assistance</u> • Ensures at risk clients receive their entitled benefits and provides referrals to agencies that can provide assistance (e.g. food bank, assistive devices) (over 700 clients in 2007)