

SOCIAL SERVICES

Introduction

Key Contacts:

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Social Services provides a wide range of programs and services including Ontario Works, Child Care and Early Years and Homelessness. Other initiatives and/or programs include Middlesex Supports and Homemakers and Nurses Program. The budget for Social Housing is also included here. The City of London is the provincially designated Service Manager; however, Ontario Works, Child Care and Early Years and Homelessness are delivered in the County through contracted service agreements with the Service Manager.

Child Care and Early Years:

- Child Care and Early Years includes the provision of General Operating Grants, Fee Subsidies, One-Time Grants, Special Needs Resourcing, Capacity Building, EarlyON Program and Services, Wage Enhancement Grants, Home Child Care Enhancement Grants and Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care program.
 - General Operating Grants: Provides financial assistance for the operation of licensed child care services to eligible operators who have a Child Care Funding Agreement with the County of Middlesex.
 - Fee Subsidies: Provides financial assistance to eligible families to pay for child care fees in licensed child care who have a Purchase of Service Agreement for Fee Subsidy with the County of Middlesex.
 - Special Needs Resources: Provides Enhanced Support Services from a contracted community agency to promote equitable access for children with special needs, disabilities, and/or medical conditions to fully participate in child care and EarlyON programs and services.

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Ontario Works Program:

- Ontario Works provides temporary financial assistance to residents in need while they are actively assisted in becoming employed and achieving self-reliance. Income assistance includes allowances for basic needs, shelter, as well as other benefits prescribed in the regulations to those applicants who meet mandatory eligibility requirements. Employment Assistance may include options to help individuals and families find and retain employment, become more employment ready and access funding for training and other employment related expenses.

Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP):

- HPP is a provincially funded initiative to provide housing and homelessness prevention assistance and support services to vulnerable populations to prevent chronic homelessness and support recipients to remain stably housed over time.

Social Housing:

- Responsibility for social housing access, eligibility, and waitlist management, the administration of social housing mortgage subsidies, supplements, and program compliance, and the administration of new affordable housing program responsibilities resides with the City of London as the Service Manager (Housing Services Act). The public housing stock within the City and County is owned and delivered by the London and Middlesex Community Housing (LMCH), as a corporate entity of the City of London.

The Homemakers and Nurses Services Program (HMNS):

- HMNS is a community-based service operated by the County of Middlesex. It provides homemaking services through a community agency contract to individuals who require assistance with household activities and who have limited financial resources.

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2023 Budget Highlights

- The Ontario Works program costs are funded 100% by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS). The Ontario Works program costs budget line was decreased in 2023 by \$88,940 as a result of changes made to caseload assumptions.
- The Ontario Works Caseload size is expected to increase in 2023. The caseload in January 2023 was 378. On January 23, 2023, the Province provided an updated caseload forecast which included a monthly caseload of 14.1% in 2022-23. These provincial planning projections are subject to change due to economy, pandemic and federal policy changes, decisions and other extenuating circumstances. The program costs are based on a caseload size of 388.
- The provincial funding (MCCSS) for Ontario Works administration, as a result of the modernization strategy, has been frozen at the 2018 actual expenditure levels since 2019. However, the County funding is provided by the CMSM based on the Service Agreement. The funding has been adjusted to reflect the agreement. Employment related expenses are 100% provincially funded.
- The province's plan is to fundamentally change the delivery of Ontario Works through Employment Services Transformation. Our region is expecting an announcement regarding the Service Manager in February 2023. The Provincial funding for Ontario Works including Employment Funding remains stable in 2023 but it is expected to change significantly in 2024 but the details are not known at this time.
- EarlyON funding allocation was increased to \$394,872 (\$377,605 in 2022 and \$350,000 in 2021).
- Child Care and Early Years Funding from the Ministry of Education is determined on an annual basis. The budget reflects a required County contribution of \$224,031. Additional cost of administration funding was provided (starting in 2022) for two new positions to support the growing portfolio and the Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care program.

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- In 2022 the Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) program was introduced. This program is 100% funded (provincial and federal funding).
- The Province is currently updating the Child Care and Early Years funding formula.

Social Housing:

The budget has increased by \$391,285 in 2023 compared to 2022.

The 2023 budget figure is calculated using the blended formula based on using 70% weighted assessment and 30% actual costs basis (using location of housing units as the measurement).

There were no material changes to the Housing budget as a result of the City of London 2023 Budget Update process. The primary drivers of the overall Housing budget continue to be the investments approved in the 2020-2023 Multi-Year Budget, most notably in London-Middlesex Community Housing (LMCH) to address their infrastructure challenges across their whole portfolio.