

Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy Report Back

Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee

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PRSO Staff Report Back

May 5, 2022



Report Back Request (1 of 2)

City Council request the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to explore the feasibility of improving access to the Fair Pass Program, in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer, Toronto Transit Commission, and to expedite any ongoing work, including but not limited to:

- a. exploring the feasibility of in-person registration in accordance with public health guidelines;
- b. expediting the extension of the Fair Pass Program to residents who already receive other means-tested supports such as rent-geared-to-income housing; and
- c. exploring the feasibility of mailing programmed, validated PRESTO cards to facilitate and ensure access;

and to report back to the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee on the results of the review by the fourth quarter of 2021.

Report Back Request (2 of 2)

The Manager, Poverty Reduction Strategy Office report to the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee by the end of 2021 on:

- the specific data the City has indicating how many people with disabilities are living in poverty in the City of Toronto.
- the data that is needed to have an understanding of how poverty impacts people with disabilities and the impact of the Poverty Reduction strategy initiatives on reducing poverty in this population.
- next steps the Poverty Reduction Strategy office will take to integrate the collection of disability data into their data collection methods to address identified gaps in current data collection.

Fair Pass Transit Discount Program



toronto.ca/transitdiscount

Fair Pass Overview

- The Fair Pass Transit Discount Program reduces the cost of taking the TTC and Wheel-Trans by saving low-income transit riders 33% on single adult fares (\$1.10) or 21% on monthly adult passes (\$32.75)
- Discount access requires an individual application and PRESTO card
- Discount is available for Toronto residents 20-64 years of age who are currently receiving income assistance from:
 - Ontario Works (OW)
 - Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)
 - Child Care Fee Subsidy*
 - Rent-Geared-to-Income Subsidy*

* Subsidy recipients must also meet financial eligibility criteria (below the Low-Income Measure After Tax + 15%)

Fair Pass Application Snapshot

Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)

Since December 2020 when the Application & Support Centre began administering Fair Pass applications, **1,828** ODSP clients have received the discount, 193 deemed ineligible (10%)

On average, **114 new ODSP Fair Pass clients per month**

How do ODSP clients apply for the discount?

- Online application (65%)
- Phone application (35%)
- Paper application (none requested)

Improving Access Update #1: Program Extension

In Q1 2022, program eligibility was extended to:

1. **OW & ODSP** clients receiving \$100+ in medical or employment-related transportation supports (February 17, 2022)
 - Additional 10% of clients expected to be eligible
2. **Rent-Geared-to-Income** subsidy recipients (March 31st, 2022)
 - Additional 77,000 residents eligible to apply

Improving Access Update #2: Program Reach

Based on feedback from multiple advisory groups, Fair Pass communications will provide greater clarity and inclusive content

- Wheel-Trans clearly identified as a mode of discounted TTC transit
- Tailored resources being developed for OW and ODSP caseworkers
- Fair Pass information poster/flyer translated into 41 languages and informs audiences that interpretation services are available
- QR code to directly access online application form and ASC hotline provided for assistance
- Social media promotions and additional advertising being explored

Improving Access Update #3: Assessment of Application Process

Primary Fair Pass application channels are:

1. **Online** - self-serve or assisted; City webpage and form enabled for translation and AODA compliant
2. **Phone** - caseworker assisted; Bell Relay and interpretation services available

Improving Access Update #3: Assessment of Application Process

In 2021, completed user experience testing and an accessibility assessment of the Fair Pass online application process

- Corporate Services' Client Experience, Innovation, and Transformation Team worked with Human Services Integration Office, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Office, and the Lived Experience Advisory Group to undertake user testing of the Fair Pass application process
- Modifications and improvements were made to webpages and forms
- Technical Services completed an AODA assessment to ensure compliance

Improving Access Update #4: Feasibility of in-person & mail processes

In-person applications – The Application & Support Centre does not currently have counter service options to provide in-person support

- Housing providers are provided with resources and information to offer in-person support to Rent-Geared-to-Income subsidy recipients

Paper applications - By request, Application & Support Centre will mail a paper Fair Pass application form that must be faxed to complete the application

- PRESTO cards will not be individually mailed to applicants by the Application & Support Centre

Improving Access Update #4: Feasibility of in-person & mail processes

PRESTO Card Access & Use

Ongoing collaborations with Toronto Public Library and subsidized housing providers to provide free PRESTO cards to residents

Confirmed that all Wheel-Trans vehicles are equipped with PRESTO card readers and that light/sound displays no longer stigmatize Fair Pass clients

Continued work with TTC and Metrolinx to increase the accessibility and availability of PRESTO card fare loading options

- PRESTO can mail a purchased PRESTO card to individuals
- PRESTO Customer Service Outlets include TTC stations, Shopper's Drug Mart locations, and 27 grocery store locations

2016 Census Snapshot: Activity Limitations & Poverty

“Activity Limitations” refers to persons who identify having difficulty doing certain activities as a result of physical, mental, or other health-related conditions or problems. This is the closest proxy in the Census to “disability.”

- **104,865 people** in Toronto identified as "always or often" having an activity limitation and were in low-income (LIM-AT)
- **32% of children** 0-17 years of age who “always or often” have an activity limitation are in low-income (LIM-AT) compared to 25% of children with no activity limitations
- **28% of adults** 18-64 who “always or often” have an activity limitation are in low-income (LIM-AT) compared to 13% of adults 18-64 with no activity limitations

2016 Census Snapshot: Activity Limitations & Poverty

Differences in Age, Gender, and Education are reflected among Toronto residents with activity limitations compared to residents who do not have activity limitations.

- **56.2 years** is the median age of those who “always or often” have an activity limitation compared to 38.9 years for all Toronto residents
- **56%** of Torontonians who “always or often” have an activity limitation are **women**
- **50%** of those who “always or often” have an activity limitation have attained a **postsecondary** degree or diploma, compared to 71% of those with no activity limitations

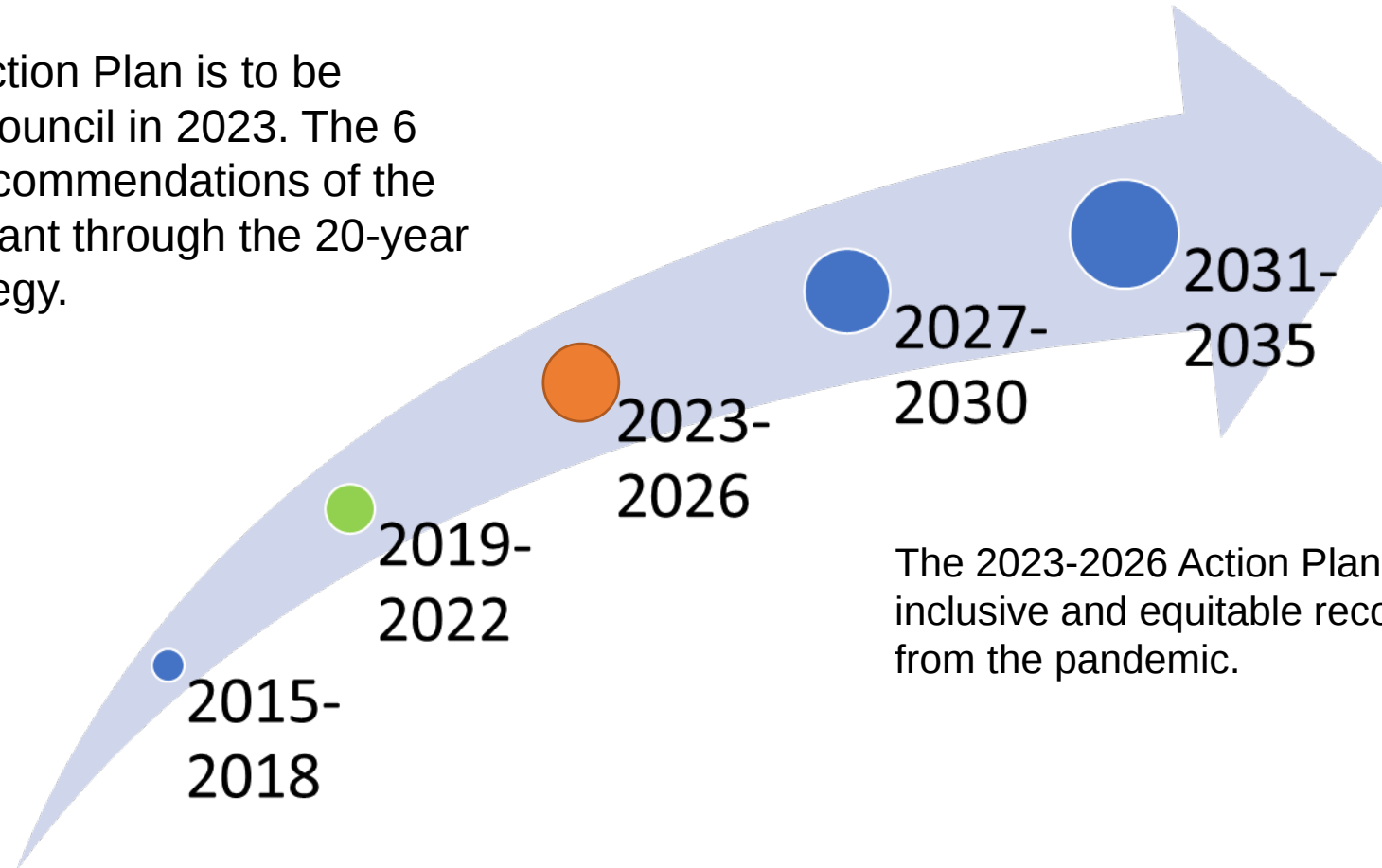
Next steps for collecting and integrating disability and poverty data

1. Continue to work with the Data for Equity Unit to include socio-demographic questions about disability in public surveys and client-focused evaluations and use disaggregated data to inform equitable program planning and service delivery
 - Gender Equity Strategy's needs assessment survey asked respondents if they identify as a person with a disability
 - Poverty Reduction Strategy Office intends to launch the first Toronto Community Survey in 2022
 - Fair Pass program evaluation client survey revisions underway
2. Engage persons with disabilities in the development of the Poverty Reduction Strategy's next term action plan



Third of Five Action Plans

The 2023-2026 Action Plan is to be adopted by City Council in 2023. The 6 themes and 17 recommendations of the strategy are constant through the 20-year length of the strategy.



The 2023-2026 Action Plan will focus on inclusive and equitable recovery & growth from the pandemic.

Developing the Poverty Reduction Strategy 2023-2026 Action Plan

- Entering our year-long engagement phase to inform the direction of our 3rd Term Action Plan
- Focusing on inclusive and equitable recovery & growth that builds key policy areas for moving forward
- Issuing an "open call" to secure an equity-oriented partner to co-develop / co-implement with us and community
- Employing an iterative two-way approach with City divisions leading to continuous engagement and refinement of actions
- Integrating the City's Lived Experience Advisory Group (LEAG) in a key role throughout



Thank You

For more information, or if you have any further questions or feedback,
please contact the Poverty Reduction Strategy Office at:

prso@toronto.ca

www.toronto.ca/povertyreduction