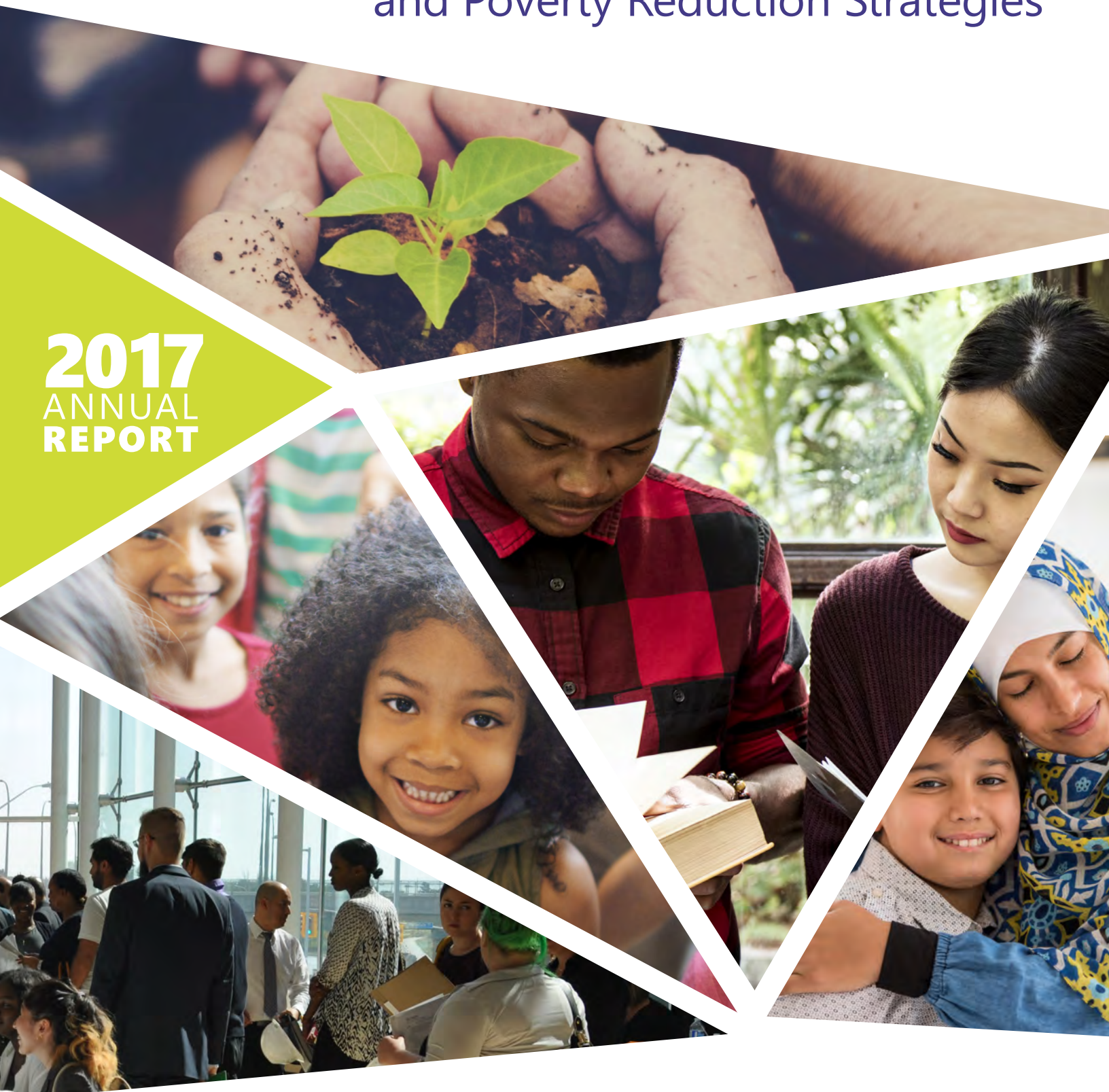


Meeting Many Needs:

Advancing Toronto's Workforce Development
and Poverty Reduction Strategies

2017
ANNUAL
REPORT







Contents

4

Message from Patricia Walcott, General Manager,
Toronto Employment and Social Services (TESS)

6

Section 1: Transforming TESS' Services for New Realities

10

Section 2: Who We Serve

14

Section 3: Understanding Client Needs and Experiences

17

Section 4: Simplifying Access to Services and Benefits

20

Section 5: Leveraging Partnerships and Innovation to Meet Needs

38

Section 6: Marketing TESS' Services

42

Section 7: Directions for 2018

44

For More Information



Message from Patricia Walcott, General Manager



It gives me great pleasure to introduce Toronto Employment and Social Services' (TESS) second Annual Report. TESS is the City division responsible for providing employment supports, financial benefits, and social supports to residents eligible for assistance under Ontario Works (OW). While many of the people we serve are unemployed or underemployed and among the city's most vulnerable, they nevertheless come to us with a diverse array of skills and talents. To support the various needs of city residents, we play a number of important roles, including:

- Administering financial benefits;
- Assessing client needs and connecting residents to City and community services;
- Delivering a range of employment services and supports;
- Contracting with training and community organizations to provide specialized client supports; and

- Facilitating access to jobs and work-experience opportunities.

Meeting Many Needs, the title of this year's report, captures the nature of the critical work that we do each day. In addition to working with employers and clients to address workforce needs and develop employment goals, we help people living in deep poverty to stabilize their lives, address the barriers they face, and build paths to a better future. While much of this work is not easily captured through traditional measures of success such as job outcomes, it is equally essential to building a more prosperous and inclusive Toronto.

TESS' work is especially important at a time of rapid economic change and growing labour market uncertainty. To address the needs of clients and meet the changing demands of employers, it is vital that the services we provide and the ways we provide them continue to evolve. TESS has a long history of leading change, most recently playing an important role in the development of the City's Poverty Reduction and Workforce Development strategies. Over this past year, we have continued to advance these strategies, delivering positive results for residents and employers. As a consequence, 2017 was another very busy and successful year, as we:

- Helped over 28,900 OW clients find work;
 - Assisted over 1,000 youth to secure jobs through the Partnership to Advance Youth Employment (PAYE) program;
 - Introduced a new access model for Ontario Works in Toronto to help clients develop a service plan within days – not weeks – of being deemed eligible for OW assistance;
 - Launched an integrated site (Construction Connections) with the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD) and the YMCA to connect job seekers to opportunities in the construction industry; and
 - Helped 200 clients with multiple barriers to employment gain critical skills, connections and confidence by piloting seven new intensive case management approaches.
- Streamline and simplify access to services;
 - Understand client needs so that we can best meet their goals; and
 - Design and deliver innovative approaches that support workforce development and poverty reduction.

These priorities – which mirror the client’s journey through our services – inform and guide our work. This report highlights our achievements in 2017 and the impact for residents, employers and other partners, in each of these priority areas.

In 2018, TESS will continue to support Toronto residents living in poverty and connect job seekers to employment opportunities with a focus on youth, individuals with criminal justice experience, and other client groups who face barriers to employment.

The success achieved in these areas could not be accomplished alone. We are grateful to the many partners and stakeholders who contributed to our work to reduce poverty, strengthen communities and support inclusive economic growth.

The dedicated, professional staff at TESS look forward to working with you to advance the dual goals of workforce development and poverty reduction in Toronto. Together, we can make a positive difference in the lives of city residents and communities.

In 2017, we also developed a new divisional purpose statement to better reflect our work:

Together we encourage purpose and possibility to help the people we serve pursue their best lives.

Patricia Walcott

General Manager
Toronto Employment and Social Services

We also identified four core values – trust, responsiveness, empathy, and relevance – to guide our interactions with clients, employers and other stakeholders. Finally, we identified three key strategic priorities for 2017/2018:

Section 1: Transforming Services for New Realities



Recognized for its competitiveness and innovation, diversity and inclusion, Toronto continues to be a city of possibility and opportunity. In recent years, the local economy has performed strongly, with real GDP growth consistently above 3 per cent and unemployment falling to levels not seen for decades.¹ For most residents, Toronto remains a great place to live, work, and dream.

Yet, for too many residents, this sense of possibility and opportunity seems out of reach. According to census data, 20 per cent of Torontonians have low incomes,² significantly more than the rates for Canada (14 per cent) and Ontario (14 per cent). In general terms, the risk

of unemployment and persistent poverty disproportionately affects those with limited education and skills. Furthermore, specific populations such as recent immigrants, racialized minorities, people with disabilities and Aboriginal Peoples face multiple layers of disadvantage as well as systemic barriers to employment.

These high levels of poverty reflect well-documented changes to labour markets, including the rise of disruptive technologies, the growth of precarious jobs and the emergence of the “gig economy.” The impact of these changes is also evident in increased long-term unemployment, especially among vulnerable groups. Many income security and social

1 <http://www.conferenceboard.ca/press/newsrelease/2017/10/17/toronto-to-be-one-of-canada's-growth-leaders-this-year-and-next?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1>
<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2018/ed/bgrd/backgroundfile-110709.pdf>

2 Low Income refers to whether an individual, family, or household had an income below a specific low-income line. The Low Income Measure After Tax (LIM-AT) is the statistic used most frequently and as a key indicator by Statistics Canada. The threshold of income varies based on the size of a household. For 2015, the LIM-AT threshold is \$22,133 for a one person household, \$31,301 for a two person household, and \$44,266 for a four person household.



programs, whether eroded, outdated or overwhelmed, have struggled to keep pace with these changes, leaving those in need at risk of falling further behind or through the cracks completely.

To address these challenges, a number of important announcements were made and actions taken in 2017. For example, the federal government began to develop a Canadian Poverty Reduction Strategy and launched the country's first National Housing Strategy, with a new Canada Housing Benefit to improve housing affordability for low income people. Meanwhile, the Government of Ontario announced steps to enhance the Ontario Student Assistance Program, provide free prescription drugs for everyone under 25, and raise the minimum wage.

Important changes were also made to Ontario's social assistance program,

including significant increases to asset levels, as well as exemptions for gifts and income. Beyond these immediate measures, there were also renewed efforts to rethink and transform social assistance and, more broadly, income security. Ontario launched a basic income pilot in three communities to test whether it helps people living on low incomes better meet their basic needs and improve their education, employment, and health. Then, in November 2017, the province received a major report – [*Income Security: A Roadmap for Change*](#) – which set out a 10-year plan for a more effective income security system and social assistance programs that provide adequate financial support, advance social inclusion and help people overcome the multiple and often complex barriers they may face to moving out of poverty. Importantly, the Roadmap's recommendations were endorsed by many organizations and municipalities, including the City of Toronto.³

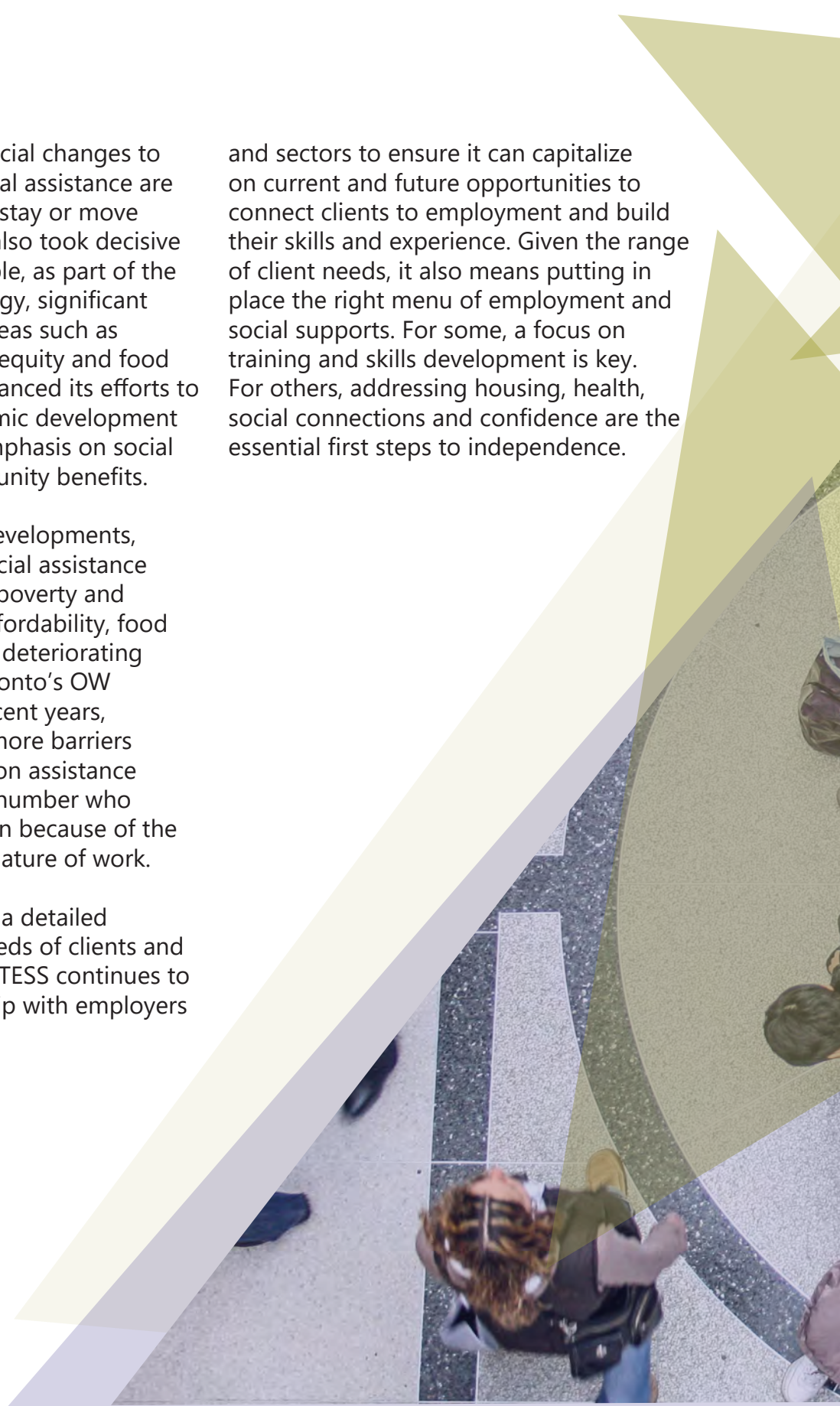
3 <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.EX29.12>

While federal and provincial changes to income security and social assistance are key to helping residents stay or move out of poverty, the City also took decisive steps in 2017. For example, as part of the Poverty Reduction Strategy, significant progress was made in areas such as housing stability, transit equity and food access. The City also advanced its efforts to support inclusive economic development through an increased emphasis on social procurement and community benefits.

Despite these positive developments, residents who rely on social assistance continue to live in deep poverty and struggle with housing affordability, food insecurity, and poor and deteriorating health. Indeed, while Toronto's OW caseload has fallen in recent years, on average clients face more barriers to employment, remain on assistance longer and a significant number who leave subsequently return because of the increasingly precarious nature of work.

This new reality requires a detailed understanding of the needs of clients and employers. Accordingly, TESS continues to strengthen its relationship with employers

and sectors to ensure it can capitalize on current and future opportunities to connect clients to employment and build their skills and experience. Given the range of client needs, it also means putting in place the right menu of employment and social supports. For some, a focus on training and skills development is key. For others, addressing housing, health, social connections and confidence are the essential first steps to independence.





Section 2: Who We Serve

108,602

Ontario Works (OW)
cases served in 2017
representing 188,529
individuals⁴

Gender

male

49 %

female

51 %

35.6

months

Average length of
time on OW

Length of Stay On Assistance

over 2 years

42 %

6 months -
2 years

35 %

less 6
months

23 %

Place Of Birth

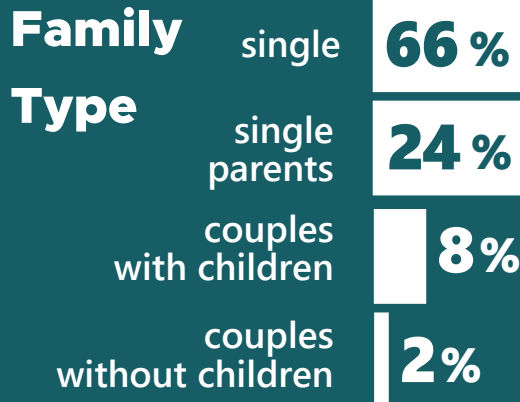
born in Canada

37 %

born outside of Canada

63 %

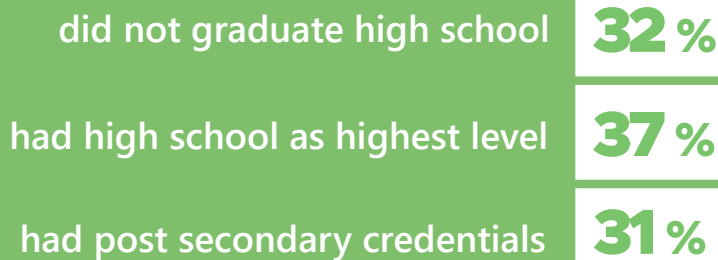
2017 Caseload Statistics



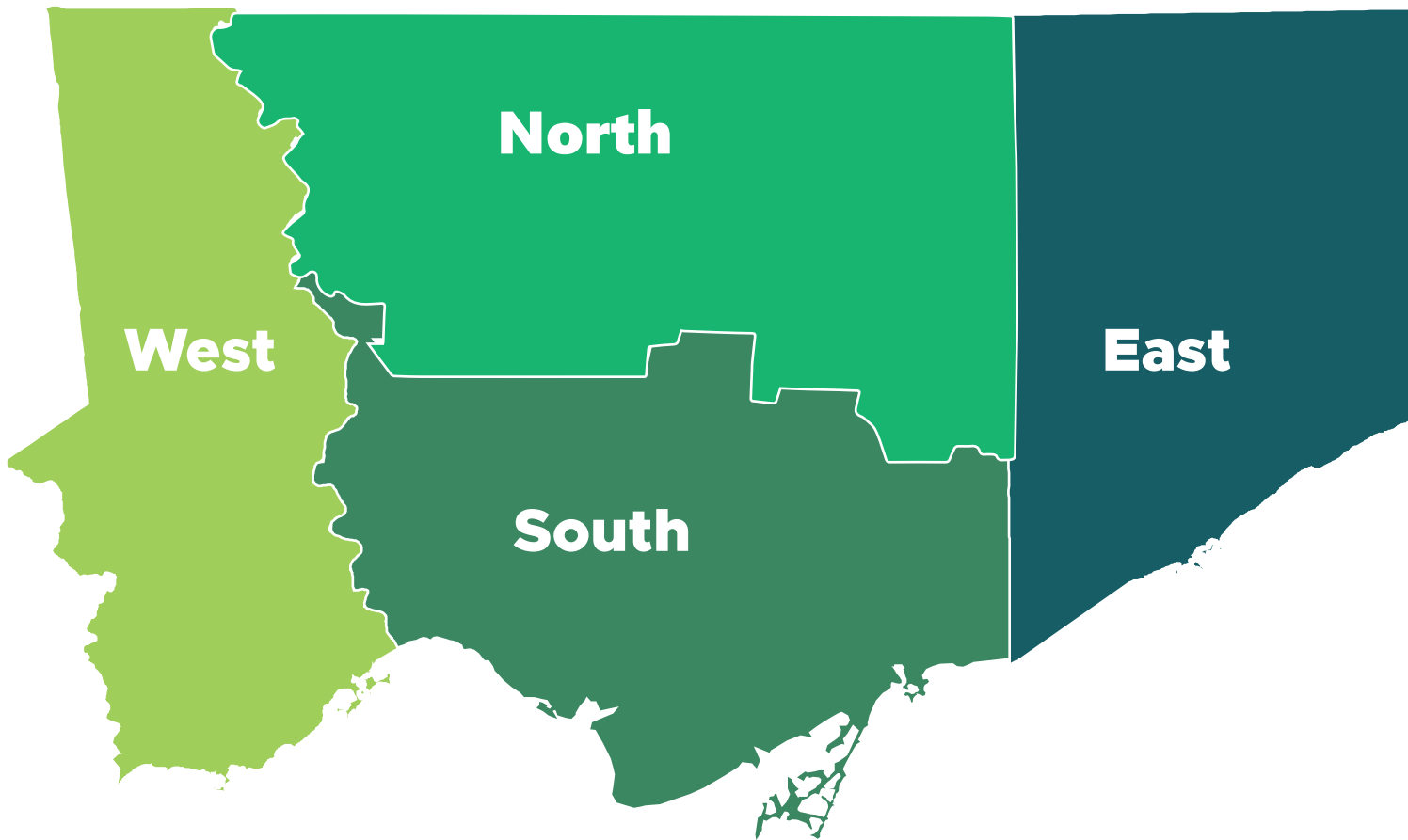
Barriers to Employment



Educational Attainment



4 OW caseload statistics represent the number of cases, not the total number of members (i.e. cases can have more than one family member). Demographic characteristics represent the characteristics of the primary applicant. Percentages may not add up to 100 per cent because of non-response to some variables.



28,962 OW clients placed in jobs


21% of OW clients reported earnings and/or being self-employed

\$110M + of earnings or self-employment income reported by OW clients



A Year in Review

	# of OW cases served	# of employment centre visits	# of OW clients placed in jobs
EAST	34,167	77,949	9,107
NORTH	28,397	45,410	7,618
SOUTH	21,826	84,864	5,875
WEST	24,212	72,475	6,362
TOTAL	108,602	280,698	28,962



Section 3: **Understanding Client Needs and Experiences**

With a rapidly changing economy and a caseload that faces complex challenges, it is important to develop a full understanding of client needs and their experiences using TESS services.

Understanding how the OW caseload has changed over time

In 2017, TESS undertook a comparison of the OW caseload in Toronto in 2010 versus 2016 to examine how it has changed over time. Although the overall caseload has declined, the length of time on assistance has increased, and more clients are

considered to be “distant” from the labour market, meaning that they face barriers to employment. For example, in 2016, 44 per cent of clients had been on assistance for over two years, and the average length of stay for all cases was nearly three years. In addition, clients reported a wide range of barriers to employment, most notably poor physical and mental health, limited education and/or skills, a lack of Canadian work experience, and challenges with transportation.

In response, TESS is providing a wider range of intensive services and supports to help clients progress.



2017 Client Satisfaction Survey Results

91% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "I am satisfied with the overall quality of the service and/or delivery of the service."

93% of respondents said they were satisfied with the service planning experience they had with their caseworker.

74% of respondents who visited an employment centre rated their experience as either "excellent" or "good."

Client Satisfaction Survey

As part of its ongoing work to capture the feedback of service users, TESS conducted a client satisfaction survey in 2017. Consistent with previous surveys, client feedback was very positive, with the vast majority of respondents indicating that they were satisfied with the overall quality of service they received. Clients also reported positive experiences with TESS Employment Centres and were satisfied with the service planning experience they had with their caseworker.

The survey findings also suggest areas where the division can make further progress, such as increasing client awareness of less well-known benefits.

Leading Innovative Research on Singles

Single individuals make up approximately two-thirds of the OW caseload in Toronto, yet are seldom the specific focus of research. In 2017, TESS received funding from the Ontario Centre for Workforce Innovation (OCWI) to develop a better understanding of the characteristics and experiences of singles. The research found that there is no one “type” of single person on OW in Toronto. Moreover, as single people have access to less money inside and outside assistance, they face a number of barriers related to deep poverty, physical and mental health, food insecurity, housing, and social isolation. An executive summary of research, available at toronto.ca, confirms the need for more co-ordinated and holistic services.

Section Summary

Throughout 2017, TESS strengthened its efforts to understand client needs and experiences. Overall, the findings point to the importance of addressing a range of interconnected challenges and barriers that clients face (e.g., physical and mental health, housing stability, social isolation, etc.) which are obstacles to employment, financial independence and personal well-being.

“Being single is really hard because you’ve got nobody else that you can depend on... you’ve got nobody. You’ve got to do it yourself or it doesn’t get done. It’s taxing, physically and mentally. It’s draining...people just need to be given the chance and it’s a matter of finding a way of giving them that chance.”

-Singles Study Participant



Section 4: **Simplifying Access to Services and Benefits**

Over the past year, TESS worked to improve and simplify access to its services and benefits. By changing TESS' intake process and collaborating with provincial partners, TESS has made it easier for clients to access OW and get the support they need. Taking a client-centred approach, these changes represent an important step forward in addressing the challenges and barriers clients face.

Improved Access to Ontario Works

Throughout 2017, a new application and intake process to ensure a consistent client experience was developed and implemented in all 15 TESS offices across Toronto.

This was truly a client-centred initiative. The voices and opinions of clients from interviews, focus groups and surveys guided the process every step of the way. The result was an improved approach that is serving as a best practice model aligned with the Province's own modernization efforts.

As noted earlier, a more precarious labour market means that a significant number of clients who leave OW for employment will return. Recognizing this trend, TESS removed the need for clients who return within six months to go through the full application process. Previously, clients only had a one month period where they could return to OW without an extensive re-application. This new approach saves time for staff and clients and means residents get connected to a service plan and supports more quickly.

Designed for Clients, by Clients: Innovative Approaches to Improving Access to TESS' Services

In July 2017, staff and client engagement sessions were organized and facilitated by TESS caseworkers and members of the City of Toronto's Lived Experience Advisory Group (LEAG), consisting of residents with lived experiences of poverty. This collaboration between staff and residents provided invaluable input on how to improve access to OW in Toronto.

“I understand poverty through lived experience. I understand marginalization through lived experience. I understand homelessness through lived experience. These are some of the issues we face in life. I felt immense support and no judgment from the TESS team...We worked together to begin the process of a more efficient, supportive and welcoming environment where judgment is banished.”

- LEAG member

Co-locating OW and ODSP Offices

The Government of Ontario and City of Toronto share a strong commitment to advance and support poverty reduction, social assistance reform, customer service excellence and integrated service delivery. To advance these common goals, TESS is partnering with the Ministry of Community and Social Services to open three co-located Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) and TESS offices in 2018. Extensive planning for the new offices was undertaken in 2017. Any client who enters a co-located office will be helped to access the appropriate supports. The co-location of services will also allow ODSP clients to access employment programs more easily. This co-ordinated approach will ensure a better client experience and enhanced employment and health outcomes.

Co-locations with Children's Services

In November 2017, the City's Children's Services division and TESS opened a third co-location at Lawrence Square. Staff from both divisions provide integrated, and seamless reception services, and also provide service planning options for their respective clients. All clients have access to employment services available in the centre.

The New Human Services Phone Number

In November 2017, the City launched a single phone number (416-338-8888) providing residents with a single access point to three program areas - housing, childcare, and OW.

Section Summary

In a rapidly shifting economic landscape, TESS recognizes the need to use personalized, holistic, and innovative approaches to delivering employment and social services. The changes made to service access ensure that clients are more easily connected to the services and benefits they need.

Section 5: Leveraging Partnerships and Innovation to Meet Needs

Many TESS clients face significant barriers to independence and employment, including health issues, discrimination, and inequitable access to labour market opportunities. In response, TESS has worked to address these needs so that clients can live their best lives. In 2017, TESS built capacity and strengthened efforts in three major areas:

- Employment and training;
- Social supports and health; and
- Financial Empowerment.

(1): Employment and Training

TESS responds to changing labour markets and client needs through innovative employment and training initiatives. Building on the division's past experience working with employers, TESS is developing sector-based strategies and supporting work-based learning opportunities to ensure job seekers are equipped with the tools and skills that employers need.

Inclusive Sector Strategies

Sector-based strategies are a proven way to help job seekers access quality jobs. TESS works closely with the City's Economic Development and Culture (EDC) division and other stakeholders to ensure that recruitment and job preparation





PAYE Networking Event, October 2017

Section 5: Leveraging Partnerships and Innovation to Meet Needs

approaches are focused on career pathways and in-demand opportunities. The goal of this approach is to identify growing sectors, understand sector-specific needs, create pathways that increase access for various populations, and prepare job seekers for a variety of employment-related opportunities in these sectors.

In 2017, TESS made significant progress in developing sector strategies in construction, food and beverage manufacturing, hospitality and tourism, retail, technology, and the arts. In each of these areas, TESS has engaged employers, hosted workshops, and held information sessions and networking and recruitment events. For example:

- **Construction Connections** is a new sector-focused workforce development system model developed through an innovative partnership between TESS, the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD), United Way Greater Toronto, the Atkinson and Metcalf Foundations, and the Toronto Community Benefits Network (TCBN), among others. This groundbreaking initiative leverages public infrastructure development investment to help low income and local residents from equity-seeking groups connect to employment opportunities in construction. On the ground, TESS and the YMCA work together at an integrated service delivery site at TESS' 150 Eglinton Avenue Employment Centre. This location acts as a one-stop shop that links job seekers with construction trades training, employment opportunities and wrap-around supports, while providing industry employers with qualified candidates. In 2017, over 100 job seekers entered the

Construction Connections pathway and more than 25 connected to construction training, union membership and construction apprenticeships.

- **The Retail Sector** in Toronto continues to be a key contributor of jobs for many people, especially youth. In 2017, TESS continued to build on the long-standing and successful partnerships the City has developed with retail sector leaders such as the Retail Council of Canada and Oxford Properties, as well as the United Way Greater Toronto and CivicAction, to explore ways to move beyond just jobs, towards building a sector strategy that focuses on sustainable career pathways and creating additional reliable entry points for a wider range of job seekers. Moving forward, this work will expand to also incorporate approaches that help job seekers understand and prepare for the impacts of technological changes by developing the skills and mindsets that will support long-term career pathways. .
- **The Art Connections pilot** (profiled on page 23) provides foreign-trained visual artists in receipt of OW with the supports and networks needed to navigate the Toronto arts sector. Many of these artists were recognized professionals in their home countries prior to coming to Canada. Art Connections empowers them to maximize their artistic talents and entrepreneurial skills to find success in Toronto. Reflecting its positive impact, the lessons learned are being embedded to support additional newcomer professionals in the arts.



Inclusive Sector Strategy: Art Connections

Demonstrating innovation at the local level, the Art Connections pilot program was designed and delivered to meet the needs of foreign-trained professional visual artists in receipt of OW in Toronto. Through a combination of group sessions and one-on-one meetings with a caseworker, participants in the program gained the critical skills and tools needed to navigate the arts sector in Canada. By the end of the pilot, the artists felt more confident, connected, and ready to pursue their goals as creative professionals in their new home country.

“[The Art Connections program] is preparing me to establish myself in Toronto, something I wouldn’t have been able to do on my own. My favourite part of the program was the help and support whether it be financial, advice or guidance; it helped shape my vision and my goals as an artist and entrepreneur...”

- Art Connections participant

NPower Canada

- TESS has hired 46 program participants for paid internships since 2015.
- 38 have completed internships, with 34 securing employment and/or enrolling in post-secondary education within six months of program completion.
- Graduates have started rewarding careers with leading employers such as CIBC, Compugen, Morneau Shepell, OMERS and Rogers Communications.

Sector in Profile – Technology

Toronto is the largest, most dynamic and innovative hub of technology-focused businesses in Canada, making it the country's centre for technology research and development. In recent years, TESS has worked closely with EDC and with partners such as LinkedIn Canada and CivicAction to better understand the tech talent landscape in Toronto, including in-demand skills and career paths in order to provide more opportunities for low income residents in this critical sector. To advance this work, in 2017, TESS staff were part of the MaRS Tech Talent Advisory Committee supporting the development of their Talent Fuels Tech strategy for the GTA.

NPower Canada

NPower Canada is a charitable organization that launches underserved young adults into meaningful and sustainable careers. Its comprehensive curriculum ensures participants are equipped with in-demand digital, technical and professional skills and connects them to new and rewarding career opportunities with some of Canada's largest employers. TESS has partnered with NPower Canada since it started in Toronto in 2015, referring youth and employers to their workforce development programs, and providing paid internship opportunities for program participants. To date, more than 560 youth have graduated from NPower Canada IT and professional services training, 80 per cent of whom are employed or pursuing higher education within six months of graduation. TESS is one of NPower Canada's top internship employers and continues to launch underserved young adults into meaningful and rewarding careers in technology.

Workforce Development Symposium

On October 23, 2017, the City of Toronto, Metcalf Foundation and United Way Greater Toronto hosted a workforce development symposium to foster opportunities for formalized learning and knowledge exchange among people leading sector strategies, work-based learning programs and youth employment initiatives. The event brought together approximately 150 attendees representing a wide range of stakeholders engaged in sector-based workforce development policy, services and training in the Toronto region, including the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services and the Ministry of Community and Social Services. A keynote address delivered by Marjorie Parker, President & CEO of JobsFirst NYC, coupled with panel and table discussions, provided opportunities to share best practices in developing, scaling up and sustaining effective youth focused sector-based workforce development programs and approaches.

Contracted Employment Programs

TESS contracts with a wide range of service providers to ensure that residents in receipt of OW have access to targeted employment services and training opportunities including career planning and assessments, self-employment support, sector-focused career development and occupation-specific skill training. Building on the existing menu of options, in 2017, TESS launched a request for proposals for new programs (to

Contracted Employment Programs in 2017

3,872 clients accepted into employment programs

70% of participants who completed programs found employment, self-employment, or transitioned to another structured employment related activity⁵

57 organizations delivered 99 programs

⁵ Post program outcomes are based on 2016 outcome trends since full data set for 2017 was incomplete at the time of publishing

2017 PAYE Key Achievements:

334 participating employers, including
14 City of Toronto divisions

1,016 secured
jobs

270 in work-based
learning opportunities

2,300 participants



PAYE Leadership Awards, 2017

be delivered throughout 2018-19) with enhanced social supports and foundational skills development to support participants facing challenges entering the labour market.

Partnership to Advance Youth Employment (PAYE)

PAYE is a joint initiative among private sector employers, the City of Toronto, and a network of community partners that connects youth (aged 18-29) from disadvantaged communities with jobs and employment sectors that

2017 Investing In Neighbourhoods Key Achievements:

270 + Non-profit
organizations
offered placements

1,180 OW clients
gained
work experience

they would not otherwise access. PAYE works mainly with job-ready youth who are out of school, unemployed or underemployed, providing them with one-on-one support, referrals to training and education, networking and mentoring opportunities, and jobs with career potential. PAYE also provides support for youth who are less ready for employment by offering job preparation support and referral to appropriate programs in the community.

Through the PAYE Leadership Award, the City of Toronto recognizes exceptional leadership and outstanding contributions that increase employment opportunities for youth. In 2017, PAYE Leadership Awards were presented to United Way Toronto and York Region; Clifford Hennig-Pereira, Senior National Manager, Recruitment Advice Centre, RBC; and Sondley Forestan, PAYE Alumni and Customer Service Representative, CIBC.

Investing in Neighbourhoods (IIN)

In 2008, TESS established Investing in Neighbourhoods (IIN) which connects individuals in receipt of OW with work experience in non-profit organizations. TESS funds the positions by providing 100 per cent of the salary for up to one year. IIN builds participants' skills and connections through varied placement opportunities and boosts participants' immediate and longer-term employability.

Emergency Services

TESS supports OW clients seeking a career in emergency services, such as paramedic and fire services, by preparing them to enter the workforce and to complete provincial certification requirements. The Toronto Fire Services Program, for example, trains participants through Centennial College's Pre-Service Firefighter Certificate Program. Upon successful completion, graduates are able to apply and work as fire fighters across Ontario. In 2017, nine of 11 participants completed the program, and three individuals were hired by Toronto Fire Services. Other participants are continuing to work towards or have completed their provincial certification requirements enabling them to apply for future opportunities.

Supporting Entrepreneurs

Small businesses are vital to Toronto's economy, and programs and services in this area are instrumental in supporting residents to establish viable business plans. TESS has enhanced and refocused its self-employment services and programs through partnerships with the Economic Development and Culture (EDC) division, local community agencies, and other stakeholders. For example, launched in 2015, StarterSpace is an integrated employment and entrepreneurship program offered by TESS and EDC to help youth turn their ideas into real businesses. It provides 18-29 year olds with assistance in developing their Starter Company application, one-on-one business advisory services and access to computers, internet and meeting rooms. In 2017, this initiative distributed 50 grants totaling more than \$175,000 and coached, mentored and guided more than 50 individuals to obtain the skills needed to run a successful business.

2017 Job Incentive Program Key Outcomes:

379 OW clients participated in three to six month work experience opportunities including 61 youth.

45% of participants obtained employment within six months of completing placements

Work-Based Learning Opportunities

In 2017, TESS advanced a number of work-based learning opportunities for low income residents. The Job Incentive Program (JIP) is a long-standing initiative that provides OW clients with a three to six month unpaid work placement with the City of Toronto. These placements provide participants with current, marketable workplace experience, as well as the enhanced skills and networks needed to enhance employability and secure work. In 2017, JIP adopted a more specific focus on youth, developed partnerships with additional City divisions such as Toronto Public Library and Corporate Security, and implemented an innovative cohort model with Toronto Public Health. Overall, in 2017, 18 City divisions, Agencies, Boards and Commissions, and Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) participated in JIP. By leveraging its role as a major employer, JIP provides an avenue for the City to create opportunities that otherwise would not exist for low income residents and people from disadvantaged communities.

TESS is also proud to support the United Way's netWORKS program, a co-ordinated approach to career-oriented networking. netWORKS provides a new way for young people to make the kinds of professional connections they need to find meaningful career opportunities. Leveling the playing field for youth facing barriers to employment, it connects the dots between employers and youth. In 2017, the City of Toronto became the first public sector organization to join the netWORKS program as a mentor partner. TESS played a lead role in developing and piloting the City's participation in this initiative by engaging City divisions, training mentors and hosting group networking sessions. Overall, the City contributed 166 mentors and helped more than 500 youth with one-on-one support to build their networks and find new opportunities.

TESS also played an important role co-leading the City's Work-Based Learning Program, identifying and supporting low income youth candidates to access and succeed in the program. The initiative provided 10 youth with a five month paid practical work experience placement at the City of Toronto in occupational fields that were compatible with their skills, education and desired career paths. Upon completion of the program in 2017, 70 per cent of participants retained employment with the City or transitioned to new employment opportunities. Through ongoing collaboration between the City's Human Resources division and TESS, the program is committed to increase the number and types of opportunities and provide access to job seekers other than youth.



In 2017:

- Approximately 36,000 payments were made to OW/ODSP clients to secure or sustain their housing
- Provided medical benefits to more than 30,000 people
- Helped more than 15,000 clients access almost 60,000 dental procedures
- Assisted more than 7,500 OW cases transition to the Ontario Disability Support Program
- Supported more than 2,100 families with the costs of funeral and burial services
- 4,552 families received child care supports and a child care fee subsidy

(2): Social Supports and Health

There is growing recognition that in order to effectively support an individual's employment prospects, a wider set of personal and social barriers also need to be addressed. This includes:

- Improving access to health and mental health services;
- Managing criminal records;
- Building confidence, resilience and social networks; and
- Providing assistance securing stable housing and child care.

As well as providing essential financial assistance in many of these areas, TESS also plays an important role as a system navigator helping to connect and refer OW clients and other low income residents to the right supports. In 2017, TESS' work in this area included the examples described below.

Welcome Policy

The City of Toronto's Welcome Policy is a fee subsidy that provides free access to City-operated recreation programs to low income individuals and families who live in Toronto. Those who are approved receive an annual financial credit that can be spent on any of the wide variety of high-quality recreation programs offered by the City throughout the year. In 2017, TESS helped 52,360 households access the Welcome Policy, of which 40,398 were on OW.

Hardship Fund

TESS recognizes that there are residents who have income which exceeds Ontario Works (OW) income and asset limits but who cannot afford to purchase essential medical items. They include persons in receipt of Old Age Security, Canada Pension Plan, the "working poor" and other persons on a fixed income. In 2017, TESS helped more than 725 residents through the Hardship Fund.

Investing in Families


Investing in Families (IIF) is an established City program that helps low income families access key employment, health, and recreation services. Through a partnership between TESS, Parks, Forestry, and Recreation (PFR), and Toronto Public Health (TPH), IIF offers innovative and integrated home- and community-based services to eligible families. In 2017, IIF provided social, health and financial supports to over 2,500 clients. One example of the services delivered collaboratively through IIF is Let's Talk, an intervention delivered by TPH Public Health Nurses and supported by TESS and PFR that promotes health and well-being through group conversation, relationship building and health promotion information sharing. Specific objectives include:

- Empowering clients to enhance their overall health and well-being;
- Decreasing social isolation and building social networks; and
- Promoting parenting, child health and development.

In 2017, approximately 500 IIF participants attended 28 Let's Talk groups.

Intensive Case Management (ICM) Pilots

In 2017, seven Intensive Case Management (ICM) pilots were launched to support clients with criminal justice experience, individuals 45 and over, residents with complex addictions issues, and youth who self-identify as LGTBQ2S. In addition to providing wrap-around supports, the pilots connected participants to various sectors such as construction and digital technology, or equipped clients with important skills such as resilience, self-awareness, and positivity. For example, the Peer Navigators pilot combines peer support and work-based learning. In partnership with the organization Working for Change, the pilot provides OW clients with peer training and mentoring, followed by a learning opportunity in a TESS office. Participants receive three months of training and a four month placement with the goal of developing leadership skills, overcoming social isolation, and gaining work experience. In 2017, 15 peers graduated and were placed in unpaid work placements in seven OW offices where they helped support other OW clients.



Creating Pathways for Residents with Criminal Justice Experience

Throughout 2017, TESS supported hundreds of clients with criminal justice experience:

- Two pilots (Trades Connex and Consumers to Creators) equipped black youth, some of whom had experience in the justice system, with training and work experience in construction and digital technology using culturally appropriate intensive case management.
- TESS increased access to the record suspension process by covering application costs for social assistance recipients, hosting information sessions and offering one-on-one services with law students and record suspension advisors in all offices. Over a four month period in 2017, 329 residents accessed these supports.
- TESS organized events and training sessions for City staff, community partners, employers, and job seekers with police records to promote inclusive hiring practices, and to provide job seekers and employment service providers with practical strategies for finding work with a criminal record. A 'Get the Offer' event, held during Workforce Development Month in 2017, was attended by 70 City and Ministry staff, employers, community partners and job seekers with police records.
- TESS trained staff to provide job coaching supports for justice-involved job seekers.

Impact of the Community Librarian Initiative in 2017

1,029

library cards issued

464

Book a
Librarian

sessions conducted at TESS

76

programs and
events hosted by

librarians for low income
city residents

50

WiFi Hotspot units
provided to TESS

clients (available for six months)

Community Librarian Initiative (CLI)

In partnership with Toronto Public Library (TPL), the Community Librarian Initiative (CLI) began in September 2016 with a Community Librarian working in two TESS offices. Throughout 2017, 12 TESS offices hosted a Community Librarian for approximately six months, which made it easier for many clients (especially those facing multiple barriers) to access the various services TPL offers.

While visiting a TESS location, clients were able to meet with a Community Librarian, receive a library card, and access, participate in, or use the free programs, services, and supports available at TPL's 100 branches and online.

2017 Homeless Employability Pilot Project Outcomes

936 one-on-one
appointments
completed with shelter residents

82% of HEPP clients
secured housing
within six months of their participation

32% were employed
within six months

85% were enrolled in
an employment-
related activity (e.g., training, work-
based learning, academic upgrading,
volunteering, etc.)

Homeless Employability Pilot Project (HEPP)

The Homeless Employability Pilot Project (HEPP) is a partnership between TESS and the City's Shelter, Support and Housing Administration division that provides employment services, supports and programs for residents in City-run shelters. HEPP helps participants increase social connections, develop skills, improve employability, and learn to navigate supports more easily.



(3): Financial Empowerment

The goal of financial empowerment is to improve financial, social and employment outcomes for people living in poverty through financial literacy, awareness of available (financial) benefits, debt counselling, assistance with tax filing, access to safe financial products, and budgeting.

RESP/Canada Learning Bond Access Path Pilot

A new area of focus for TESS is supporting OW clients with children to access the Canada Learning Bond (CLB), a federal government grant which provides up to \$2,000 for a low income child's post-secondary education or training costs. In partnership with SmartSAVER, TESS supported 500 Canada Learning Bond registrations at a single event in 2017, representing up to \$1 million that could be accessed by clients for their children's education.

Section Summary

Recognizing that clients face many complex challenges and that their journeys on to and off of assistance are not linear, TESS continues to put in place a range of innovative initiatives to increase service for priority populations and respond to various needs. Partnerships with other City divisions, employers, training providers, educational institutions, the provincial and federal governments and community organizations are key to the success of these initiatives.







Section 6 : **Marketing TESS' Services**

Every day, through one-on-one meetings and group activities, TESS staff work closely with OW clients to increase their awareness of the services and supports that can make a positive difference in their lives. In addition to this core work, to ensure that clients, residents, employers and other stakeholders are aware of TESS' services, the division also uses a combination of traditional channels and social media to profile key events and programs. This outreach includes in-person events, such as the City's annual Workforce Development Month, as well as the use of different social media platforms including Twitter and YouTube, to market our services. TESS ensures that key information reaches as many people as possible.

Workforce Development Month

Highlighting the work City divisions do to support job seekers and employers all year round, TESS hosted its sixth annual Workforce Development month in October 2017. This month, which brings together job seekers, employers, City divisions, and community agencies, had three major goals:

- Increase awareness, knowledge, and use of City services by residents and employers;
- Engage city residents and connect them to services, training, and employment opportunities; and
- Spotlight key partnerships between the City, community organizations, private sector employers and networks, and other orders of government.



Social Media in 2017

Twitter

28,816

Visits to the TESS profile

781

Tweets

496.4K

Impressions

Facebook

97

Posts

3,867

Likes

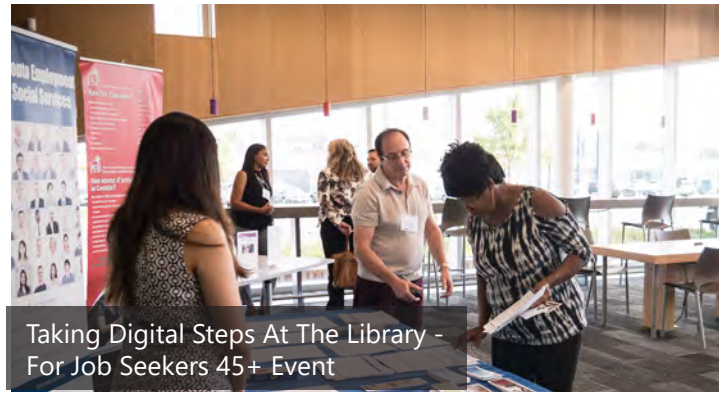
211K

Total reach

Yorkdale Shopping Centre held its largest ever hiring event in September 2017. With more than 35 participating retailers, TESS and its Employment Ontario partner agencies provided coaching and resume and interview support for qualified candidates attending the event. In total, more than 100 individuals were hired.



PAYE Networking Event



Taking Digital Steps At The Library - For Job Seekers 45+ Event



Councillor Shelley Carroll speaks with employers and TESS staff at the Don Valley East Youth Hiring Event



PAYE Networking Event



Mayor Tory speaks with employers at the Yorkdale Job Fair



Councillor Michael Thompson participates in the Workforce Development Promotional Video 2017



City of Toronto Career and Information Fair

Workforce Development Month highlights:

28 events held

4,500 + participants

850 + employment opportunities

675 + residents interviewed

225 residents hired

Section 7: Directions for 2018

In 2018, TESS will continue its work to:

- Understand the current realities facing clients through research and engagement;
- Make it easier to access divisional services;
- Provide supports and programming that address barriers to employment;
- Offer advice to City Council and the Province; and
- Model and pioneer partnerships with employers and training providers.

Recognizing the multi-faceted nature of clients' needs, in 2018, TESS will integrate and advance elements of the City's Poverty Reduction and Workforce Development Strategies to provide relevant services and seek out opportunities to collaborate with divisional, community and employer partners. Anticipated high impact initiatives in 2018 include:

Transit Fare Equity: The Fair Pass: Transit Fare Equity Program was endorsed by Toronto City Council in 2016. This program will offer discounted TTC fares to low income city residents to support their ability to secure and access employment and participate fully in everyday activities. In April 2018, TESS will roll out the first phase of the Fair Pass Program offering discounted TTC fares to eligible Ontario Works (OW) and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) clients. Approximately 150,000 clients will be eligible for the discount.

Financial Empowerment: Building on the division's success connecting clients to the Canada Learning Bond, and learning from other financial empowerment pilots from 2017, in 2018 TESS will aim to assist 3,000 low income children in Toronto whose parents are in receipt of OW access the Canada Learning Bond. Additionally, as part of our broader financial empowerment program, Toronto will be the first municipality in Canada to have in-house financial empowerment coaches supporting OW families.

Construction Connections: The goal for 2018 is to connect 200 residents to industry training, trade union membership and/or employment opportunities through supports provided at the Construction Connections site.

Community Benefits: Throughout 2017, TESS increased its experience in community benefits work by implementing Construction Connections, supporting the implementation of the City's Social Procurement Program, and continuing to play a role in Community Economic Development (CED) plans in Toronto Community Housing revitalization communities. Building on this work, in 2018, TESS will support the development of the City's first Community Benefits Framework and the development and implementation of a Community Benefits Agreement for Woodbine Expanded Gaming in Rexdale.

Contracted Employment Services:

As a result of the request for proposals for contracted employment programs completed in 2017, 3,100 training seats will be available to OW clients in 2018, provided by 42 contracted employment service providers delivering 63 programs. The range of program/training options is directly linked to the needs of OW clients in Toronto who are increasingly facing complex, multi-faceted challenges and barriers to employment. Program options will continue to be available, for example, for people interested in the trades, individuals with criminal justice experience, and residents with disabilities.

Youth Employment: This year, PAYE's focus will be to increase work-based learning opportunities for youth. Through access to more apprenticeship/internship opportunities, disadvantaged youth participating in PAYE can make better job market connections, and develop new life skills and qualifications. In 2018, the goal is to increase the number of youth engaged in a work-based learning initiative to 350. Furthermore, through the implementation of an integrated youth services framework, TESS and SDFA will increase employment opportunities for Toronto youth in 2018.

Anti-Black Racism: Several initiatives which TESS develop and deliver under the auspices of the City's Workforce Development and Poverty Reduction strategies (e.g. PAYE) will also support objectives of Toronto's Anti-Black Racism Action Plan. In collaboration with the Social Development, Finance and Administration (SDFA) division, TESS will support racialized youth and adults, particularly those with criminal justice experience, address personal and systemic barriers to employment. Key initiatives in this area in 2018 will include:

- Providing itinerant legal services/advice in TESS Employment Centres;
- Developing intensive case management programs to support youth with multiple barriers to employment; and
- Working with employers (and associations) to increase awareness of the challenges job seekers face when companies use criminal record checks as a generic screening tool (rather than when there's a specific legislative requirement to do so).

Given the known challenges facing this client group, TESS aims to engage 30 per cent of OW youth clients (who have disclosed criminal justice experience) to one or more of these service interventions.

Service Integration: TESS will continue its work with the Province to open three ODSP/OW co-located spaces by the end of 2018. As part of this initiative, TESS will identify ways to make the process of moving from OW to ODSP easier; develop employment programs, workshops and services specifically for local ODSP clients; and collaborate with ODSP staff in the delivery of specialized programs. In addition, as part of City efforts to streamline how residents access a broader range of social supports, TESS, in partnership with Toronto Children's Services, and the Shelter, Support and Housing Administration division, will support the Human Services Integration (HSI) initiative. During 2018, HSI will roll out a knowledge base to support staff in three different divisions and advance planning for an integrated contact centre, enhance the Services and Benefits Finder Tool, and test a co-ordinated needs assessment to more efficiently connect residents to services.

For more information

Patricia Walcott

General Manager,
Toronto Employment & Social Services
416-392-8952
patricia.walcott@toronto.ca

toronto.ca/humanservices

toronto.ca/workone

 facebook.com/torontoess

 [@torontoess](https://twitter.com/torontoess)

#workoneTO