
City Council

Notice of Motion

MM13.11	ACTION			Ward: All
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Asking the Province to maintain the definition of disability for recipients of the Ontario Disability Support Program - by Councillor Brad Bradford, seconded by Councillor Paul Ainslie

** Notice of this Motion has been given.*

** This Motion is subject to referral to the Economic and Community Development Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

Recommendations

Councillor Brad Bradford, seconded by Councillor Paul Ainslie, recommends that:

1. City Council request the Ontario Minister of Children, Community and Social Services to:
 - a. reverse budget cuts made and planned for the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services;
 - b. maintain the current Ontario Disability Support Program definition of disability;
 - c. increase social assistance rates; and
 - d. respect the rights of people living with disability to participate in decisions affecting them by creating a meaningful process of co-reviewing and co-designing programs of social assistance and adjudication processes.

Summary

As many Members of Council are aware, the Province of Ontario has announced \$1 billion in cuts to social assistance over the next two years, including plans to narrow down the definition of disability used for the Ontario Disability Support Program. Doing so has the potential to create significant financial challenges for vulnerable Torontonians.

This Motion asks the Provincial Government to reverse cuts to social support funding, maintain the existing definition of disability for Ontario Disability Support Program, continue to increase social assistance rates, and engage with people living with disabilities to take their lived experience into account, when designing social assistance programs.

A narrower definition of disability could limit access to enhanced support of Ontario Disability Support Program to a portion of future applicants living with disability and also to some of the

current 120,000 Ontario Disability Support Program recipients living in Toronto if these recipients are not grand-fathered together.

The change to the definition of disability may mean other vulnerable people with disabilities that are episodic, including people undergoing cancer treatments, people with Multiple Sclerosis, people living with HIV, and people with arthritis or diabetes, will be denied benefits.

Multiple groups have identified significant challenges with changing the current definition of disability under the Ontario Disability Support Program, including the Income Security Reform Group, the First Nations Income Security Reform Working Group, and the Urban Indigenous Table on Income Security Reform, and Ontario 360.

The Council-adopted Poverty Reduction Strategy Action Plan for 2019-2022 has recognized that provincial regulatory and funding changes for social assistance will have detrimental consequences for Toronto's low-income residents and for Toronto's ability to respond to the effects of poverty.

For reference, the new Official Poverty Line published in the 2019 Federal Poverty Reduction Strategy has been set at \$1,699 per month for a single person; the maximum Ontario Disability Support Program monthly allowance is \$1,169 (32 percent under poverty line), the maximum Ontario Works monthly allowance is \$733 (57 percent under poverty line).

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM13.11