

Corporate Services

November 20, 2023

Re: Ontario Works Financial Assistance Rates

Please be advised that the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Orangeville, at its Regular Council Meeting held on November 13, 2023, approved the following resolution:

WHEREAS poverty is taking a devastating toll on communities, undermining a healthy and prosperous Ontario, with people in receipt of Ontario Works being disproportionately impacted; and

WHEREAS the cost of food, housing, and other essential items have outpaced the highest inflation rates seen in a generation; and

WHEREAS people in need of social assistance have been legislated into poverty, housing insecurity, hunger, poorer health, their motives questioned, and their dignity undermined; and

WHEREAS Ontario Works Financial Assistance rates have been frozen since 2018; and

WHEREAS the newly introduced Common Assessment Tool (CAT) questionnaire developed by the Provincial Government for use with Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Program recipients contains complex and invasive personal health related questions; and

WHEREAS the use of the Common Assessment Tool (CAT) provides no benefit to clients, it does not score, provide results, assess client need, and does not match those in need to the services they require; and

WHEREAS the Common Assessment Tool (CAT) contains questions mirrored in the Ontario Health Common Assessment of Needs, used by health providers; and

WHEREAS privacy obligations under The Personal Health Information Protection ACT (PHIPA) do not extend to municipal delivery agents for Ontario Works; and

WHEREAS designated Service Managers are doing their part, but do not have the resources, capacity, or tools to provide the necessary income and health related supports to people experiencing poverty; and

WHEREAS leadership and urgent action is needed from the Provincial Government to immediately develop, resource, and implement a comprehensive plan to address the rising levels of poverty in Ontario, in particular for those on Ontario Works:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT The Town of Orangeville calls on the Provincial Government to urgently:

- a. **At least double Ontario Works rates and index rates to inflation, answering calls already made by “Raise the Rates” campaign and the “Income Security Advocacy Centre”;**
- b. **Commit to ongoing cost of living increases above and beyond the rate of inflation to make up for the years they were frozen;**
- c. **Commit to jointly working between the Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services and the Ministry of Health on the best methods of assessing client needs and then matching those in need to the services they require;**
- d. **AND FURTHER THAT** a copy of this motion be sent to the Minister of Children, Community, and Social Services, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association, the Western Ontario Wardens Caucus, the Eastern Ontario Wardens Caucus, and all Ontario Municipalities

Carried.

Yours truly,

Tracy Macdonald
Deputy Clerk