

## **2018 Key Messages and Related Resources for MPPs**

The following contains several key messages that Community Living Ontario is asking its member organizations to focus on should they have an opportunity to meet with their member of provincial parliament (MPP). Many MPPs were elected for the first time in June of 2018, so we have an excellent opportunity to share our concerns with our provincial representatives.

Consider choosing two or three areas to highlight and leave the package behind for the MPP and his or her staff.

Bring a person with lived experience to the meeting to share their story.

## Key Messages

<b>ISSUE: PEOPLE NEED AN INCREASE TO ODSP SUPPORT</b>	
Our message:	One of the most pervasive problems facing people who have an intellectual disability is the high level of poverty they experience. Many people with disabilities in Ontario are living in an ever-increasing state of poverty as a result of the failure of the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) to maintain adequate levels of income support.
Facts:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Under the previous Liberal government, ODSP payments:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Increased by 1.5% in 2016, starting September 1;</li><li>○ Increased by 2% in 2017, starting September 1; and</li><li>○ Was to increase by 3% in 2018, starting September 1.</li></ul></li><li>• On July 31, 2018, the newly-elected Progressive Conservative government reduced the ODSP payment increase from 3% to 1.5%, starting September 1, 2018.</li><li>• Also on July 31, 2018, Children, Community and Social Services Minister Lisa MacLeod stated the government would develop and announce a sustainable Social Assistance program within 100 days.</li><li>• According to 2011 data compiled by Statistics Canada, over 1.7 million people in Ontario live on incomes below the poverty line – that line is \$20,676 for a single person.</li><li>• The maximum payment for a single person receiving ODSP income support is \$14,028 per year.</li></ul>
Stories:	Tell some stories about the impact that the current ODSP rates are having on people in your community.

Action required:	<p>Moving people out of poverty must remain a primary objective of reform for the Government of Ontario.</p> <p>ODSP benefits need to provide for the real costs of living. Rates should reflect average market rents (as determined by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation); the average cost of a nutritious food basket (as determined by municipal boards of health); and include money for other basic needs such as transportation and utilities. The rates should also be adjusted annually for inflation.</p> <p>We also encourage the government to focus on strategies that build autonomy – for example, retaining the changes to limits on cash and liquid assets, and the improved exemptions to earnings announced in 2018.</p>
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## ISSUE: REMOVING EXEMPTION FOR SHELTERED WORK

### Our message:

Community Living Ontario has been calling for reforms to sheltered workshops for over 30 years, and the organization supported the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services' 2015 commitment to transition people out of sheltered employment and into jobs or volunteer opportunities in the community.

Under the previous Liberal government, Bill 148 or the Fair Workplaces Better Jobs Act would have eliminated the simulated work exemption under the Employment Standards Act (ESA), effective January 1, 2019.

On October 23, 2018, the Government of Ontario introduced Bill 47, also known as the Making Ontario Open for Business Act. Among what is proposed is a delay in the removal of the exemption, allowing simulated and sheltered work to continue in this province.

### Facts:

- The simulated work exemption is a section of the ESA that says a person who performs work in a simulated job or workplace for the primary purpose of rehabilitation is not entitled to the protections of the ESA. While not all sheltered workshops or simulated work arrangements are covered by this exemption, it has been relied on by businesses and organizations that pay people with disabilities less than the minimum wage to perform work.
- Allowing sheltered work to continue promotes the segregation and exclusion of people from their communities, goes against the Human Rights Code, and runs counter to many of the guiding principles and articles of the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- In 2012, the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal found that a business paying a person \$1 an hour just because they had a

	disability was a violation of the Human Rights Code.
Stories:	Share some stories of the value of meaningful work for real pay and worthwhile volunteer opportunities in the community for people who have an intellectual disability. Discuss how your organization transitioned out of sheltered workshops and assisted people who have a disability to make employment connections in the community.
Action required:	<p>The Government of Ontario must stay the course on the closure of sheltered workshops and the creation of community-based alternatives for all those affected.</p> <p>Community Living Ontario is committed to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Working with the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services to ensure proper supports and resources are available to people, families, and member organizations;</li><li>• Collaborating with agencies to determine how best to support people and their families in thinking and moving through the transition out of workshop environments;</li><li>• Highlighting successful stories of people and member organizations who have moved out of workshops and into inclusive community settings; and</li><li>• Working with member organizations to assist people and families to make community connections and plan for making an inclusive life outside of congregated/sheltered settings.</li></ul>

## ISSUE: ENDING LARGE-SCALE CONGREGATED RESIDENTIAL OPTIONS

<p>Our message:</p>	<p>In September of 2004, Community Living Ontario and its membership were thrilled to learn that the era of housing people who have an intellectual disability in segregated institutions was coming to an end in Ontario. The Government of Ontario announced that it would close Southwestern, Huronia, and Rideau Regional Centres by March 31, 2009.</p> <p>There is no question that all people can and should have the opportunity to live in the community, and the closure of the institutions gave many people their first opportunity to choose where and with whom they wanted to live.</p> <p>The Community Living Movement has been a leader in supporting those who move out of institutions and in helping local communities strengthen their capacity to welcome people.</p> <p>Sadly, less than 10 years after the closure of the three large institutions, and following many, many allegations of physical, emotional and sexual abuse made by the institutions' former residents, there is pressure to once again congregate people who have an intellectual or developmental disability in large-scale facilities, apart from other members of their community.</p> <p>There is a crisis for adults who have an intellectual disability, with approximately 15,000 people on a waitlist for residential support and parents or family members feeling increasingly unable to care for their loved one at home with little to no government assistance.</p>
<p>Facts:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In 2014, the Liberal government invested \$810 million over four years to address waitlists for residential supports and individualized funding.</li><li>• The 2014 funding provided for 819 additional residential spaces over two years (2014 to 2016), yet the waitlist increased by about</li></ul>

1,300 people in one year alone (2015/16).

- The majority of the new residential spaces that were created through the 2014 funding were allocated to young people who have an intellectual disability who were transitioning from services funded through the child welfare system. These were young people that were already in receipt of government residential funding, not those waiting without support. Only 270 people received new residential support.
- Some additional funds were provided to developmental services in the 2017 provincial budget, but again, the vast majority of residential funding was targeted at transition-aged youth who already had funding through another ministry.
- As of March 31, 2016, according to MCCSS, there were approximately 14,900 people on the waitlist for residential support, roughly 9,700 of whom were ready to receive support immediately.
- As part of the Liberal government's 2018 Budget, the province was to support more than 800 people who have an intellectual disability who were inappropriately housed in hospitals, long-term care homes, sheltered or correctional facilities to move into suitable, safe homes in their community, which would also start to address the huge residential waitlist.
- On April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018, the Ontario government committed \$5.1 million to an Ottawa organization to build a 34-unit facility intended to house 45 people, with at least 80% of the spaces allocated to people with an intellectual or developmental disability; a segregated and non-inclusive housing model.
- Over the course of 2015 and 2016, the Developmental Services Housing Task Force, a Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services-funded initiative, was charged with selecting innovative housing projects specifically for adults who have a developmental disability. The task force funded 18 two-year projects totaling over \$5.6 million. The task force was to present its final report to the ministry in the fall of 2018.

Stories:	Speak to examples of families in your community who find it difficult to support their loved one at home, while illustrating the value of having people who have an intellectual disability living in their community with adequate support.
Action required:	<p>The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services and related ministries must encourage innovative housing solutions at the community level that will increase residential capacity and improve in-home supports.</p> <p>We must pay attention to our lessons from the past and not pursue strategies that will reestablish large congregated facilities that we all worked so hard to eliminate just a decade ago.</p> <p>We strongly urge the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services to reject proposals for creating large congregated housing facilities and focus on planning for homes in community built around the unique needs of each person.</p>

**ISSUE: SUPPORTING FAMILIES/INDIVIDUALIZED FUNDING ALLOCATIONS/MANDATED SUPPORTS**

<p>Our message:</p>	<p>Community Living Ontario was founded by parents committed to creating a better life for their sons and daughters within the community. Family members have to this day remained a key resource in supporting the creation of a welcoming and supportive society.</p> <p>Increasingly, individualized funding is being made available to enable children, youth, and adults to learn new skills and to participate in the community, while providing families with respite; a break from their caregiving responsibilities.</p> <p>However, when the past government separated individualized support funding for children (Special Services at Home) and adults (Passport), it created a break in support for children as they entered adulthood that has caused huge challenges for people with disabilities and their families.</p> <p>In the 2018 Ontario Budget, the Liberal government announced a \$5,000 guaranteed yearly minimum for people eligible for Passport funding.</p> <p>The establishment of this minimum amount of funding also begins to address the first principle and key recommendation of the Select Committee on Developmental Services, a committee struck primarily through the efforts of Progressive Conservative MPPs, that “the provision of developmental services and supports should be mandated and waitlists eliminated.”</p>
<p>Facts:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services informed Community Living Ontario last year that it anticipated that by April of 2018, when the 2014 investment was completed, the waitlist for people eligible for Passport funding would be 11,000.</li></ul>
<p>Stories:</p>	<p>Share stories of people who have been able to learn a new skill or</p>



	strengthen relationships in the community as a result of Passport funding. Highlight the importance of families having a break from the daily responsibilities of caregiving.
Action required:	Community Living Ontario encourages the government to retain the commitment made in the 2018 Budget to provide all people who have been declared eligible for the Passport program with at least \$5,000 in funding per year. This reform creates the bridge between children and adult supports that has been needed.

**ISSUE: BASE BUDGET INCREASE FOR COMMUNITY AGENCIES AND USE OF OUTSIDE PAID RESOURCES**

Our message:

Other than some modest increases for staff wages, it has been a decade since developmental services-funded agencies have received any new annualized funding to address operational pressures in providing high-quality services and supports to people who have an intellectual disability.

In December of 2017, the government announced funding for the sector to address costs related to the implementation of Bill 148. Yet, costs for things such as WSIB, pay equity, quality assurance compliance measures and so forth have continued to increase dramatically.

Pay equity and the gender wage gap continue to be some of the key operational pressures that are seriously destabilizing many community agencies, particularly those who have had to utilize the proxy comparison method.

Further, agencies have been burdened with costs for service reform such as the expenses related to closing sheltered workshops and developing alternatives for everyone affected.

The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services has insisted that agencies continue to provide support to the same number of people; a directive that has led the Ministry to declare that there has been no diminishment in supports. It is only logical to conclude that given significant reductions in service capacity, the supports to people has, out of necessity, decreased.

At the same time, the Government of Ontario has increasingly adopted the practice of sub-contracting and outsourcing residential services, using Outside Paid Resources, which has resulted in children and adults being forced to live in distant locations, away from their community and family.

At present, many of these operators work outside of the regulated system, creating uncertainty and risk among community agencies with respect to

	<p>the quality of support provided and the safety and security of people receiving support.</p> <p>Too often, the government has relied on community agencies to police the actions of Outside Paid Resources without resources or authority to do so.</p>
Facts:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In the 2018 Budget, the government committed \$200 million over three years (\$57 million in year one) to community agencies to enhance the capacity of service providers, thereby helping to ensure that people have access to quality supports when and where they are needed.</li> </ul>
Stories:	<p>Highlight that while basic living supports continue to be provided to people supported, the capacity to assist people to participate in community activities is being increasingly compromised. Illustrate that without significant new investments, agency capacity will continue to decline and will soon put at risk even the basic living supports that people rely on.</p>
Action required:	<p>Community Living Ontario, along with other organizations in the developmental services sector, is asking that the government immediately invest \$300 million on an annualized basis to stabilize the foundation of existing services. This funding will enable agencies to cover the inflationary pressures that have built up over the past ten years of no base funding, and begin to address the impacts of the unfunded liability of the Pay Equity Act.</p> <p>As the government proceeds with efforts to streamline spending, Community Living Ontario encourages the government to pay attention to the fact that over the past 15 years, the vast majority of funding for developmental services was spent on expanding supports and services and not on administration and infrastructure.</p> <p>It is important that the government funds pay equity agreements to enable agencies to attract and maintain professional, experienced staff.</p>



	A review is needed with respect to how Outside Paid Resources are used in the developmental services sector.
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## Additional Key Message Template

Many member organizations will find it helpful to deliver their own messages when meeting with MPPs, in addition to the key provincial messages being taken forward by others in the developmental services sector. Experience has taught us that it is far more effective to deliver two or three messages. We strongly advise you not to take forward more than one additional message, and if there is not a good reason for the additional message, use only the ones provided.

Reasons for including an additional message:

- Your community or region is faced with a serious issue that your local MPP can support; or
- Your MPP holds a position that is related to an issue facing people who have an intellectual disability and their families, such as a minister of a related ministry or an opposition critic of a related issue.

Keep your key message brief and clear and make sure to include each of the elements in the template below:

- A brief key message that tells the MPP what we want them to know.
- Facts to back up our issue.
- Local stories of how the issue affects people in your community.
- What you want done about it.

<b>ISSUE:</b>	
Our message:	
Facts:	
Stories:	



Action required:	
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## Questions and Answers

**Q: What do people who have an intellectual disability want?**

A: Like all of us, people who have an intellectual disability and their families simply want to live, learn, work, and participate in the opportunities that exist in the community. They want to be part of things and contribute to community life. Some require support to do so.

**Q: Doesn't the government already spend a lot of money on services for people who have an intellectual disability?**

A: The Government of Ontario spends about \$2.3 billion a year on community services and supports for people who have an intellectual disability and their families through a branch of government called developmental services. Given the type and range of supports provided, the sector receives far less than other sectors. The demand for services in the sector continues to far exceed recent increases in funding, and many people are waiting for support.

**Q: I have heard that there have been some increases in funding in recent years. Has this helped to increase the incomes of people who have an intellectual disability?**

A: People who have a disability in Ontario have access to funds through the Ontario Disability Support Program to assist them with daily living expenses. The current government has provided funding that basically keeps pace with the cost of living, keeping many people mired in poverty.

**Q: Are people who have an intellectual disability now fully integrated into our communities?**

A: We've come a long, long way from the days when people who have an intellectual disability were routinely institutionalized and kept totally separate from the community. Many people now live and work as part of the community, learn in the same schools and classrooms as other children from their neighbourhoods, and work and volunteer in community organizations. At the same time, there are many barriers that prevent others from being fully part of the community – segregated education programs that keep kids apart, poverty,



and attitudes that create distance between people who have an intellectual disability and other community members.

**Q: Don't many people who have an intellectual disability live with their families?**

A: Yes. Historically, thousands of parents have supported their children at home rather than place them in institutions. This saved the province millions of dollars. The last of Ontario's large institutions were closed on March 31, 2009. Now, many parents are aging and unable support their adult sons and daughters at home. When they look for support, they often find that there are no funds to respond to their needs or the funding that they do receive cannot stretch far enough to meet the real needs of their loved ones.

**Q: What can I do to help?**

A: You can tell party leaders and your caucus that the community is the appropriate place for people who have an intellectual disability to live. Tell them that the decision to close the three remaining institutions was the correct one to make. Further, our communities need the resources to support people who have an intellectual disability adequately, and they need a clear path in order to live a safe and dignified life in the community.

[Print this page on your organization's letterhead]

## Community Living - Who We Are and What We Stand For

The Community Living Movement in Ontario was formed in the 1940s by families and their allies who were fighting for the rights of their children and friends who have an intellectual disability to attend school.

Since then, our numbers and focus have increased considerably. Today, our membership represents tens of thousands of people, within a federation of over 100 member organizations. We work to support children, youth, and adults. Our focus has moved well beyond education and embraces all aspects of community life.

Community Living Ontario, along with its counterparts in other provinces and territories, form the Canadian Association for Community Living. We are all part of a world-wide advocacy network called Inclusion International.

People who have an intellectual disability want to live amidst everyone else in our communities, participate fully in all community activities, and contribute to the well-being of our society. We are dedicated to supporting people to advance inclusion in their own lives.

As an organization, our position is clear - **it is better for people and our communities when:**

- People live in communities rather than congregated and segregated facilities;
- People are employed and able to provide for some of their own needs;
- Children are educated in regular classes rather than duplicate, segregated classes;
- Young people are prepared for lives as participating and contributing members of society; and
- Families and friends are able to participate in the supports of the people they care about rather than relying exclusively on government-funded supports.

We believe that we have a collective responsibility to support, not harm, people who have an intellectual disability, their families, and communities. Each of us acts on this responsibility as individuals, as members of community agencies, and as taxpayers. We also look to our government to extend our collective ability to act. Government is involved, not instead of us, but with us.



At this point in our history, we are critically concerned that current trends will frustrate the efforts of our membership, communities, and government to stand beside our friends and family members. We fear that unless decisive action is taken, harm will not only continue to be done, but increase.

**[Print this page on your organization's letterhead]**

## **'Community Living' – It's What We're All About**

Some people think our name, "Community Living," has little meaning.

It's different, we admit. But after you read about what we do, we think you'll agree that our name tells exactly what we're about. And we hope you'll agree that not only our name, but the work we do and the goals we have, make perfect sense.

Community Living is something most of us experience naturally, as part of our daily lives. We live in communities, our children go to neighbourhood schools, we have the opportunity to work at real jobs for real pay and contribute as productive citizens.

But, for many people who have an intellectual (or developmental) disability, community living is a dream, an objective yet to be realized. Some may live at home but with little connection with the community around them — as children, they may be in segregated classrooms in schools far away from neighbourhood children; as adults, they could have little opportunity to participate in the workforce. At all ages, many face physical and social barriers that keep them from participating in the social, recreational, and economic world around them.

**For more than half a century, Community Living has worked to bring people and their communities together:**

- **We support people** as they develop their capacity to live, learn, work, and participate in all aspects of living in the community; and
- **We help the community** develop its capacity to welcome and support people who have not always had the same opportunities as the rest of us to participate in community life in meaningful, productive ways.

The direct service and support we provide is essential for many people and their families. Others simply need social or attitudinal barriers dismantled to enable them to make their way in the community. In both direct and indirect ways, supporting people to contribute and participate **makes good economic sense**, and produces communities that are **vibrant and strong**. It's also the right thing to do.

By now, our name, "Community Living," will make sense. Rather than call ourselves by the labels that are used to categorize and therefore "separate" people from their goals,



we take a different approach — declaring in our name the vision of the people we support and the goal we strive to achieve.

We believe this is a vision and goal that you share for your community.