

TO:	CHAIR AND MEMBERS COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING ON FEBRUARY 13, 2012
FROM:	CINDY HOWARD DIRECTOR, SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES
SUBJECT:	EMPLOYMENT ONTARIO ANNOUNCEMENT TO END FUNDING FOR EMPLOYMENT RESOURCE CENTRES

RECOMMENDATION

That, on the recommendation of the Director of Social and Community Support Services with the concurrence of the Executive Director of Community Services, the following report **BE RECEIVED** for information purposes.

PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER
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BACKGROUND

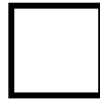
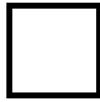
On January 30, 2012, the Provincial Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) announced that funding for Employment Resource Centres and of Practice Firms will end as of July 31, 2012. This announcement is the next step in the Employment Ontario Transformation of employment services across the Province. In August 2010, delivery under the new Employment Services delivery model commenced with the establishment of 7 organizations providing one-stop access services. At that time the Ministry indicated that it would be taking additional time to study and to allow community agencies to retool to align with the service delivery model. After further analysis, MTCU has determined that it will be focusing on one-stop access and therefore has provided 6 months notice to all organizations with Employment Resource Centre and Practice Firm contracts.

Four organizations in the city of London which currently are funded to operate Employment Resource Centres have received this notice. There is no local impact related to Practice Firms as there are none operating in London. Both the Ontario Works Resource Centre and the Employment Resource Centres (ERC) operated by the London Public Library are directly affected.

For the City, this has a direct impact on Ontario Works services. As the delivery agent under the Ontario Works Act, the City has the responsibility to effectively deliver employment and income supports that respond to the needs of our participants. An Employment Resource Centre is an integral support for the delivery of employment services. The Ontario Works ERC is currently staffed by 4 people, 2 of which are funded through the MTCU contract. City staff will be developing a plan to address employment resource centre supports in light of the loss of funding and consistent with meeting the requirements of the Ontario Works program.

This announcement marks the end of a long and successful funding partnership between the City and MTCU. The City has partnered with MTCU (Human Resources and Development Canada prior to the Labour Market Agreement which devolved services to the Province) since 1994 under the Canada London Employment Assistance Referral (CLEAR) program. This partnership was established for the effective use of public funds to support a strong employment system in the City. The services and focus of the partnerships evolved as funding, service and community needs evolved.

The London Public Library's impact will be in 6 branches where ERCs are located, with MTCU funding supporting 16 positions. The Library will still have many resources to assist in job search and Library staff will refer people to full service Employment Ontario sites in London. The Library is also developing a plan to address ongoing services. This ends a 16 year partnership that served over 21,000 people in the last three months of 2011.



The service impacts to this community are significant. Both Ontario Works and the Library need to continue to provide some employment resource services. Both organizations are also awaiting further information and clarification from MTCU in regards to transition supports. We will work collaboratively with MTCU, Employment Ontario one-stop organizations and other members of the employment sector to ensure a smooth transition and to ensure that the community and our customers continue to have access to a full range of employment services. We plan that full services will continue until July 31, 2012.

Given the provincial initiatives currently being undertaken such as the Poverty Agenda, Social Assistance Review and the Neighbourhood Child and Family Centres, as well as our local initiatives such the London Strengthening Neighbourhoods Strategy and Ontario Works in the Community, the direction that MTCU is taking and the timing of this announcement is unfortunate. The loss of ERCs in neighbourhood based library locations removes employment services from those areas. We will monitor the impacts of this decision including how the EO organizations meet these needs.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The total impact to the City budget is the loss of almost \$1 million in funding. For the period of April 1, 2011 to March 31, 2012, MTCU has committed \$212,374 to the City for Ontario Works (CLEAR) services and \$746,970 to the London Public Library. This funds a total of 18 positions as well as administrative and other costs. Both the Library and Ontario Works are redefining how to provide employment information to the public and to Ontario Works participants and staff.

Conclusions

This is a significant change for the City. Our work over the next few months will focus on a smooth transition and will be designed to ensure that the community and our customers continue to have access to a full range of employment services. At this point, the plan is that services will continue until July 31, 2012. We will provide updates about the impacts of this change.

SUBMITTED BY:	
Elisabeth K. White Manager, Employment & Strategic Initiatives Social & Community Support Services	
RECOMMENDED BY:	CONCURRED BY:
Cindy Howard Director, Social & Community Support Services Community Services Department	Ross L. Fair Executive Director Community Services Department

- c. Elaine Sauve, Program Supervisor, Ministry of Community and Social Services
- Susanna Hubbard-Krimmer, CEO, London Public Library
- Mark Harrison, Service Delivery Manager, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
- Sherree Mahood, Director, Western Region, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities