

**Toronto Employment and Social Services(TESS):
Overview of Services and Supports for 2SLGBTQ+ Communities
2SLGBTQ+ Advisory Committee**

April 16, 2024

TESS Services and Supports

Scope of Services:

- TESS provides financial assistance through OW, health benefits, stability supports, and employment supports to recipients of the Ontario Works program. Ontario Works for our service users.
- TESS administers Ontario Works (a Provincially funded social assistance program that provides money for food, shelter, clothing, prescription medications, other health and household costs) to residents in need.
- We fulfil our mandate through an inclusive and client-centred service delivery approach.

Client Supports:

- Our vision, mandate and strategic priorities confirm and operationalize our commitment to equity and inclusion and our continuous improvement of service navigation that is reflective of diverse communities by:
 - proactively seeking opportunities to advocate and influence provincial decisions through a client-centred lens; and
 - applying an intersectional gender equity lens to the development of new services and supports for Ontario Works clients.

Divisional Supports: Client Level

Policy Reviews

- To empower and maintain the dignity of our clients and service users, ongoing reviews of policies and processes impacting 2SLGBTQ+ clients are underway, such as seeking opportunities to further Trans rights.

Training and Wrap Around Support Programs

- Contracted service with employment service & training providers -assist clients in meeting their goals and addressing their complex and concurrent needs.

Client Advisory Groups

- Client Advisory groups comprised of a diverse group of clients in receipt of social assistance to help inform the division on policies, programs and initiatives to ensure services are relevant, and equitable.

Identity Based Data Collection

- Intention and meaningful efforts to collect Identity-Based data from clients in receipt of social assistance to inform equitable program planning and service delivery.

Innovative Case Management

- Divisional and local population-specific Innovative Case Management (ICM) pilots are developed to provide stability supports and improve access to employment resources and supports.

Staff Level

Building staff capacity

- The Continuous Growth Pathway is a list of mandatory trainings to broaden staff understanding of intersectional equity-based principles and communities of inclusion. New and updated modules frequently added to include to strengthen staff understanding of gender and sexuality themes and concepts
- Job aids and alternate supports have been developed to support staff when asking for and collecting sensitive information

Open forums to discuss learnings

- Through open forums and team meetings, staff are encouraged to facilitate open and meaningful dialogue with their teams to empower staff and promote capacity building and resource sharing.

Strategic Advisory Committees and Employee Resource Groups; TESS Pride Network

- These are forums that propel and progress Equity, Diversity and Inclusion goals through staff engagement.
- These spaces help inform and promote learning on intersectionality's of identities and can inform greater systems changes that impact both staff and clients

City of Toronto – Strategic Alignments

TESS collaborates with other City colleagues to improve interdivisional equity work that supports and empowers equity-deserving communities, examples include:

Gender Equity Strategy

- Review of services and resources with an intersectional gender equity lens, to ensure our services are relevant and accessible to our clients
- Identify areas to enhance mentorship opportunities and more inclusive hiring and retention practices

2STNB+ Youth Service Plan

- Policy reviews to enhance accurate representation of clients as they want to be represented
- Development and implementation of ICMs specifically catering to 2STNB youth
- Strengthening relationships with 2SLGBTQ+ communities and organizations to enhance service pathways and resources for clients and service users

Questions?