

ONTARIO WORKS SERVICE PLAN 2019-2020



**District of Nipissing Social Services
Administration Board**

June 2019

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PREAMBLE

This plan marks the beginning of the 2019/2020 service planning cycle with the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. While it would be comforting to say that it's believed that the remaining part of the cycle will be uneventful, based on recent ministry announcements nothing could be farther from the truth. Social assistance programs continue to be significantly impacted by the political ideology of the day and it is imperative that service providers keep up with the pace of new governments. Over the next two years, as components of this paradigm shift in social assistance delivery roll out, the collective resiliency of the entire social service network will be tested. Ontario Works administrators will need to ready for this period that will undoubtedly be filled with change, challenges and most importantly opportunities.

A few of the key challenges impacting this cycle that stand out as being significant is the removal of local autonomy to set employment targets and the requirement for DSSAB's and CMSM's to operate using 2018 actual expenditures. While this retroactive funding reduction is not impacting all DSSAB's and CMSM's equally across the province, it is of great concern to regions who for whatever reason found themselves underspent last year. It is extremely disappointing that the recent reconsideration granted to other sectors, namely Children's Services and Emergency Medical Services, was not extended to Ontario Works programs who serve the most vulnerable populations in Ontario.

For the most part SAMS appears to have stabilized. However, it is still not meeting the overall service needs of the program specifically in the area of employment. As mentioned in the previous Service Plan this has resulted in DNSSAB Social Services working with a third party on the continued enhancement of a locally developed employment assessment tool and database. To date, the value of the data being generated has been significant to the achievement of outcomes, program planning and policy development. In the past only anecdotal information related to where individual social assistance recipients were on the employment continuum was known, with no empirical evidence to support it. Due to this innovative and OMSSA award winning tool, DNSSAB Social Services now has case specific information related to the level of employability for every adult in receipt of Ontario Works assistance.

The information being collected through DNSSAB's employment assessment tool illustrates the importance of the social determinants of health on a client's pathway to employment, highlights the barriers preventing these individuals from connecting to the labour market and emphasizes the inherent relationship between health and successful employment outcomes. Overall, in the District of Nipissing, health outcomes are poor in comparison with the Province and the treatment options for mental health and addiction are barely scratching the surface of a deeply rooted crisis in our communities.

While it was known that mental health and addiction was impacting our clientele from attaching to the labour market, prior to the implementation of the database it was difficult, if not impossible, to understand how far reaching these barriers were at the aggregate level. It is also important to note while the statistics being collected capture part of the story, we know that many clients struggling with mental health and addiction issues do not disclose these barriers due to concerns related to stigma.

In order to ensure that the Ontario Works program continues to be proactive and innovative in its responses to what appears to be an increase in clients presenting with complex barriers, collaboration with community partners will be essential. As you will see later on in this plan, DNSSAB's Social Services introduction of Transitional Support Case Managers to the Ontario Works team marks the beginning of a targeted response to addressing these challenges. This initiative however is now at risk and will be discontinued if DNSSAB is not successful in convincing the Ministry through its business case that 2018 actuals will not provide the resources required to continue to deliver these targeted services.

As the Province moves forward with social assistance reform, DNSSAB feels that it is well positioned to be responsive to these new challenges and expectations. The recent MCCSS announcement regarding the transition of employment service delivery to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, and opportunity for service system management will be an area of focus during this cycle. While the results and potential impacts of this transformational shift will not be known for some time, DNSSAB is looking forward to future consultation and collaboration with its partners and the Province.

Finally, I would like to recognize and commend all of the hard work and achievements of the entire Ontario Works team. It is because of their continued perseverance, resiliency and commitment that DNSSAB has managed to effectively serve some of the most vulnerable citizens in the District of Nipissing. I would also like to recognize our dedicated community partners who have played a significant role in this journey, as without them we would truly be at a disadvantage to achieving the outcomes that matter most.



Michelle Glabb
Director, Employment and Social Services
June 28, 2019

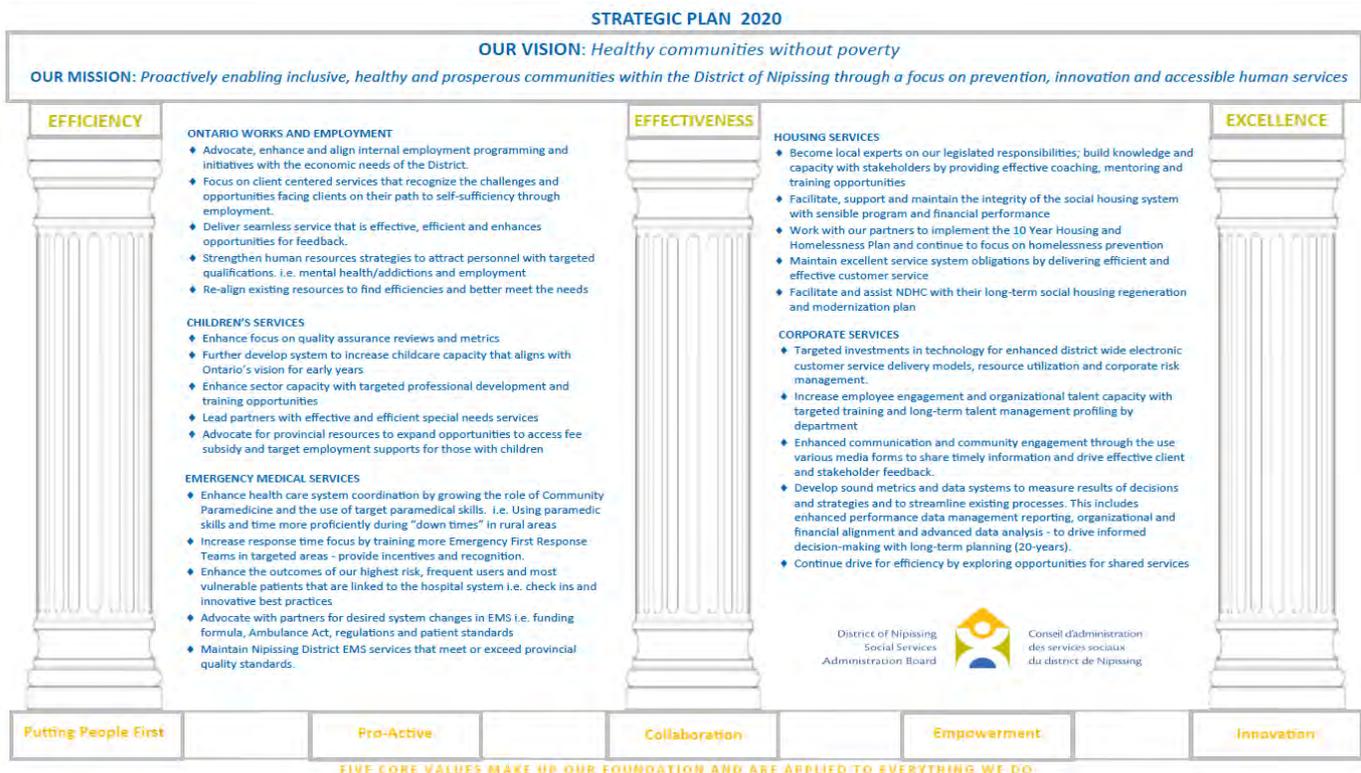
PURPOSE

The 2019-2020 Ontario Works Service Plan builds on priorities established in the previous service planning cycle and demonstrates the key strategies being utilized by Social Services to support the Program’s vision and mandate. It further provides an overview of the environmental context in which Ontario Works is delivered; as awareness of the existing political, social and economic conditions are essential to program planning and analysis. Service Providers, through the Service Plan, are also required to illustrate how current service delivery strategies are aligned with the achievement of the performance targets set in the Plan. The Service Plan further provides an opportunity to highlight achievements and best practices, set new goals, analyze resources and identify gaps in service. The Plan also provides an opportunity for service providers to communicate the role that stakeholder linkages and community partnerships play in the delivery of social assistance.

Report Production

This report was written by Michelle Glabb, DNSSAB Director of Employment and Social Services; and David Plumstead, DNSSAB Manager of Planning, Outcomes and Analytics. Contributions also made by other members of the Ontario Works team.

DNSSAB STRATEGIC PLAN 2020



The DNSSAB strategic plan is unchanged from the last service planning period and DNSSAB's mission, vision and corporate strategies continue to be supported by the three pillars of *efficiency, effectiveness, and excellence* and the core values support the strategic framework.

As with the previous service plans, the OW Service Plan 2019-20 aligns with the strategic direction of the Board, while still meeting the requirements of the Ontario Works Service Planning Guidelines 2019-2020.

ONTARIO WORKS VISION AND MANDATE

The Ontario Works vision and mandate remain unchanged from the previous service plan:

Vision: To achieve improved employment outcomes for Ontario Works participants by increasing individual employability with the goal of sustainable employment and increased financial independence.

Mandate: To provide employment assistance and financial assistance to people in financial need. The Ontario Works Program:

- recognizes individual responsibility and promotes self-reliance through employment;
- provides temporary financial assistance to those most in need while they meet obligations to become and stay employed;
- effectively serves people needing assistance; and
- is accountable to the taxpayers of Ontario

1.0 MINISTRY PRIORITIES

The following section highlights the specific activities and strategies being utilized by Social Services to address the Ministry's service delivery priorities within the following four pillars:

1. Improving Employment Outcomes
2. Enhancing Accountability for Achieving Outcomes
3. Amending Service Contracts (in-year) related to Employment Targets
4. Strengthening Fiscal Accountability

1.1 IMPROVING EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES

1.1.1 Improvements to Service Design and Delivery of Employment Supports

1.1.1.1 *Get Trained Workers Program and Employment Database Enhancements*

In 2016, through a Purchase of Service Agreement, Social Services engaged a third party to build an employment assessment tool that could fill in the gaps left by the current SAMS software, and its predecessors, related to assessing an individual's distance from the labour market. As mentioned in the 2018 Addendum, in May 2017, Social Services was presented with the Ontario Municipal Social Services Delivery Association (OMSSA) Local Municipal Champion award for this creative and innovative initiative. Since that time, various enhancements have been made to the database to increase its functionality with more changes scheduled for 2019.

The Manager of Outcomes, Planning and Analytics has also been utilizing a business intelligence software called Tableau to further manipulate the data to generate even greater insights into the Nipissing Ontario Works Caseload. Social Services has also been investigating whether or not interfacing the Ontario Works extracts with the database will be cost effective due to the data cleansing required. To date, all of the work in the database has been manual which can impact data integrity when staff forget to enter necessary updates. Further review of this option will continue during this cycle.

As you will see later on in this Plan, the data alone being generated by the database has made the efforts worthwhile, not to mention the benefits inherent in the software to match clients to available job opportunities. Future changes will include mental health and addiction, community placement and employment placement modules. A great deal of time and effort has been put into this initiative including several on-site visits to other OW offices both in the north and the south to demo the software. These demonstrations have resulted in many regions on-boarding this solution into their models of delivery. The ultimate goal would be for all OW sites to have a employment common assessment tool that is consistently used across the Province.

1.1.1.2 Let's Talk Employment for the Post Grad

In May 2019, Social Services developed and implemented a new workshop entitled “Let’s Talk Employment for the Post Grad”. This workshop was developed in response to the historical influx of applications being received following the conclusion of post-secondary study periods and OSAP income. Social Services felt that this target group needed increased attention to connect them with the labour market at the point of contact. For this reason, students who are mid program or graduates are registered for this new workshop at the time of grant with no delay.

The following is a brief program description:

- Identify and market post-secondary skill sets
- Resume and cover letter review/creation
- Job search strategies
- Interview skills and practice
- Ongoing support – review progress, provide resources, share leads
- Connect with employment through Get Trained Workers.



To date, this initiative has been very successful with seven new applicants being connected to full time employment in their field of study and two being connected to part time/contract employment, all within a 30 day window from the time of application.

1.1.2 Post-Secondary Collaborations

1.1.2.1 Cassellholme / CTS Canadian Career College / DNSSAB Collaboration (Homemaker) Homemaker Program (2016-2017)



As reported in the 2018 Addendum, through a partnership between Social Services, Cassellholme (home for the aged) and CTS Canadian Career College, a new and innovative solution to connect social assistance recipients to post-secondary education through a program called the “Homemakers Program” was developed. This initiative met the needs of all parties by providing short-term training to Ontario Works recipients, alleviating pressure on Cassellholme for personal support workers (PSW’s) and increased student enrollment for CTS. The intent of the program was to train homemakers to replace PSW’s in the homes of seniors who did not require intensive supports. This then allowed Cassellholme to better utilize their PSW’s to meet the increasing needs of the senior population. Through this initiative, Cassellholme agreed to fund their tuition, books and all other associated educational fees on the condition that the student passed the interview and graduated from the program.

Using the employment database, Social Services identified numerous potential candidates. Through information sessions, workshops and 1-1 appointments candidates were narrowed down to thirteen. After an interview process, Cassellholme extended the conditional offer of employment to six of the recommended thirteen candidates. The DNSSAB was confident that the other seven candidates could be successful and therefore extended funding to them through the Ontario Works program. In the end, the program saw a **100%** graduation rate, and everyone secured employment shortly after completing the program.

1.1.2.2 Cassellholme / CTS Canadian Career College / DNSSAB Collaboration (PSW)

Personal Support Worker (2018)

Following the success of the Homemakers Program explained above, in 2018 Cassellholme reached out once again to Social Services for potential candidates to participate in a CTS Personal Support Worker Program. The intention of this initiative was to address the significant shortage of PSW’s in the District. The same conditions applied to students entering this program as noted above. Unlike the Homemakers program, the PSW program was OSAP fundable, therefore recipients entering this program exited the Ontario Works program. Intensive and individualized supports were provided to the students every step of the way to increase the likelihood of their success in the program.



As noted above, Social Services utilized the employment database to filter the caseload for potential candidates based on specific parameters. Through information sessions, workshops and 1-1 appointments, the ideal candidates were narrowed down to twelve.

After an interview process, Cassellholme extended the conditional offer of employment to four individuals. CTS Canadian Career College assisted them in applying for OSAP living expenses, scholarships and grants, and working out defaulted OSAP loans when possible.

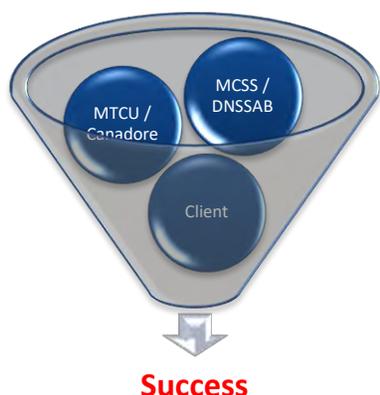
The DNSSAB employment services team guided the other eight candidates in accessing funding and applying for the program. Four of the eight enrolled in the program and the remaining four opted out for various reasons (defaulted OSAP, failed mature student’s test, lack of confidence due to a self-declared learning disability, and a language barrier).

The following represents the outcomes of this initiative for the eight who attended the program:

- six **(75%)** graduated from the program
 - six **(100%)** work in their field of study
 - three exited Ontario Works due to earnings
 - two receive extended health benefits but would otherwise be ineligible for Ontario Works due to their earnings
 - one person's hours of work and wages have not yet allowed her to exit Ontario Works however her hours are scheduled to increase in the near future
 - two did not complete the program:
 - one person tragically passed away
 - one was unable to complete due to personal issues

1.1.2.3 Canadore College / DNSSAB Collaboration (PSW)

Personal Support Worker Program (2018-2019)



The Canadore initiative while similar to the CTS Pilots described above had a significant difference in that it was supported by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities who agreed to fund tuition, books and all other associated educational fees. For this reason, and due to the collaboration with Canadore College, it was determined that this program was unique and was therefore not OSAP fundable. Therefore, OW recipients selected to participate in this initiative were able to remain on Ontario Works while attending.

Social Services followed proper channels and engaged MCCSS in this process in order to ensure compliance with the OW legislation. After approval was received to proceed, using the Employment Database, Social Services identified and selected 32 clients that met the following criteria to participate in this exciting opportunity:

- Job Ready Service Category
- No Criminal Record

Staff from the DNSSAB employment services team and representatives from Canadore College then vetted and prepared the candidates through a series of workshops and information sessions.

Canadore College completed pre-admission activities comprising of an assessment of academic eligibility (mature student testing if required), functional ability testing and also assisted the participant to obtain a criminal reference check.

The following represents the outcomes of this initiative:

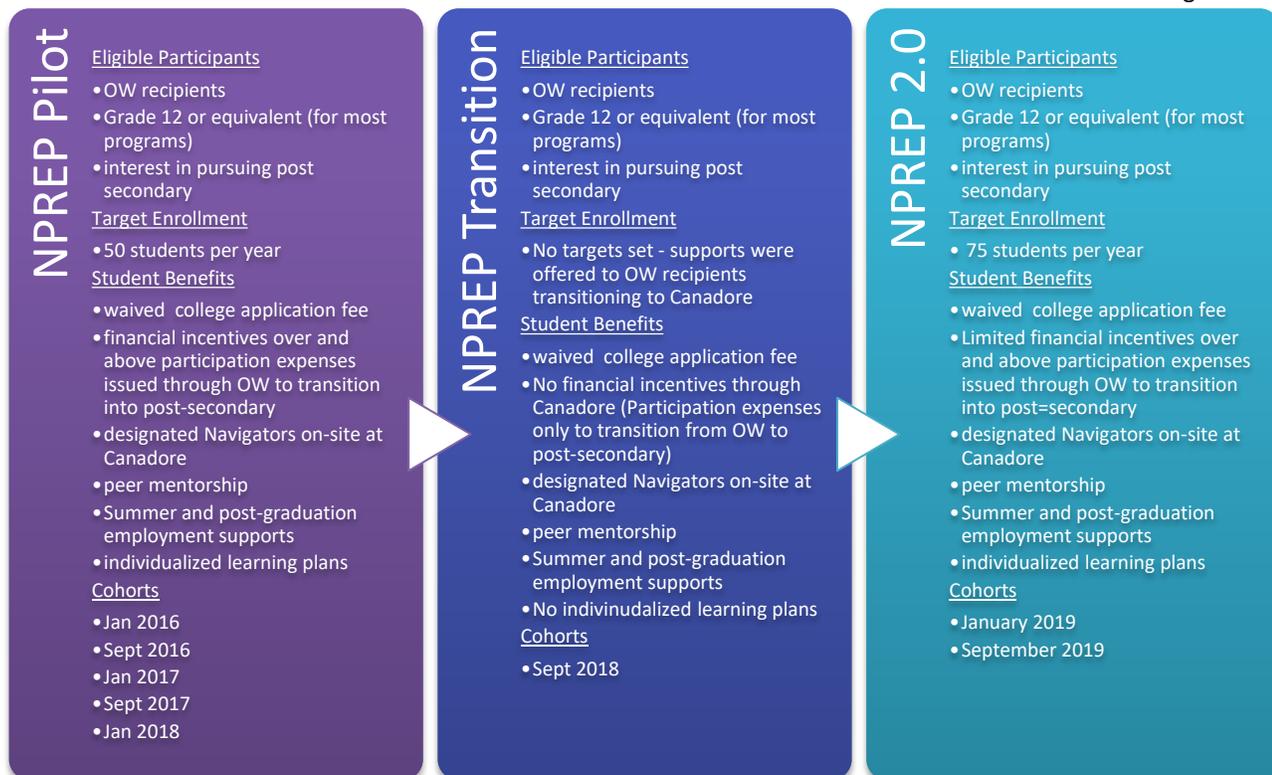
- 26 of 32 seats were given to Ontario Works recipients.
- 5 of 26 (19%) OW students did not complete the program.
- 3 of 26 (12%) OW students have been approved for a 2 year accommodated plan.

- 18 of 26 (69%) OW students successfully completed the program.
- 16 (88%) have been hired **in their field**.
- 2 of which are continuing their education at Nipissing University for Nursing.
- 1 of which is continuing their education at Canadore College for Mental Health and Addictions.
- 1 (5%) has secured part-time employment unrelated to her field of study and continues to receive employment supports.
- 1 (5%) will seek employment after maternity leave.

1.1.2.4 Canadore College Partnership: Nipissing Poverty Reduction Through Education Program

Nipissing Poverty Reduction through Education Program (N-PREP) started as a three year pilot program that was funded under Ontario’s Local Poverty Reduction fund from 2015 to the end of 2018. There were 160 NPREP participants from the original pilot and 186 NPREP students to date. As you can see in the diagram below under NPREP 2.0, Social Services through a purchase of service agreement with Canadore College, kept the NPREP initiative alive beyond January 2018 by funding a full time Navigator position along with other student supports to work solely with social assistance referrals from OW and ODSP. Unfortunately, due to budget restrictions Social Services was not able to provide the same level of support through this transition phase or into the new NPREP 2.0 partnership which began in January 2019. Refer to figure 1 below for additional details about the changes to NPREP.

Figure 1



In order to monitor and measure the success of NPREP both quantitative analysis and qualitative research has been complete. To date, five reports have been generated;

1. *Nipissing Poverty Reduction through Education Program (NPREP): Year 3 Evaluation Report*, prepared by David Zarifa and Gregory P. Brown, November 2018
2. *Supplementary Data and Analysis for NPREP Evaluation Year 2, November 2017*, prepared by David Plumstead, November 2017
3. *Nipissing Poverty Reduction through Education Program (NPREP): Year 2 Evaluation Report*, prepared by David Zarifa and Gregory P. Brown, November 2017
4. *Supplementary Data and Analysis for the Nipissing Poverty Reduction through Education Program Evaluation – Year 1*, prepared by David Plumstead, October 2016
5. *Nipissing Poverty Reduction through Education Program (NPREP): Preliminary Evaluation Report*, prepared by David Zarifa and Gregory P. Brown, April 2017

Initial findings are positive. For instance, the third party evaluations completed suggest that without NPREP many students would not have entered post-secondary and that the support of the NPREP staff was critical to their success at school. The year two supplementary data analysis completed internally analyzed 80 NPREP participants who entered post-secondary between September of 2015 and January of 2017. Initial estimates indicate that for every dollar spent to support students through NPREP there is a potential cost savings of \$3.40 in OW recidivism costs. The report also recognized the immediate short term program outcomes gained by moving OW recipients off of social assistance and into post-secondary education.

To date, 74 of 186 NPREP students have graduated. As more students graduate and hopefully gain employment it will be interesting to see the long-term impact on social assistance dependency. In the meantime, it is important to continue the work we are doing through NPREP. Promoting higher learning to help connect OW recipients to employment will not only decrease dependency on social assistance it will also address the skills gap experienced by local employers.

1.1.3 Employer Engagement – Information Sessions for Clients

In 2018, Social Services started connecting with local employers in a more meaningful way by inviting them to the DNSSAB office to present to job ready social assistance recipients. During these sessions, the employers not only recruited potential candidates but also explained what their business was and what they were looking for in an employee. This approach has been reasonably successful as it allows clients to network with employers and gain an understanding of what an ideal candidate looks like based on the unique needs of each Employer. To date the following represents some of the local employers that have been engaged:

- Home Instead Senior Care Info Session
- HGS – group went to HGS for a tour and info-session
- Cassellholme
- Zedd
- Paramed

The employment team has also been doing site visits with several employers for clients in groups at actual work sites to give them exposure to the various workplaces. To date, these efforts appear to be successful and well received by both clients and employers.

1.1.4 Engagement with Dr. Dell'Aquila – Methadone Clinic

In late 2018 and early 2019, Social Service and Dr. Dell'Aquila partnered to target interventions for OW and/or ODSP participating clients self-declaring as having mental health and/or addiction issues. By filtering the data from the employment database, a short list of clients fitting this criterion was easily identified. To date, one session has taken place with clients. Unfortunately, due to the needs of this population, there was a high no show rate for the first session. A second session will be scheduled in the near future. Dr. Dell'Aquila's intention is to connect all clients who are not currently connected to a mental health or addiction program to services that will meet their individual needs, not necessarily methadone treatment. Further discussions are underway to develop a strategy on how to engage this population in the outlying areas.

1.1.5 Strategic Workshop Development by Target Group

Due to the functionality of the Get Trained Workers Employment Database, Social Services is now able to isolate target groups and develop programs and services that fit their unique needs. Examples of this would be mental health and addiction, sole support parents, older clients, clients applying for the first time, clients with criminal records, recent graduates, youth etc. Social Services will be working on establishing workshops to meet the needs of all target groups during the current cycle.

As mentioned previously, Social Services can filter the data and drill down based on whatever parameters it chooses through the use of Tableau. This tool has helped Social Services be more strategic around its decision making with respect to what employment services will be delivered. A few examples of this strategy are as follows:

- For the NPREP program, the caseload was filtered using the following criteria: participant has obtained their secondary school diploma or equivalent, participant is classified as job ready and participant has answered no to the questions related to significant barriers.
- For the mental health and addiction workshop, the database was filtered to identify recipients who did not have family doctor and had answered yes to questions on the employability assessment related to mental health and addiction being a barrier to employment.

1.1.6 Expedited Employability Assessments at the First Point of Contact

It is well documented that the longer a participant is in receipt of social assistance, the lower their self-confidence, and self-esteem is. For this reason, Social Services made the decision to move the administration of the employability assessment up to the intake appointment. By bringing the focus of employment services to the first point of contact at the time of application, participants move along the employment continuum faster with better results. However, Case Managers do use their discretion to postpone the completion of the assessment when required. An example of when it may be deemed unreasonable to administer the assessment at the point of intake may include situations where the client is emotionally unstable or in distress.

1.1.7 Enhance Transitional Support Case Manager (TSCM) Team

In 2018, Social Services enhanced its case management team through the creation of a Transitional Support Case Manager role, which is essentially Case Managers with expertise, education and experience working with individuals struggling with mental health and addiction. Due to the high volume of recipients declaring mental health and addiction as a barrier to employment, it was becoming increasingly important to develop a strategy that could meet the needs of this population. Additional detail regarding the role of the TSCM's will be provided later on in this Plan. In 2019, through the support of an increased investment through the municipal levy, it was Social Services intention to increase the capacity of this team as the team was not able to keep up with the demand. Due to recent Ministry announcements this plan was put on hold pending the result of Social Services business case which can be found further on in the document under Section 4 – 4.2 Analysis of Resources and Business Case.

1.1.8 Collaboration with ODSP

Social Services continues to have a positive working relationship with the Ontario Disability Support Program. Due to the inherent overlaps in program delivery, ongoing coordination and communication has been essential. Joint training on various topics including mental health and addiction has also been leveraged during the previous cycle to increase networking, learning opportunities and to maximize funding envelopes. The following represents a few of the key areas where ODSP and OW intersect:

- ODSP Discretionary Benefits: during the last service planning cycle, a review of the OW/ODSP discretionary benefits policy was completed in consultation with the ODSP office and implemented in April of 2019. The review was required as data was revealing that many ODSP requests for discretionary benefits were being denied. In order to increase the level of support that OW was providing to ODSP recipients the policy was updated. The most significant change was the removal of the historic “financial needs test” that included a calculation that was too restrictive in its application. The new policy continues to have parameters and is being monitored closely to ensure that expenditures remain within budget and that the changes made are having the intended results. Further details on the overall effectiveness of this change will be provided in the 2020 addendum.
- ODSP applicants who choose to participate in Ontario Works activities, ODSP dependent adults and non-disabled spouses with mandatory Ontario Works participation requirements. Currently, OW is only working with approximately 18 ODSP participants none of which are ODSP applicants. From a social inclusion perspective, this is an area where there may be value to increased collaboration on how to better connect this population to Ontario Works employment services. It is essential that both programs focus on the abilities of these individuals rather than their disabilities. Ontario Works strongly believes that everyone has something to contribute and they deserve to feel that these contributions are valued in their communities.

A strategy will need to be developed with ODSP on how to increase referrals and on how to increase the engagement of ODSP recipients after they have connected to the OW program. Jointly delivered

information sessions that promote the value of participation may be a good place to start to engage this population. Communication materials that seek to engage ODSP clients may also be of value. Another possible approach could be to have the OW worker meet for the first time with the ODSP participant at the ODSP office or vice versa in order to achieve a more wrap-around approach to employment services.

Due to the recent Provincial announcement regarding Ontario Works and the delivery of employment services, it is unclear whether or not Ontario Works will continue to work with all non-disabled ODSP spouses and dependent adults on their employment goals. Until clarity is received on this component of the Ontario Works mandate, Ontario Works will remain committed to working with these individuals on their pathways to employment and/or employment enhancing activities.

- ODSP File Transfer processes based on SAMO requirements.
- OW has worked with ODSP on several Joint Implementation Protocols (JIP's) over the years with the last version being updated in 2017. A new version is currently being drafted to capture more recent changes. More work will be required to the JIP as soon as decisions are made on how to better engage this population to participate in OW activities.
- Employment Related Benefits for ODSP recipients participating in the OW program.
- OW Discretionary Vision Care for ODSP Dependent Adults.
- OW Discretionary Dental for ODSP Dependent Adults.
- ODSP Funerals.
- Social Services Employment Database that stores targeted employment related information for OW and ODSP clients in order to expedite matches to employment opportunities and/or community and employment placements.
- In an effort to better serve the needs of all social assistance recipients, and due to the volume of ODSP clients accessing DNSSAB OW satellite offices in Mattawa and Sturgeon Falls, OW approached ODSP to form a partnership whereby they could use DNSSAB space in order to connect with their clientele in person. This proposal was well received by ODSP resulting in a schedule being established in both offices to have an ODSP worker on site on a bi-weekly rotation. To date, the results of this initiative have been very positive.

1.1.9 ENHANCED COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION WITH EMPLOYMENT ONTARIO

In 2017, through consultation and collaboration with MTCU and Employment Ontario (EO) Service Providers, a centralized external referral tracking process was created in order to streamline how referrals are made from Ontario Works (OW). This new process assists both OW and EO with the monitoring and measuring of how many external referrals are being made and to what agency by Case Manager. This process also simplified and centralized communication. The process further allows OW and EO to compare data with respect to referral numbers which can then be used to inform decision making around program planning and service delivery.

Further to this new tracking mechanism, a new referral form was implemented the week of June 17th, 2019 to make the form more functional for both OW and YES Employment Services. Social Services also has a long standing referral protocol with adult literacy providers in the District that has worked very well over the years.

Social Services has also been very active as a member of the Nipissing Employment Services Table (NEST). In fact, it was the lead agency that brought the table together. At the onset of this collaborative being established, Social Services hosted and chaired the meetings for some time before suggesting that the Chair rotate. This not only gave other organizations an opportunity to lead the table, it also gave everyone the chance to visit other employment service delivery sites. To date this initiative appears to be successful and will continue to operate until the group collectively decides otherwise.

The Nipissing Employment Services Table is comprised of local employment and training agencies. The group collaboratively finds solutions to common barriers relating to employment and/or training in order to develop and improve the service network. The group regularly shares new programs, updates and ideas during bi-monthly meetings, via the shared google drive and through an e-mail distribution list. Members of the NEST inclusive of Social Services successfully organize and host various events with the most recent Fall Job Fair serving over 200 job seekers. The following agencies are represented at the Table followed by the vision, mission, scope and purpose:

- DNSSAB, YES Employment Services, Chamber of Commerce, Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board, March of Dimes, Canadore College, True Self, Collège Boréal, North Bay and District Multicultural Centre, Literacy Nipissing, Community Living, North Bay Military Family Resource Centre, ODSP, Agilec, Labour Market Group, North Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre, Economic Development, Métis Nations of Ontario, Contact North, PEP Place, True Self, the Business Centre, Literacy Alliance of West Nipissing.

Vision:

All job seekers and employers in the District of Nipissing experience improved co-ordinated access to the full range of employment and training supports resulting in sustainable employment.

Mission: *To*

- Facilitate communication and collaboration among service agencies and within the community
- Identify gaps and duplications in employment service delivery;
- Improve employer engagement resulting in increased employment participation rates;
- Ensure long term sustainable employment outcomes across Nipissing District;
- Foster an enhanced understanding of social inclusion and acceptance issues among employers, stakeholders and the Nipissing District population at large and:
- Promote and celebrate diversity, integration, and equality of opportunity throughout the workplaces of our community.

Scope:

The Nipissing District Employment Services Table:

- Work with employers, stakeholders, and the Nipissing District population to identify and overcome socio-economic and cultural barriers to employment;
- Recognize, collaborate, and produce coordinated action plans which address the issues and challenges marginalized groups face when entering the labour market; and
- Actively support and encourage social inclusion and integration throughout the various workplaces in the Nipissing District;

Purpose:

The Nipissing District Employment Services Table:

- Defines and addresses the needs and issues related to employment services and training by working collaboratively to find solutions
- Provides a forum where the voices of employment service providers can participate in developing and improving the service network

1.2 LEVERAGE LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Social Services continues to seize every opportunity to collaborate with economic development organizations in order to leverage provincial investments and resource development to provide opportunities for OW recipients to access skills training, work experience and new jobs.

The following are brief descriptions of economic development activities that were undertaken or are currently underway. Unfortunately, recent news that the Mattawa-Bonfield Economic Development Corporation has dissolved has left a gap that hopefully will be filled in the near future. These activities involve collaborative participation and planning with economic development organizations, or leveraging other public and private investments in areas such as infrastructure and resource development. The activities also include the compiling and disseminating of information and data relevant to economic growth and development, for key stakeholders and organizations.

- A number of Get Job Ready events, Job Fairs and Workforce Week events were held during the previous service planning cycle to help people prepare for, and find, employment. These events required collaborative participation and planning by many service organizations including – but not limited to – the DNSSAB, Employment Ontario, The Labour Market Group, Canadore College, College Boreal, Fed Nor, North Bay Economic Development, the respective North Bay and West Nipissing Chamber of Commerce, etc.
- Economic Development organizations are actively involved in the Nipissing Employment Services Table.
- DNSSAB provides the North Bay Economic Development Department with monthly labour force data from the national Labour Force Survey (Statistics Canada).
- Monthly labour market data compiled by the Labour Market Group is disseminated to staff.
- Consultation has taken place on how to connect the Labour Market Groups “Ready Set Hired” job bank to the Get Trained Workers Employment Database to facilitate and digitize the matching of client skill sets to available job opportunities.
- DNSSAB continues to be an active member of the North Bay Parry Sound District Chamber of Commerce.
- DNSSAB has a service agreement with the North Bay and District Chamber of Commerce to deliver employment placement services through the 100 Jobs Pilot along with a service agreement for the Get Trained Workers program both of which will be discussed in greater detail later in this report.
- DNSSAB has had an Agreement with the Business Centre for many years to assist OW staff to support clients pursuing self-employment. The Business Centre provides a comprehensive training program that allows participants to explore entrepreneurship, develop a business model and prove its viability. The program further assists participants with sound business skills and learning important networking methods to support the launch and successful growth of their business. All clients receive confidential one-on-one consultations that go beyond

the completion of the program. Participants are invited to attend a variety of workshops and also receive all workshop material on a USB for future reference.

- In South Algonquin (Whitney) satellite office and Resource Centre, DNSSAB Social Services has formed a partnership and agreed to co-locate at its current location with the Bancroft and District Chamber of Commerce. This partnership will help to align the needs of local employers with that of local job seekers. Below are a few pictures of the Grand Opening and ribbon cutting that took place on June 26, 2019.



Past Activities - Disseminate /Share Economic Development Information and Data:

- DNSSAB has hosted a Nipissing Regional Economic Development Workshop (July 2015) which was attended by elected officials, senior administration, and directors of economic development from surrounding municipalities. The workshop was intended to facilitate a discussion around economic development and growth in Nipissing District, and gauge whether there are opportunities for working together on any initiatives or taking a coordinated /regional approach to economic development. This event was well received by the Board and those who participated. Since that time the Board has communicated a renewed interest in engaging this group a task that DNSSAB hopes to complete within the 2019/2020 service planning cycle.
- DNSSAB made a presentation to the North Bay Development Corporation on demographic and socioeconomic factors, set within an economic development context.

1.3 DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN LOCAL COMMUNITY SERVICE PARTNERSHIPS

Social Services is well aware that it cannot meet the diverse needs of the caseload on its own. For this reason, over the years relationships with numerous community partners have been built to ensure that participants have access to a robust selection of internal and external employment services. In order to be effective, every opportunity to take advantage of integration, leveraging partnerships and collaborative planning must be taken to meet the complex needs of the clients we collectively serve. In many cases this collaboration grows into more formal agreements and/or protocols that clarify roles and responsibilities.

The old adage of it “takes a village” absolutely applies to the work of the human service sector as we all have a role to play in helping clients navigate through the various service systems. While some individuals may only have a few stops to make along the continuum of services, others may have several with many encountering setbacks along the way.

While we would like to believe that the composition of the Ontario Works caseload is primarily job ready participants, the reality is that for many clients’ barriers play a significant role in preventing them from being able to engage in employment related activities. This is why establishing local partnerships with community organizations to develop protocols to support OW clients, marginalized or disadvantaged groups across service sectors remains an over-arching priority for Social Services.

The following descriptions illustrate the current local partnerships that the Social Services team has developed over time.

1.3.1 Pilot Project with North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit for Preventative Dental Care

In April 2018, Social Services entered into an Agreement with the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit on a pilot project to deliver preventative dental care to OW and ODSP dependent adults. By this time, the Health Unit was in the early stages of opening their adult dental clinic. While the Health Unit had secured some funding through Green Shield Canada Community Giving Grant, it was not adequate to cover all of the costs associated with opening up dental services to all low income adults in the District of Nipissing. In fact, according to the executive director of clinical services and chief nursing officer at the Health Unit, in Nipissing District there is three times the provincial average of adults seeking dental care.¹ To further illustrate the significant demand, at the time of writing this Plan, there is a five month waiting period for the dental services being delivered.

This initiative to improve access to dental care for adults in receipt of social assistance in the District of Nipissing also aligned well with DNSSAB’s mission of proactively enabling inclusive, **healthy**, and prosperous communities. To accomplish this we must collaboratively partner with other service providers to develop long term solutions that put the citizen first and focus on prevention.

By proactively addressing dental issues prior to them becoming emergencies, over the long term, the goal of the Pilot is to decrease spending on emergency dental and dentures and improve social assistance recipient’s employment opportunities and overall health outcomes. This Pilot further seeks to decrease the number of OW and ODSP participating adults accessing emergency rooms and walk-in clinic resources for dental related issues.

There is an abundance of evidence that concludes that proper oral hygiene is essential to overall good health. Health Canada advises all Canadians that oral health is important at all stages of life.² Not only is it important to our sense of self-efficacy but also to our overall health. On the contrary, poor oral health impacts on appearance, self-esteem, employment opportunities and quality of life. “Most people don’t connect their mouths to the rest of their

¹ <https://www.thesudburystar.com/2016/08/27/no-relief-for-north-bay-man-suffering-dental-pain/wcm/5feb47c3-fc9b-817c-65ff-fd81e5f06842>

² The effects of Oral Health on Overall Health, November 2009 Health Canada.

bodies. There is a link. Research shows that tooth decay (cavities) and periodontal (gum) disease may contribute to many serious health conditions. With mounting scientific evidence, the connection between oral infections and other diseases in the body is becoming widely understood and accepted. Gum disease and cavities are chronic, contagious oral infections that can lead to major health concerns and negatively affect the course of other diseases and treatments. Prevention is considered key to maintaining good overall health. Proper oral care and regular professional scaling (cleaning) by a dental hygienist are important for keeping the mouth and body healthy. Health Canada, The World Health Organization, the Ontario government and data from international research continue to place emphasis on health prevention and the knowledge that “the public cannot³ be healthy without oral health.”

Although emergency dental care is a discretionary benefit available for social assistance recipients, many citizens continue to struggle to access essential dental treatment. This is in part due to the discrepancy between actual service fees and allowable expenses resulting in low rates of reimbursement to dental practitioners. The other issue being noted by local dentists as well, in a summary report written by the Ontario Oral Health Alliance (OOHA) is the high no show rate of social assistance recipients to attend their appointments.⁴ As of February 2019, the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit reports that to date they have achieved an 89% attendance rate which is testament to the effectiveness of the adult dental clinic in the District of Nipissing. While this statistic captures all low income individuals accessing services and not solely social assistance recipients, they are nonetheless included in this count.⁵

To most low-income citizens and those in receipt of social assistance, accessing preventative dental care is viewed as a luxury rather than a priority given the realities and financial pressures of daily living expenses such as rent, groceries and utilities. For some, the decision to access dental services is not even considered until the dental pain and discomfort becomes overwhelming. Many times these citizens make multiple trips to walk in clinics or to the local emergency room to seek an affordable treatment solution to manage their dental pain and discomfort. This limited access to dental care encourages citizens to avoid and delay essential care, needlessly tying up hospital and walk-in clinic resources in accessing symptomatic relief instead of treating root causes for their dental emergency.

Several years ago, an article appeared in the *Saturday Star* which highlighted the life of “Jason”. His story is one example of many individuals who live in poverty with little or no access to dental care, especially preventative treatments, that save teeth, promote health and strengthen the whole person as an employment candidate. In the story recounted by “Jason” he said how in interviews potential employers “stared at him” because of his lack of teeth, leading him to choose professions away from interactions with the public, although his natural people skills made him aptly fit for a sales job. His struggles with acute dental pain resulted in chronic health concerns and the loss of many employment opportunities. From “Jason’s” story we learn that if left untreated infected teeth can lead to life-changing health problems and further societal marginalization.

³ <https://odha.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Overall-Health.14.1-copyright.pdf> Oral Health and Overall Health

⁴ <http://www.vaughanchc.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Summary-OOHA-Report-on-Access-to-public-dental-programs-final.pdf>

⁵ Fact Sheet February 2018, North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit

The two pictures below tell Jason's story and illustrates that if treated, proper interventions can transform lives.⁶ Aside from the health implications associated with the image on the left, it is clear that from an employability perspective most employers are looking for an employee image that resembles that on the right.



By providing access to essential oral care, social assistance recipients can be more focused on finding, and maintaining employment. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives published a paper entitled: *Putting Our Money Where Our Mouth Is: The Future of Dental Care in Canada*". In this paper, Dr. Ronald Smith, President of the Canadian Dental Association, reminds us that tooth decay is a completely preventable disease. Of greater importance he adds that, "many of the people most likely to need dental care are less likely to receive it." A more startling revelation in this paper is that Canada "loses over 2 million school days and over 4 million working days a year due to ailments associated with our teeth."⁷

To date, Social Services based on year-to-date average expenditures is forecasting an overall cost savings in emergency adult dental costs of about \$68,000 from 2018 to 2019. While it would be misleading at this point to indicate that these potential cost savings are attributable to this initiative, there is also no evidence at this stage to indicate that it is not part of the solution to cost savings over the long term.

1.3.2 Nipissing and Area Food Charter Working Group

Social Services continues to be actively engaged in the Nipissing and Area Food Charter Working Group (FCWG). The FCWG members represent multiple sectors within our community and work together to develop food-related initiatives and policies in Nipissing District that are guided by the Food Charter. The Food Charter was officially launched in November 2015 and has identified six pillars; food literacy, the environment, culture, social equity, health and wellness and sustainable economic development. The Action Plan for 2017 focuses on five key projects;

1. Education initiatives and workshops
2. Community garden creation
3. Advocacy regarding emerging food policy and social equity issues
4. Communication strategy to showcase local food and highlight success stories
5. Consult with citizens with lived experience and organizations to inform local decisions regarding supports and programming needed to address food security issues in our community

⁶ http://www.thestar.com/news/2007/02/10/why_is_he_out_of_work.html

⁷ *Putting Our Money Where Our Mouth Is: The Future of Dental Care in Canada*", April 2011

As food security is one of the most important social determinants of health, Social Services would have been remiss to not participate in this initiative. While Social Services has no control over the amount of benefits clients receive to support their basic needs beyond the level of advocacy, it does have a role to play in the overall landscape assisting with the development of strategies to elevate the food security of clients living in poverty within the District.

1.3.3 Nipissing Service Collaborative

As reported in the Addendum, in March 2016, DNSSAB was approached to participate in the Nipissing Service Collaborative as part of the Open Minds, Healthy Minds: Ontario’s Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy, supported by the CAMH Provincial System Support Program. DNSSAB’s Social Services immediately agreed to participate as part of the strategy’s second phase.

Through an inclusive interactive design day in March 2017 Service Collaborative members and participants from the community met to identify core components of a client centered System Solution that would improve system navigation for adults with needs related to mental health, substance use and/or developmental disabilities. The solution would also address clients across the continuum of need and include multiple sectors.

In order to accomplish this ambitious task, a sub group called the Service Collaborative Implementation Team (SCIT) was created to explore ideas related to the design and implementation of the system solution components. Social Services volunteered to participate on the SCIT as well as ensure that the sector and its needs were represented.

The consultations and planning of the SCIT continued well into the 2017/2018 planning cycle and an update was provided in the 2018 Addendum. Since that time, the Nipissing Service Collaborative successfully developed a navigation tool called the “Service Navigation Guide” or “SNG”. Social Services Transitional Support Case Managers, along with four other community partners have been piloting the tool since September 2018. Through this process feedback on the effectiveness of the tool and implementation issues have been identified and remedied. Through the help of Healthline Ontario, significant de-identified data is being compiled through the SNG that will assist with future analysis. Efforts are underway to establish a funding stabilization plan that will be manageable over the long term. The photo below is of the SCIT sub-committee.



(from the left, Dan Billingsley – North Bay Recovery Home, Laura Johnson DNSSAB, Kathleen Eveson DNSSAB, Donna Forget True Self, Joel Johnson PEP, Moira Wheeler – Person with Lived Experience, Erica Labonte-Voyer – NMHSS)

1.3.4 Community Action Circle (CAC)

The Community Action Circle (CAC) is a multi-sectoral committee that includes aboriginal and non-aboriginal service providers and community stakeholders with representation from a range of human service providers including health, mental health, education, housing, justice, social services and the First Nation community. The purpose of the committee is to ensure that there are adequate and culturally sensitive supports available to serve the Urban Aboriginal population in North Bay.



The CAC meets monthly and each meeting begins with an opening prayer, smudging ceremony and often includes an aboriginal teaching to encourage a cross-cultural understanding of concepts related to the five subcommittees listed below;

1. Justice
2. Education and Employment
3. Social Inclusion
4. Health and Wellness
5. Children, Youth and Elders

DNSSAB has been an active participant on the CAC since its inception in 2015. At present, we participate in the Education and Employment subcommittee which aims to address employment, financial and poverty issues that impact the urban aboriginal population.

1.3.5 North Bay and Area Community Drug Strategy Committee

Social Services has been a participant on the North Bay and Area Community Drug Strategy Committee for many years. This committee is essentially a working group of community agencies that envision a safer and healthier community that optimizes the lives, abilities and health of individuals, taking into consideration the needs of all diverse groups. The group addresses substance misuse and addictions through prevention, treatment, enforcement and harm reduction.

The main focus of the committee since 2013 has been to raise awareness and promote change in how substance misuse and the responses to it are perceived. The committee has also been heavily engaged in advocacy and has taken a leadership role on many occasions to bring attention to issues that were reaching a crisis point locally. One that stands out as being significant was the implementation of the North Bay and Area Fentanyl Patch 4 Patch Policy. The purpose of the policy was to provide public education and awareness regarding the risks of fentanyl abuse and misuse to physicians, pharmacists and patients. The policy was brought to Queen's Park by Nipissing MPP Vic Fedeli and Bill 33, an Act to reduce the abuse of fentanyl patches and other controlled substance patches, received Royal Assent in December 2015. The Committee's policy has now been implemented in most pharmacies across the province.

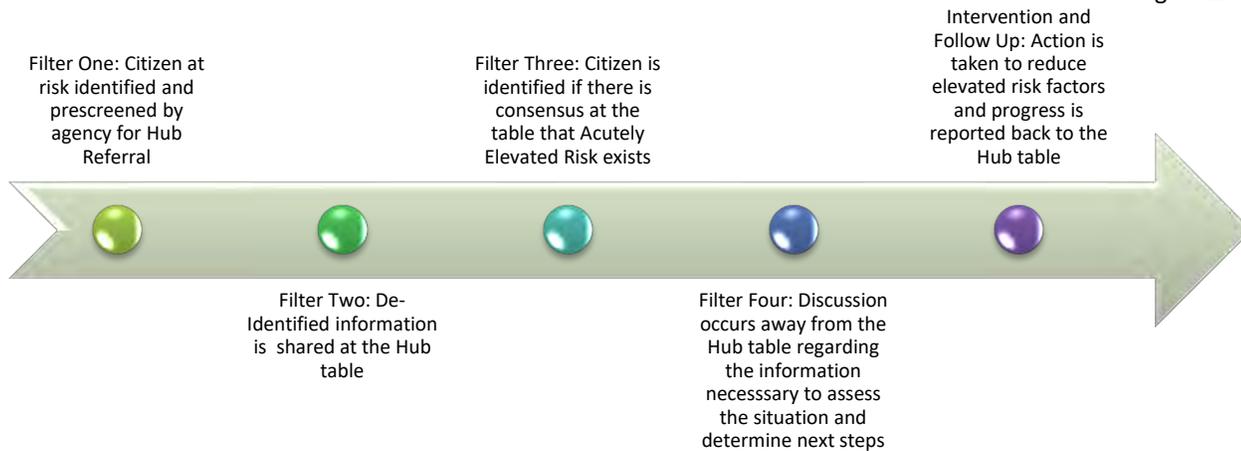
The Committee also held a Cannabis Forum in June 2018 which hosted a panel of experts in the field to provide information on the topic prior to the legalization of cannabis along with two Mental Health and Addictions Symposiums on Feb 28/19 and on March 21/19. The Committee is now working on a new program entitled "Time

to Talk Initiative” that is aimed at helping people understand the importance of talking and sharing information that will help support a healthy and safe community.

1.3.6 The Gateway Hub

The Gateway Hub was established in North Bay in 2013 and is now one of 50 situation tables in Ontario. A situation table (Gateway Hub) is a strategic alliance of human services, guided by common principles and processes in order to mitigate risk situations in a timely manner. The term "table" highlights that it is a meeting, which convenes regularly, with police and other human service professionals from a variety of organizations. During a Situation Table, participants work together to review situations of acutely elevated risk (AER) and determine if an individual or family is at imminent risk of harm and victimization and then coordinate interventions to mitigate risk. By addressing situations of AER, the table works collaboratively to reduce multiple risk factors that increase the likelihood that an individual or family within a community will experience harm and victimization. As the table deals with sensitive information, it is imperative that they adhere to the four filter process which was designed to work within privacy legislation. The four filter process is outlined in the figure below.

Figure 2



Approximately two thirds of situation tables in Ontario, including the Gateway Hub, capture de-identified information in a provincial Risk Tracking Database (RTD). The data recorded in the RTD provides invaluable information to help understand the needs of our community and inform local planning. For instance, mental health was identified as a top three risk factor both locally and provincially as illustrated in the table below:

Year	Gateway Hub	Province ⁸
2017	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Antisocial / Problematic Behavior (non-criminal) 2. Mental Health and Cognitive Functioning 3. Family Circumstances 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mental Health and Cognitive Functioning 2. Criminal Involvement 3. Drugs

Table 1

⁸ Ontario’s Risk-Driven Tracking Database 2017 Annual Report, prepared by Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, released November 2018

2018	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mental Health and Cognitive Functioning 2. Antisocial / Problematic Behavior (non-criminal) 3. Substance Abuse 	2018 Provincial Data has not been released to date
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The RTD also allows us to review risk factors that link to our service delivery mandate. For instance, since Jan 2018 the table has reviewed 224 cases. Of the 27 Risk variables used to define the case of AER, 5 can be directly correlated to impacting DNSSAB programs and services. The following table outlines these Risks Variables and accompanying descriptors (Factors) with the number of occurrences identified in the 224 cases brought to the table to date.

Table 2

RISK VARIABLES	RISK FACTORS	# OF TIMES IDENTIFIED
Poverty	Person living in less than adequate financial situation	77
Housing	Person does not have access to appropriate housing, Transient but has access to appropriate housing	59
Basic Needs	Person being neglected by others, Person neglecting others basic needs, Person unable to meet basic needs, Person unwilling to have needs met	63
Unemployment	Person temporarily unemployed, Person chronically unemployed, Caregivers temporarily or chronically unemployed	28
Parenting/Supervision	Person not receiving proper parenting Person not providing proper parenting Parent-child conflict	115

As a valued partner to the table, DNSSAB has attended 92% of all Hub meetings since January 2019, well above the 80% benchmark and has officially assisted with 63 cases of the 224 situations as of January 2018.

In May of 2018, DNSSAB, the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit, HANDS and the North Bay Police Services formed a partnership to fund one full time Community Development and Engagement Coordinator. The position reports to DNSSAB Social Services but is collaboratively managed and guided by the Gateway Hub Steering and

Executive Committees. This position is responsible for maintaining and building upon the existing Gateway Hub structure which includes facilitating Hub Table meetings, preparing reports, analyzing data, building partnerships and marketing the program. Having someone dedicated to the Hub is anticipated to improve and tighten up local processes as well as provide additional insight into the data being captured at the table. This will help to drive local initiatives to address risk and ensure that those most vulnerable in our communities are able to access appropriate services and achieve successful outcomes. The data will also prove valuable to help develop a community safety and well-being plan for our community.

As this partnership and position was an unusual one for Social Services, approval was sought from MCCSS. In February 2018, Social Services received approval from the Ministry that it would allow Social Services to use matched funding in the amount \$40,000 to support the Gateway Hub Coordinator position starting with the 2018/2019 contract year. However, on June 28, 2019, Social Services received further communication indicating that this position would no longer be eligible beyond 2019 for MCCSS program delivery funding as it did not meet the necessary criteria. Social Services is extremely disappointed by this decision and continues to feel that the activities of the Gateway Hub do indirectly support employment services. For this reason, further discussion on this issue will be requested at a later date.

1.3.7 Ontario Health Teams

As part of its large-scale changes to the healthcare system, Ontario's Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) has recently announced the creation of a series of Ontario Health Teams. On April 26th, 2019, Social Services participated in a Near North Wellness, Ontario Health Teams Readiness Assessment process meeting, hosted by the Northeast Regional Health Centre, and facilitated by Optimus SBR. Several other service providers were in attendance as well. The vision for Ontario Health Teams is to utilize a more holistic multi-disciplinary approach to healthcare. As a collaborative, several service providers including the DNSSAB Chief Administrative Officer acted as signatories on the self-assessment submission that was sent to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care on May 15, 2019. To date, no additional information has been received on this submission. However, Social Services will continue to be an active participant in this process due to the intrinsic relationship between social assistance programming and healthcare. If the submission is selected by MOHLTC an invitation to submit a full application will be received sometime in July of this year.

1.3.8 Gambling Harm Reduction Partnership

The Gambling Harm Reduction Partnership (GHRP) was established in the fall of 2018 in response to the anticipated development of a Casino in North Bay which is expected to open in the spring of 2020. The GHRP is a collaborative multi-agency team working together to increase public awareness of gambling harms, promote informed decision making about gambling and implement interventions that prevent gambling harms across the continuum of use. The Table has representation from a range of service providers as illustrated in figure 3 on the following page.

Risk factors that can increase the risk of gambling harms include, but are not limited to, low socioeconomic status, mental health and wellbeing, substance misuse and addictions. Given that social assistance recipients live in poverty they are at greater risk of gambling harms. If a social assistance recipient also has mental health or addiction issues they are at even greater risk. DNSSAB would have been remiss not to play a role in the development of strategies to address problem gambling.



Figure 3

Problem gambling can have negative impacts on individuals and families and the broader community. Gambling harms may include;

- Financial harm
- Relationship disruption
- Emotional
- Health
- Cultural harm
- Reduced professional or academic performance
- Criminal activity and deviance

Given that we work with a vulnerable population, it is imperative that we work together as a community to implement strategies to monitor and mitigate harm. With funding from Gambling Research Exchange Ontario (GREO) the partnership is in the process of developing a gambling harm reduction plan in an effort to protect vulnerable populations. Current strategies include;

- Assess and monitor the prevalence of problem gambling by surveying residents and local businesses
- Advocate for harm reduction strategies within the casino environment (e.g. Limit hours of operation)
- Raise public awareness about gambling harms and encourage individuals and families to access treatment opportunities
- Build local capacity to ensure there is access to treatment

1.3.9 Violence Against Women Coordinating Committee of Nipissing

The Violence Against Women Coordinating Committee (VAWCC) of Nipissing was founded in 1999 as a community response to address domestic violence. The VAWCC is comprised of cross sectoral service providers that work together to improve our community response to violence against women. DNSSAB is one of many local service providers that participate on the committee. There is representation from a number of local agencies representing a number of sectors as illustrated in the figure on the following page:

Figure 4



The VAWCC strives to:

- Strengthen partnerships and promote enhanced collaboration in order to improve accessibility and quality of services;
- Identify and develop plans to address service gaps;
- Raise public awareness through education and training about violence against women and the resources and services available in our community.

In March of 2019 the VAWCC brought in Jason Katz who is internationally renowned for his activism around issues of gender, race and violence. The two day workshop promoted gender equality and prevention of gender violence.



The committee also promotes other local initiatives that relate to violence against women. For instance, A New Day Youth and Adult Service provided a two-day workshop in North Bay on Human Trafficking in May 2019. This event was shared with VAWCC members many of whom participated including some DNSSAB staff. Participation with the VAWCC and attending education and training events have inspired us to review our local practices so that we can better support victims of violence, survivors of sex trafficking and individuals who have been sexually exploited.

1.3.10 Other Partnerships

Examples of other partnerships that are more related to participation at tables, and/or referrals for services are reflected in Table 2 and 3 on the following page. Items shown in green are examples of agencies that the Ontario

Works team would refer to, with planning table/on-going meetings shown in blue. Please note that these are not exhaustive lists.

Business Centre (protocol in place for referrals for participants interested in self-employment.	Temagami/Bonfield Libraries (employment related printing/photocopying etc)	Canadore College, Nipissing University, Canadian Career College College Boreal, Contact North
North Bay Recovery Home	Literacy Council	Literacy Alliance
NEMESIS	St.John's Ambulance	Health Unit Dental Clinic
Children's Aid Society	Northern College	ODSP
Metis Nation of Ontario	Family Enrichment	Multi-cultural Centre
Amelia Rising	March of Dimes	Cap-C
People for Equal Partnership	DEOC	Alliance
True Self	Community Counselling Centre	Indian Friendship Centre
Amelia Rising	Agilec – South Algonquin Employment Service Provider	Canadian Mental Health Associated (CMHA)
YES Employment/Employment Options	Dr.Phillips (psycho-vocational assessments)	Nipissing Legal Clinic
Get Trained Workers	Northern College Temagami Employment Service Provider	Legal Aid Ontario

Table 3

Northern Regional Planning Table	Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours Meetings	Nipissing District Homelessness and Housing Table
Gateway Hub Community Mobilization Table	Canadore College Social Service Worker Advisory Committee	

Table 4

1.4 STRENGTHEN PROGRAM ACCOUNTABILITY

Social Services is in full support of ensuring that strong accountability measures are in place to oversee and monitor Ontario Works program delivery. However, the Ministry memo dated April 17, 2019: *Ontario Works Service Delivery Priorities* has flagged a few key areas that are of great concern due to the potential negative impact that these

changes could have on overall service delivery. The following are the key areas of concern that stand out as being significant:

- 2018 actuals for the employment outcomes measured will be the 2019 baseline for 2019 plus a 3% increase;
- Elimination of the flexibility to renegotiate baselines;
- Budget submissions for 2019 funding should not exceed the previous years actuals unless there is a clear evidence-based rationale negotiated with the Program Supervisor and documented in the 2019 Service Plan.

Details related to why these areas are of concern can be found under section 4.2, Program Management - Analysis of Resources and Business Case.



2.0 ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

The scan that follows includes analysis of the previous planning cycle performance, summary census demographics for Nipissing District (see Appendices), a general description of the local OW caseload, and labour force and industry information and analysis.

2.1 SERVICE DELIVERY

2.1.1 Analyses of Previous Planning Cycle

After years of OW caseload growth and lingering post-recessionary effects from 2008, the local caseload has finally started to decrease. During the previous planning period, the caseload decreased on average, by 100 clients annually, and now sits at about 2,150 - down from 2,350 at the end of 2016. This coincided with a stronger economy and employment environment, and also the implementation of DNSSAB's new service delivery model which met with strong performance and employment outcomes for the clients during the 2017-18 planning period.

The series of charts that follow in this section illustrate Social Services performance for the previous 2017-2018 planning cycle on the following four outcome measures:

- Average Monthly Employment Earnings Per Case
- Percentage of Caseload with Employment Earnings
- Percentage of Terminations Exiting to Employment
- Percentage of Caseload Exiting to Employment

Please note that due to the way SAMS continually measures outcomes, recorded achievements are never fixed. Therefore, outcomes reported in this plan are relative to when the snapshot of data was taken and may or may not be the most current recorded outcome.

For the 2017/2018 planning cycle DNSSAB allocated 400 points to earnings and 600 points to employment in year 1 and 500 points equally in year 2. In year one overall average achievement on all targets were met and exceeded. In fact, 2000 points were earned which was a huge accomplishment for Social Services. This achievement however did not deter Social Services from continuing to focus on employment. In year two all targets other than Percentage of Caseload with Employment Earnings were met with Social Services falling slightly below on this Measure.

Figure 4 below illustrates overall performance relative to the achievement of targets for the previous planning cycle on **Measure 1 - Average Amount of Employment Earnings for Participants with Earnings.**

Average Monthly Employment Earnings Per Case, Achieved and Target; 2017 & 2018

Figure 5



As shown, the lowest level achieved on this measure during the cycle was in March 2017 (\$702), with the highest level being achieved in October 2018 (\$918). For 2017, 200 points was assigned to this Measure for a potential maximum achievement of 400 points by year end. For 2018, 250 points was assigned to this Measure for a potential maximum achievement of 500 points.

In 2017, the following targets on this Measure were set: Quarter 1, \$733.00; Quarter 2, \$731.00; Quarter 3, \$745.00; and Quarter 4, \$762.00. The quarterly averages on this Measure were more consistent than outcomes during the previous cycle with only one month (March) falling short of the target. Achievements in all other months exceeded the target. By year end, the overall average achievement of \$781 exceeded the average yearly target of \$743. Therefore, 400 points earned.

For 2018, targets were set by reviewing the previous year’s quarterly averages and adjusting them to recognize the fluctuations in achievements: Quarter 1, \$761; Quarter 2, \$777; Quarter 3, \$781; and Quarter 4, \$813. As noted, the achievements on this measure were favorable with targets being met in all quarters. Overall, as the yearly average achievement of \$843 exceeded the average yearly target of \$783, for 2017, this target was met. Therefore, 500 points earned.

Case Managers continue to encourage their clients to approach their employers for increases in their hours and or wage rates. However, as this measure is heavily impacted by unfavorable economic conditions, these efforts are most often not successful. The increasing trends in part time employment and/or prevalence of minimum wage jobs

also impacts this Measure. Coordinating two or more part time jobs to make ends meet can also be difficult and the uncertainty that exists around leaving one employer for a better paid opportunity, or one with more hours, can at times be a risky decision. One-to-one employment counseling, marketing clients to higher paying employment opportunities through employment placements, investing in clients through skills development opportunities, encouraging networking, and utilizing community placements when appropriate are all strategies that can improve outcomes on this measure.

Figure 5 below now illustrates overall performance relative to the achievement of targets for the previous planning cycle on **Measure 2 –Percentage of Caseload with Employment Income:**



The lowest level achieved on this measure was in October 2018 (12.65%) with the highest level being achieved in December 2017 (16.56%). For, 2017, 200 points was assigned to this Measure for a potential maximum achievement of 400 points by year end. For 2018, 250 points was assigned to this Measure for a potential maximum achievement of 500 points.

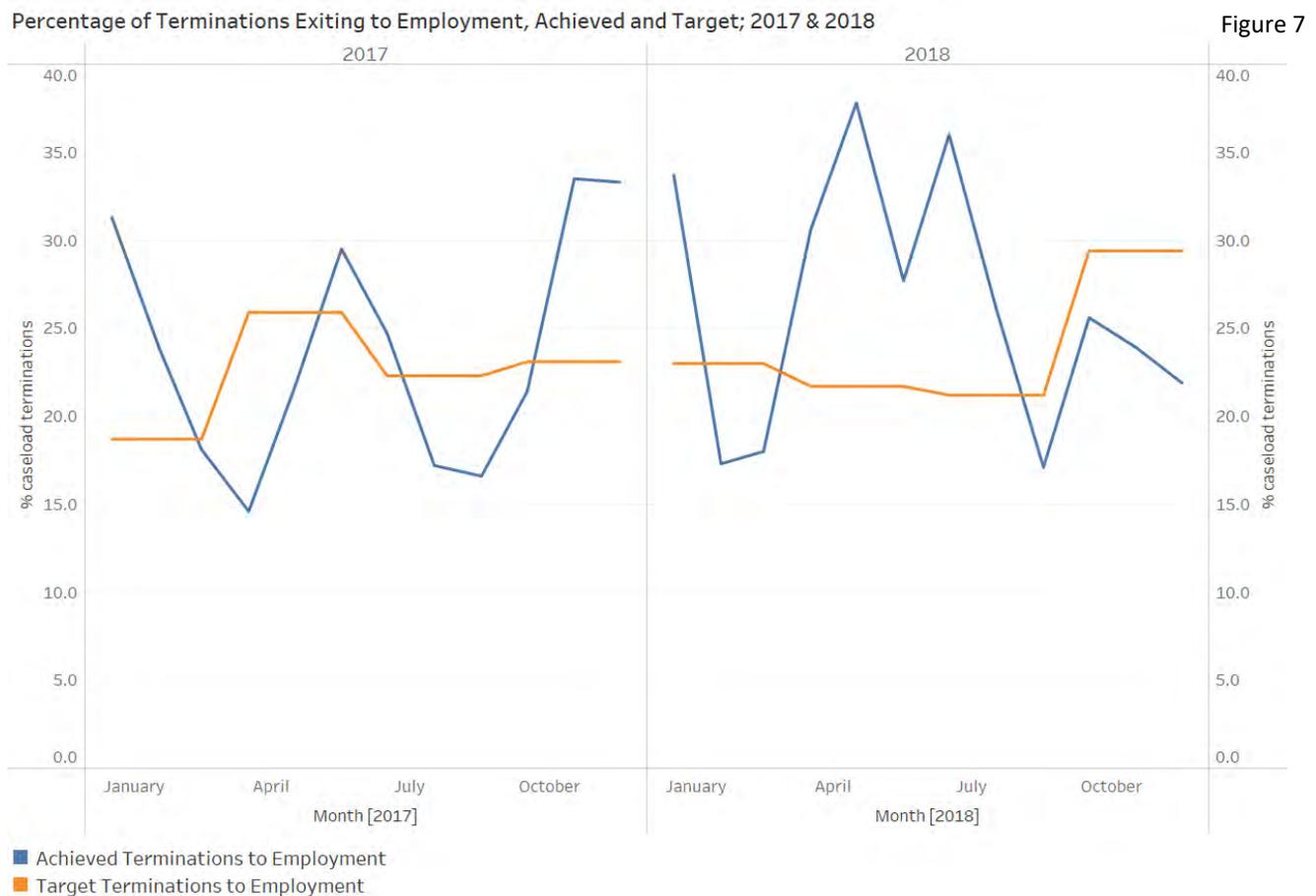
For 2017, the following targets were set by reviewing the previous year’s quarterly averages and adjusting them to reflect any in year fluctuations in achievements: Quarter 1, 12.59%; Quarter 2, 13.08%; Quarter 3, 14%, and Quarter 4, 15.45%. As the overall achievement on this Measure was 15.18% against a target of 13.78%, this target was met and exceeded for 2017. Therefore, 400 points earned.

For 2018, the following targets were set: Quarter 1, 13.79%; Quarter 2, 14.43%; Quarter 3, 16.62%; and Quarter 4, 16.05%. As the overall achievement on this Measure was 13.97% against a target of 15.22%, this target was not met.

Case Managers and Employment Support Workers work diligently with clients on their job search strategies through one-to-one employment counseling, workshops, and through referrals to the many community partners who offer employment services that enhance the employability of the client. Other strategies by OW staff include community and employment placements which are used regularly along with referrals to the Get Trained Workers Coordinator to match clients with employment opportunities.

Maximizing the use of the employment supports and benefits available under the Ontario Works Program are also promoted to ensure that clients have what they need to assist them with their job search efforts or to start a training or employment opportunity. Although these efforts have proven to be effective, there is more work to be done in this area to identify other employment enhancing activities that may be beneficial to increasing the employability of clients who may be facing other barriers, in addition to being unemployed. Strategies to improve services in this area are currently being developed and will be explained in more detail further on in the Plan. As with other targeted outcomes, the results on this Measure can often be skewed by client’s not submitting income reporting statements after they have secured employment and received their first pay, therefore it is difficult to measure the overall effectiveness of current service strategies on outcomes.

Figure 6 below now illustrates overall performance relative to the achievement of targets for the previous planning cycle on **Measure 3 – Percentage of Terminations Exiting to Employment**.



Achievement for this measure ranged from a low of 14.58% in April 2017, to well over two times this number (37.84%) in May 2018 demonstrating the extreme volatility of achievements on this Measure. For, 2017, 300 points was assigned to this Measure for a potential maximum achievement of 600 points by year end. For 2018, 250 points was assigned to this Measure for a potential maximum achievement of 500 points.

For 2017, the following targets were set: Quarter 1, 18.69%; Quarter 2, 25.85%; Quarter 3, 22.34%; and Quarter 4, 23.14%. The chart above validates how unstable this outcome measure was with outcomes met in only six months of the twelve months. However, as achievements on the months where the target was met were so far above the target, this offset the lower months bringing the overall quarterly average up to the mark. Therefore, as the overall average achievement on this measure by year end was 23.78% on a target of 22.5%, the target on this Measure was met with a total of 600 points earned.

For 2018, the following targets were set: Quarter 1, 22.97%; Quarter 2, 21.65%; Quarter 3, 21.18%; and Quarter 4, 29.43%. Once again, like 2017, overall performance validates how unstable this outcome measure was with outcomes met in only six months of the twelve months. However, as achievements on the months where the target was met were so far above the target, this offset the lower months once again bringing the overall quarterly average up to the mark. Therefore, as the overall average achievement on this measure by year end was 26.31% on a target of 23.81%, the target on this Measure was met with a total of 500 points earned.

As explained in previous Service Plans, achievements on this Measure in greatly impacted by the loss of outcomes when clients do not submit an income reporting statement after securing employment. While Social Services continues to complete cold calls on cases where a file has been terminated for this reason, it has come to the attention of Social Services that there has not been one case terminated for this reason on the case closure reports since June of 2018. **A ticket has been logged and a communication has been received that this is now a known issue. Social Services has requested that these reports be re-ran back to January of 2019 at a minimum as Social Services relies upon these reports to flag the cases that require cold calls to be completed. Other methods of identifying these cases would create workload pressures in the department.**

It is difficult to explain why this measure has such extreme variations as the cause could be a combination of several factors such as seasonal trends, cold calls incomplete or changes in the local labour market. Similar to Measure 2 Percentage of Caseload with Employment Earnings, efforts to increase the employability of clients are the focus of both the Case Management and Employment Teams. As noted further on in this Plan, there are various initiatives underway to facilitate the proper matching of clients to job opportunities through the Social Services Get Trained Workers Employment Database and employability assessment, collaboration of the Employment Services Table, and Social Services partnerships with Canadore College and the Chamber of Commerce to name just a few. Maximizing the use of the employment supports and benefits available under the Ontario Works Program are also promoted to ensure that clients have what they need to assist them as they transition from social assistance dependency to self-sufficiency through employment.

As explained in previous Service Plans but remains relevant, is that this outcome measure continues to be impacted by the data integrity issues and/or legislative changes intended to promote poverty reduction. The following list represents a few of the factors that have the potential to skew outcomes that must be taken into consideration when determining the overall effectiveness of current service strategies:

1. Outcomes for clients that have secured employment and do not submit an income reporting statement are hidden in other termination reasons such as “failure to submit IRS” rather than “voluntary withdrawal Employed”;
2. Earnings/Flat Rate exemptions that allow social assistance recipients to earn more and remain eligible for Ontario Works assistance thus creating longer term dependency. This issue may be alleviated by the upcoming change to earning exemptions;
3. Increase in the Ontario Works asset limits which can also potentially allow clients to remain eligible when their savings accounts from earnings increase;
4. Changes to how self-employment income is treated

Figure 7 below now illustrates overall performance relative to the achievement of targets for the previous planning cycle on **Measure 4 – Percentage of Caseload Exiting to Employment**.

Percentage of Caseload Exiting to Employment, Achieved and Target; 2017 & 2018



As shown, the lowest level achieved on this measure was in April 2017 (0.9%) with the highest achievement recorded at three times this number (3.01%) in December 2017. As this was a new outcome measure during the previous service planning cycle not much was known about how it would perform. As suspected, this Measure appears to perform in much the same way as the previous Measure, Percentage of Terminations Exiting to Employment, especially with respect to the extreme variations.

For, 2017, 300 points was assigned to this Measure for a potential maximum achievement of 600 points by year end. For 2018, 250 points was assigned to this Measure for a potential maximum achievement of 500 points.

For 2017, the following targets were set on this Measure: Quarter 1, 1.34%; Quarter 2, 1.67%; Quarter 3, 1.79%; and Quarter 4, 2.01%. As noted, targets were met in 7 of the 12 months. As the overall average achievement on this Measure was 1.89% on an average targeted achievement of 1.7%, this target was met for 2017 with 600 points earned.

For 2018, the following targets were set on this Measure: Quarter 1, 1.57%; Quarter 2, 1.62%; Quarter 3, 1.73%; and Quarter 4, 2.69%. As noted, targets were met in 6 of the 12 months. As the overall average achievement on this Measure was 2% on an average targeted achievement of 1.9%, this target was also met for 2018 with 500 points earned.

As this measure appears to be impacted by the same strategies, data integrity issues and poverty reduction changes noted above under Measure 3 - Percentage of Exits Exiting to Employment, strategies on how to influence outcomes will not be repeated here.

2.1.2 External Influences: PEST (Political, Economic, Social, Technological)

The PEST framework continues to be useful for considering external environmental factors that DNSSAB has little, or no control over but which, could influence OW operations, direction, performance, and outcomes, during the two-year service plan period:

Political

- The 2019-2020 service plan starts out with a change in provincial government and subsequently program, planning and budget changes in most areas of public policy including Ontario Works. In the 2019 provincial budget, the government confirmed that it will be reforming Ontario's social assistance system, partly in response to poor OW employment outcomes and high rates of returning clients. While there are few details known at this point, the following are policy and/or legislative reforms that are expected to impact OW over the next two years:
- Employment Ontario (EO) Transformation. In response to the current employment system which is fragmented, complex, and delivering poor outcomes, the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) has started the process of transforming Employment Ontario (EO). The transformation will include a new service delivery model and system that integrates EO, OW and ODSP employment programs into one system. The transformation process has just started and there are currently more questions than answers on how these three systems will be integrated. But suffice to say, the transformation could fundamentally change the OW employment landscape and thus some of the service goals, targets and strategies in this plan.
- Change in OW Employment Targets. The way in which employment targets are being set is changing and this will influence our delivery approach for the 2019-2020 planning period. For example, the ministry has set the targets for 2019 at last year's (2018) level + 3% (minimum). Setting these arbitrary targets half-way through the first planning year (2019) is retrospective and reduces the service manager's control in achieving them. These targets may also become moot points during the second year of the planning period depending on the results of the EO transformation process (above).

- Closely related to the above, it is important to note that the historic practice of renegotiating forecasted baselines and targets with the ministry during the contract year (and avoiding financial recoveries by the ministry) is ending. Instead, negotiated employment targets will remain in place during the contract year and the ministry may recover up to 15% of the uploaded funding based on weak/poor performance in meeting the targets (for the Nipissing DSSAB this amounts to about \$325,000 in the worst-case scenario).
- Change in definition of ‘Disability’ (ODSP). In the fall of 2018 the province indicated that it will be changing the definition of disability for the ODSP program. Invariably, a change in definition will mean a change in the number of people who qualify for the program. This could have the effect of increasing the OW caseload if the definition becomes more restrictive and those who no longer qualify for ODSP shift over to OW instead.

Economic /Fiscal

- The province is projecting the economy to grow steadily over the service planning period albeit at a slightly slower pace than the previous period. Average economic growth (GDP) is expected to be around 1.5% annually over 2019 and 2020 – down slightly from the previous period – while the average growth in employment is projected to be about the same at 1.0% annually. Meanwhile, the provincial unemployment rate is expected to hold steady in the low 6% range as reported in the last service plan, possibly dipping into the 5% range towards the end of the period.
- Ontario’s minimum wage was increased to \$14/ hour in January 2018 after subsequent increases in 2016 and 2017 as reported in the last service plan. While the government at the time intended to increase the wage further to \$15/ hour in 2019, the present government has halted that plan. As mentioned in previous service plans, the impact of wage increases on the local economy and social assistance are largely unknown but nonetheless, should be taken into account by the ministry and service managers when planning, setting employment targets, and analyzing employment outcomes and data.

Social

- In the fall of 2018, social assistance rates were increased by 1.5% for OW and ODSP. No other announcements of future rate increases have been made by the government.

Technological

- It is likely that under the new transformed EO system, service system managers and service providers will be required to use a common employment assessment tool, integrated case management system, and database. It is unknown at this time what these technology components will look like.

2.1.3 Demographic and Socioeconomic Summary

As part of the environmental scan, the previous service plan provided an update on the population and dwelling counts for Nipissing District from the 2016 census. However, at the time, no other census data had been released.

Since that time, the full census dataset has been released and staff has made a number of Board presentations on 2016 census data and information in key demographic areas, relative to the Board’s program areas and service

planning and delivery. These presentations are included in the appendix as a supplement to the service plan and for ministry interest and reference. A short summary of the main takeaways is also provided below:

Appendix 1. Population and Dwelling Counts 2016

Main takeaway: Nipissing District's population is about 83,000 people which is down 2.0% from the previous (2011) census period. At the time, this was the third lowest population growth rate in the province amongst the 49 census divisions. The district continues its long-term trend of a stationary /flatlined population that ebbs and flows +/- 2.5% with each census period apart from periodic growth spikes. There has also been a slight decrease in the number of dwellings (less than 0.5%) which marks the reversal of a 25-year growth trend in households.

Appendix 2. Age and Sex 2016

Main takeaway: Nipissing District has a relatively old age structure compared to the province whereby there are more people over the age of 50 than under 50 – and while the district's children and youth population is generally in decline the seniors population is growing. The district's core working population (ages 25 -64) has also started to decline which poses challenges in local economic development and labour force participation.

This older age structure lends itself to limited population growth as described earlier and results in a relatively large dependency ratio. Additionally, the baby boomers – who were between the ages of 50 and 70 at the time of the 2016 census - account for nearly one-third of the district's population and present future challenges in public policy areas such as labour force development, housing, and health, as they continue ageing.

Appendix 3. Family Households, Marital Status and Language

Main takeaway: Family households without children represent over 60.0% of the district's family households and this includes couples without children (32.5%) and single households (30.0%). This is reflective of the age and population trends mentioned above, i.e. an older population with fewer children and youth. Couples with children account for another 23.0% of the district's family households followed by lone parents (11.5%) and other, non-family households (3.0%). Compared to the province, Nipissing has significantly more family households without children and fewer families with children. In terms of trends, the number of couples without children has increased 21.0% over the past 15 years, although the increase has slowed a bit since 2006. Single households have also been on the rise since 2001 with a 26.0% increase while lone parents have seen a 12.0 % increase but have levelled off since 2006. On the other hand, couples with children have been moving in the opposite direction, having steadily dropped by -21.0% over the same period.

Turning to marital status, 45.0% of the district's population (15 years of age and older) is married while another one-quarter have never married. Another 12.0% are living common-law, 7.0% are widowed, 6.0% are divorced and close to 4.0% are separated. Compared to the province, the district's marital status is similar on most fronts – however, the population that is married and has never married is relatively smaller than the province while those who are living common law is relatively larger. On the trend front, the married population has been decreasing over the past 15 years while the number of people who are divorced or living common law has been increasing. These trends likely have many social, economic and demographic implications for our local communities and economies.

In terms of language, and based on mother tongue, the majority of the district's population speaks an official language, either English (72.0%) or French (22.5%). A small percentage speaks non-official languages comprised of

Aboriginal languages (0.5%) and non-Aboriginal (immigrant) languages (3.0%). The remaining 2.0% of the population speak both official languages (English and French) or other various combinations of English, French, and non-official languages.

The main difference in language between Nipissing District and the province continues to be in the French and non-Aboriginal (immigrant) speaking populations. For example, just 3.5% of the provincial population speaks mother tongue French compared to 22.5% in Nipissing District. On the flipside, over one-quarter of Ontario's population speaks non-aboriginal (immigrant) languages versus 3.5% in Nipissing District. These differences in language speak to the relatively large francophone and immigrant populations in Nipissing District and Ontario respectively.

Looking at Language trends, after 10 years of increasing, the district's *English-speaking* population has decreased by about 2.0%. Meanwhile, the *French* population has gradually been declining since 2001 with a net change overall of about - 11%. The population speaking *non-official languages* as their mother tongue has grown by 17% over the same period.

Appendix 4. **Income**

The total median income for the district's population (15 yrs. +) is just under \$32,000 but this varies significantly depending on family household type and composition. For example, families with children have the highest incomes in the district with the median sitting at \$108,000 while families without children have an income of about \$72,000. This income decreases to \$44,000 for lone parent families and to just \$29,000 for single households.

The district's overall median income is close to the provincial median but is significantly lower across the various family household types. For example, the median income of families with and without children in Nipissing District is \$8,500 - \$9,000 lower than the provincial medians (8.0% and 12.0% respectively). This also holds true for the district's lone parent families which are about \$10,000 (23.0%) lower than the provincial median and single households which are \$8,000 lower (27.0%).

In nominal terms the district has had strong income growth over the past 15 years, rising from around \$20,000 to nearly \$32,000 (a 62.0% increase). However, when adjusting for inflation the real increase in income is less than half that at about 23.0%.

2.2 CASELOAD DESCRIPTION

Note: Unless otherwise stated the following data is sourced from Ontario Works Caseload at a Glance (Nipissing DSSAB), March 2019; PRAB (Policy Research and Analysis Branch). The caseload count excludes temporary care and emergency assistance so the actual caseload at any given point is approximately 4-5% higher.

2.2.1 OW Beneficiaries

As at March 2019 there are 3,362 Ontario Works (OW) Beneficiaries in Nipissing District. Most (61.0% or 2,048) of the beneficiaries continue to be the Primary Recipients and make up the 'OW caseload'. The remaining beneficiaries are *dependent children* (1,130 or 33.5%), *spouses* (138, or 4.0%), or *adults* (46, or 1.5%).

There has been a significant decrease (-456 or -12.0%) in the number of OW beneficiaries in the district over the previous service plan period (2017-18) – a more detailed description of the caseload and trends can be found in the following sections.

2.2.2 Family Household Type

As mentioned above, there are 2,048 Primary Recipients on the Nipissing District caseload which is a decrease of 317 (13.5%) recipients from the previous service plan. The family household types of the recipients are shown in the following table:

Table 5. Family Household Type	Nipissing OW		Ontario OW
	#	%	%
Singles without children	1,377	67.2	61.6
Singles with children	533	26.0	28.9
Couples with children	87	4.2	7.6
Couples without children	51	2.5	1.9
Total	2,048	99.9	100

The decrease in recipients has been fairly proportional across the family household types so the caseload composition continues to be similar to that reported in the last service plan. Single recipients continue to represent the largest household type, accounting for a little over two-thirds of the caseload (the same as the last planning period). Singles with children (lone parents) make up another 26.0% of the caseload which is also the same as the previous period. The remainder (6.7%) of the caseload is comprised of couples with, and without, children –the number of couples with children is down slightly from the previous period (5.1%) while the number of couples without children is up from 2.1%. Overall, singles (with or without children) are about 14 times as likely to be on OW, as couples (with or without children).

It can also be noted from the table that compared to the provincial OW caseload, Nipissing continues to have a greater share of singles, fewer lone-parents and couples with children, and more couples without children.

2.2.2.1 Family Household Type, Nipissing OW and General Population

The table on the following page compares the above family household composition of OW to the family household composition of the general population in Nipissing District.

It can be noted that the caseload is significantly over-represented with singles, with and without children, and under-represented with couples (with and without children) compared to the general population. In the case of singles, the share of OW is a little over twice the general population while the share of couples is around one-tenth the population. This continues to illustrate that singles and lone parents face the greatest economic pressure and need in the general population.

Table 6. Family Household Type	Nipissing OW, %	Nipissing Population, %
Singles without children	67.2	29.8
Singles with children	26.0	11.7
Couples with children	4.2	23.2
Couples without children	2.5	32.6
Other non-family households	N/A	4.0
Total	100	

2.2.3 Age of Dependent Children

The table below shows the general age groups of the *youngest child at home* for the OW lone parents and couples with children (above):

Table 7. Age of Youngest Child	Nipissing OW		Ontario OW
	#	%	%
≤ 5 years	378	61.0	52.7
6 -12 years	161	26.0	29.8
13 – 17 years	62	10.0	12.4
18 years ≥	19	3.0	5.2
Total	620	100.0	100.0

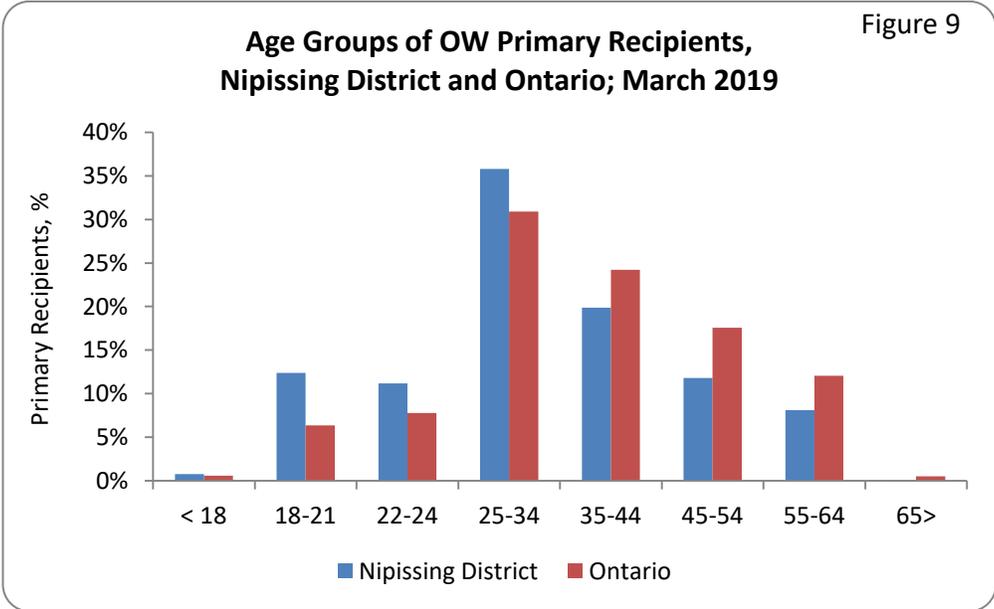
Following the decrease in caseload since the last service plan, the number of dependent children is also down 15.0% (109) and is part of the overall decrease in beneficiaries mentioned earlier. Approximately 60.0% of the OW lone parents and couples with children in Nipissing have at least one child that is 5 years of age or younger and this is up from 58.7% reported in the previous plan. A further 26.0% have a child that is between the ages of 6- 12 years which is down slightly from the previous plan (27.2%). Combined, 86.0% of the OW caseload has dependents which include children that are 12 years of age or younger.

The remaining OW families with children have at least one child that is between the ages of 13-17 years (10.0%) and one that is 18 years or older (3.0%). These are similar percentages to those reported in the previous service plan.

In comparing the age groups of the youngest child at home to those of the provincial caseload, it can be noted that Nipissing has a larger percentage of children ages 5 or younger and smaller percentages across the remaining age groups, 6 years and older. This is also consistent with the previous planning period.

2.2.4 General Age Groups, Nipissing and Ontario OW Caseloads

The figure below shows the age distribution of the Nipissing and provincial OW caseloads:



In comparing the above with the previous service planning period, the normal shape and relative size of the OW age distributions remains largely unchanged.

In Nipissing District, about one quarter of the OW caseload is 24 years of age or younger and this is largely unchanged from the previous service plan. This also continues to be significantly higher than Ontario (14.7%) for this age group.

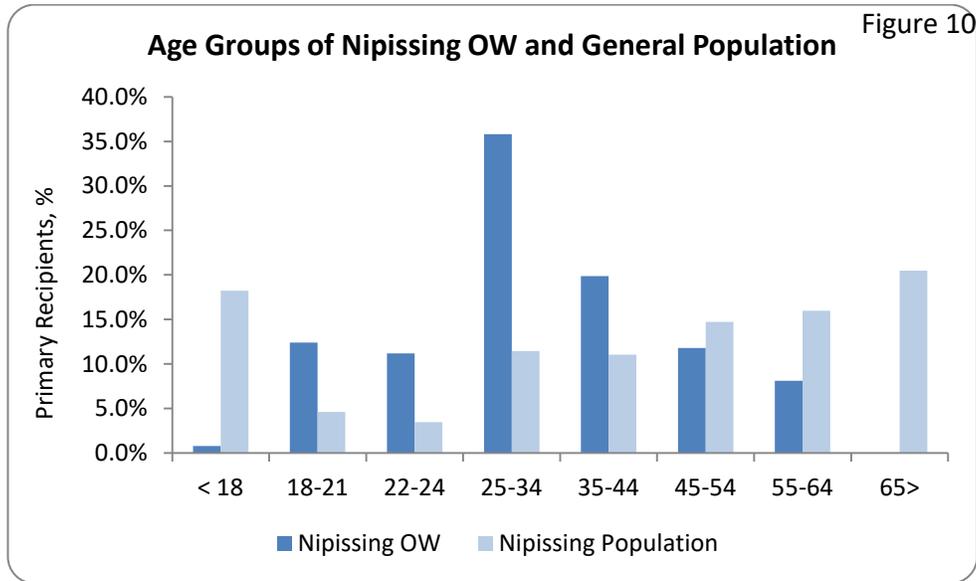
Young adults between the ages of 25 and 34 years represent a little over one-third (35.8%) of the Nipissing caseload and this is also the same as the previous plan two years ago. The number of recipients in this age group continues to be higher relative to the provincial caseload (30.9%).

Turning to the older OW adults, those in the 35-44 age-group account for one-fifth of the Nipissing caseload which is up slightly from the previous period. This age group represents a turning point relative to the province, whereby the provincial share of OW recipients in this group is now greater than Nipissing District.

The remaining caseload is mainly comprised of older recipients in the 45-54 and 55-64 age groups (11.8% and 8.1% respectively). Combined, the share of recipients in these age groups is about the same as the previous planning period. It can be noted that the provincial caseload has about one-and-a half times the share of OW recipients in these age groups as the district which is also consistent with past planning periods. As noted in previous service plans, a very small number (< 1.0%) of OW recipients are 65 years of age or older as they leave the caseload for other government support programs.

2.2.5 General Age Groups, Nipissing OW and General Population

The figure below compares the above age distribution for OW with the general census population (2016) in Nipissing District:



It can be noted that the caseload is significantly over-represented with recipients who are between the ages of 18 and 44 years, and under-represented with those between the ages of 45 and 64 years. Starting with the younger OW recipients, the share of those between the ages of 18 and 24 years is about three times that found in the general population. This difference holds true for the next age group (25-34) also. Meanwhile, the number of OW recipients in the 35-44 age-group is nearly twice that of the general population.

Moving in to the older age groups, the share of OW recipients in the 45-54 age group is about three-quarters that of the general population while those in the 55-64 age group are about half.

The above indicates that youth and young adults in Nipissing District are experiencing greater economic pressure and need relative to the older adults and age-groups.

2.2.6 Education

The broad education levels of the OW Primary Recipients are shown in the table below:

Table 8. Education	Nipissing OW		Ontario OW
	#	%	%
Grade 1 - 8	68	3.3	6.1
Grade 9 - 11	831	40.1	30.0
Grade 12 - 13	654	32.1	37.3
Post-Secondary	481	23.6	26.6
Total	2,034	100.0	100.0

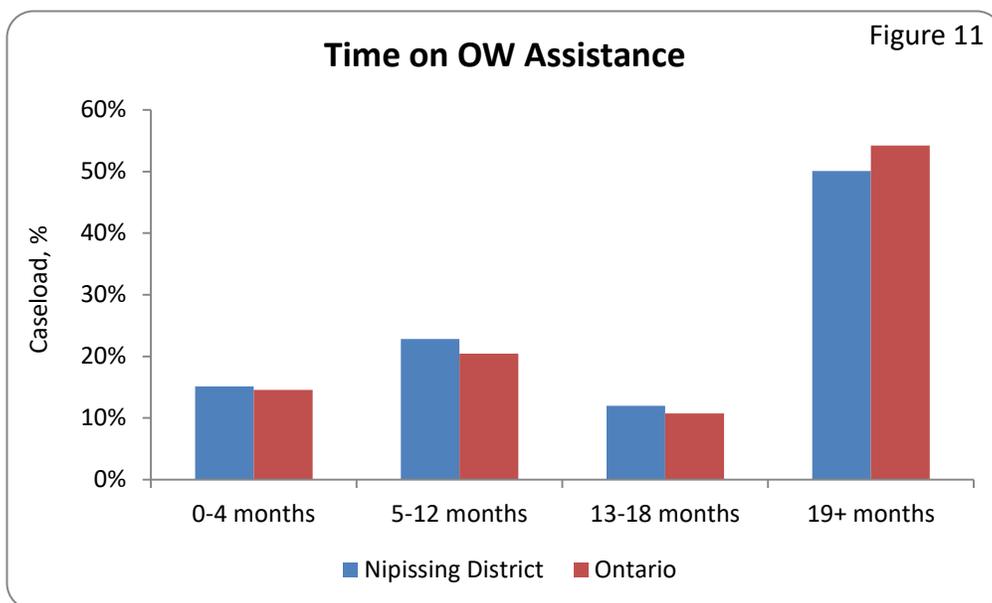
Consistent with the previous caseload data, the educational composition of the Nipissing caseload is similar to the previous service plan with some minor variation. Just under one-quarter of the OW caseload has post-secondary education, down slightly from 25.0% reported previously. Close to another one-third of the caseload has completed high school (including grade 13 under the previous education system) while the remainder (43.5%) have not completed high school.

In comparison to the provincial caseload, Nipissing has fewer recipients who have completed high school or postsecondary education (55.7% vs. 64.0%) and more recipients without a high school education (43.4% vs. 36.1%).

2.2.7 Months on OW Assistance

Presently, the average time on OW assistance in Nipissing District is 2.5 years which is up from 2.2 years reported in the last service plan.

Figure 10 below shows the distribution of time on assistance by general groups for Nipissing District and Ontario:



It can be noted that there is significant variation from the average when looking at the data by subgroups. Starting with the Nipissing caseload, approximately half the recipients have been on OW assistance for 19 months or more which is up from 46.0% reported in the last plan. Another 12.0% have been on assistance between 13–18 months (also up from 9.5%) while the remaining (38.0%) recipients have been on assistance for 12 months or less (down from 44.5%).

These findings are consistent with the expected outcomes from the DNSSAB’s new service delivery model which was fully implemented over the previous planning period. Under the new model, recipients who have been assessed as job ready need few supports and leave the caseload relatively quickly for employment. Meanwhile, those assessed as not being job ready stay on assistance longer to address their employment barriers and receive further supports. This can have the effect of increasing the overall time on assistance.

In comparison to Ontario, the time on OW assistance in Nipissing is similar, with only slight differences. Nipissing has relatively fewer recipients on assistance for 19 months or longer (50.1% vs. 54.4%) and more recipients on assistance for 18 months or less (50.0% vs. 45.8%).

2.2.8 Employment Readiness

Note: the following data is sourced from the DNSSAB employment database which includes temporary and emergency assistance. Also, this is the current caseload count (June) and not the March count from the ministry performance reports presented in the preceding sections – thus the counts will differ by up to a couple of hundred clients.

The figure below shows the Nipissing OW caseload by the level of employment readiness, assessed at client intake:



A little over one-third of the clients (34.5%) are in the *life stabilization* service category. These clients generally have multiple barriers to employment and are significantly detached from the employment and job markets. They often require many different programs and supports before employment can become a viable option. For example, over half (56.0%) this group have mental health issues that are impacting their ability to get or keep a job while 47.0%

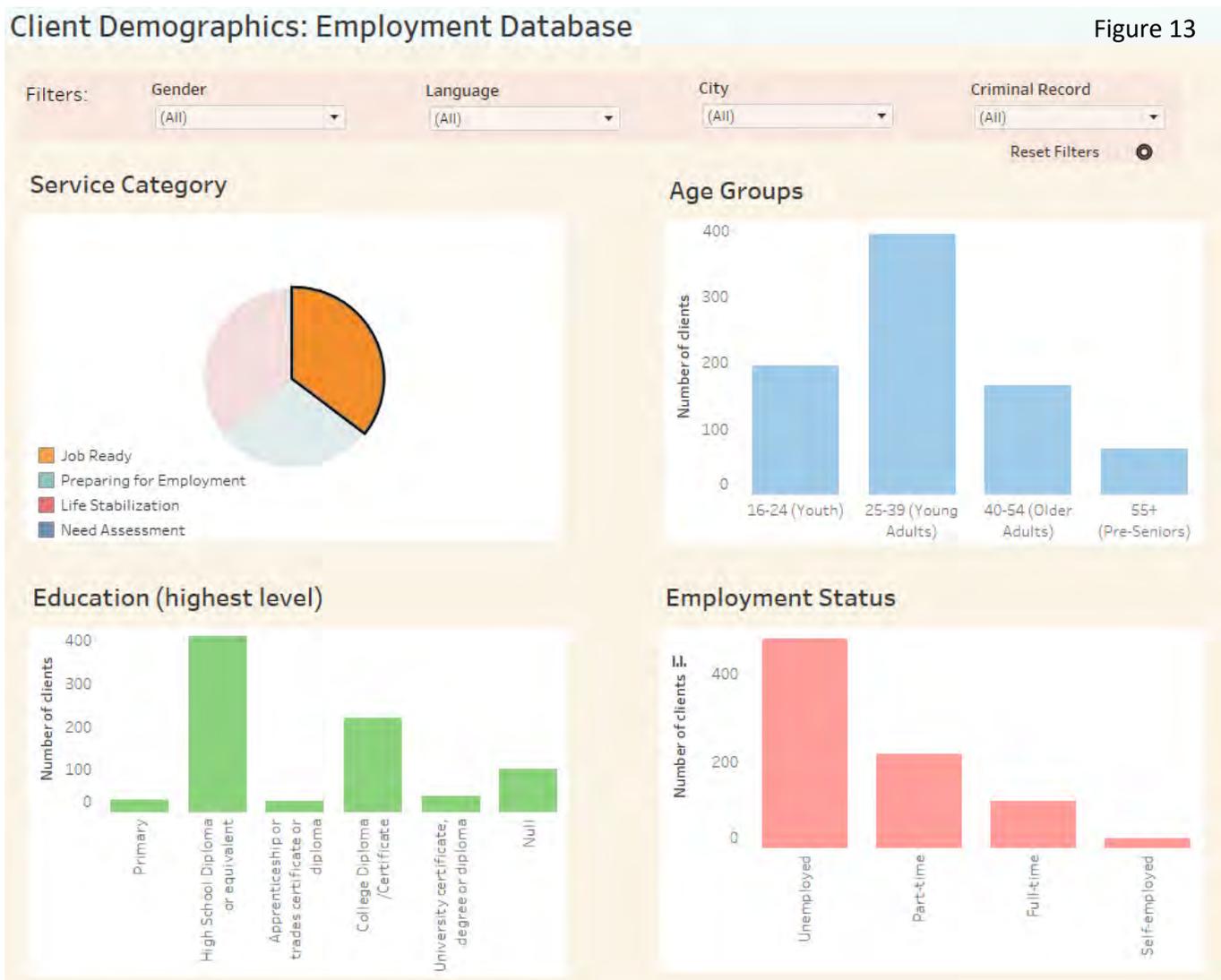
have physical health issues posing similar employment barriers. Furthermore, one-fifth of the life stabilization group has addictions issues which also impact their ability to get or keep jobs.

A smaller percentage (28.5%) of the caseload is *preparing for employment*. These clients have some barriers to employment and may require short-term training, education, or help in addressing personal needs to move them towards job readiness. As an example, over one-third (35.0%) of this group have criminal records which need attention if they are to be successful in obtaining employment. Other common barriers that are impacting the client’s ability to get or keep jobs are transportation (53.0%), childcare (22.0%) and housing (18.0%).

The remaining clients (35.5%) are generally *job ready* and have little to no barriers to employment. These clients generally require fewer supports than those in the service categories above, to participate fully in the employment and job markets. The following section provides a summary profile of these clients.

2.2.8.1 Job Ready Clients Demographic Profile

The dashboard below provides a demographic profile of the job ready clients on the Nipissing caseload:



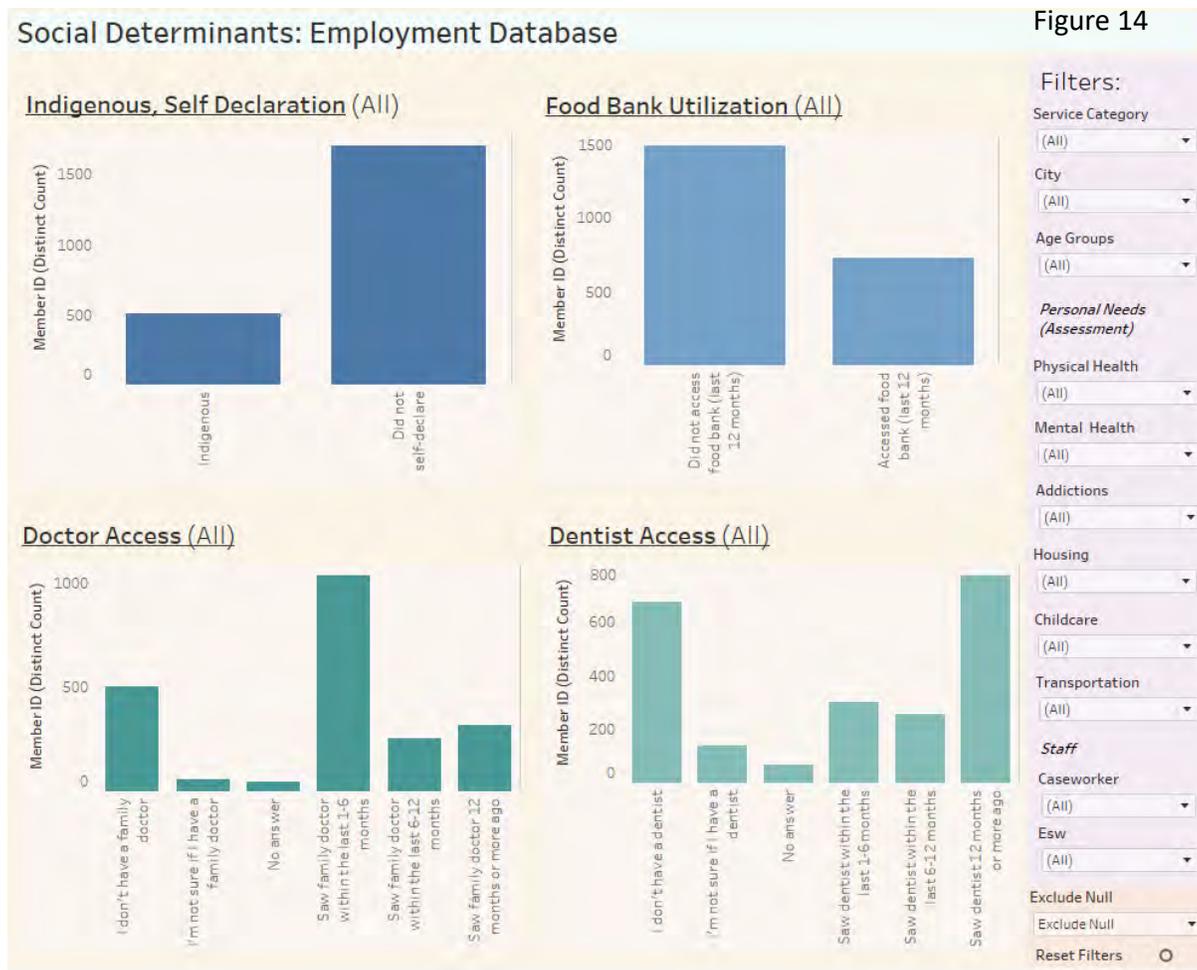
In terms of age, the majority (48.0%) of the job ready clients are young adults ages 25 - 39 years. Youth ages 16 – 24 years account for another 24.0% of the job ready group followed by older adults between the ages of 40 and 54 (20.0%). The remaining clients (8.5%) are pre-seniors who are 55 years of age or older.

Most of the job ready clients in Nipissing are educated with a high school diploma or higher – just 3.5% have less than a high school education (i.e., primary). Half these clients have a high school education or equivalent while another 26.0% have a college diploma or certificate. A small number (4.5%) of the job ready have a university certificate, degree, or diploma while the remaining 3.5% have an apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma.

Not surprisingly, most (58.5%) of the job ready clients are unemployed and looking for work. Somewhat surprising though is the other 41.5% of the clients who have jobs and are working either full-time, part-time or in self-employment. Presumably these clients are looking to make changes and improve their current employment situation.

2.2.8.2 OW Clients Social Determinants of Health

The dashboard below provides a profile of key social determinants for the OW clients on the Nipissing caseload. The profile includes whether the clients are indigenous, and also whether they have accessed food banks or have a dentist and doctor.

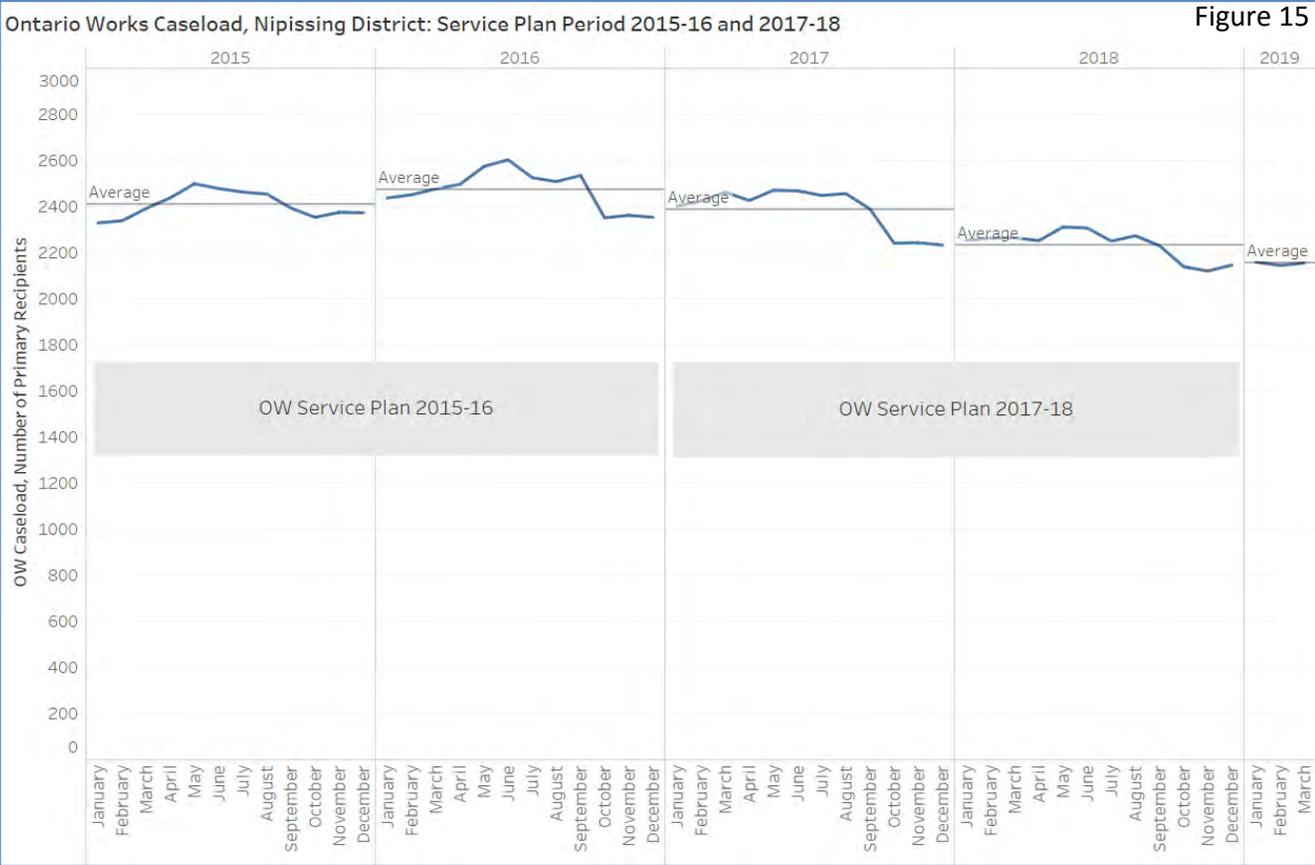


As just a quick example, nearly one quarter of the Nipissing caseload has identified as being indigenous, while one-third have accessed a food bank within the past year. Furthermore, 23.0% do not have a doctor and a larger number, 30.0%, do not have a dentist. This is revealing information and data, and important to know when trying to help people improve –or stabilize – their lives and connect them to the labour market and jobs.

It should be noted that in practice, the above data can also be cross-tabulated and parsed out in numerous ways using the charts themselves as filters, as well as those to the right of the dashboard. This allows the user to explore and query the database in many different ways and drill down to the most granular level of detail.

2.2.9 OW Caseload Trend

The figure below shows Nipissing District’s OW caseload trend over the past two service plan periods. The caseload is shown by month, and the years are separated to highlight and compare the annual caseload averages, variation, and patterns.



Data source: Social Assistance Operations Performance Report, April 2019. Note: The caseload counts include temporary assistance but not emergency assistance.

After peaking at 2,550 OW recipients (the highest since the 2008 recession) midway through 2016, the caseload has finally started to decrease after years of growth. On average, there were about 2,450 recipients on the caseload through the 2015/16 planning period. The caseload has since dropped an average of 100 recipients (-4.0%) each year through the next planning period (2017/18) for an overall decrease of about 8.0%.

It's interesting to note that the decrease in the Nipissing caseload is counter to the NOSDA trend which shows most of the northern caseloads either stationary or increasing during the same period. The decrease does somewhat follow the provincial trend however, with the Ontario caseload also starting to taper off in late 2017.

Nipissing's decrease in the caseload is also consistent with the DNSSAB's change in service delivery which started in 2016 and became fully operational in 2017 and 2018. The new service delivery model includes centralized intake, application, client employment profile, and common assessment of job readiness to facilitate targeted service strategies and greater employment outcomes (see the Service Delivery section for more details on the model. Also, see the report, *Ontario Works and Employment, Service Delivery Model Evaluation; DNSSAB November 2018*).

2.3 LOCAL LABOUR MARKET

2.3.1 Labour Force Unemployment and Participation Rates

Note

As stated in previous service plans, labour force data is not available for Nipissing District other than once every five years through the national census. While the census data is valuable for looking at point-in-time economic conditions or cross sectional trends, it does not provide a current economic picture or enough data to analyze labour force conditions in more detail. Thus, for service planning purposes the monthly labour force data for North Bay (Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey) is used to assess local labour market and economic conditions.

As mentioned in previous service plans the monthly labour force data continues to be of weak quality due to the small sample size associated with North Bay and sampling variability in the data. This is particularly true for the unemployment rate which has a large standard error and coefficient of variation. However, as long as the data is interpreted cautiously and within the context of the margin of error and other, comparable data (for example, the provincial data), the analysis still provides insight into the local economic environment surrounding OW delivery and the employment targets and outcomes.

In view of the above, the following sections present analysis on two key labour force indicators – the unemployment and participation rate.

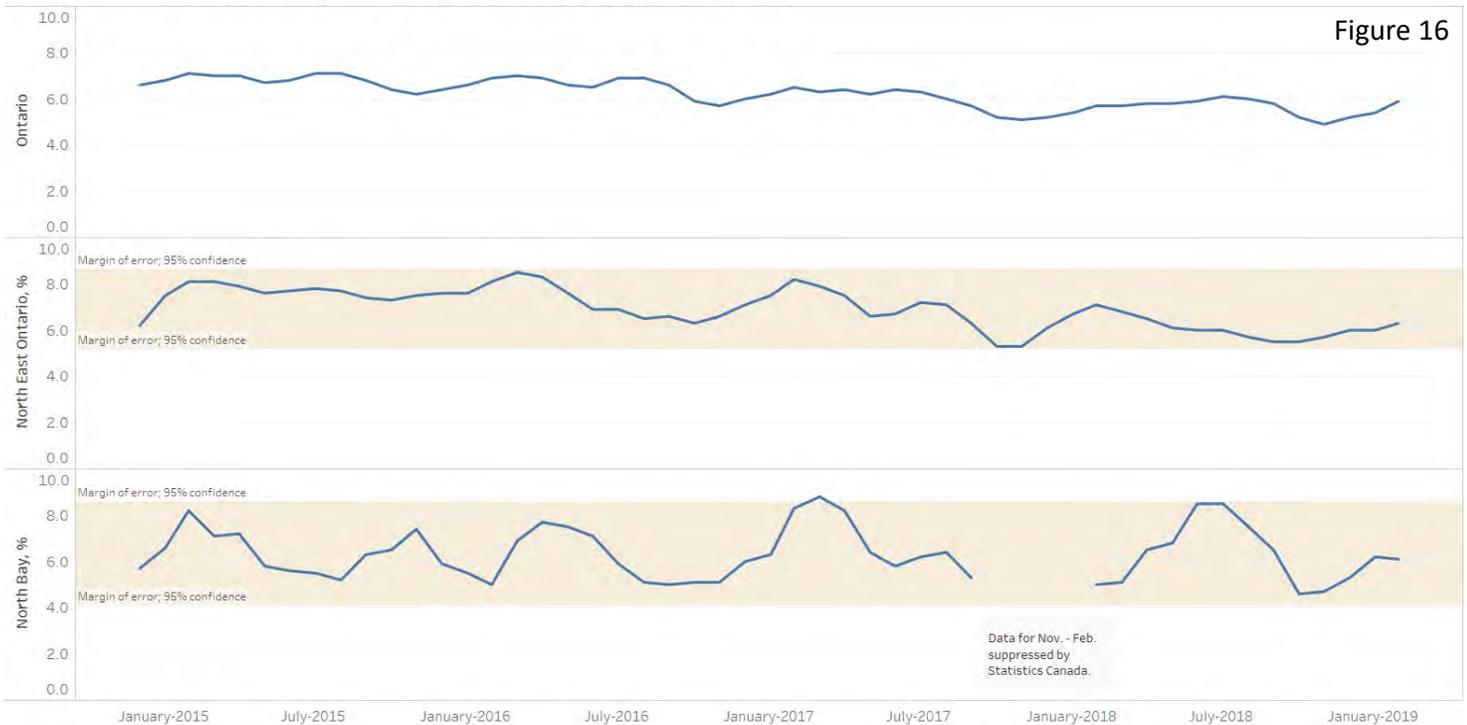
2.3.1.1 Unemployment

The unemployment rate for Ontario, Northeast Ontario, and North Bay is shown below, going back to January 2015 which covers the previous two OW service plan periods. The line charts for Northeast Ontario and North Bay also show the margin of error for the unemployment estimate at a 95% confidence level –as noted, the error increases significantly moving from the province (basically non-existent) to the economic region, down to the city level.⁹

During the previous two service planning periods above (2015-16 /2017-18), Ontario's unemployment rate averaged 6.2% which was down from the 7.0% average reported in the last plan. The rate varied from a high of

⁹ The margin of error is a function of the sample's standard deviation divided by the square root of the sample size, so smaller samples (i.e., North Bay) result in more variability and error. For the above data, Ontario's average standard error is 0.2, Northeast Ontario's is 0.6 and North Bay's is 1.4 (the margin of error doubles for a confidence level of 95%).

Unemployment Rate in Ontario, North East Ontario and North Bay, 2015-2018 (March)



7.1% earlier in the period (Aug, 2015) to a low of just under 5.0% more recently (Dec. 2018). As noted by the chart, the provincial unemployment rate has continued trending downward and is currently at 5.9%. Taking seasonality into account, this is some of the lowest unemployment experienced by the province since the great recession in 2008.

On average, provincial unemployment was lower (5.8%) during the previous OW planning period 2017-18 than the preceding period (6.7% in 2015-16). And while this correlates with the decreasing OW caseload during the same period, this was also during the time that the DNSSAB implemented its new service delivery model. As mentioned in the previous service plan, the OW caseload remained elevated in the preceding planning period (2015-16) when unemployment was also on the decline from 2013-14 so a positive correlation between unemployment and the caseload is not always evident.

Switching to Northeast Ontario, and similar to previous patterns, the average unemployment rate in the region was a little higher (6.9%) than the province over the same period, with an average variation of ± 1.2 most of the time. On average, most of the region’s irregular movements in unemployment have been within the sampling margin of error and are likely attributed more to statistical noise and variability than real change.¹⁰ During the latest planning period, 2017-18, the Northeast unemployment rate appears to be following the provincial trend closer and is also on the decrease. Currently, unemployment in the region is 6.3% (+/- 1.2%) which is slightly higher than the province.

As mentioned earlier, North Bay’s unemployment rate is prone to higher sampling error and variability so the data

¹⁰ Generally, movements inside the margin of error are attributed more to statistical error but could be actual change in unemployment, or statistical/sampling variability, or both. Movements outside the margin of error are considered statistically significant and are more likely to be the result of an actual change in unemployment.

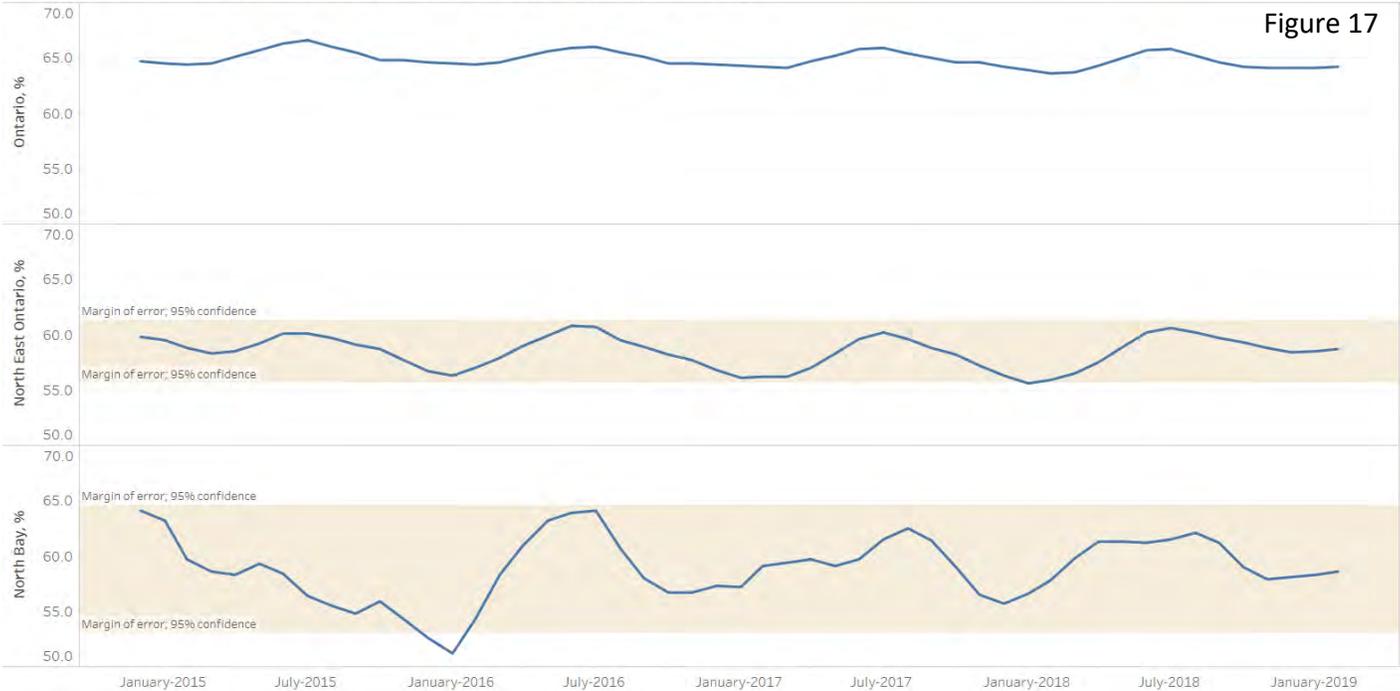
shows more irregular movements, swings, and pronounced seasonal variation compared to the other areas.¹¹ North Bay's average unemployment rate for the previous planning periods was 6.3% which was basically the same as the province. However, with an average margin of error of +/- 2.8 most of the time, the unemployment range widens considerably to between 3.5% - 9%. Similar to the Northeast region, most of the movement in the data is within the margin of error and statistically speaking, would be considered non-significant change.

Due to the wide variability in the data, North Bay's unemployment trend is not as discernable as the other areas. It appears to be holding steady and moving with the seasonal patterns of employment in general. Currently, North Bay's unemployment rate is 6.1% (+/- 2.8) which is between the province (5.9%) and region (6.3%).

2.3.1.2 Labour Force Participation

The participation rate continues to be a key indicator and proxy for the local labour market in terms of the percentage of the population (15 years and older) that is in the workforce and either employed or unemployed. The chart below shows the labour force participation rate for Ontario, Northeast Ontario and North Bay during the previous two service plan periods. As with the unemployment charts above, the line charts for Northeast Ontario and North Bay also show the margin of error for the participation rate estimate at a 95% confidence level (note: the chart axis has been truncated to emphasize the seasonal patterns).

Participation Rate in Ontario, North East Ontario and North Bay, 2015-2019 (March)



Data Source: Statistics Canada CANSIM Table 282-0122 (accessed June 10, 2019).
 Unadjusted for seasonality, 3-month moving average. North Bay data from the
 Statistics Canada monthly Labour Force Survey subscription.

¹¹ For example, taken as a percentage of the estimate, the error averages 24% for the North Bay data during this period.

As mentioned in previous plans the workforce has a seasonal pattern whereby participation is highest in the summer and lowest in the winter (this correlates negatively to the OW caseload which is generally the opposite). This pattern can be observed in all the charts although the statistical noise from the sampling variability in the North Bay data makes it harder to discern.

Ontario's labour force participation rate has been fairly steady over the previous two OW planning periods but continues to decrease slightly over time due to the aging population and a decrease in the core working-age population. During the period, the provincial participation rate averaged 65.0%, and varied +/- 1.5% depending on the time of year and seasonal factor.

In contrast, Northeast Ontario had a lower (58.5%) participation rate over the same period with a sampling margin of error of +/- 2.5% (at 95% confidence) which includes the seasonal variation and cycle. As mentioned in previous service plans, the participation rate in the Northeast (and Northern Ontario in general) has historically been low relative to the province, mainly because of a smaller workforce and a population that is declining and aging faster than the rest of the province.

Turning to North Bay's participation rate, interpreting the data needs to be done with caution as the survey sampling error increases and it becomes more difficult to distinguish between real change and statistical change resulting from the sampling error and variability. North Bay's participation rate averaged about the same (58.5%) as Northeast Ontario during the period although the sampling margin of error was significantly higher at about +/- 6.5%. The rate is down from the average (61.0%) reported in the previous service plan which is consistent with the longer-term trend of declining labour force participation in North Bay. For the most part, and apart from 2015, it appears that the participation rate in the city has followed the seasonal cycle and longer-term trend of the province and region although the data is more irregular due to statistical noise and bounce from the smaller sample size. It can also be noted that the data points in the first quarter of 2016 fall outside the sampling margin of error indicating a possible labour force event of significance, i.e., a real drop in the participation rate- this was relatively short-lived though.

2.3.2 Industry Structure, Nipissing District and Ontario

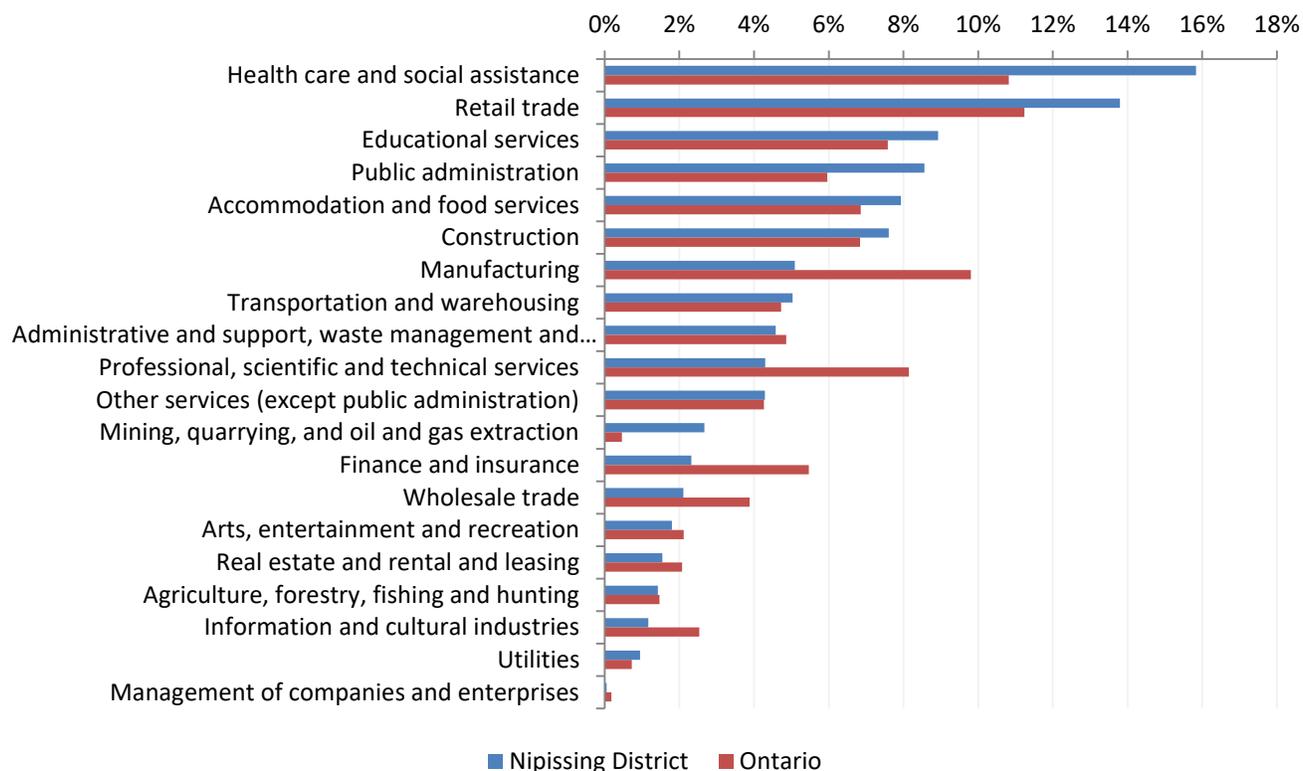
The figure on the following page shows the industries that are classed under the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), by the percentage of the labour force (ages 15 yrs. +) working in them in 2016. The data is presented in descending order for Nipissing District, and Ontario is also shown for benchmarking and comparison purposes.

The NAICS divides the economy into 20 sectors for the purposes of providing a standard for classifying businesses and a statistical framework for conducting general economic analysis. In the case of OW service planning, the NAICS also provides insight into the district's industry and employment environment. (Note: previous service plans have used a combination of census industry data or other sources, such as Canadian Business Counts, depending on data availability at the time).

The general industry structure of Nipissing District remains largely unchanged since the previous census period (2011) last reported in the 2015-16 OW service plan. Additionally, the local structure continues to differ from the province in terms of relative size and rank-order of some of the key industry sectors. A summary description of the distribution of industries and labour force is provided below:

Figure 18

Labour Force Population by Industry (NAICS); Nipissing District and Ontario, 2016



Data Source: Statistics Canada 2016 Census.

Health care and social assistance continue to be the largest sector in Nipissing District accounting for about 16.0% of the local labour force. This is the same percentage as the previous census period and significantly larger than the provincial health care and social assistance sector (11.0%). This sector is made up of organizations that are primarily engaged in providing health care through diagnosis and treatment; providing residential care for medical and social reasons; and providing social assistance, such as counselling, welfare, child protection, community housing and food services, child care, etc.

The retail sector is the next largest sector in Nipissing District with about 14.0% of the labour force (down slightly from 15.0% in 2011). This sector is also relatively large compared to the provincial retail sector (11.0%). The sector includes store and non-store retailers which are primarily engaged in retailing merchandise (generally without transformation) and rendering services incidental to the sale of merchandise.

The third largest sector by labour force participation – educational services - accounts for a further 9.0% of the district’s workforce and is also unchanged from the previous census period. The education sector includes the establishments that provide instruction and training such as schools, colleges, universities and training centres.

Public administration includes organizations that are engaged in activities of a governmental nature at all three levels of government. Approximately 8.5% of the local labour force works in this sector which is down from 10.0% previously reported. This is another sector in the district that is relatively larger than the provincial sector (6.0%).

Combined, the four sectors above account for close to half of Nipissing District's labour force. Thus, the public sector continues to be of major importance and plays a large role in employment in Nipissing District.

Rounding off the top five sectors by labour force employment is accommodation and food services at 8.0% (up from 7.0% in 2011). This sector is comprised of establishments that provide customers with lodging and/or preparing meals, snacks, and beverages for immediate consumption on and off the premises. It can be noted from the chart that the local accommodation and food sector is slightly larger than the provincial sector (7.0%)

Working down the list, construction is the next largest sector employing 7.5% of the district's labour force – up from 7.0% in 2011 and slightly larger than the provincial sector (7.0%). Based on the NAICS definition the construction sector “comprises establishments primarily engaged in constructing, repairing and renovating buildings and engineering works, and in subdividing and developing land”.

The other 14 NAICS sectors in the chart account for the remaining 37.0% of the district's labour force with each sector in turn, accounting for 5.0% or less of the labour force. In many of these sectors, the district now has relatively fewer workers than the province. Most notable is the district's manufacturing sector (5.0%) which is half the size of the provincial sector (10.0%) based on the share of the labour force. This is similar for the professional, scientific and technical services sector (legal services; accounting, architectural, engineering, consulting services etc.) where the provincial share (8.0%) is almost twice that of the district (4.5%). Other sectors where Nipissing has a significantly smaller share of the labour force are finance and insurance (2.5% vs. 5.5%), wholesale trade (2.0% vs. 4.0%) and information and cultural industries (1.0% vs. 2.5%).

2.3.3 Current Job Postings and OW Job Ready Clients by Occupation

In view of the above industry structure, for planning purposes it is helpful to see where the current job openings are and how the local inventory of OW skills and occupations line up with employment demand.

2.3.3.1 Current Job Postings by Occupation, North Bay and Area

The chart on the following page shows current job postings by occupation for North Bay and surrounding area. While there are various job websites that post jobs, these postings are from the National Job Bank which is considered a good sample of the jobs available in the area at this time. The jobs are classified by the National Occupational Classification (NOC) system and presented in descending order, starting with the occupation that has the most jobs posted.

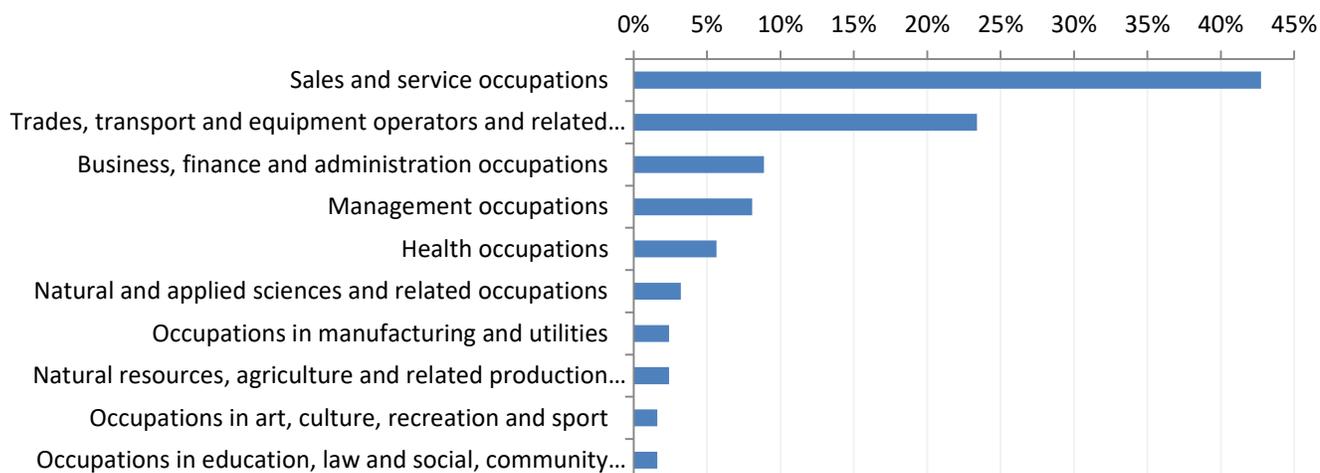
The National Job Bank currently has 124 job postings for North Bay and the surrounding area. As shown in the chart below, many (42.7%) of these jobs are sales and service occupations and include cleaners; food and beverage workers, cooks; retail sales and service; and customer service clerks.

Occupations related to the trades, transportation, and equipment operation account for the next largest share (23.4%) of local jobs posted on the job bank. Jobs in this category include welders; drivers, truck operators; mechanics; machinists; various technicians; carpenters; and general labourers.

Business, finance and administration occupations account for a further 8.9% of the local postings. Many of these are for administrative assistants, clerks and receptionists. Other business-related jobs include information officers; financial planner; mediator and bookkeeper.

Figure 19

Job Postings by Occupation in North Bay and Area (National Job Bank; June 17, 2019)



The number of current job openings for management is also in the 8.0% range and these mainly call for managers in various sectors including retail, construction, health and finance.

Rounding off the top five occupations by local job bank postings is health which accounts for 5.6% of the postings and are mainly for nurses and health care aides.

The remaining occupations represent a small number (11.3% or 14) of the job postings for North Bay and surrounding area. In the natural and applied sciences field (3.2%) these are mainly jobs for engineers, technologists, and technicians in various sectors while the manufacturing occupations (2.4%) include machine operators, production painters and general labourers. The local jobs in the natural resources and agriculture occupations (2.4%) are landscaping related (supervisors and labourers) and these are followed by the job postings for art, culture and recreation/sport (1.6%) which are for camp leaders and counsellors. The final job listings (also 1.6%) are in the education, law and social, community government services and are for Personal Support Workers (PSWs).

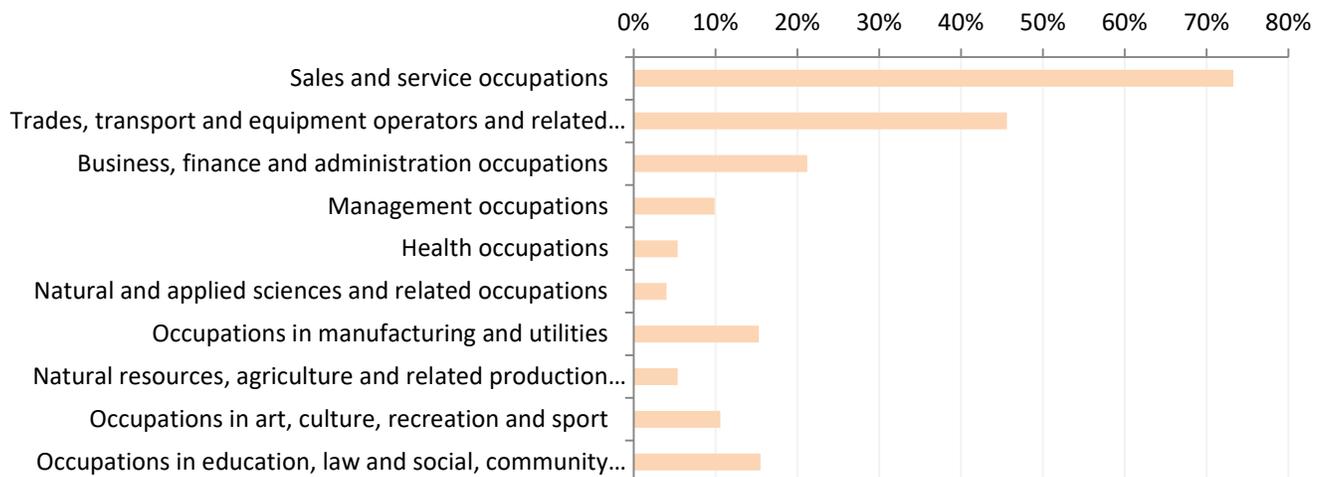
2.3.3.2 Ontario Works Job Ready Clients by Occupation

In view of the above job openings by occupation for North Bay and surrounding area, the occupations of OW clients can now be looked at to see how they align with the above job demand.

The figure below shows the number of Nipissing OW clients who are Job Ready by the same NOC classifications presented above. The data is presented in the same NOC order as the previous chart for comparison and reference purposes. Note: some clients have more than one occupation and fall into more than one NOC category so the totals include duplicate counts and do not add up to 100. Thus, figures 18 and 19 are not directly comparable in absolute terms for comparing the number of occupations in the local job market to those found in the OW population. However, they are comparable for looking at the relative distribution of occupations between the two and seeing how they match and align.

Ontario Works Clients who are *Job Ready* by Occupation, Nipissing District (June 17, 2019)

Figure 20



Currently, there are about 800 OW clients (a little over one-third of the caseload) in Nipissing District who have been assessed as ‘job ready’. It can be noted from the above chart that the distribution of occupations for this group closely follows that of the current job openings presented earlier (Figure 18), at least at this high level of NOC and for the more popular occupations.

Similar to the district’s job postings presented earlier, the OW job-ready caseload is heavily oriented towards occupations in sales and services with nearly three-quarters of the clients having an employment background in this area. Analyzing the data further shows that the client’s main sales and service occupations are bartenders; cashiers; food and beverage workers; cooks/chefs; cleaners; retail sales and service; and security guards. This closely aligns with the sample of sales and service job postings presented earlier and demonstrates strong alignment between local job demand and supply in this occupational area. Having said that, the actual number of jobs available and the people to fill them also needs to be considered. For example, as stated earlier, 42.7% of the local jobs posted in the National Job Bank are in sales and service which equates to 53 jobs (and while this is a sample and not necessarily all the sales and service job postings, it provides a reasonable indication of the number of jobs available locally).¹² However, the number of OW clients who are job ready and have sales and service employment backgrounds is approaching 600 – this is a large number relative to the jobs available even if some of these clients have other occupations or no longer work in sales and service. Additionally, there are the job seekers who are unemployed and not on OW which account for another 1,500 (+/- 675).¹³ Granted, not all these unemployed have occupations in sales and service but even so, this points to a relatively large over-supply of sales and service skills relative to demand, even if the 53 jobs in the job bank were doubled. Incorporating supply and demand factors such as these into the OW employment targets would provide a more realistic and accurate picture of employment outcomes and performance.

¹² As one example, the website *Ready, Set, Hired* lists 80 jobs for sales and service occupations in Nipissing District. Presumably, most of these are duplicates of the National Job Bank but also include some additional jobs.

¹³ The number of unemployed in North Bay (May 2019) is estimated at 1,500 with a coefficient of variation of 57.5% at a 95% confidence level. Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey.

Just under half (45.8%) the OW job ready clients have occupations related to trade, transport and equipment operators, and related occupations (again, as mentioned earlier, some of these clients also have other occupations including sales and service above). Most of these occupations are bus, taxi, transport drivers; heavy equipment operators; carpenters, roofers, labourers; plumbers, electricians, and welders. Again, there seems to be good alignment between these occupations and those posted by employers in the job bank described earlier, but with fewer jobs (29) than job ready clients (370).

Approximately one-fifth of the job ready clients also have occupations in business, finance and administration. Many of these are administrative-office support/clerk/ receptionist type roles which closely match the job postings in the job bank (above). Accountants /bookkeepers are other client occupations under this category.

It’s interesting to note that following the above three NOC occupations, the rank-order of the distribution of occupations for the job ready clients and job postings falls slightly out of step. For example, the job ready clients have a relatively large number of occupations in manufacturing and utilities; art, culture, recreation and sport; and education, law, social and government services; relative to the job postings in these areas. Granted, this is just a sample of jobs and some of these OW clients also have other occupational skills but it provides valuable insight into job-matching and helping clients prepare for, and get, jobs.

The above provides an example of looking at the supply and demand of jobs based on the NOC occupations. In practice, this forms the basis of matching clients with jobs – at a more detailed level - through the DNSSAB employment database and looking at skills re-training or upgrading where imbalances or misalignment between client occupations /skills and the employment market exist.

2.4 COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

As mentioned earlier in this report, Social Services takes community partnership development and maintenance very seriously and seizes every opportunity to collaborate and learn from others. The following table represents how Social Services engages partners to enhance its service delivery model.

Strategy	Description
Sharing of Best Practices	Social Services has been heavily engaged during the previous planning cycle to share the benefits and successes associated with the Get Trained Workers Employment Database. In fact, Several site visits to other Ontario Works delivery sites both in the North and the South have taken place with these areas subsequently coming on board with this exciting initiative.
In-Services for Front Line Staff	Social Services frequently invites and/or accepts requests to present information as a means to communicating with community partners. These in-services form part of the training plan for front

	line staff. Over the past cycle, examples of in-services are the methadone clinic, Aids Committee, and Canadian Mental Health Association.
OMSSA and NOSDA	Social Services continues to be very active with OMSSA and NOSDA. Through these associations, Social Services has shared best practices and learned from other service providers. Social Services along with the region of Niagara also co-facilitated a break out session at the 2018 OMSSA employment forum.
AMO	Social Services remains active in contributing to the development of AMO presentations for various delegations delivered by the CAO to ensure social assistance issues are at the forefront of these conversations.
Sharing of Physical Space	In order to foster positive working relationships with community partners and the availability of resources to Ontario Works recipients, Social Services has several agreements with many community partners such as Probation and Parole, YES Employment, North Bay and District Chamber of Commerce, Bancroft and District Chamber of Commerce and ODSP to share DNSSAB workspace. Service Canada has also recently approached Social Services to share space. Discussions are underway to ensure that the space available will meet their needs. To date these partnerships have been working well.
Joint Staff Training Opportunities	Social Services has contacted other OW offices and the North Bay ODSP office to offer joint training opportunities in order to reduce costs and promote the networking of staff cross programs.

Participation at numerous planning tables and committees	As described earlier in this Plan, Social Services is heavily engaged in community tables such as NEST, Gateway Hub, Housing and Homelessness Table, LHIN tables etc. Participation at these tables provides Social Services with the opportunity to engage multiple service providers all at the same time.
Employer Information Sessions	As noted previously, in 2018, Social Services started to engage local employers in a more proactive way to deliver employer information sessions to clients. Site visits with participants at various worksites have also been completed.
Participation in Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours meetings	As these meetings are great networking opportunities, Social Services has dedicated resources to allow specified staff to participate in these meetings. The Employment Marketing Specialist and Supervisor of Employment and Client outcomes rotate their attendance.

In terms of gaps in services, for North Bay, the largest urban centre in the District, there are ample employment programs and services available, with the exception of Practice Training Environments which were eliminated some time ago, but had value within the employment services continuum. In fact, based on the findings of an employment services review DNSSAB completed in 2014, it appeared that more coordination of services was needed in order to avoid duplication. Life skills programs while available in various locations across the service network could also be managed differently by developing a more comprehensive “program” that all providers could refer to versus the fragmented approach currently being utilized.

In terms of other gaps, access to services in most sectors remains a problem in the outlying areas of Nipissing District. While many service providers have mandates that require services to be delivered across the District, there is no similar mandate or budget to have a regular and physical presence in all communities. As transportation remains a significant barrier for areas without public transportation, access to services for social assistance recipients residing in the outlying areas is greatly impacted. For example, methadone clinic services are available in North Bay and Sturgeon Falls, however, social assistance recipients without access to a vehicle or ride in Mattawa need to access medical transportation for cab fare into North Bay in order to access services. It is also important to note that this cost is not recognized as reimbursable by the Northern Health Travel Grant program.

In North Bay, Mattawa and West Nipissing, there is an on-going physical presence of Employment Ontario programs. In South Algonquin, Temagami and everywhere else in between in the District, including rural areas, there are no physical EO sites to assist with job search related activities. Most of the providers responsible for these areas tend to service individuals upon request and make the necessary arrangements to facilitate this work.

As many individuals in need of services may not be familiar with the programs and services available, this places these areas at a significant disadvantage.

Further on in the Plan, other gaps in the District will be identified such as the shortage of family Doctors and Psychiatrists in some areas and wait times to access residential mental health and addiction treatment.

3.0 STRATEGIES AND OUTCOMES

3.1 SERVICE STRATEGY

In order to facilitate successful outcomes for clients and develop models of integrated streamlined and accessible services, Social Services must work to leverage partnerships through collaborative planning. Through referrals to the services offered by community partners, Social Services is able to extend its reach and participants are able to benefit from the wealth of expertise that exists within the broader employment service network. Utilizing third parties as part of a strategy to improve employment outcomes can also help minimize some of the stigma associated with social assistance delivery.

The following section highlights strategies that are directly related to the achievement of outcomes and other strategies that influence outcomes indirectly. Many of the strategies are priorities that are expected to be multi-year projects or activities that will remain relevant for many years to come. Unfortunately, at the present time MCCSS does not measure the work and associated outcomes related to assisting clients with multiple barriers such as mental health and addiction. It also does not measure the number of clients connected to post-secondary education or adult upgrading which has proven to be a successful strategy utilized by Social Services.

The table below provides an overview of the strategies that will be utilized during the current cycle that will influence outcomes and the rationale for the continued delivery of these initiatives.

STRATEGY	RATIONALE
100 Jobs Pilot in Partnership with the North Bay and District Chamber of Commerce	The 100 Jobs Pilot is a third party initiative that markets social assistance recipients to employers throughout the District. In order to compete with Employment Ontario programs it is essential that Social Services also provide financial incentives to employers. To date, this program has been successful and will therefore be continued during this cycle. By utilizing a third party agency, stigma plays a lesser role resulting in more outcomes to employment.
Employment Placement	Social Services has been ramping up participation in Employment Placements. The Employment Marketing Specialist (EMS) continues to make connections with Employers throughout the District. Like the 100 Jobs Pilot, the EMS offers financial incentives through the employment placement program.

Increased focus on literacy and life skills training.	Participants without the basic skills needed to engage with their communities and/or employment have great difficulty achieving financial independence in a labour market that is becoming increasingly competitive and knowledge based. For the current planning cycle there will be an increased focus on attaching clients without a grade 12 education to adult literacy and life skills training.
Lunch and Learns	Since the inception of the NPREP program, lunch and learns have been held to promote the value of post-secondary education. Lunch and learns however can be utilized to promote other activities as well for various target groups. Social Services will be utilizing this approach more in the current cycle.
Increase opportunities to volunteer through community placements.	Volunteer placements can increase a participant's self-confidence, self-worth and social inclusion. Increasing the number of community placement sponsor and participants will be a focus during this cycle. Increased financial incentives to promote these activities is also under review. These efforts increase a client's employability and also provide them with references.
Continued delivery 1-1 coaching and delivery of group employment workshops and training.	Social Services delivers a variety of internal workshops. While some are standard and are available externally as well, many are unique to DNSSAB. The following represents some of the workshops currently being delivered: customer service training, employment ready program, Skircles, cash register training, job search, interview skills, community placement information sessions, understanding your responsibilities which is a workshop designed for clients facing non-compliance, on-line WHIMIS, smart serve, computer training, safe food handling and health and safety.
External Referrals to employment service providers	Social Services will continue to refer to external programming when the participant presents a need that cannot be fulfilled through internal employment services, workshops or training.
Psycho-vocational assessments	Social Services purchases services from a local Psychologist who provides psycho-vocational testing on participants who are having difficulty connecting with the labour market. The outcome of the assessments is varied as many participants discover that they actually have a disability and are

	subsequently referred to the ODSP program. Many clients over the years have exited the OW program because of this partnership to either employment or to ODSP.
Referrals to Business Centre for Self-Employment Program	Social Services will continue to refer to the Business Centre for participants with entrepreneurship/self-employment goals. While the success of participants working through this process is limited, it continues to be a valuable program to help participants explore this career option.

3.2 LINKING STRATEGIES TO OUTCOME MEASURES

As mentioned earlier setting and achieving performance targets is challenging due to the relatively high risk of unpredictability in the local labour market or the broader regional economy. Therefore, ensuring that careful consideration is given to all decisions related to service methodologies is essential as failure to align services with the needs of the clientele can directly impact performance outcomes.

The following data was utilized to set the targets identified on the following page for 2019:

1. Social Assistance Operations Performance Reports – outcomes up to May 2019
2. Historical data for past years to confirm trends

In previous years, Administrators had the flexibility to set targets that were reflective of the previous year’s performance. This year, Administrators are required to set targets based on a Ministry mandate of 3% above the previous year’s average actual achievements. This has created a planning environment where Administrators will potentially be setting targets they know they have not met due to the timing of the submission. For example: Social Services can confirm that it has not met the targets set for the first quarter on 3 of the 4 outcome measures. While this may or may not mean that outcomes will not be achieved over the two year cycle, it has left Administrators operating in a much riskier fiscal environment.

In recognition of the in-year fluctuations in performance, Social Services has again avoided straight line projections in setting the targets. Consistent with the previous planning cycle, employment outcomes have been weighted heavier than earnings outcomes as it believed that current service delivery strategies will have a greater impact on overall outcomes on these measures. Further, while the upcoming change to how earnings exemptions are applied is expected to positively influence employment exits, this same change is also expected to lower the average earnings of employed participants. For these reasons and due to lower achievements overall compared to the provincial average, Social Services will not be establishing a target on earnings measure # 2. Minimal points of 200 have been assigned to earnings measure #1 with 800 points being assigned to employment measures 3 and 4.

In the memo dated April 17, 2019, Administrators were informed that the ministry may consider a reduction in the mandatory three percent (3%) targeted increase in outcomes, if a regions 2018 actual/2019 forecasted baseline is significantly above the provincial median. In Nipissing, as shown in the table below, achievements on Measure 3 – Percentage of Terminations Exiting to Employment was 8.31% above the provincial average with Measure 4 – Percentage of Caseload Exiting to Employment coming in at almost twice the provincial average. **For this reason, DNSSAB Social Services is requesting a decrease in the mandatory three percent (3%) increase above 2018 actual**

achievements on employment outcome measures three and four in accordance to Table 12 below. As shown in Table 11, the adjusted targets on these measures continue to be higher than the provincial average even with the reduction in the targeted improvement from the baseline. As noted above targets have not been set on earnings measure # 2 with a three percent (3%) targeted increase set on earnings Measure # 1.

Table 11

	Jan-18	Feb-18	Mar-18	Apr-18	May-18	Jun-18	Jul-18	Aug-18	Sep-18	Oct-18	Nov-18	Dec-18	AVG
Provincial - % of terminations exiting to	17.40%	14.88%	16.81%	19.82%	18.69%	18.83%	18.82%	17.45%	16.25%	17.25%	19.82%	19.97%	18.00%
Nipissing - % of terminations exiting to	33.73%	17.32%	17.96%	30.61%	37.84%	27.66%	36.05%	26.06%	17.08%	25.56%	23.87%	21.93%	26.31%
	Jan-18	Feb-18	Mar-18	Apr-18	May-18	Jun-18	Jul-18	Aug-18	Sep-18	Oct-18	Nov-18	Dec-18	AVG
Provincial - % of caseload exiting to employment	0.91%	0.73%	0.99%	0.92%	1.06%	1.11%	1.03%	1.00%	1.10%	1.10%	1.13%	1.05%	1.01%
Nipissing - % of caseload exiting to employment	2.65%	1.02%	1.39%	2.10%	2.55%	2.37%	2.90%	1.71%	1.93%	2.26%	1.84%	1.23%	2.00%

Proportional Weighting of Earnings and Employment Measures			?
	Assigned	Total	
	Year 1		
1: Average Monthly Employment Earnings per Case	200	200	
2: Percentage of Caseload with Employment Earnings	0	0	
3: Percentage of Terminations Exiting to Employment	400	400	
4: Percentage of Caseload Exiting to Employment	400	400	
Total	1,000	1,000	
Note: Outcomes have a standard Minimum and Maximum Weighting.			
	Minimum: 0	Maximum: 600	

Table 12

OUTCOMES: EARNINGS AND EMPLOYMENT						
1: Average Monthly Employment Earnings per Case						?
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1-Q4	
2018 Actuals = 2019 Forecast Baseline	\$793	\$850	\$862	\$865	\$843	
Targeted Improvement from Baseline	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	
Targeted Improvement (\$)	\$24	\$26	\$26	\$26	\$25	
Target	\$817	\$876	\$888	\$891	\$868	
						Points Assigned: 200
2: Percentage of Caseload with Employment Earnings						?
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1-Q4	
2018 Actuals = 2019 Forecast Baseline	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	
Targeted Improvement from Baseline	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	0.00%	
Targeted Improvement (%)	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	
Target	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	
						Points Assigned: 0
3: Percentage of Terminations Exiting to Employment						?
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1-Q4	
2018 Actuals = 2019 Forecast Baseline	23.00%	32.04%	26.40%	23.79%	26.31%	
Targeted Improvement from Baseline	0.10%	0.10%	0.10%	0.10%	0.10%	
Targeted Improvement (%)	0.02%	0.03%	0.03%	0.02%	0.03%	
Target	23.02%	32.07%	26.43%	23.81%	26.33%	
						Points Assigned: 400
4: Percentage of Caseload Exiting to Employment						?
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1-Q4	
2018 Actuals = 2019 Forecast Baseline	1.69%	2.34%	2.18%	1.78%	2.00%	
Targeted Improvement from Baseline	0.40%	0.40%	0.40%	0.40%	0.40%	
Targeted Improvement (%)	0.01%	0.01%	0.01%	0.01%	0.01%	
Target	1.70%	2.35%	2.19%	1.79%	2.01%	
						Points Assigned: 400

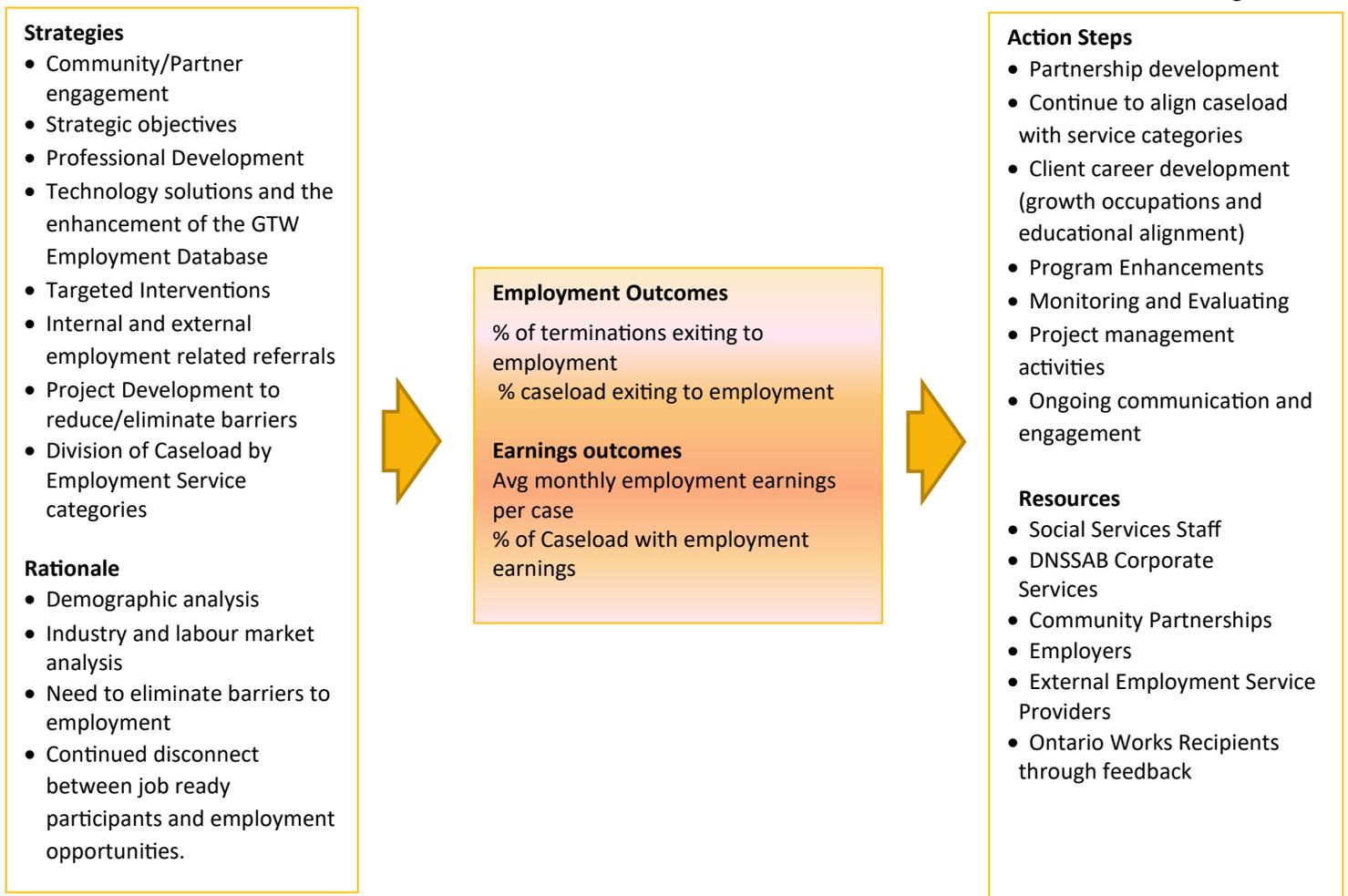
As you can see, the targeted improvement from baseline for Percentage of Terminations Exiting to Employment has been decreased from 3% to 0.10% resulting in a 2019 target of 26.33% which remains above the 2018 provincial average of 18% and the 2019 year-to-date average of 20.68%. For Measure 4, Percentage of Caseload Exiting to

Employment the 3% increase has been reduced to 0.40% resulting in a 2019 target of 2.01% which remains above the 2018 provincial average of 1.01% and year-to-date average of 1.08%.

3.3 ACTION STEPS AND RESOURCES

The diagram below summarizes the key strategies and action items described in this Plan that will help to achieve improved employment outcomes and self-reliance for clients. Key action items for the current planning cycle will include enhancing partnerships, staff development, development and implementation of projects, re-alignment of caseload based on service needs and individual career development. In order to be successful in the delivery of employment services to move clients in receipt of social assistance into sustainable employment, it is imperative that Social Services have its finger on the pulse of the local labour market and economy. A broad view of current labour supply and demand, as well as the future needs of the labour market, is essential to effective planning in the area of employment services. To that end, staff will be concentrating more effort this planning cycle on business and market analysis, with the end goal of better preparing clients to meet the needs of business and the local labour market.

Figure 21



3.4 STAKEHOLDER LINKAGES

The DNSSAB defines its stakeholders as any individual or group that can have either a positive or negative impact on its ability to realize the mission and vision. The Board has defined six stakeholder groups which include: our clients/citizens; employees; service delivery partners; governments/funders; Board of Directors; and the community.

Recently, DNSSAB renewed its strategic plan to 2020, resulting in a continued focus on service integration and holistic approaches. To date, efforts in coordinating and integrating services in the community have resulted in numerous partnerships and linkages with common service providers in the form of planning tables, referral protocols, community service delivery and planning, and contracted programs and services.

These relationships allow Social Services to broaden its effectiveness and leverage resources to better meet the diverse needs of the caseload. Examples on how Social Services accomplishes this is listed below:

- Joint events and collaborative planning with Economic Development Organizations on job fairs and get job ready events broadens the reach of Social Services to reach employers.
- Partnership and Purchase of Service Agreement with the North Bay and District Chamber of Commerce on business after hours events, marketing, employment placement, job development and Get Trained Workers helps to remove the stigma associated with the delivery of social assistance.
- Strong partnerships and protocols with the wide variety of services offered by Employment Ontario to compliment OW employment programming allows Social Services and the clients it serves, to benefit from the vast amount of knowledge and expertise available throughout the employment services network.
- Strong partnerships/protocols/Service Agreements with the education sector both at the literacy and basic skills level up to post- secondary assist Social Services to promote these activities as being a pathway out of poverty.
- Partnership with the healthcare sector to deliver dental services to social assistance recipients helps to illustrate the inherent linkages between these two service sectors.
- Purchase of Service Agreement with the Business Centre assists Social Services with ensuring that the appropriate expertise required to help a client to pursue entrepreneurship is available.
- Partnerships/Protocols with local NGO's assist Social Services with ensuring that any gaps left by the system are met in the community.
- Partnership/protocols with local women's shelters assist Social Services to ensure that this target group receives the sensitive services required when dealing with issues related to violence against women.
- Partnership/protocols with local addiction and mental health service providers assist Social Services with ensuring that the level of expertise required to assist participants with this barrier is available.
- Client engagement sessions and/or feedback processes will help to inform Social Services on whether or not the current service delivery model is meeting their needs.
- Engagement opportunities to meet with other OW Service Providers through various tables, NOSDA/OMSSA etc. allows Social Services to learn and benefit from the experiences of its peers on the delivery of effective employment strategies.

3.5 ADDRESSING SERVICE GAPS

Identifying and addressing service gaps throughout the district continues to be a key priority for Social Services. Due to the size of Nipissing District and the unique needs of our rural versus urban areas, Social Services must ensure that our service delivery model meets the needs of all clients and not only the clients residing in the larger urban centers. In order to enhance Social Services ability to identify and address service gaps, Social Services has taken a leadership role in facilitating service provider networks that work collaboratively on ways to re-align existing resources to better meet the needs of our clients. This has proven to be an effective tool for Social Services to promote holistic services through an integrated service model. Through various initiatives and participation on various Tables, members of the Social Services management team and front line staff, along with other dedicated community partners have managed to close or reduce service gaps on a number of fronts. Continued collaboration and consultation will remain a priority as we move forward to ensure that an integrated approach to decision making is sustained over time.

DNSSAB's continued role in the administration of the Nipissing Innovation Fund, which funds projects to support the needs of low income individuals and families, is a perfect example of how aligning resources with the needs of the community can reap positive rewards. By investing these dollars into innovative programs that seek to fill gaps through a focus on prevention, Social Services is optimizing and allocating resources in a manner that can impact future generation's thus reducing potential future dependency on social assistance programs.

The following highlights a few of the on-going initiatives that demonstrate the commitment of Social Services to reduce service gaps in the community.

Transportation remains a significant barrier for clients residing in the outlying areas of Nipissing District where there is no access to public transportation. The Nipissing Travellink Pilot, as reported in the previous Service Plan was an excellent example of DNSSAB's efforts to collaborate with its partners to develop a solution to a significant gap in service. While it is clear that Nipissing Travellink did not alleviate this barrier beyond its end date in March 31, 2018, the data compiled from the Pilot should have greatly assisted the Ministry with their future planning. However, to date, there has been no contact regarding the results of the Pilot. It is suspected that the change in government may have created this gap in follow through. The results of the Pilot will also serve to inform Municipalities on what a local transportation initiative could look like in their communities. Opportunities for public/private partnerships may be the solution to this long standing barrier for many social assistance recipients living in the outlying areas. However, until an innovation solution is found, this service gap will once again leave social assistance recipients and those living on low incomes with very few options to change their circumstances.

3.5.1 Access to Mental Health and Addiction Services

DNSSAB's CAO and Board have been very active in their advocacy efforts to engage the Northeast Local Health Integrated Network on the issue of access to mental health and addiction services throughout the District. As Nipissing has been considered a hub for these services for many years due to the location of the previous North Bay Psychiatric hospital, the caseload has a significant representation of participants with these barriers. Over the past few years, DNSSAB's CAO has been making every effort to highlight the linkages between social assistance and healthcare programs.

Wait times along with a lack of Psychiatrists are resulting in frustration for those seeking services and seeking to help others connect to service. Due to the high demand in the District of Nipissing, service providers are struggling to keep up with the ever increasing need. As this sector is currently under review through the development of the Ontario Health Teams, Social Services is hopeful that the service providers will get what they require to be successful. From the outside looking in, it appears that more staff working within communities are required to meet the demand for populations with higher needs. The lack of inpatient mental health beds has also placed significant pressure on the sector and other service providers trying to help clients navigate the system and connect to services. As most of the services are located in the urban centre this can also present a significant barrier to those without access to public transportation. For this reason, MCCSS through OW and ODSP are forced to absorb the transportation costs under mandatory benefits to get participants to the services.

3.5.2 Protocols with Local Nurse Practitioner Clinic

Due to the shortage of family Doctors and Psychiatrists in the District, it has been essential to form partnerships with various healthcare providers. Effective referral protocols with Nurse Practitioner Clinics has been essential to connecting social assistance recipients to healthcare services. As information related to whether or not a client has a family doctor is collected at the time of application through the social determinants of health questions on the employment assessment, Social Services is now able to filter the database for these cases and target communications. This is proving to be an effective strategy to bridging this gap in healthcare for social assistance recipients.

3.5.3 Other Systemic Gaps

Other systemic service gaps such as income and food insecurity, shortage of safe and affordable housing, lack of employment opportunities for participants with barriers and shortage of 24 hour formal childcare and infant spaces also impact a clients' ability to connect to the labour market. While several of these gaps are certainly not within the control of Social Services, this does not mean that Social Services does not have a role to play in the area of advocacy. Social Services can confirm that a lot of work is currently underway at DNSSAB to address the gaps noted under childcare and housing. The creation of additional infant childcare spaces is on the immediate radar of the Children's Services department and changes to how affordable and subsidized housing programs will operate under the DNSSAB Housing Portfolio are also on the horizon due to legislative changes within their respective Ministries.

3.6 INCREASED EMPLOYABILITY STRATEGIES

Over the years a great deal of effort has gone into moving case management away from a transactional reactive model to a more pro-active client-centred service utilizing a holistic wrap-approach to better meet the needs of clients in receipt of social assistance. However, technology and complicated cumbersome program requirements continue to make this goal a challenging one. In times of austerity where funding is strained at all levels, creative solutions are required in order to meet the complex needs of clients living in poverty.

It is clear that in order to assist social assistance recipients to connect with employment, they need to be empowered to see their own potential and how they can rise above their current circumstances. By investing in

strategies that work, identifying the client's currency and offering the supports that are needed, social assistance recipients can develop the self-confidence they need to move forward.

For many clients, living in poverty can result in feelings of hopelessness, isolation and marginalization. This can result in a client developing a real fear of leaving social assistance for employment which in turn can act as a barrier to their success. In order for the human service network to be effective, every opportunity to take advantage of integration and collaborative planning must be taken. Leveraging data cross sectors whenever possible in order to gain a better understanding of the needs of communities is also a valuable strategy. A multi-ministerial and holistic approach is required in order to ensure that the full spectrums of a client's needs are met as they are interconnected on many levels. It is clear that more work needs to be done to align programs and services within the broader human service network. Building these relationships and repairing these disconnects is not only cost effective for tax payers but will also enhance the quality within the service system as a whole.

3.7 MONITORING SERVICE STRATEGIES

Social Services continues to utilize various Cognos reports along with the Social Assistance Operations Performance Report to inform its planning. Various other peripheral tracking mechanisms developed locally inclusive of the Get Trained Workers Employment Database are also used extensively to ensure that program delivery remains on track. This monitoring is key to ensuring that variances are identified early in order to investigate the cause of the variance and develop a solution. This analysis enables Social Services to adjust service delivery strategies and/or modify local policies or procedures as required to ensure that the work of Staff is aligned with the achievement of outcomes.

Social Services relies heavily on whatever data is available to evaluate the effectiveness of its service strategies in order to ensure that there is an ample return on investment. Social Services monitors and reports on targeted outcomes and program expenditures monthly to the DNSSAB Board. Ad hoc reports and presentations on various other topics related to data and social assistance delivery are also utilized to further educate and inform. In addition, Social Services also uses available data associated with other CMSM's and DSSAB's to confirm how it compares to the outcomes and achievements in other regions. In addition, Social Services has also been visiting other OW sites to learn from the expertise and experiences of others and their best practices.

Increased client engagement has also commenced through the development of an internal client advisory group. Seeking feedback from end users must be a part of any strategy to monitor service delivery. Within the next few months, through a collaborative initiative with several other northern DSSAB's, the cost for a customer satisfaction survey kiosk will also be launched in Nipissing. This initiative was enabled through a collaborative third party purchase of service agreement. Pro-active engagement to seek feedback from community partners is also planned for this cycle to ensure that the current service delivery model is not having any unintended negative impacts on mutual clients or programs.

A detailed file review process is also in place for supervisors to oversee front line staffs work. As part of the file review, Supervisors refer to the Get Trained Workers Database to confirm a client's level of employability. They then compare this information to the activities noted on the client's outcome plan in SAMS. If the activities are not compatible with the level of employability, follow up occurs to ensure that the Case Manager is providing all of the appropriate supports to the client to be successful on their employment pathways.

In addition to the monitoring activities noted above, the following list provides examples of other strategies utilized by Social Services to determine progress towards the achievement of outcome targets.

- Get Trained Workers Employment Database data related to the number of participants matched to employment and/or changes in job readiness
- Number of referrals to internal workshops and training
- Number of referrals to external workshops and training (literacy, life skills, EO program etc.)
- Number of community placement sponsors and participants
- Number of employment placements
- Number of participants exiting to post-secondary education
- Amount of employment placement incentives approved
- Amount of community placement client incentives approved
- Number of students graduating from secondary or post-secondary education
- Quarterly reports from third party service providers with purchase of service agreements

4.0 PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

4.1 SERVICE DELIVERY

Continuous improvement and the delivery of quality customer service have always been program goals for Social Services. Over the years, aside from provincially legislated changes, Social Services has gone through various transformations to improve its service delivery model. While many of the changes were successful, several were not. However, regardless of the outcome there were always lessons to be learned from these experiences. One of the most recent examples of a change that did not reap the intended results is:

- Division of the caseload composition by employment service category by Case Manager (life stabilization, preparing for employment and job ready). This change was made following the implementation of the Get Trained Workers Employment database. It was recognized when moving to this model that this component of the plan may not prove to be effective due to concerns related to balancing caseload numbers and the on-boarding of new applicants. Our prediction became evident early on as caseloads quickly became unbalanced resulting in files having to be transferred between Case Managers. Transferring files in an Ontario Works environment is not considered a quality practice as it impacts building relationships between a client and their Case Manager. Further, this model did not work well on files where the applicant may have been job ready but the spouse was struggling with barriers and was therefore part of the life stabilization group. All other components of separating the caseload by employment service category remain in effect. It is only the Case Manager component of the plan that was discontinued.

Table 12 below highlights key program management activities and approaches that:

- Support achievement of outcome targets
- Address any delivery issues identified in the environmental scan; and,
- Respond to, and address, Ministry priorities.

Activity	Status	Rationale Table 13
Elimination of Intake model in its current form and return to previous application model.	Implementation targeted for July 2019	<p>In 2016, the Intake Screener position was eliminated and replaced with Intake Case Managers. These new positions were created as equals to regular Case Managers with the added function of intake screening. Where Intake Screeners were unable to determine eligibility, Intake Case Managers have been able to make these decisions, issue benefits, determine levels of employability in accordance to defined employment service categories all at the time of grant. Following grant, the file was transferred to an “on-going” Case Manager.</p> <p>This change corrected the limitation that the previous Intake Screener positions had with respect to determining eligibility. However, there was a remaining “flaw” inherent in this model. Applicants continued to have to tell their stories twice in order to develop a relationship with their newly assigned Case Manager. Therefore, once again, a review was completed of this service delivery model in late 2018, early 2019. The result of which was to return to a model utilized 20 years ago when Case Managers completed the full application, granted the file and carried the case. In order to implement this change, a working group composed of management and Case Managers was formed to identify the steps that will be required to seamlessly implement this change. Implementation date targeted for the third quarter of 2019.</p>
Possible introduction of Program Integrity Unit	Potential implementation targeted for Fall 2019	<p>One of MCCSS’s four pillars is rooted in the importance of program integrity, oversight and accountability. While Social Services already prioritizes these program areas, it is felt that a more structured approach may be beneficial. This change would be made utilizing existing resources. The composition of this unit, if implemented would be 2 EVP Case Managers, a combined FSW/Program Integrity position (title to be determined), 1 Staff Trainer and 1 OW Supervisor. At this point, no final decisions have been made with respect to how functions will change or be organized.</p>

Reduction of one Integrated Services Trainer to be re-profiled to a Transitional Support Case Manager	Complete	In an effort to target resources to the program areas feeling the most pressure, in early 2019, one Integrated Services Trainer was eliminated and re-profiled into a Transitional Support Case Manager. This position was initially targeted for the West Nipissing (Sturgeon Falls) office due to the high numbers of individuals on the caseload struggling with mental health and addiction. However, due to the recent Ministry announcement, regarding funding, this position was not deployed to Sturgeon Falls and remains at risk of being eliminated.
Increased focus on job retention strategies.	On-Going	Recidivism continues to be a challenge for service providers. While all outcomes are beneficial, long term sustainable outcomes are the goal. For this reason, Social Services built this function into the job description of the OW Employment Marketing Specialist. Retention services are also built into the Get Trained Workers Coordinator job description through a Purchase of Service Agreement.
Marketing Strategies	On-Going	In order to ensure that Employers are aware of the services available through the Ontario Works Program marketing is required. Various mediums have been used from pamphlets to billboards over the years. These efforts will continue providing there is funding to support it.
Enhanced Staff training and Professional Development	On-Going	Ensuring that front line staff have the tools required to deliver quality, client centered employment services that are targeted to meet the individual needs of clients is essential to the achievement of outcomes. During the previous cycle, the following are examples of the training provided to staff, in addition to their own professional development activities: strategic resumes for Client Challenges, motivational interviewing, discrimination in mental health, compassion fatigue, CMHA Bounce Back and Access, de-escalation and human trafficking.
Continued partnerships with post-secondary institutions for short and long term programs	On-going	Post-secondary education is increasingly becoming important for participants to connect with the labour market and achieve self-sufficiency through sustainable employment. For this reason, Social Services will continue to collaborate with this sector on innovative solutions to alleviate poverty.

Continue to focus on employability at the first point of contact.	On-Going	Determining a client's level of employability earlier in the process can often expedite the ability for service providers to engage clients in employment related activities. If successful, this change in time should have a positive impact on outcomes and length of time on assistance data.
Continue to engage and participate in activities with the health care sector	On-Going	Social Services will continue to take every opportunity to make the necessary linkages with the healthcare sector to promote collaborative planning on common issues. Holistic services that meet the complete needs of participants are the key to creating healthy communities. This relationship between poverty, health and wellbeing is empirically well known. Efforts to address one without considering the other are simply destined to fail resulting in poor outcomes for clients, Band-Aid solutions and an increased strain on the tax payer
Continue to participate on the Northern Regional Planning Table (NRPT)	On-Going	Provincial/Municipal community placement tables were launched in June 2000 in partnership with the Ontario Works Branch and OMSSA. Since that time, this table evolved into the Northeast Regional Planning Table and then to the Northern Regional Planning Table. DNSSAB Social Services has hosted these meetings for many years. At the recent NOSDA conference, there appears to be an appetite to transform this table once again into something a bit broader where several MCCSS Program Supervisors participate across the North. In the interim, Social Services will continue to host the NRPT as this table has proven to be an excellent vehicle to share best practices, good news stories and discuss program issues.
Public Education	On-Going	Enhance opportunities to educate the public to increase awareness of the Ontario Works Program and decrease stigma. Over time these efforts should assist with re-profiling the Ontario Works program as an employment program with a skilled labour force versus a "welfare" program plagued by stereotypes and misconceptions. This strategy would need to be modified to meet the new service delivery model when employment is transitioned over to EO programs.
Job Fairs/Get Job Ready Events		These collaborative events have been a successful strategy for Social Services to connect job seekers to employment. These events are held every year, are very well attended and reap positive results. Positive feedback from Employers is

		always received with many interviews being conducted on site at these events.
Continued Advocacy Efforts on Various Social Assistance Issues		Continued advocacy will be an important strategy moving forward as the province continues with its social reform agenda. It will be imperative that Administrators of social assistance programming be active participants in the change process and not bystanders. This will help to ensure that the voices of those living on Ontario Works assistance are heard so that informed decisions are made.

4.2 ANALYSIS OF RESOURCES AND BUSINESS CASE

On January 30, 2019 the District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board approved the DNSSAB Ontario Works 2019 budget. The Ontario Works program delivery budget was approved for a total of \$8,428,301 inclusive of the municipal share. However, on April 16, 2019, DSSAB’s and CMSM’s were notified that regardless of what was approved through local budget processes, MCCSS would only be approving actual 2018 expenditures. This significant and retroactive change has resulted in widespread concern across the Province for DSSAB’s and CMSMs who for a variety of reasons found themselves to be under spent by year-end 2018.

In Nipissing total actual expenditures for 2018 were \$7,330,337. As noted above, the 2019 approved budget was \$8,428,301 for a difference of \$1,097,964. In addition, the 100% allocation for 2019 was also reduced from \$2,155,900 to \$2,074,900 resulting in a shortfall of \$81,000. For this reason various efforts are underway both at the program and corporate levels to reduce spending wherever possible. A hold on backfilling non-essential positions and freezing hiring was implemented immediately DNSSAB wide.

As you will see below, this has placed Social Services at a significant disadvantage to fully implement targeted strategies related to mental health and addiction. This funding reduction has put an added strain on an already overburdened department to deliver services and achieve outcomes. The other significant concern related to this potential reduction in funding relates to the timing of this Ministry announcement. As CMSM’s and DSSAB’s will not know whether or not their rationale to go beyond 2018 actuals is approved by the Ministry until July/August, it is unclear whether there will be time to absorb this shortfall. As mentioned in the preamble, it is extremely unfortunate that the recent reconsideration granted to other sectors, namely Children’s Services and EMS, was not extended to Ontario Works programs who also serve one of the most vulnerable populations in Ontario.

The following information attempts to summarize DNSSAB Social Services rationale for why 2018 actuals will not be sufficient to support the delivery of the Ontario Works program in 2019, inclusive of the strategies detailed in this Plan:

4.2.1 Service Delivery Enhancement - Transitional Support Case Managers (TSCM)

Part of the approved 2019 budget included a renewed investment into the expansion of Social Services newest service delivery model change to implement a targeted response for clients struggling with mental health and

addiction barriers. Two additional positions were approved plus the re-profiling of an existing Integrated Services Trainer into a TSCM. The intention of these changes was to bring the overall compliment of TSCM’s up to six.

The TSCM position was developed to better meet the needs of clients with significant mental health and/or addiction issues. While TSCM’s manage an active Ontario Works caseload they are also required to have education and experience directly related to mental health and addictions. They carry a reduced caseload so that they are able to meet more frequently with clients, participate in more case conferences and remain connected to community supports and services. The figure below illustrates the outcomes measures that have been established to measure the effectiveness of the position.

Figure 22



Individuals and families dealing with mental health and addiction issues are vulnerable. With the proper supports and services in place, it is our hope that we can help them create stability in their lives and move forward along the employment continuum.

As noted above, due to the Ministry announcement, the three additional positions were not filled and remain vacant with the existing three positions now also being at risk of elimination. This is extremely unfortunate in light of the fact that nearly half of the caseload has self-declared mental health and addiction issues as the main barrier to their employment. The table below reveals the barriers self-declared by clients during their employability assessments.

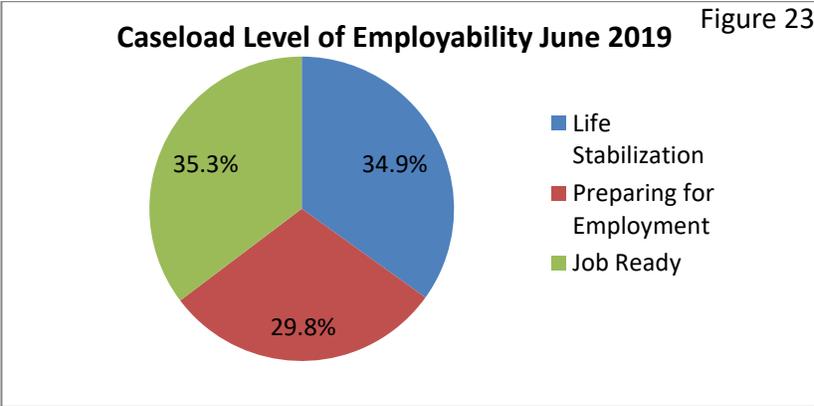
Table 14	Barriers	% Self-Declared
	Mental Health impacting ability to connect to the labour market	34%
	Addiction impacting ability to connect to the labour market	13%
	Mental Health and Addiction impacting ability to connect to the Labour Market (concurrent disorders)	9%
	Physical Health is impacting ability to connect with the labour market	29%
	Transportation is impacting ability to connect to the labour market	43%
	Housing/Homelessness is impacting ability to connect to the labour market	16%
	Client does not have a family Doctor	21%
	Has criminal record	30%

As you can see, the number of clients self-reporting significant barriers to employment in the District of Nipissing is high and we know that there are many others struggling to overcome these challenges who did not disclose this information. These challenges require targeted approaches within case management, such as the TSCM service enhancement. Approaches like these will not be possible if staffing levels and/or innovative employment initiatives decrease due to funding restraints.

4.2.2 Employability of the Caseload

As noted earlier in the plan, and as DNSSAB now has access to information through the employment database that is not collected provincially, it has a much better understanding of who is on the caseload. In fact, had the province had access to this kind of information province wide when the Auditor General concluded that Ontario Works programs were ineffective in employment service delivery, their observations may have been different. It is simply ineffective to benchmark the achievement of targets against the entire caseload when we know many clients are distanced from the labour market due to complex barriers.

The following figure appeared earlier in the description of the caseload section but is presented again to illustrate how Nipissing’s caseload breaks down by level of employability:



As you can see, clients presenting with significant barriers is almost equal to those presenting as job ready. The remaining group represents those falling somewhere in the middle along this continuum. This information is being presented as part of Nipissing’s rationale for access to funding beyond 2018 actuals, as targeted approaches to assist clients falling in the life stabilization category requires a greater investment in resources. This population most often presents with higher needs related to housing instability, mental health and addiction etc. **It is also important to note that the Nipissing District continues to have over twice the number of people on ODSP per capita, than the province.**¹⁴ **This statistic is relevant to this business case due to the fact that many recipients of ODSP transitioned from the Ontario Works program, with many more individuals remaining in receipt of Ontario Works that are in fact disabled and on the wrong program.**

¹⁴ Social Assistance Extranet, ODSP Social Assistance Operational Performance Report

4.2.3 Recruitment Challenges

DNSSAB experienced significant challenges in what is believed to have been an anomaly year in relation to the recruitment for multiple positions in 2018. Due to the mandatory posting periods according to the Collective Agreement, this resulted in longer term vacancies. The table below illustrates the number of times various positions were posted and re-posted with no results. Recruitment for bilingual positions proved particularly challenging, despite significant recruitment efforts, including posting in French and English, on-line, in print, and through social media. Unplanned sick leaves also exacerbated the staffing challenges experienced in 2018 as positions were often left vacant pending the receipt of medical information. Most of these sick leaves ultimately became longer term unexpected leaves.

Position	Duration	Times Posted
Case Manager Transitional Support Bilingual	Permanent	5
Case Manager Transitional Support Unilingual	Temporary	5
Case Manager Mattawa Bilingual	Temporary	2
Case Manager Mattawa Unilingual	Temporary	4
Client Support Worker Sturgeon Falls	Part Time/Temp	4
Client Support Worker Sturgeon Falls	Permanent	1
Ontario Works Case Manager	Relief	3
Client Support Worker	Relief	2
Reception	Temporary	2

4.2.4 Access to Matched Funding

Due to the absence of matched municipal funding, DNSSAB has historically not been able to leverage the available provincial funding to invest what is needed into program delivery and employment. The table below illustrates the amount that DNSSAB left on the table for 2018. Despite this fiscal reality, up to now, year over year, DNSSAB's Social Services has exceeded its targeted employment outcomes. In fact, during the 2017/2018 planning cycle, DNSSAB achieved its targets in the first year. This is testament to the hard work and commitment of the Ontario Works team to do more with less. While this may appear to be a good news story, mandating the use of 2018 actuals has placed DNSSAB at a significant disadvantage to implement targeted strategies related to mental health and addiction barriers. As DNSSAB's municipal investment is already well below other regions, this Ministry decision is putting DNSSAB even farther behind on its ability to maximize and leverage provincial funding envelopes.

While the level of municipal matched dollars is not the responsibility of the province, the inequities that it creates between regions is substantial. These inequities result in regional differences in programs and services. It also has the potential to create inconsistency in service delivery models when the economic conditions of individual regions vary so greatly. It is DNSSAB's position that all social assistance recipients should have access to the same quality and range of services regardless of where they reside.

NOSDA Members	Gross MCCSS Planning Allocation	2018 Board Approved OW Budget	50/50 Funding not Utilized	% of 50/50 funding not Utilized
Algoma DSAB	3,543,000	3,671,034	(128,034)	0.0%
Cochrane DSSAB	6,029,700	6,045,276	(15,576)	0.0%
Greater Sudbury	14,670,600	12,208,969	2,461,631	16.8%
Kenora District Services Board	2,913,600	2,899,325	14,275	0.5%
Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board	2,323,700	2,279,000	44,700	1.9%
Nipissing DSSAB	10,742,400	8,202,696	2,539,704	23.6%
Parry Sound DSSAB	3,733,500	3,733,500	-	0.0%
Rainy River	1,181,100	977,883	203,217	17.2%
The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board	13,646,800	11,307,000	2,339,800	17.1%
Sault Ste Marie	9,080,800	7,663,155	1,417,645	15.6%
Timiskaming DSSAB	2,890,400	2,872,000	18,400	0.6%

4.2.5 Caseload to Full Time Equivalent (FTE)

In a report compiled by the Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association (NOSDA) in 2014, a comparison of 9 northern DSSAB's on caseload to full time equivalent (FTE) was completed. As you can see in the table below, in 2014, the results of this comparison revealed that DNSSAB had the highest caseload to FTE's in the North. While it is acknowledged that this data is obviously not current and does not reflect service delivery model differences, it does validate that any reduction in program delivery funding will have a significant impact on operations. Further, as explained above, due to the amount of funding that DNSSAB leaves on the table year over year, it is clear that its investment into staffing levels are lower than other regions who have access to higher levels of matched municipal dollars.

DNSSAB is deeply concerned that the Ministry's decision to only allow 2018 actuals will result in deeper staff reductions beyond the transitional support positions mentioned earlier in this section. As these positions are targeting clients struggling with mental health and addiction issues it seems counter-productive to reduce staffing with such a high needs caseload. A request through DNSSAB's MCCSS Program Supervisor was made for more current information on caseload size to FTE count prior to the submission of this report. Unfortunately, this information was not available to complete further analysis.

Table 17	Manitoulin				Nipissing	Parry		Sault	Thunder	
	Cochrane	Kenora	Sudbury	Sound		Rainy River	St. Marie	Bay	Timiskaming	
Operating per capita	202	127	170	287	268	143	311	212	231	
Levy per capita	38	34	37	54	58	29	60	43	55	
OW cases as % of pop	1.6%	1.0%	1.4%	2.8%	1.9%	1.3%	2.5%	1.9%	1.7%	
Operating/case	12,250	12,285	12,082	10,203	13,879	11,131	12,339	11,319	13,465	
Cases per FTE	23.4	27.3	26.4	37.2	17.7	30.1	35.2	25.7	24.3	
EA per case	832	956	801	745	772	737	1097	949	1057	
Municipal \$/EA case	95	134	91	85	88	85	281	106	120	

Source: NOSDA 2014

The figure below represents the current Social Services organization chart. Social Services currently has a total of 59 FTE's (7 management, 52 unionized). With the exception of the Supervisor of Employment and Client Outcomes, the supervisor to staff ratio is about 11:1. As of June 2019, our average caseload size per "regular" Case Manager District wide was about 110. Case Managers carrying specialized functions such as transitional support, funerals, temporary care and self-employment have reduced caseloads ranging from 75-100.

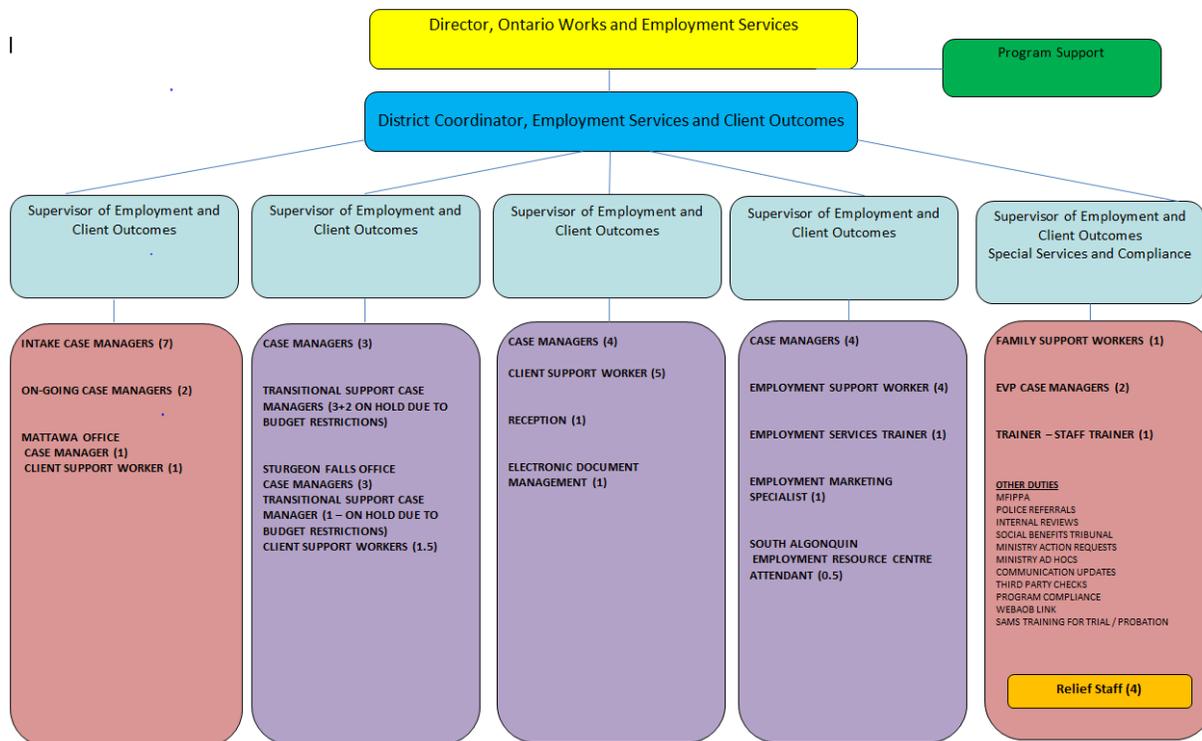


Figure 24

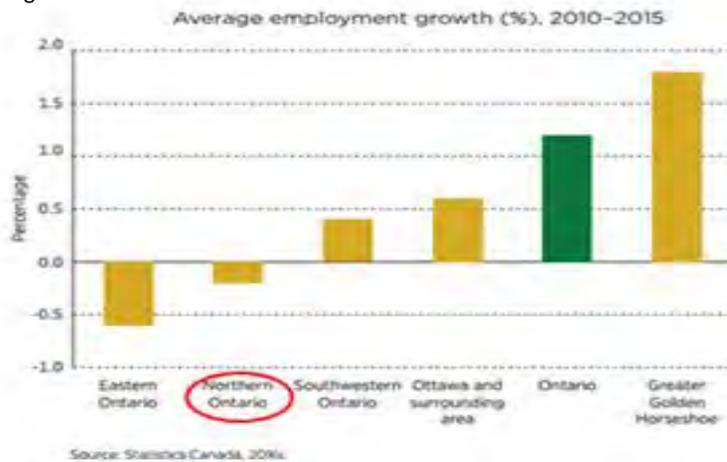
4.2.6 Northern Factors

Northern factors also impact DSSABS with respect to labour force participation, employment growth, transportation barriers and access to supports and services. The chart below illustrates how the North compares in the areas of average employment growth. As you can see there has been almost no employment growth at all in Ontario outside of the Greater Golden Horseshoe area during the province's "recovery" from the 2009 recession. Labour force participation rates are also substantially lower than the provincial average. These variables contribute to why

DNSSAB needs every dollar available to support program delivery and employment. Clients residing in the North in under serviced areas face these additional systemic barriers that can often prevent them from moving forward along the employment continuum as quickly their counterparts who reside in regions with greater access to supports and services.

LABOUR MARKET PERFORMANCE SINCE 2009 POST-RECESSION (NORTHERN ONTARIO)

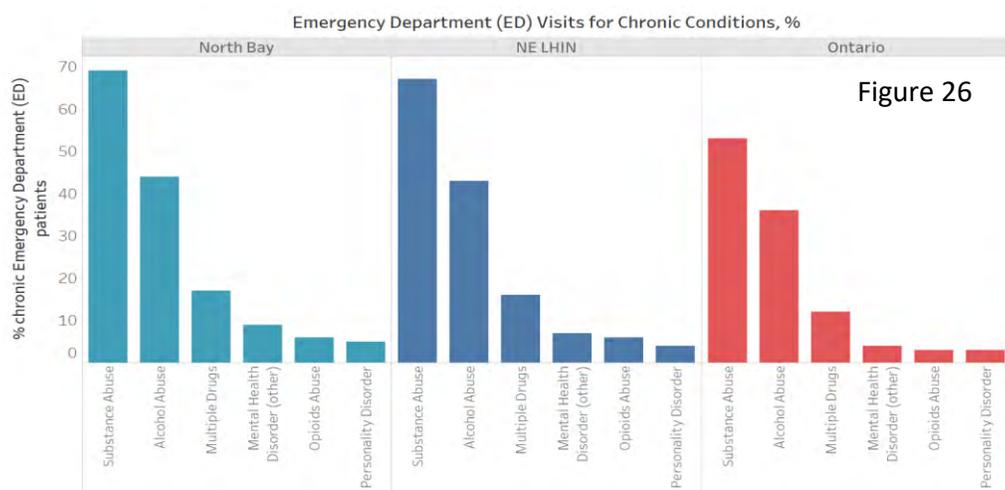
Figure 25



The North is also at a significant disadvantage when it comes to the level of access to programs and services that assist social assistance recipients with addressing barriers such as mental health and addiction. According to data obtained from the Northeast Local Health Integration Network it is clear that there is a significant inequity for citizens needing to access mental health and addictions services in the District of Nipissing.¹⁵ This places increased pressure on the DNSSAB’s Social Services to ensure that these individuals do not fall through the cracks of what is clearly an overburdened service system network that cannot meet the demand. This directly relates to why DNSSAB created Transitional Support Case Manager positions that are required to have education and experience targeted directly to mental health and addiction. As these positions are now in jeopardy, DNSSAB is concerned over what the implications of this will be on the Ontario Works caseload over time.

The charts below illustrate this systemic issue in the District of Nipissing with respect to wait times and emergency room usage for mental health and addiction related illnesses. Figure 25 below shows that emergency rooms in the District are trying to fill gaps left by the system. As shown, the percentage of Emergency Department (ED) visits for chronic conditions (which include mental health and substance/ alcohol abuse) are significantly higher in North Bay and the North East LHIN, than in Ontario. For example, ED visits for alcohol and substance abuse in North Bay are 20% and 30% higher respectively, than in Ontario, while multiple drug abuse is 42.0% higher. Meanwhile, ED admittance for opioid abuse in the city is twice that of the province (6.0% vs. 3.0%). On average, the odds of being admitted to the ED for a chronic personality disorder are about 1.5 times greater in North Bay than in the province, and for other mental health disorders these odds increase to over two times that of the province.

¹⁵ <https://www.nugget.ca/news/local-news/need-mental-health-and-addictions-services-be-prepared-to-wait-dnssab>



The table below breaks this information down further for North Bay, Mattawa and West Nipissing. As you can see, repeat unscheduled emergency room visits within 30 days has increased from 20.1% for the District in 2012/13 to 27.4% in 2016/17.

Repeat Unscheduled ER visits within 30 days for Mental Health and Substance Abuse 2012-2017

Table 18

Indicator/Area	Fiscal Year				
	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Mental Health % ED revisits					
Nipissing	15.5 %	14.7 %	12.9 %	16.6 %	20.3 %
Mattawa	15.6 %	23.7 %	10.9 %	17.9 %	30.2 %
North Bay	15.9 %	13.9 %	13.0 %	16.5 %	19.1 %
West Nipissing / Nipissing Ouest	14.5 %	14.4 %	13.3 %	16.4 %	20.6 %
Substance Abuse % ED revisits					
Nipissing	20.1 %	18.9 %	24.8 %	28.9 %	27.4 %
Mattawa					
North Bay	21.4 %	21.6 %	27.5 %	30.7 %	30.5 %
West Nipissing / Nipissing Ouest			14.1 %	25.3 %	12.8 %

Data source: National Ambulatory Care Reporting System (NACRS), Ministry of Health and Long-term Care IntelliHEALTH, accessed 26/10/2017

The table on the following page illustrates wait times in days for mental health and substance abuse and problem gambling programs in the Northeast region compared to the province of Ontario. As you can see, wait times in the District of Nipissing are significantly higher in several key areas. This information is relevant to this business case as DNSSAB Social Services has no control over the level of access a client has to mental health and addiction support services, beyond the advocacy level. This information is not intended to criticize our community partners as Social Services recognizes their commitment and dedication to serving as many people impacted by these barriers as

possible through the resources they have. It is simply intended to highlight how difficult it is in this environment to help clients with mental health and addiction issues to move forward. As mentioned previously, this population requires intensive supports especially during the period that they are not connected to mental health and addiction services. Therefore, funding reductions that will impact staffing levels will reduce the ability of Social Services to meet the needs of these recipients. Even for those who manage to connect to services, receive a diagnoses and are deemed disabled, are left waiting for much longer periods if denied ODSP, due to the lack of adjudicators in the North to hear their appeals.

Table 19

Wait Time (in days) for Mental Health Substance Abuse and Problem Gambling Programs

ConnexOntario Health Services Information, report provided July 2018

Wait time (median and range, in days) for mental health programs by area of service and for fiscal quarter, 2018/19 Q1

Estimated wait times in days	Ontario	North East	Algoma	Cochrane	Sudbury	Manitoulin	Parry Sound	Nipissing	Timiskaming	Range within districts
Community Mental Health Services										
Abuse Service	16	7	7	15		7	0	30	5	0 - 30
Assertive Community Treatment Team	20	10	90	444	10		0	30	7	0 - 444
Case Management/Supportive Counselling and Services	28	8	10	7	0	21	39	7	14	0 - 39
Centralized/Coordination Access	10	0			0					
Counselling and Treatment	48	10	0	7	15	30	28	9	1	0 - 30
Day/Night Care Mental Health	46									0 - 0
Diversion and Court Support	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	90	0 - 90
Early Intervention	6	6	0	7	0		6	3	0	0 - 7
Support Within Housing	172	14	0	14	75			30	31	0 - 75
Vocational / Employment	14	1		1						1 - 1
Substance Abuse Services										
Addictions Treatment	14	10	7	11	7	7	0	30	4	0 - 30
Case Management	20	10	10	11	22	5	0			0 - 22
Case Management/Supportive Counselling & Services - Addictions Supportive Housing	60	16	10	25	90		0	365		0 - 365
Day/Evening Care - Addictions	16	8		8	17			7		7 - 17
Residential Supportive Treatment - Addictions	30	7	2	2	34			270		2 - 270
Residential Treatment - Addictions	90	26	27	8	140			7		7 - 140
Withdrawal Management	2	0								0 - 0
Problem Gambling Services										
Addictions Treatment - Problem Gambling	16	11	14	11	12	8	11	8	0	0 - 14

Note: Highlighted values are maximum median wait times among the districts in the North East LHIN

Sample

Data Source:

ConnexOntario Health Services Information, reported provided July 2018

As part of the transfer payment agreement with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC), all organizations that receive ministry funding to provide mental health and addictions services must enter into an agreement with ConnexOntario Health Service Information for the provision of information to the Drug & Alcohol Helpline (DAH), Ontario Problem Gambling Helpline (OPGH) and Mental Health Helpline (MHH) registries, including regular reporting of the availability of service. Programs funded through hospital global budgets are not currently required to report availability information.

Availability or "wait time", as reported to ConnexOntario, refers to an estimated date of the next available treatment slot, where treatment slot refers to the next available bed, appointment date, and/or caseload opening, depending on the type of service. Note that the wait time information includes programs where there was no wait for service (0 days). Programs with blank values indicate that the service is not provided within the area.

The reports include the median (50th percentile) and range in the wait times for service during the fiscal quarter by the area where the service is located.

Limitations:

Organizations are to report availability information regularly to ConnexOntario. However, some organizations may not provide updated information when scheduled. The reported information reflects the expected wait for service, which may differ from the actual wait time.

As noted, the wait time reflect the time to the next available treatment slot and is reported by the agency providing the service, which may differ from the wait time experienced by service recipients. The wait time values may be based on a small number of programs and data points.

The categories of service located within a functional centre can differ, which complicates the comparison of wait times. Note that services may provide service to residents of other areas.

4.2.7 Collective Bargaining

DNSSAB ratified its latest collective agreement with CUPE on September 11, 2018. While DNSSAB was expecting and preparing for a funding reduction as mentioned earlier in this section, it was not prepared for the depth of the reduction. In fact, through the province's decision to limit DSSAB's and CMSM's to 2018 actuals, an uneven playing field has been created as many regions were not underspent in 2018. Through the bargaining process, a 1.5% increase was approved by the Board. This increase combined with staff movement within the established scaled pay grid has resulted in an overall increase in staffing costs of approximately 3% for 2019. Therefore, to expect administrators to absorb this cost retroactively without impacting program delivery and employment services is simply not realistic, and will significantly impact operations resulting in lay-offs, a decrease in employment initiatives and ultimately negatively impact outcomes. If the Ministry doesn't fund inflationary costs such as collective bargaining increases, this will lead to a perpetual decrease in staffing levels in order to keep costs the same as the previous year. Perpetual decreases are clearly unsustainable as the DNSSAB would eventually end up with too few staff to provide the required frontline services.

4.2.8 Accountability Pillar

One of the Ministry's four pillars is to strengthen program accountability. As explained earlier, DNSSAB Social Services takes the oversight and accountability of its work very seriously. Social Services have developed various mechanisms to ensure program integrity and invests significant resources into these processes. This is important to DNSSAB's rationale for additional funding as utilizing 2018 actuals will result in a reduction in staffing. Reductions in staffing serve to place additional pressure on the team as a whole. Third party checks, EVP, 2 year reviews, supervisor file audits, document management, fraud allegations, overpayments and MFIPPA requests are all examples of time consuming processes where adequate resources are required to carry out these functions effectively.

4.2.9 Inflation

Inflationary pressures in regards to collective bargaining were mentioned above; however, the DNSSAB faces inflation pressures for all its costs (materials and supplies, rent, contracted services, utilities, etc.). Again, if the Ministry does not fund these inflationary cost increases, this will lead to an unsustainable perpetual decrease to services. Essentially maintaining costs at previous year's actuals is simply not realistic.

4.2.10 SAMS

SAMS training also continues to place an increased financial pressure on CMSM's and DSSAB's in that learning SAMS takes more time than it took to learn SDMT. This additional time to work through the SAMS training modules combined with job shadowing, training on provincial directives and local policies places a significant financial strain on the program delivery budget. This investment into the onboarding of staff is substantial and it is becoming increasingly difficult to contain costs in this area. This is important to DNSSAB's rationale as staff training has been an important component of DNSSAB's oversight and accountability framework for many years. While there are no real Ministry standards per se related to how much training is provided to staff, DNSSAB has always made quality training a priority. Reduced funding could result in reducing training for staff which can lead to more errors, poor customer service and potentially greater risks for the organization.

Staff also continues to report that it simply takes longer to complete transactions in SAMS than it did in SDMT. While this has improved significantly since SAMS was launched, this fact remains a reality. Staff continues to spend unreasonable amounts of time focusing on administrative tasks, interpreting and applying a myriad of rules and navigating a complicated software solution. In order to maximize outcomes, intensive interventions that require Case Managers to spend more time with their clients and less time on administrative tasks is required. Much has been said over the years about the desire to simplify the program in order to reduce the administrative burden so that more time can be spent working one-to-one with clients. To date, there has been little to no movement in this area. DNSSAB is optimistic that the Ministry continues to have this on their immediate radar – however, until these promises are realized, Ontario Works programs will continue to be burdened by low value work at the expense of the work that really matters.

4.2.11 Outcomes

The Ministry’s decision to prescribe a mandatory three percent (3%) increase in employment targets is already proving to be unachievable for many DSSAB’s and CMSM’s who were already achieving significantly higher outcomes than the provincial average.

Over the years, DNSSAB Social Services has been very effective at achieving its employment targets. In fact, based on a review of the data, it appears to stand out from the crowd in this area. As illustrated in the Figure below, Nipissing DSSAB achieved a 6.54% reduction in the caseload during the previous planning cycle. This achievement clearly stands out in comparison to other DSSAB’s and CMSM’s in the north during this period. Once again, as with the review of the mental health and addiction sector above, this data is not being presented to diminish the achievements of our OW partners in the North. All DSSAB’s have their own unique challenges that impact outcomes and caseload size. This information is simply being presented to highlight the challenge that Nipissing may have to improve upon their current outcomes.

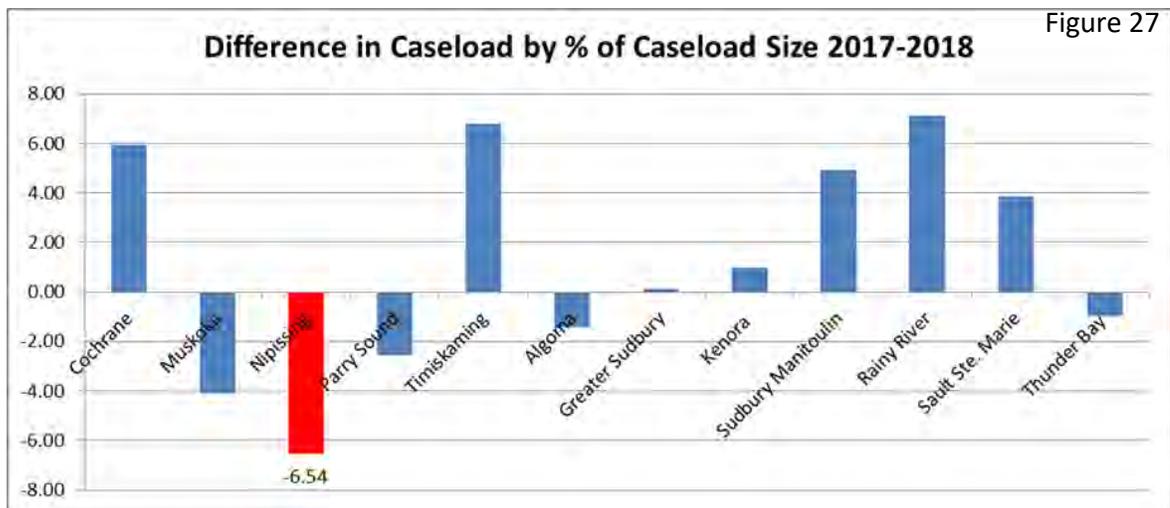
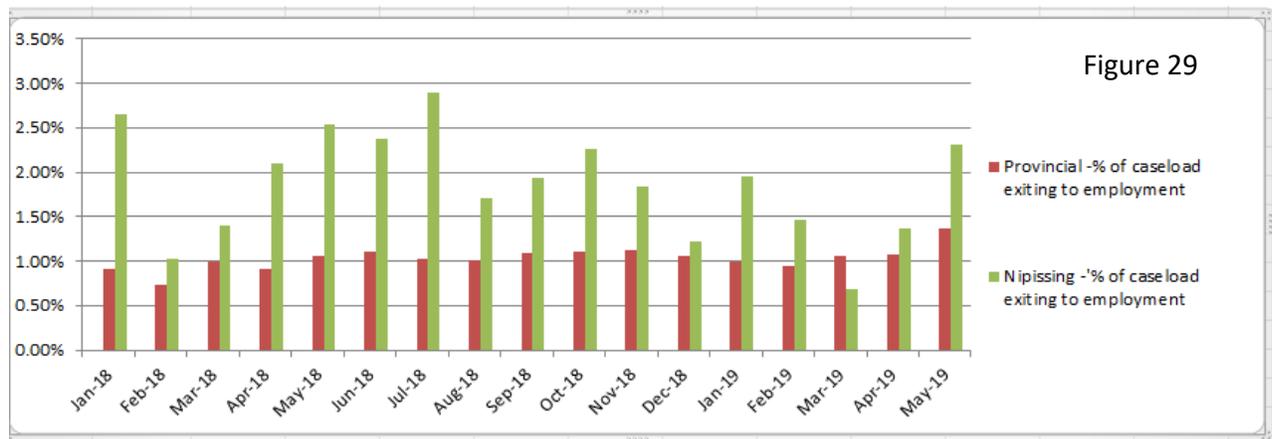
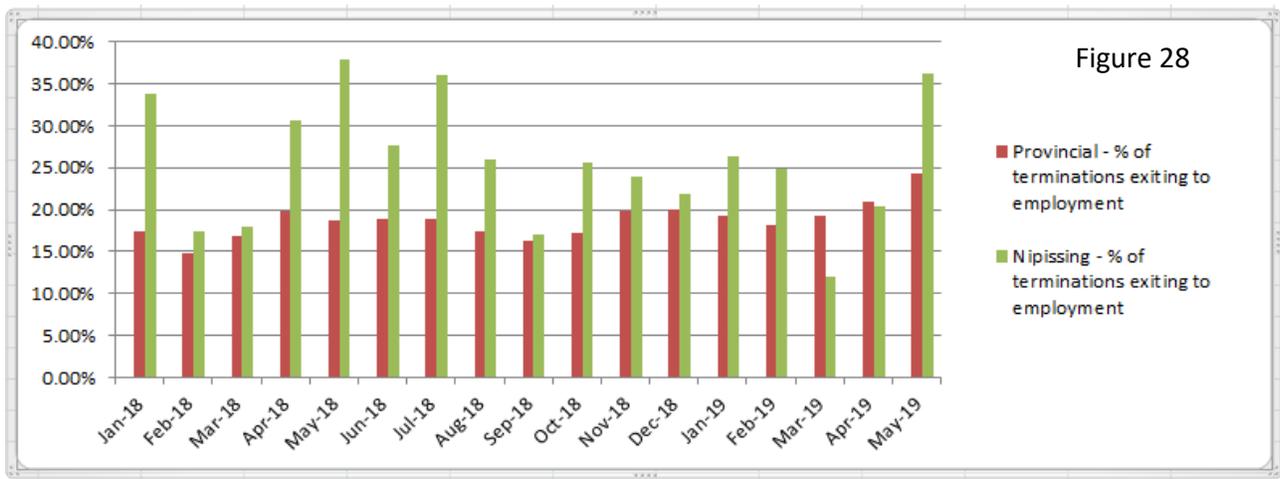


Figure 27

The following two figures illustrate DNSSAB Social Services achievements in the area of terminations to employment in comparison to the Provincial average. As you can see, DNSSAB’s outcomes are well above the

average. This data illustrates that DNSSAB has been effectively moving job ready individuals into employment with Nipissing’s achievements remaining significantly above the provincial average. As described above, DNSSAB has a very high population of clients with multi-barriers that are distanced from the labour market. This situation is not expected to improve in light of the recent Ministry announcement related to the upcoming change to align the ODSP eligibility criteria with the criteria for Canada Pension Plan – Disability benefits. It is believed by many working in the OW sector along with partners working within the legal clinic sector that this change may result in fewer people qualifying for ODSP resulting in an increased OW caseload. If the OW caseload does rise as a result of this change, it will be of great concern to member municipalities who may see this decision as a download on the municipal taxpayer.



It is DNSSAB’s belief that through the Ministry’s decision to mandate a 3% increase in targets, it was attempting to bring lower performing DSSAB’s and CMSM’s up to a higher level of achievement. The problem is that this decision has the potential to negatively impact the regions that were exceeding provincial averages, DNSSAB being one of these regions in the area of terminations to employment. Imposing a blanket percentage increase across regions with different caseload demographics and labour market conditions may not prove to be an effective strategy. For this reason, in section 3.2, DNSSAB has

requested to lower its targets on the employment outcome measures due to its overall performance in comparison with the province in figures 28 and 29 above.

Based on preliminary conversations with various colleagues in the field several are planning to budget for the potential clawback in 2020 due to concerns over whether or not they will be able to reach this higher bar. As it is a two year cycle, the impact of this potential clawback would not be until the end of 2020. Administrators cannot wait until the end of the cycle to recover 15% of their upload funding. For Nipissing, 15% of the upload funding represents \$311,235 which is significant to overall program delivery and employment services.

4.2.12 Ministry Messaging

During various meetings with Richard Steele and other Ministry officials, DNSSAB's Chief Administrative Officer along with the leadership from other CMSM's and DSSAB's were advised that expenditures in 2018 should be monitored carefully as reductions were anticipated. For this reason, Nipissing DSSAB and other CMSM's contained costs wherever possible in order to prepare for this period of fiscal restraint. These efforts are now seen as having been counterproductive as underspends have now resulted in an even more restrictive fiscal reality for 2019. Had this information been known at the time, a very different approach would have been taken. For this reason, DNSSAB now feels penalized for what was believed to have been a pro-active approach to fiscal responsibility and Ministry direction.

4.2.13 Other Factors

The risk associated with the administration of OW financial benefits is that there is no upside limit to the potential costs. Now that the upload is complete most of this financial pressure on municipalities has been alleviated. However, program delivery and employment costs continue to have financial implications for municipalities who are struggling with a stagnant or declining tax base. As caseloads fluctuate in response to variables that service providers often have very little control over, predicting resource needs can often be difficult. The fact that the current funding model continues to be driven by the achievement of employment and earnings outcomes can also be problematic, as the work involved with serving clients with multiple and often complex barriers who are distanced from the labour market is not the activities that drive the employment funding envelope.

The impact of the cost sharing cap on discretionary benefits also remains an area of concern for Administrators. While it is understood that in this fiscal environment, financial controls are needed when expenditures appear to be climbing and budgets are declining. However, it remains unclear if this was the best approach to take to ensure that these costs were contained. It is also unclear what the impact will be if services and/or benefits are reduced in order to remain within the cap as a reduction in the supports available to clients can create cost pressures in other areas. To date, Social Services has managed to maintain service levels and control discretionary expenditures effectively. However, this may or may not be sustainable depending on the future needs of the caseload.

Ultimately, in order to manage in this environment, every opportunity to optimize resources, allocate and align policies and funding to the needs of our clients while minimizing administrative costs wherever possible is critical. Full utilization of available funding to support clients continues to be the goal for Social Services. However, full utilization is not always possible when access to funding is only available when dollars are matched by an already strained municipal levy. Despite this, the DNSSAB Board was very generous during the previous cycle in supporting various initiatives in order to maximize cost sharing opportunities. Unfortunately, despite their continued support in 2019, their renewed financial commitment to increase actual expenditures in 2018 to support the vulnerable citizens in the District is now dependent upon the Ministry supporting DNSSAB Social Services business case.

While DNSSAB is optimistic that the Ministry will support this business case, Social Services will continue to do what it does best by delivering quality services that seek to empower individuals and families facing challenges that may seem insurmountable. Social Services will also continue to optimize every opportunity to find efficiencies, leverage community partnerships, share resources whenever possible and seize opportunities to apply for various grants through sole and joint procurement in order to explore innovative ideas to poverty reduction.

Finally, it is important to note that DNSSAB's Corporate Services also plays an important role in Ontario Works program management. This includes work such as the financial and administrative support from Finance & Administration, and employee development and talent management through the Human Resources Department. Research and analysis also plays a significant role in our endeavor to understand more about our caseload and its interaction with the local labour market and economy. The Communications Department is also relied upon to help us with our action steps, particularly stigma reduction, and increasing public education and awareness around programs and services. Funding reductions to Social Services impacts these areas as well as the OW budget significantly supports this work through its central administration allocation.

It is for all of the reasons noted above that DNSSAB respectfully requests reconsideration of the Ministry's direction to use 2018 actual expenditures versus the approved 2019 DNSSAB budget.

4.3 KEY PROGRAM MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

4.3.1 Overview of Service Delivery Model

Social Services continues to promote online applications however to date the update has been relatively weak in comparison to phone applications. In 2017, a monthly average of 47 applications were completed on-line with an average of 138 completed through other application methods. For 2018, the average decreased to 37 per month with 127 applications taken over the phone. The average turnaround time was four days for both years.

DNSSAB Social Services uses a software program, Prairie Fire to manage its intake calls. To date, this system has been effective. As mentioned, the majority of intake applications are completed by phone. Very few walk-in appointments are requested and are completed on a case by case basis. Following on-line applications, applicants are contacted by an Intake Case Manager to schedule their verification appointment.

Verification appointments completed by phone are scheduled during the call. Intake Case Managers meet with all applicants, verify their documentation, and determine eligibility. Emergency applications are also managed by the Intake Case Management team with the employability assessment only being completed with clients applying for on-going assistance. Eligible clients are then transferred to an on-going Case Manager who is responsible for all other duties related to the management of the file inclusive of participation management and fraud allegations. The employment team act as a support to Case Managers with respect to the delivery of employment related workshops, 1-1 appointments etc. Clients with issues related to child support can voluntarily be referred to the Family Support Worker whereas clients with requirements to pursue spousal support are automatically referred.

Applications for formal childcare subsidy are integrated at the intake level only. OW Intake Case Managers capture the required information, however, Children's Services Representatives working for the Children's Services department make the eligibility decisions and carry the cases. Informal childcare requests are processed by OW Case Managers.

In an effort to streamline the application process and eliminate the need for clients to tell their stories twice, as mentioned earlier in the Plan, this model is currently under review. At this stage, it appears favorable that the model will be changed back to a model used many years ago when the Case Manager completed all stages of the intake process. With this model, there will continue to be a role for a few Intake Case Managers to schedule appointments, retrieve and assign on-line applications along with other case management duties that will be re-aligned at that time.

4.3.2 Outline of Business Practices

Legislative requirements, program directives and standards

Program integrity, oversight, accountability and transparency continue to be high priority areas for Social Services and DNSSAB in general. Through monthly file reviews by Supervisors and the monitoring and analysis of various Cognos and financial reports, along with various other data sources, the Director of Employment and Social Services monitors overall program delivery. Through the finance department, the Director also receives monthly supplementary detailed financial reports on expenditures to date. The combination of these reports are relied on heavily to oversee operations in relation to the program budget.

DNSSAB has also implemented a performance management program that ties the competencies of Staff to DNSSAB's core values, mission and vision and strategic plan. Further to these strategies, during the previous cycle, Social Services also developed service benchmarks for all job classifications within the department. In an effort to further enhance program oversight, Ontario Works Supervisors are also responsible for Internal Reviews and Social Benefit Tribunal hearings, a function that was previously held by Eligibility Review Officers prior to their elimination at the local level.

While the DNSSAB OW Director absolutely has oversight of the program, it is essentially the finance department who carries much of the responsibility and work for ensuring that the integrity of the financial information being presented to the Ministry, through subsidy claims, submissions and quarterly reports, are accurate and reflect actual expenditures. Various detailed spreadsheets are utilized extensively by finance

staff to assist with the reconciliation process. All financial information is presented in accordance to generally accepted accounting principles issued by the Financial Accounting Standards Board. DNSSAB's approach to reporting financial information to the Ministry, the Board and the public has been to ensure transparency at all levels.

DNSSAB also has local policies to further assist staff with various activities to increase accountability and ensure that consistent practices are being used to govern DNSSAB business. Examples of these policies are:

- Asset Capitalization Policy
- Citizen Financial Disbursements Policy
- Purchasing Policy
- Disposal of Assets Policy
- Investment Policy
- Whistleblower Policy

Risk management plays a significant role in Social Services oversight strategy as identifying risk in all activities prior to implementation is essential to effective planning. By ensuring that changes and decisions are made in a consultative manner, Social Services have managed to identify and mitigate possible areas of risk on various occasions. Anticipating what could go wrong and identifying what decisions need to be made to prevent a negative outcome are routine exercises that Social Services employs when making decisions. These exercises can result in a cost savings on resources, protection of DNSSAB's reputation as an organization, and a reduction in liability - all of which promote effective and efficient operations.

As reported previously, in order to further strengthen DNSSAB's contract management processes, in 2016, a Contract Management Specialist position was created to provide expertise, support and guidance to the senior management team. This position is responsible for developing and maintaining a contract management system to ensure all contracts have been properly executed, are in compliance with the contract terms and conditions, and remain current. These contracts include property, capital and operating leases, purchased service agreements and settlements. The position liaises with legal counsel when required in developing, negotiating and managing contracts and is directly involved in resolving contract disputes. In addition to contract management this position also works closely with the DNSSAB management team to provide support and expertise in the formal bid/purchasing processes of goods and services for the organization. This position also develops, implements and provides oversight of a contract management system and associated policies and procedures to ensure contracts are well within regulatory guidelines and requirements.

The table below summarizes the main tools and/or activities that are utilized by Social Services to ensure compliance in all areas of program delivery.

PROGRAM OVERSIGHT	FUNCTION	TOOLS/ACTIVITY	Table 20
	Program Monitoring	Social Assistance Operations Performance Reports Cognos Reports Client Surveys Manual trackers OW Extranet Data SAMO Data Prairie Fyre Reports to track intake activity Alignment of Strategic Plan with Program Mandates Subsidy Claim Guide	
	Staff Competency	Annual Competency Based Performance Reviews Ongoing staff training on both financial and employment assistance Continuous Learning and Professional Development Opportunities Talent Management Plan Succession Planning to ensure transfer of knowledge Employment Suitability Testing as part of interview process	
	Risk Management	Dedicated EVP Team effective April 2017 Strategic Plan/Mission/Vision Clear Local OW, HR and Board Policies Standardized Operational Procedures Effective Communication Monthly File Reviews by Supervisors Review of detailed monthly financial expenditure reports Document Management Protocols Dedicated position to records management Board engagement for direction on high level decisions Approval Escalation Processes Strong Contract Management processes including multiple sign offs by DNSSAB authorities Separation of Duty Processes Detailed HR Policies to clarify expectations Internal Whistleblower Policy Internal Purchasing Policy Internal Reviews and Social Benefit Tribunals completed by Supervisor Strict adherence to third party request and MFIPPA processes	
	Program Reporting and Accountability	Monthly Board Reports on Caseload/Intake/Outcomes MCSS Reporting Board Reports posted on DNSSAB website to ensure transparency FSW and Case Managers to continue to pursue all potential sources of income (support, EI, WSIB etc) Pay Directs to Landlords/Utility Companies where appropriate Monitoring and actioning of fraud allegations	

4.3.3 Modernizing Program Delivery

Social Services has been heavily engaged in modernizing the way that employment services are delivered. The most recent example of the use of the use of technology to support employment service delivery would be the development of the Get Trained Workers Employment Database and employability assessment. As information related to how this database and assessment tool work has already been provided, this information will not be repeated here. The customer satisfaction survey mentioned earlier in this Plan is another attempt at using technology to capture valuable data that can assist with program planning and service delivery. Risk based eligibility methods to some extent are being used however this is an area of development and growth that will be explored during this planning cycle.

4.3.4 Ontario Works benefits managed outside of the Social Assistance Management System (SAMS)

All Ontario Works benefits are managed within SAMS with the exception of dollars expensed to third parties through purchase of service agreements primarily for employment services. The following list represents the initiatives currently being funded outside of SAMS:

- North Bay and District Chamber of Commerce - 100 Jobs Pilot
- North Bay and District Chamber of Commerce - Get Trained Workers
- Clark Communications – Get Trained Workers Employment Database
- North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit – Dental Pilot
- Canadore College – NPREP – Transitions to Post Secondary

Copies of signed and executed Service Agreements will be forwarded to the Ministry as supporting documentation with subsidy claims reflecting transactions completed outside of SAMS. Third party reports could also be made available upon request.

DNSSAB has strict internal controls over payments associated with Service Agreements to maximize accountability and transparency, while protecting the financial interests of the DNSSAB and its funders. DNSSAB also has strict segregation of duties controls in place to ensure the integrity of the process by reducing the exposure to inappropriate, unauthorized or unlawful expenditures. The segregation of duties is to prevent one person from having access to all steps in a process that involves assets and/or usage of budget dollars as no one employee or group should ever be in the position to perpetuate and/or conceal errors or fraud. Directors/Managers are involved in the development of Service Agreements however do not control the whole process. The Contract Management Specialist is responsible for the creation and vetting of all Service Agreements. Directors/Managers must consult with the Manager of Finance to ensure that there is funding available to support the project and the CAO and DNSSAB Board Chair must sign all Agreements. Finance is responsible for creating the subsidy claims with the OW Director reviewing the claim and submitting it to the Ministry.

4.3.5 Performance Standards

As explained above, DNSSAB has very robust policies around risk management, therefore, any situation that appears to not be covered by a policy is remedied quickly. Social Services meets the performance standards of the Ministry however is always looking for opportunities to improve and work smarter. Various reports are reviewed monthly to monitor performance standards. As mentioned, Social Services shares updates on performance standards through monthly reports to the Board. Social Services has also developed internal performance standards for all positions in order to ensure consistency in the delivery of services, efficiency and effectiveness.

4.3.6 EVP Compliance

In order to ensure compliance with the expectations of the eligibility verification process, DNSSAB Social services performs the following evaluation procedures within the 60-day cycle on approximately 62 cases per audit plan:

- Assign the audits to the individual EVP Case Managers on the first day of receiving the audit plan;
- Review the audits within the first week of assignment;
- Request the information from the client according to the CIVRS report within a 2 week period;
- If information is submitted in a timely manner, make the necessary changes to the evidence and close the audit with an outcome;
- If information is not received in a timely manner, the file is suspended at the end of the first 30 days of assignment until the information is received. If the information is not received, the file is closed on the last day of the 60 day cycle;
- If an OW file that was closed for EVP reasons needs to be reinstated within a 6 month period, the original EVP auditor will reinstate the file in order to complete the EVP requirements.

In order to monitor and measure the lifecycle, the supervisor reviews the following reports monthly and conducts random file reviews on approximately 10 audits per month to ensure quality assurance:

- CRS 350 EVP Activity Report
- CRS 440 EVP Performance Report
- CRS 580M EVP YTD Statistics Report
- EVP OW Performance Analysis

DNSSAB Social Services has shown to be efficient and effective in the program management activities of the EVP process by meeting all expectations and surpassing the Provincial averages consistently. Year-to-date statistics on the completion rate for the period of January to March 2019 for Nipissing was 97% compared to the provincial average of 63%.

4.4 OVERVIEW OF LEARNING SUPPORTS

4.4.1 Supportive Approaches through Innovative Learning (SAIL)

In May of 2017, DNSSAB partnered with the District of Parry Sound Social Services Administration Board to hold a 3 day SAIL “Train the Trainer” Training session which was delivered by Marianne Seaton. Our in-house trainer along with a member of our SAIL committee participated. The training re-familiarized our staff with the SAIL curriculum and helped them to develop District specific application scenario’s to incorporate into our in-house training. It also assisted us to develop strategies to help normalize SAIL. Given that the SAIL curriculum was revised and released in late 2017 our trainers also participated in the SAIL webinar in November 2017 and the SAIL Regatta in December 2017. All three modules of the revised SAIL curriculum were delivered to frontline staff in March 2018. Staff provided positive feedback and appeared to be engaged in the training sessions. The pictures below are of a team building exercise which required staff to develop a strategy to build the tallest structure with the supplies provided. The purpose of the exercise was to reinforce the importance of communication and problem solving skills. Due to staff turnover, we are planning SAIL training for new staff in the fall of 2019.



Having SAIL trainers now on-site will allow us to ensure SAIL competencies are being incorporated on the front line, in ongoing training, supervisor communications, staff meetings and the onboarding/interview process for new hires. All of these efforts will help to normalize SAIL so that it becomes a part of the Social Service language and culture.

4.5 STRATEGY TO DELIVER FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES

DNSSAB’s CAO has recently been in communication with MCSS on the expectations of DNSSAB on the provision of French language services, specifically with respect to the DNSSAB website. This communication was in response to a complaint received by the Office of the French Language Commissioner of Ontario. At the time of writing, these discussions remain ongoing therefore no details will be provided at this time. In the interim, the following information noted in the 2015/2016 Service Plan remains relevant.

As a designated transfer payment agency under the French Languages Services Act, DNSSAB is required to undertake a review every three years to ensure that it remains in compliance with the designation criteria. In March 2015, DNSSAB submitted its Agency Designation Plan and Evaluation Tool to MCSS to confirm its

compliance. DNSSAB takes this designation seriously and while there is still work to be done in the area of translation, it strives to ensure that services and communications are consistent with the following guiding principles:

- French Language Services are now a right according to the French Language Services Act;
- The District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board advocates for the pro-active delivery of French Language Services as means to communicate effectively to and optimally used by French-speaking clients and the public;
- The Board is committed to the provision of high quality French Language Services in a culturally sensitive manner;
- The Board promotes equivalency/specificity of services provided;
- Services and corresponding supports (advertisements, documents, brochures, etc.) are preferably produced in both official languages or can be made available in both official languages upon request;
- The District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board equally offers educational incentives to Staff with respect to French Language upgrading courses.

The DNSSAB Management Team is responsible to ensure that the guiding principles outlined above are implemented, monitored and maintained throughout all business activities. In order to achieve these requirements, DNSSAB has developed a partnership with College Boreal to complete mandatory testing on all candidates applying to bilingual job bulletins to ensure that the candidates level of proficiency meets the needs of the program areas ranging from a level 1 to a Superior level 4.

The table on the following page illustrates what has proven to be an acceptable representation of bilingually designated front line direct delivery staff in all District offices. Positions without front line client service responsibilities are not included in the numbers. It is also important to note that currently both the Mattawa and Sturgeon Falls sites have bilingual compliments of 100% due to the high numbers of French speaking residents in these areas. In addition, while only the positions noted below are “designated” bilingual, a much higher proportion of front line staff with client service responsibilities (25) are fluent in both official languages as bilingualism is taken into consideration as being an asset through the recruitment process.

Please note that these numbers reflect staffing levels inclusive of the three unfilled Transitional Support Case Managers.

Table 21. Total Front Line Direct Delivery Counts	Unilingual	Bilingual	Percentage of Compliment
Case Managers (32)	24	8	25%
Receptionist (1)	0	1	100%
Client Support Worker (7.5)	3	4.5	60%
Staff Trainers (1)	1	0	0%
Family Support Worker (1)	0	1	100%
Employment Marketing Specialist (1)	0	1	100%
Employment Services Trainer (1)	1	0	0%
Employment Support Workers (4)	3	1	25%

4.6 BUSINESS PRACTICES

As always, Social Services expectations with respect to performance will continue to be to meet or exceed existing standards. While Social Services has gone to great lengths to anticipate what challenges social assistance reform will bring during the current cycle, it is recognized that changes in business practices and local policies may be required as the delivery of the program evolves.

The internal strategies detailed in this Plan at this point do not require any changes in business practices. Social Services has committed to monitoring and analyzing the outcomes of its current service delivery model during the service planning cycle. If the change in the DNSSAB intake process is implemented during the third quarter of 2019 as planned, careful monitoring will be required in order to ensure that the intended benefits are reaped from this service delivery change.

By the next service planning cycle, Social Services is optimistic that it will be able to report that the enhancements to its service delivery model and employment initiatives have achieved the anticipated results. It is important to note however that the achievement of outcomes is only one piece of the puzzle, as service model changes can have other benefits on client service delivery, beyond exits to earnings achievements and exits to employment. An update on whether or not these strategies will prove to be more effective and efficient will be provided in the 2020 Addendum.

In order to ensure efficient and effective customer service, Social Services has always operated with a focus on continuous improvement. Service delivery methodologies that are effective today may prove to be ineffective in the future in a changing environment. Being able to adjust business practices and realign service strategies to meet performance targets when the needs of the caseload change, can often present a challenge. Frequent legislative changes, changes in the needs of the local labour market and broader regional economy are also variables that can impact business practices often on very short notice.

As the Province moves forward with legislative changes to support their new vision, it will be imperative that the process be consultative and collaborative with the social assistance delivery network, OMSSA, NOSDA, AMO and other stakeholders. Understanding how changes will impact vulnerable individuals and families in receipt of Ontario Works “on the ground” will be essential for these changes to be implemented effectively and efficiently.

It is clear that when the transition of employment to MTCU happens, numerous policies and processes will need to be updated inclusive of the joint implementation protocols with ODSP. Even the focus of the Get Trained Workers Employment Database will need to change and target the life stabilization and preparing for employment categories versus the job ready. How outcomes will be monitored and measured in the future will be another area that will require attention, however to date no details are known on what will be changing in this area. Social Services feels that it is well positioned to be responsive to these upcoming changes and is looking forward to the implementation of a modernized employment service delivery system.