
2006 BUDGET BRIEFING NOTE – 2006 Ontario Works Monthly Caseload Projection

Recommendation in Analyst's Notes:

“The General Manager of Social Services report to Budget Committee during the 2006 Operating Budget wrap-up meetings on actual year-to-date Ontario Works monthly caseload with possible revisions to the 2006 proposed average monthly caseload estimate of 75,000”.

2006 OW Caseload Projection:

Based on presentations to date at the Administrative Review, Community Services Committee and Budgetary Advisory Committee, TSS demonstrated that the 2006 caseload projections are established using:

- Historical trends and analysis of caseload dynamics;
- Economic forecasts related to Toronto's labour market ;
- Review of policy changes that are likely to impact caseloads.

With respect to policy changes, MCSS announced changes to the OW program effective August 2005, in the following areas:

- Income from earnings;
- Employment start-up benefits;
- Unlicensed childcare, and
- Extended health benefits.

TSS has projected that the changes to income from earnings and the introduction of the extended health benefit will impact the actual caseload numbers.

In our opinion, the underlying forecasting methodology, analysis and assumptions in the 2006 average monthly caseload of 75,000 cases are still valid, and the estimate is prudent. This represents an increase of \$7.4 million over the 2005 budget.

The actual caseload on December 31, 2005 was 70,250. This has increased to 71,192 at January 31, 2005. Staff recommends that Council review caseload again prior to the finalization of the budget.

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