

**Consolidated Clause in Policy and Finance Committee Report 7, which was considered by City Council on September 25, 26 and 27, 2006.**

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**Update on the Progress of 'Systems of Survival,  
Systems of Support: An Action Plan for  
Social Assistance in the City of Toronto'**

*City Council on September 25, 26 and 27, 2006, adopted this Clause without amendment.*

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**The Policy and Finance Committee recommends that City Council adopt the recommendation of the Community Services Committee contained in the communication (September 11, 2006) from the Community Services Committee:**

Recommendation:

The Community Services Committee on September 11, 2006, recommended to the Policy and Finance Committee that City Council adopt the staff recommendations in the Recommendations Section of the report (August 18, 2006) from the General Manager, Social Services, respecting "Update on the Progress of 'Systems of Survival, Systems of Support: An Action Plan for Social Assistance in the City of Toronto'."

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(Report dated August 18, 2006, addressed to the  
Community Services Committee from the  
General Manager, Social Services)

Purpose:

To provide an update on the progress of 'Systems of Survival, Systems of Support: An Action Plan for Social Assistance in the City of Toronto', including the introduction of two initiatives offering targeted and integrated responses to key issues confronting vulnerable residents and communities.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

At its meeting of June 27, 28, and 29, 2006, City Council adopted the recommendations contained in Toronto Social Services report, 'Systems of Survival, Systems of Support: An Action Plan for Social Assistance in Toronto'. The Action Plan is comprised of 65 recommendations and actions outlining specific measures the different orders of government need to take to restore and reinvest in Toronto's social safety net.

This report describes initial steps being taken to address key issues identified in the Action Plan including two initiatives; 'Investing in Neighbourhoods' and 'Investing in Families', aimed at assisting vulnerable residents living in the City's priority neighbourhoods.

This report recommends that funding of up to \$3.2 million gross be drawn from the National Child Benefit Supplement (NCBS) Reserve Fund to support these two initiatives, resulting in \$0 net impact to the City.

On July 1, 1998, the federal government initiated payment of the NCBS to low-income families with children. The Province reduced social assistance payments to families by the same amount as the NCBS, and municipalities were required to reinvest their NCBS savings in programs, benefits, and/or services, which meet the National Child Benefit (NCB) objectives.

The City's monthly NCBS savings are captured in the National Child Benefit Supplement Reserve Fund, which was established in 1999. The use of these funds is governed by the criteria established by the Province for the expenditure of NCBS savings, and these initiatives are consistent with these criteria.

The 'Investing in Neighbourhoods' initiative will commence in late 2006 to the end of 2007. Up to \$2.2 million will be drawn from the Reserve Fund, with up to \$0.2 million allocated in 2006, and the balance of funds allocated in 2007, as detailed in Attachment 2.

The 'Investing in Families' initiative will similarly commence in the latter part of 2006 and operate through 2007. Up to \$1.0 million will be drawn from the Reserve Fund, which will be undertaken in partnership with Public Health, Parks, Forestry and Recreation and Children's Services. Additional temporary staff positions in Parks, Forestry and Recreation (2 Recreationists) and in Public Health (6 Public Health Nurses, 1 Nursing Supervisor [part-time] and 1 Support Assistant [part-time]) will be funded through this draw and requested through the 2007 budget process. It is anticipated that up to \$0.05 million will be allocated in 2006, with the balance of the funds allocated in 2007. All financial and administrative aspects of the initiative will be managed through Toronto Social Services, with costs to be included in respective programs budget submissions.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and concurs with the financial impact statement.

#### Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) Social Services' 2006 Operating Budget be increased by \$0.25 million gross and \$0 net, funded from the National Child Benefit Supplement Reserve Fund in 2006 and the balance of \$2.95 million gross and \$0 net, funded from the National Child Benefit Supplement Reserve Fund in 2007, be included in the respective programs 2007 Operating Budget Submissions;

- (2) Council authorize the General Manager of Social Services, or her designate, to negotiate and if negotiations are successful, to execute service agreements in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor with non-profit community based agencies to implement the 'Investing in Neighbourhoods' initiative;
- (3) Council authorize the General Manager of Social Services, or her designate, to adjust funding allocation between these initiatives as may be required to ensure maximum use of these funds;
- (4) Toronto Social Services continue transferring NCBS savings to the NCBS Reserve Fund as adopted by Council, and such funds should only be used for projects that meet National Child Benefit objectives;
- (5) this report be referred to the next meeting of the Budget Advisory Committee; and
- (6) the appropriate City officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

Background:

At its meeting of May 8, 2006, the Community Services Committee considered a report by the General Manager of Toronto Social Services (TSS) titled 'Systems of Survival, Systems of Support: An Action Plan for Social Assistance in Toronto'. The Action Plan is a wide-ranging policy document comprised of 65 recommendations and actions outlining specific measures the different orders of government need to take to restore and reinvest in Toronto's social safety net. This report describes initial steps being taken to address key issues identified in the Action Plan, including two initiatives aimed at assisting vulnerable residents living in the City's priority neighbourhoods. A further report describing a detailed strategy for realizing the remaining recommendations and actions contained in the Action Plan will be forwarded to the Community Services Committee in 2007.

The Action Plan, along with the recommended amendments, was adopted by City Council at its meeting of June 27, 28 and 29, 2006. A complete list of the amended recommendations contained in the Action Plan is provided in Attachment 1.

Comments:

'Systems of Survival, Systems of Support: An Action Plan for Social Assistance in the City of Toronto' builds on the City's efforts to foster strong and safe communities, and recognizes that Toronto-based program delivery solutions, supported by the federal and provincial orders of government, are necessary to addressing complex social problems.

Consistent with City's Council priorities, and with the Social Development Strategy, the Action Plan underpins the City's broader efforts to respond to the new realities of poverty and underemployment in Toronto. It recognizes that good social programs are critical, that the City has to take a leadership role in making sure social programs delivered by all orders of government work in Toronto, and that the City itself needs to continue to design and deliver

programs that will work locally. This report discusses the actions that are being taken, and that are being proposed, to meet the objectives set out in the Action Plan, and achieve the main outcomes sought which include better assisting vulnerable residents to find and sustain jobs, to access needed services and to be engaged in their communities.

Specific actions are currently being taken in a number of areas to address issues identified in the Action Plan, related to improved provision of employment services, improved service co-ordination and integration among city divisions, and streamlined service delivery. Section A below briefly outlines a number of these steps and the progress that is being made.

At the same time, the Action Plan proposes concrete initiatives that offer innovative and targeted responses to key issues confronting vulnerable residents and communities, particularly Ontario Works (OW) clients. Two important initiatives are discussed. The first, referred to as 'Investing in Neighbourhoods', proposes a unique project model that directly assists unemployed OW family recipients living in priority communities by providing jobs in locally based non-profit agencies. A second initiative, 'Investing in Families', addresses the obstacles that often face single parents on OW who are unemployed, and often excluded, by providing an integrated mix of health, social, employment and recreation services that they would otherwise not be able to access. Section B below provides a more detailed description of these initiatives.

A. Update on Action Plan Progress:

With City Council's adoption of the recommendations contained in 'Systems of Survival, Systems of Support: An Action Plan for Social Assistance in the City of Toronto', TSS has begun to develop an Action Plan implementation strategy. At the same time, progress continues to be made in a number of areas that both support the strategic directions of the Action Plan and provide a strong foundation for development of the implementation strategy. These activities, and the collaborative approach demonstrated in each case, reflect the City's commitment to social development, and TSS' commitment to working with its partners to improve service delivery and develop more effective and responsive employment services for Toronto's unemployed residents. A summary of these significant initial steps follows:

- (1) In July 2003, Council approved plans for the regeneration of Regent Park and gave direction to the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC), with the support of the Social Development, Finance and Administration (SDFA) Division, to create a Social Development Plan for Regent Park. It is anticipated this plan will be tabled early in 2007. This broader plan will incorporate a set of strategies for improving employment services provision within Regent Park that will be tabled at the same time.

TSS is taking the lead in developing the employment services component of the Social Development Plan. With respect to immediate steps, the employment plan will outline a number of ways in which services to individuals and employers can be enhanced. Over the longer term, it proposes a new and improved service delivery approach which will better connect unemployed residents with jobs and training opportunities, both in Regent Park and across the city.

- (2) Championed by the Toronto Board of Trade, the Youth ONE Campaign was launched in the Spring of 2006 with the aim of creating 1,000 jobs or apprenticeships for young people in Toronto's priority neighbourhoods.

In conjunction with SDFA, TSS is providing key support to the initiative on behalf of the City. TSS staff support the City's Toronto Employer Hotline at 416-397-JOBS (5627), which participating businesses can call to offer opportunities to the young people who need them. In addition, staff help interested employers by connecting with Youth Employment Partnership agencies, who forward pre-screened youth candidates who have the pre-employment skills necessary to ensure their success in the workplace.

- (3) An Employment Services Senior Steering Committee has been recently struck to provide strategic leadership for collaborative planning and co-ordination of employment and labour market services in Toronto. The Committee is comprised of representatives from City divisions and Agencies, Boards and Commissions (ABC's) that have a role in the provision of labour market programming, including SDFA, Economic Development Culture and Tourism (EDCT), TCHC, Toronto Public Libraries (TPL), Shelter, Support and Housing Administration (SSHA), and Parks, Recreation and Forestry (PRF). Chaired by the General Manager of TSS, the Committee will look for ways to align service planning and delivery efforts across the city, including investigating best practices that could be applied in Toronto, capitalizing on and making the best use of resources, including avoiding duplication of services, and identifying administrative barriers that are preventing stronger integration of services.
- (4) In conjunction with SDFA, TSS is developing a terms of reference to conduct a comprehensive review of the employment services system in Toronto, consistent with the Action Plan's focus on employment services planning. Further details on the review will be provided in TSS' detailed report on the Action Plan implementation strategy that will be forwarded to the Community Services Committee in early 2007.
- (5) As described in the Action Plan, TSS' Employment Resource Centres (ERC's) are an effective gateway to key job search and retention supports, and play a critical role in the rapid re-employment of recently unemployed workers. TSS is striving to make its ERC's career development centres, providing information not only on how to find a job but how to build a sustainable career. All ERC staff are being trained as Career & Employment Information Specialists, and will be certified as such. Currently, TSS is the only jurisdiction in Canada to have ERC's staffed exclusively by people with these qualifications.

TSS is also actively exploring how to build a stronger web presence to support increased service options for clients, particularly in the area of self service, with the aim of providing a variety of service channels including on-line access.

- (6) TSS has developed inter-divisional service delivery protocols with the SSHA, Toronto Children's Services (TCS) and TCHC to provide better coordinated and targeted responses to mutual clients. Examples of specific achievements include the joint work done to put in place the Tent City Emergency Pilot Program and the Next Steps Rent

Supplement Program, as well as the joint training and orientation sessions for staff from each area.

- (7) TSS has been working with the Province to streamline the applicant process for OW clients referred to the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). As a result of this collaborative effort, redundancies have been removed from the ODSP financial eligibility determination process and verification requirements for OW and ODSP have been made consistent.

TSS and the Province have additionally committed to future cross-training of both the City's Social Services staff and Provincial ODSP staff.

- (8) SDFA, working with TSS, EDCT and Corporate Human Resources, has submitted a proposal (known as Employer Access to Support and Employees [EASE]) to Service Canada for \$400,000.00 to enable at-risk youth to more easily access employers, including the City of Toronto.

The proposal has two objectives. The first involves better connecting employers with existing youth serving agencies. Specific initiatives include the development of a tool kit for employers to assist them in including youth in future workforce planning. The second objective involves reviewing and redesigning the City's Human Resources practices to ensure they do not present a barrier to hiring at-risk youth. This will include the creation of 100 job opportunities for youth within the City and its ABC's.

- (9) The General Manager of Social Services has been invited to participate on the Ontario Works Labour Market Development Agreement/Labour Market Partnership Agreement Reference Group. This "seat at the table" will ensure that the City's interests are represented in planning for the transition of federal employment services to the Province under the agreements, and that the City is prepared to take advantage of emerging opportunities created by these agreements to play a leading role in the management and delivery of employment services in Toronto.
- (10) TSS continues to meet with Deb Matthews, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services, most recently in June 2006, to discuss potential OW policy changes that will streamline eligibility determination and improve program access and adequacy (e.g., increasing allowable asset levels under OW legislation). These are critical policy and administration changes that are prominently identified in the Action Plan as essential to making OW work more effectively for Toronto residents.
- (11) A pilot project has recently been developed to support the Workplace Language Assessment and Pre-Screening Process developed by the Canadian Centre for Language Benchmarks (CCLB). Supported by a range of partners (Canadian Immigration Commission [CIC], the provincial Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration [MCI], and the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council [TRIEC]), the pilot will test the assessment process, which will identify the specific workplace language needs of skilled immigrants.

TSS is a pilot site for the pre-screening component of the assessment process, reflecting the fact that OW in Toronto is a primary entry point for many skilled immigrants seeking employment assistance. Specially trained TSS staff will initially pre-screen appropriate OW clients. If language barriers are identified, clients will then receive a full workplace language assessment in TSS offices by a trained assessor working for the CCLB. The end goal is to use the assessment results to make appropriate referrals to workplace related training programs such as Bridge to Employment programs and Enhanced Language Training.

- (12) As a key part of its efforts to engage OW clients, TSS has established Client Advisory Groups in each of its districts. Client Advisory Groups are intended to provide an avenue whereby clients and TSS staff work together to improve service quality by identifying service delivery issues and making recommendations for improvement. Input from these groups was sought as part of the development of the Action Plan, and they will continue to play a vital role in the development of an informed implementation strategy.

The above accomplishments represent initial steps being taken in support of the Action Plan. A more detailed implementation strategy for the Action Plan will be forwarded to the Community Services Committee in 2007. Key to the development of the strategy will be community engagement and consultation processes aimed at harnessing the collective efforts of stakeholders who advocate for the City's vulnerable residents.

#### B. Implementation of Action Plan Initiatives:

Consistent with the City's focus on community safety and strong neighbourhoods, TSS' Action Plan recognizes that locally based projects are critical both to the success of OW clients and to the strength of the social infrastructure in priority neighbourhoods. In the Action Plan, TSS identified two unique opportunities to achieve the above objectives by simultaneously investing in people who live in vulnerable communities and in the local non-profit organizations that serve and support these communities. Thus, the 'Investing in Neighbourhoods' and 'Investing in Families' projects concretely further the City's commitment to developing integrated, place-based solutions that address priority neighbourhood issues. The effectiveness of both initiatives will be evaluated, and reported back to Council through regular updates provided on the overall implementation of the Action Plan.

#### Investing in Neighbourhoods:

The goal of the 'Investing in Neighbourhoods' initiative is to increase the employability and skill level of a group of OW clients who reside in priority communities across Toronto, while at the same time strengthening the capacity of these neighbourhoods by supporting locally based non-profit organizations.

The approach used is based on successful transitional job program models in other jurisdictions, and draws on TSS' extensive experience delivering employment programming over many years. Moreover, the approach provides a means of benefiting individual clients while addressing exclusion and building capacity in local neighbourhoods.

Through this initiative, up to 100 OW clients (both parents and adult dependents) who are residents of priority communities will be placed in jobs in local community based agencies. All \$2.2 million in funding for the initiative drawn from the NCBS Reserve Fund will be allocated to salaries for participants. TSS will fund 100 percent of the salary for each position. Lasting for approximately 1 year, the jobs will offer skill building opportunities, direct work experience and the chance to build networks and relationships with employers.

Wages earned by participants will be comparable to the wages earned by staff currently employed with participating agencies (approximately \$12.00 per hour). Participants will significantly increase their income and gain valuable work experience and references that could help them to eventually exit the OW program. Ongoing job retention and career development supports will be provided to help participants adjust to employment and address any issues that may affect their ability to retain their job, as well to support their efforts to move on to other, longer term jobs.

In addition to creating employment opportunities for OW participants, the aim is to increase the service delivery capacity of participating agencies, and help support the development of role models and community leaders. A more detailed overview of the service delivery model is provided in Attachment 2, including information about project administration and management.

An evaluation of the 'Investing in Neighbourhoods' initiative will be conducted to assess its success in assisting OW clients and building service capacity in local neighbourhoods. Specifically, the evaluation will review client outcomes and solicit feedback from clients, staff, participating agencies and other community stakeholders to determine the overall effectiveness of the program.

#### Investing in Families:

The impacts of social isolation on the well-being of poor single parents and their children, including the implications of finding and keeping jobs, is well documented, including Social Services' own 2003 survey on single parents on Ontario Works. Research shows the obstacles facing many poor single parents are interconnected, and that a comprehensive approach is required to assist single parent families on social assistance stabilize their lives (particularly those residing in underserved communities), obtain and keep jobs and improve the overall health and resiliency of all family members. Such an approach requires a combination of coordinated and targeted services provided by a range of different divisions and/or agencies.

The overall objective of the 'Investing in Families' initiative is to improve the economic, health and social status of single parent families receiving social assistance in Toronto. More specifically, the goals of the initiative are to:

- (a) build capacity in single parents to improve their circumstances through employment by providing access to locally based pre-employment training that include a range of support services such as life skills workshops, job search skills, work preparation and work experience opportunities;
- (b) promote a healthy lifestyle among the children of single parents, including improved physical fitness and personal resiliency;



- (c) increase participation in leisure and recreation activities among all family members;
- (d) improve the physical and mental well-being of single parents; and
- (e) enhance the social integration of single parent families in their communities.

It is anticipated that single parent families participating in the initiative will be better prepared to successfully obtain and maintain employment, and to eventually realize financial independence.

Thus, through this initiative, critical employment preparation and retention, child care, recreational and health services will be provided to single parent families. An integrated family case management approach will be used to ensure that needed services can be accessed and coordinated for every client. Wherever possible, services will be provided to families in their homes, as doing so has been shown to increase both the likelihood services will be used and that they will benefit clients.

It is proposed that the initiative will start with up to 275 single parent families residing in the Jane-Finch community, with at least one child over the age of six. Based on program success and available funding, the initiative may be expanded to other communities.

Ultimately, this initiative's success depends on the effective coordination of services among the City's Social Services, Public Health, Children's Services, and Parks, Forestry and Recreation divisions. The \$1.0 million drawn from the NCBS Reserve Fund to support this initiative will be used in two ways; first, to increase service delivery capacity through additional temporary staff resources in several critical areas to support the delivery of core program elements (6 Public Health Nurses, 1 Nursing Supervisor [part-time], 1 Support Assistant [part-time] and 2 Recreationists from PFR); and second, to ensure access to recreational programming for participating family members. All funding related to the 'Investing in Families' initiative will be administered by the Social Services Division. A more detailed description of service delivery model, and the responsibilities of the participating divisions, is provided in Attachment 3.

Program evaluation will assess not only the impact of the initiative on the lives of the single parent families who are participating, but also on the effectiveness of the coordinated service delivery approach.

#### Conclusions:

This report recommends that funding of up to \$3.2 million be drawn from the National Child Benefit Supplement Reserve Fund to implement and support the initiatives described above. These initiatives, and the other actions that are described in this report, represent steps that are being taken to meet the objectives set out in the Action Plan, and to achieve the main outcomes sought, which include better assisting vulnerable residents to find and sustain jobs, to access needed services and to be engaged in their communities. They also demonstrate the degree to which City divisions and Agencies, Boards and Commissions (ABC's) are working together to develop streamlined, integrated service delivery models that meet the needs of vulnerable residents in Toronto.

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Attachment 1

Action Plan Recommendations adopted by City Council, as Amended

*Italic text = Council Amendments*

1.1a The Province commit to developing a refocused social assistance system, the main components of which are:

- (i) a child benefit, funded 100 percent by the provincial and federal governments, that builds on the current National Child Benefit Supplement to remove children from the social assistance system by providing adequate benefits to all children in low income families, *and that ensures the incomes of families on social assistance increase by at least the amount of the National Child Benefit Supplement that is currently clawed back and, further, that there be no reduction of provincial benefits in the future as a result of increases in the National Child Benefit Supplement;*
- (ii) a simplified Ontario Works program that provides financial benefits, services and supports to adults to help them stabilize their lives and move out of poverty; and
- (iii) a program that is accessible to disabled people and those who will not be able to support themselves through employment over the longer term.

1.1b As a first step towards making these changes, the Province:

- (i) establish a concrete timetable for creating a new provincial child benefit;
- (ii) create an advisory panel made up of members from policy and advocacy groups, municipal delivery agents and interested citizens to support the development of the new social assistance program design; and
- (iii) develop a range of options for review by the panel prior to finalizing any program re-design.

*1.1c Until such time that a new child benefit is introduced as described in Recommendation 1.1a, the Province immediately end the clawback of the National Child Benefit Supplement from families on social assistance.*

- 1.2a City Council adopt the following positions with respect to the funding of social assistance programs:
- (i) the Province assume responsibility for funding 100 percent of the total costs of the Ontario Disability Support Program, including benefit and administration costs;
  - (ii) the Province assume responsibility for funding 100 percent of the benefit costs for the Ontario Works program; and
  - (iii) the City of Toronto continue to deliver the Ontario Works program in Toronto.
- 1.2b The Province remove the cap on rents for Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program clients residing in social housing so that such clients are eligible to receive the maximum shelter benefit provided to clients living in private rental units (and subject to any increase in benefit rates).
- 1.2c City Council advocate to the Premier of Ontario, the Minister of Community and Social Services, and the Minister of Finance that these changes be effected as soon as possible.
- 2.1 In response to the continuing erosion of social assistance benefit rates, the Province adjust the Ontario Works benefit rate structure in accordance with the following:
- (i) the shelter component maximum for Ontario Works clients equal *100 percent* of the median market rent for each local housing market, based on annual surveys conducted by the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation; and
  - (ii) the basic needs component maximum for Ontario Works be increased by *40 percent* and thereafter adjusted annually to reflect the findings of yearly nutritious food basket surveys conducted by local Boards of Health based on protocols established by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, *as well as annual changes in Statistics Canada's Low Income Cut-Offs and the Market Basket Measure*.
- 2.2 The Province increase allowable asset levels under the Ontario Works Act to at least three times the maximum Ontario Works assistance rate, in accordance with the new rate structure recommended in Section 2.1.
- 2.3 The City of Toronto, together with the Province, explore options for making subsidized or reduced cost transit passes available for all Toronto residents (including children) in the Ontario Works program.
- 2.4a The Province fund at 100 percent all costs associated with the delivery of dental services currently provided through Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program.
- 2.4b The Province support and fund the provision of improved basic dental services for adults on Ontario Works.

- 2.5a The Province increase the Back to School Allowance available under the Ontario Works program to provide families with children on Ontario Works with the following benefits:
- (i) \$50.00 per month per dependent aged 12 and under to be issued during the 10 month school year, for a total of \$500.00 per dependent per year; and
  - (ii) \$75.00 per month per dependent over the age of 12 to be issued during the 10 month school year, for a total of \$750.00 per dependent per year.
- 2.5b The Province extend eligibility for the Back to School Allowance to all Ontario Works participants in Toronto who are completing high school or involved in high school equivalency programs. Each participant would be eligible to receive a total of \$75.00 per month for the 10 month school year, or \$750.00 per year.
- 2.5c Recognizing that everyone is affected by winter weather, the Province extend eligibility for the Winter Clothing Allowance available under the Ontario Works program to all clients (adults and children), consistent with existing eligibility criteria and issuing guidelines (e.g., \$105.00 per person per year payable between September and December).
- 3.1a The City of Toronto establish a recruitment policy *in consultation with City unions and employee groups, as appropriate* that places priority on increasing access to employment opportunities within the Toronto Public Service for individuals in vulnerable communities by:
- (i) providing timely and relevant information about City jobs, and particularly entry level jobs, to people in vulnerable communities;
  - (ii) engaging vulnerable communities through outreach activities that describe the City's recruitment processes and that prepare people to apply for jobs; and
  - (iii) providing ongoing supports to new hires in entry level positions to build their skills and help them progress within the Toronto Public Service.
- 3.1b In collaboration with community-based organizations, City divisions and intergovernmental partners, Toronto Social Services, on behalf of the City, take responsibility for leading the planning, management and delivery of employment services and supports for the City's unemployed and low income residents.
- 3.2a The Province reinvest in adult education and ensure sufficient capacity exists to serve Ontario Works clients in Toronto.
- 3.2b The Province extend eligibility for the financial supports and bursary available through the Learning, Earning and Parenting program to all families with parents under the age of 30 on Ontario Works.

- 3.3 To better assist unemployed low income residents compete for jobs that pay a decent wage, the Province must:
- (i) extend eligibility for Ontario Student Assistance Program grants to mature low income students;
  - (ii) expand eligibility for Ontario Student Assistance Program part-time financial grants to mature low income students not currently considered “high needs”;
  - (iii) review the Ontario Student Assistance Program loan forgiveness and default policies to ensure low income students are not adversely affected; *and*
  - (iv) *end the current practice of treating Ontario Student Assistance Program loans as income for the purpose of eligibility for child care fee subsidy.*
- 3.4a The federal and provincial governments ensure that the job skills training programs they manage are accessible and have sufficient capacity to meet the needs of low income Toronto residents.
- 3.4b To reflect Toronto Social Services’ current role as a deliverer of services to unemployed city residents, many of whom have more complex needs:
- (i) the federal and provincial governments provide Toronto Social Services with adequate funding for job training programs; and
  - (ii) the Province provide Toronto Social Services with the authority and flexibility necessary to design and deliver the range of job training now required.
- 3.5 The City of Toronto introduce a policy whereby each division within the Toronto Public Service identify opportunities for Ontario Works participants to gain experience through internships, mentoring and work placements.
- 3.6 The Province provide adequate and distinct funding to Toronto Social Services for Employment Resource Centres in recognition of the important role they play in delivering employment services to people on Ontario Works and other low income residents.
- 3.7 The Province 100 percent fund the expansion of job retention supports, provided through Ontario Works, that help low income residents leaving social assistance make and sustain the transition to employment.
- 3.8 The provincially mandated program design and funding formula for the Ontario Works Employment Placement program be adjusted to recognize the true cost for agencies to deliver placement and extended job retention supports.
- 3.9 The federal government cover 100 percent of all social assistance costs incurred by the City of Toronto for newcomers during their first five years in Canada.

- 4.1 As per the City's Social Development Strategy, Toronto City Council ensure that decisions made with respect to the design, funding and policies governing human service programs delivered by the City make fair and equitable access by low income individuals and families a core priority.
- 4.2 City divisions in the human services cluster:
- (i) investigate opportunities for providing integrated application processes for income redistribution programs and services; and
  - (ii) develop common service strategies for mutual clients.
- 4.8 The Ministry of Community and Social Services establish a multi-sectoral task force to undertake a review of the current Ontario Disability Support Program, *such review to examine:*
- (i) *the Ontario Disability Support Program application process and eligibility determination criteria;*
  - (ii) *the adequacy of current Ontario Disability Support Program benefit rates;*
  - (iii) *the merits of extending the improvements to dental, transportation, back-to-school and winter clothing Ontario Works benefits called for in the Action Plan to persons on the Ontario Disability Support Program; and*
  - (iv) *the ability of persons on the Ontario Disability Support Program to access employment preparation and training supports, such as adult education and the Learning, Earning and Parenting program.*
- 5.1 Within the Ontario Works legislative and regulatory framework, the Province provide Toronto with the flexibility and resources to develop service delivery models, technologies and best practices that improve program delivery and outcomes for city residents.
- 5.2a The Province establish a task force to simplify administration and eliminate unnecessary Ontario Works rules, including proposing a fundamentally simplified application process.
- 5.2b The scope of this task force include reviewing and removing program policies and procedures in Ontario Works that:
- (i) limit access to the program; and
  - (ii) restrict municipal efforts to help clients prepare for, find and keep jobs.
- 5.2c This task force be mandated to prepare a public report for the Minister of Community and Social Services, and to include members from municipalities and key community-based organizations.

- 5.7a Consistent with both widespread international practice and the recommendations of the Matthews Report, the Province make a legislative commitment to the evaluation of social assistance programs and policies.
- 5.7b The Province establish an Evaluation Fund so that future social assistance reforms better reflect evidence-based policies and practices.
- 5.7c Recognizing the quality and range of research that has been undertaken by Toronto Social Services, the Province provide the City with ongoing funding for research and evaluation to support the delivery of the Ontario Works program in Toronto.
- 6.0a Toronto Social Services develop an implementation strategy for taking action on the recommendations contained in Systems of Survival, Systems of Support.
- 6.0b To develop a successful, grounded and community-centred implementation strategy, Toronto Social Services will engage stakeholders across the city by:
- (i) working with community agencies, partners and clients to develop and implement a strategy for advocating to the federal, provincial and City governments to make the changes called for in the Action Plan;
  - (ii) holding a series of focused forums with interested and involved stakeholders and communities to advance specific parts of the Action Plan (e.g., development of an employment services plan); and
  - (iii) strengthening and integrating service planning and service delivery partnerships with City divisions and at the provincial and federal levels.

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## Attachment 2

### ‘Investing in Neighbourhoods’ Initiative – Overview

The following provides an overview of the basic approach that will underpin the implementation of this initiative, including the way the initiative will be managed and administered.

#### Initiative Oversight and Management:

Toronto Social Services (TSS) will manage the ‘Investing in Neighbourhoods’ initiative. Administrative costs associated with start-up and with ongoing case management of participants will be absorbed by TSS within approved budgets.

All \$2.2 million in funding for the initiative drawn from the National Child Benefit Supplement (NCBS) Reserve Fund will be allocated to salaries for initiative participants. TSS will fund 100 percent of the salary for each position. Workers Safety Insurance Board coverage will be provided through the Ministry of Community and Social Services’ Accident Insurance Plan, as is

the case with other Ontario Works (OW) placement programs. Agency hosts will provide work infrastructure, supervision and training.

Community and Labour Market Managers from TSS will have primary responsibility for delivering this program within their local office catchment areas. Program oversight will be the responsibility of District Directors, Social Services. Payment tracking and administration will be the responsibility of TSS' Ontario Works Employment Assistance Support Team.

#### Job Opportunities:

Job opportunities will pay \$12.00 per hour gross, a wage rate selected as a result of a review of comparable full-time entry level positions in non-profit agencies. Successful candidates will work a maximum of 30 hours per week or 120 hours per month, allowing for participation in other activities such as upgrading or part-time training if suitable to the participant's service plan. Jobs will last for approximately one year. The initiative itself may last up to 18 months depending on how quickly jobs can be identified and filled by OW candidates. If clients leave a job before the one year period ends, especially after only a few months, efforts will be also be made to identify other clients to fill the position.

#### Agency Outreach and Selection:

Outreach to potential employers (agency hosts) will be made through community agency networks and staff involved in neighbourhood action teams in each of the 13 priority neighbourhoods plus Regent Park. Organizations from the priority neighbourhoods will be able to propose potential work opportunities using a proposal template developed for this program.

Agencies must demonstrate how prospective positions will enhance the employability and skill level of participants and positively contribute to the safety and quality of life in priority communities. Proposals will be evaluated and approved by TSS.

#### Candidate Outreach and Selection:

Outreach to potential candidates will be completed through Social Services' Caseworkers and Employment Resource Centre staff, and by community agencies. Eligible and interested parents and adult dependents will be pre-screened by Toronto Social Services and referred to agency hosts, who will conduct employer interviews. Agency hosts will make final selection for each position.

Once a candidate has been selected, a service agreement will be signed that will outline the responsibilities of the agency host, define payment terms, and outline monitoring and evaluation requirements. Service agreements will be co-managed by TSS Community and Labour Market Managers, and Program Support Managers. A contract management framework will be developed that outlines roles and responsibilities.



### Case Management and Client Supports:

Given that this program is targeted to families, many successful candidates will continue to be eligible for OW benefits such as drug coverage and childcare support.

Throughout their placement, Employment Resource Centre staff will provide clients with job retention and career development support. These staff will also maintain ongoing contact with participants and agency hosts to ensure that participants are progressing in their positions and have the supports they need to succeed. As noted, these positions are intended to be a transition, time will thus be made available for additional education and training. In the last quarter of the placement, Employment Resource Centre staff, in consultation with agency host and participants, will develop an exit or transition plan to assist people in securing another job.

### Program Evaluation:

Toronto Social Services will complete an evaluation of this initiative at the end of 2007. A key success factor will be the number of clients completing placement and making a successful transition to unsubsidized work. Feedback will be sought from the agency hosts, participants and staff on the effectiveness of program design and delivery, as well as the impact of the initiative on agency capacity and benefits to the local community.

Based on the evaluation results, program modifications will be made as required. As well, funding will be sought from alternate sources to continue the initiative and provide employment opportunities to OW clients who reside in the city's most vulnerable communities.

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### Attachment 3

#### 'Investing in Families' Initiative – Overview

The following provides an overview of the roles and responsibilities of the service delivery partners that will collaborate in the implementation of this initiative.

#### Social Services:

Toronto Social Services (TSS) will manage the 'Investing in Families' initiative and coordinate activities with Children's Services, Parks, Forestry and Recreation and Public Health. All financial and administrative aspects of the initiative will be managed through TSS, and costs related thereto absorbed within TSS approved budgets.

TSS will continue to provide Ontario Works (OW) assistance for the single parent and his/her dependent children. Social Services Caseworkers will have regular and frequent contact with the family, whether by phone or in person/in-home. The caseworker will ensure core OW activities are carried out (e.g. proper and timely issuances of funds, monitoring client progress and providing additional employment and financial supports as required) but also play a broader role, which is at the heart of the integrated family case management approach that will be used to support clients. To that end, TSS staff, notably caseworkers, will ensure all needed services are

coordinated, are delivered in a timely manner to the family, and are integrated in a way that provides the greatest benefit to participants and their families.

#### Recreation Services:

The recreation component of the initiative includes an in-home recreation assessment for each child/youth in the family completed by a Recreationist from Toronto Parks, Forestry & Recreation. The assessment identifies the interests of each child/youth, the supports required to ensure successful participation, and a brief education on the benefits of recreation. The supports required may include transportation, equipment, and childcare to facilitate participation in recreation programs.

The Recreationist assists the family in placements to age-appropriate skill development recreation opportunities. This will include a range of recreation programs where skills are developed either by participation in team or group activities or through lessons, classes and/or youth employment training. The minimum service level is one program per child per year. The parent will also be encouraged to participate in recreational activity.

The Recreationist also provides resource contact numbers to the families for other needs the family may identify either in the assessment or subsequent follow-ups. Two Recreationists will be funded through the initiative, at \$0 net cost to the City, to support participants and undertake the above functions.

#### Public Health Services:

The Public Health component includes an in-home health/mental health assessment for each family member. The assessment identifies the physical, emotional and mental health needs of each family member and the supports required to ensure a successful outcome. On-going case conferencing with TSS staff will be a requirement.

A range of positions will be funded, at no net cost to the City, to support the Public health component of the initiative, including 6 Public Health Nurses, 1 Nursing Supervisor [part-time] and 1 Support Assistant [part-time]).

#### Children's Services:

Children's Services will continue to provide child care brokers services to the Families First caseload. Existing child care brokers will work closely with the TSS Caseworker to facilitate child care services. It is anticipated that the child care brokers will discuss child care opportunities with the parent in the parent's home.