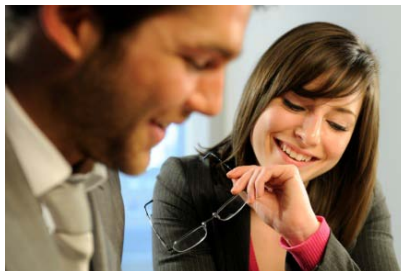




London Ontario Works

Employment Services Framework, 2013 to 2018

February 24, 2012



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PREAMBLE

The London Ontario Works *Employment Services Framework 2013 to 2018* sets out the planned structure of employment service provision for Ontario Works participants in London over a five year period. This framework is a revised and updated version of the Framework approved by Municipal Council in 2005. It provides a framework for service delivery based on community, participants, staff and employment sector key informant input, caseload demographics, and best practices research including the experience of a sample of Ontario jurisdictions.

This framework is an important tool for strategic planning and will assist employment service providers and London's Ontario Works office in developing service and business plans. It is consistent with the City of London's strategic priorities of developing a skilled workforce and partnerships with key private, institutional and community partners (City of London, 2011).

A very comprehensive approach was taken to complete this framework. We appreciate the contributions of our community partners including business employment and education sectors, as well as staff, other Ontario Works offices and people receiving Ontario Works.

Cindy Howard
Ontario Works Administrator and
Director, Social and Community Support Services

LONDON ONTARIO WORKS

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES FRAMEWORK

Background

Under the Ontario Works Act, the City of London has the responsibility to effectively deliver services and supports that respond to the needs of Ontario Works participants. Ontario Works is an employment assistance and financial support program. Employment supports for Ontario Works participants are focused on helping people gain and maintain sustainable employment by supporting training and education, developing “hard” and “soft” employment skills, linking participants to opportunities, and providing individualized supports as needed.

An Employment Assistance Framework for delivering employment services and supports for Ontario Works participants was introduced in 1997 when the Ontario Works program commenced in London, and was revised in 2005 in response to funding changes and the evolution of legislation. The city is committed to an Employment Assistance model that is a combination of individualized services and supports, leveraged with services funded by other Ministries and Departments (including the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, and Human Resources & Skills Development Canada), and contracts for specified employment assistance services with local service providers.

The Value of Work

Besides providing a source of income, employment has social, emotional and health benefits. Working can provide a sense of identity and purpose, as well as provide an opportunity for social contacts. It offers opportunities for personal growth, helps to structure day-to-day life, and contributes to self-esteem. Besides financial hardship, loss or lack of employment can cause mental and physical health problems at the individual level. These have broader reaching negative impacts on the family and the community as a whole (Mikkonen & Raphael, 2010), (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2003).

Ontario Works Employment Services

Employment services are mandated within the Ontario Works legislation. The Ministry of Community and Social Services provides direction on employment service obligations and responsibilities of Ontario Works offices through the Ontario Works Policy Directives. The Directives recognize that a range of employment supports and services must be available to participants in order to respond to their needs and to local labour market needs. Participants are required to undertake an active job search either independently or in a structured job-search program. Learning Earning & Parenting (LEAP), Literacy Screening, assessment and training, and Addiction Services are specialized employment supports and services offered as part of employment services. Employment Placements and Community Placements are required activities as is Self-Employment Development.

The Need for an Employment Services Framework

Municipalities have local discretion on how Ontario Works employment services are delivered.

Ontario Works employment services are part of the broader workforce development and employment and training services sector which includes numerous partners, in both private and government sectors. The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, through Employment Ontario, offers a range of employment supports and services that may be appropriate for some Ontario Works participants. Literacy and Basic Skills programs and services are funded through the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities and are provided by educational institutions and Employment Ontario centres. Community based employment agencies may serve a range of individuals including Ontario Works participants, Employment Insurance beneficiaries, Ontario Disability Support Program clients, as well as the general public. Within this context, it is acknowledged that the Ontario Works Employment Services Framework must be a part of a shared service model approach that partners with the training and education sectors and the business community.

A local employment services framework guides program direction, in order to ensure that the Ontario Works employment programs which are funded by the Ministry of Community and Social Services operate within the legislation and within the local context.

The Need for a Revised Framework

Since the 2005 Framework was developed, legislation has continued to evolve, the economy and labour market context have changed, the employment and training sector has undergone a transformation, and we have a greater awareness of the emerging needs and makeup of the caseload. At this time, there is a fair amount of uncertainty as to the future economic state and the policy context in which Ontario Works employment programs will be operating.

“Although London’s economy continues to recover from the 2008-09 recession, the pace of recovery has been painfully slow.” (Metropolitan Outlook 2: Economic Insights Into 14 Canadian Metropolitan Economies, Winter 2012, p. 4)

Local Economic and Labour Market Changes

This is a time of instability and many unknowns. The recession officially started in 2008 but locally, job losses were occurring at least a year earlier. Although employment is expected to improve, when this will occur is unknown. What the jobs of the future will be may not be known, however, information is available to assist with planning. There is a shifting in employment from the goods¹ to the services sector, which will create new opportunities in the goods producing sector. Most new employment will require higher education or training. Nontraditional work arrangements are increasing. There is less potential for climbing the career ladder from an entry level job than previously available. A challenge for the Ontario Works employment services program is supporting people to gain employment that leads to long term financial and

¹ Goods denote tangible commodities such as products and materials; whereas services are intangible commodities.

personal gain. For many, the employment gained initially may be insecure, entry level, low pay, and with no benefits (Herd, 2008).

In the four years prior to 2008, London's economy was performing as well as or better than the Provincial economy. Local unemployment rates were below Provincial unemployment rates. Since the recession of 2008, London's unemployment rate has been among the highest in the country and in November 2011, the London CMA labour force participation rate of 64.9% was among the bottom half of Ontario Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) (Statistics Canada, 2011). Unemployment rates that are higher than provincial and national averages are due in part to "global industrial restructuring and major economic shifts" which threaten London's economic base (Academica Group Inc., 2012).

Although the Conference Board of Canada projects improvement in London's economy over the next four years to 2015, there is a concern that the numbers show a fragile economy (De Bono, 2012). The Conference Board of Canada (Lefebvre, Arcand, Sutherland, Wiebe, & McIntyre, Winter 2012) predicts that for 2012 to 2015:

- London's economy will grow;
- Employment will increase, particularly in the industrial, office and person services sectors;
- Employment growth will exceed population growth; and
- Unemployment rates will decrease.

While there is optimism about a lowering in the unemployment rate, it is questionable whether the unemployment rate will ever return to the low levels seen in the early 2000's. With the changing economy, the unemployment rate in London and beyond may be higher than in the past (Bishop, 2011).

Legislative Changes and Policy Initiatives

Federal and Provincial legislative and benefit changes introduced since 2005 are aimed at supporting or encouraging employment. Following the release of MPP Matthews report *Review of Employment Assistance Programs in Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program* (2004), a number of incremental changes aimed at removing social assistance policy barriers to employment and to leaving assistance have been implemented. These include the introduction of extended health benefits to support people leaving assistance for employment, and a change to the earnings exemption policy that benefited most (but not all) recipients with earnings. A Federal Working Income Tax Benefit (WITB) to supplement the earnings of low wage workers was introduced in 2007 and enhanced in the 2009 Federal budget.

A number of initiatives and projects that are under development or are in the early stages of development may impact the delivery of employment services for Ontario Works participants. Briefly, these include:

- Transformation of Employment Ontario
- London and Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership
- Provincial Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review

- Review of Social Assistance in Ontario
- Commission on the Reform of Ontario's Public Service

Development of the Revised Framework

The 2013 to 2018 Framework was developed through an extensive consultation process that maintained a focus on planning, research and consultation, drawing from the following:

- A review of American and Canadian literature evaluating “what works” in employment service delivery for welfare recipients;
- A review of purchased Ontario Works employment service delivery approaches used by other Ontario jurisdictions;
- Analysis of London's Ontario Works caseload demographics;
- Analysis of London's labour market and economic needs and trends;
- Consultations with employment and education service providers, Ontario Works participants, Ontario Works staff, and key informants representing London employers and businesses; and
- Program reviews.

A summary of the research results is found in the [Appendix: Summary of Research Key Findings](#).

Framework Development and Implementation Process



Key Service Areas in an Employment Assistance Framework

To achieve a full range of participant and employer-focused employment services, the following key service areas are needed. The following service areas, described in more detail in the

[Appendix: Key Service Areas](#), form the basis for the Employment Services Framework for 2013 to 2018:

- Individualized Services and Supports
- Assessment and Employment Planning
- Employment Plan
- Career Management
- Foundational Skills
- Education
- Workplace Experience (includes Community Placement)
- Employment Placement
- Targeted Training Initiatives
- Intensive Employment Supports
- Skills Training
- Self-Employment Development

Service Delivery Framework for Employment Services

This framework is intended to provide strong supports and outcomes for participants. The 2013 to 2018 Framework is guided by the principles of:

- Participant centred delivery
- Range of quality services
- Reflective and responsive to the changing needs of participants, employers and the labour market
- Strong connections with employers and workforce development
- Use of evidence-based practices
- Maximizing and leveraging other related resources
- Flexibility
- Stakeholder accountability

The [Employment Assistance Framework](#) is designed so that the participant is at the centre of the Ontario Works employment supports program. This program is comprised of separate and distinct components including in-house supports and services, services that are purchased from employment agencies in the community, and employment services that are available from agencies and organizations funded by other departments and ministries. Information and communication connects these components to each other and to the participant. Community-based employment agencies have the closest connections with employers. Supporting this program are research, legislation, funding, accountability and results, and broader community supports.

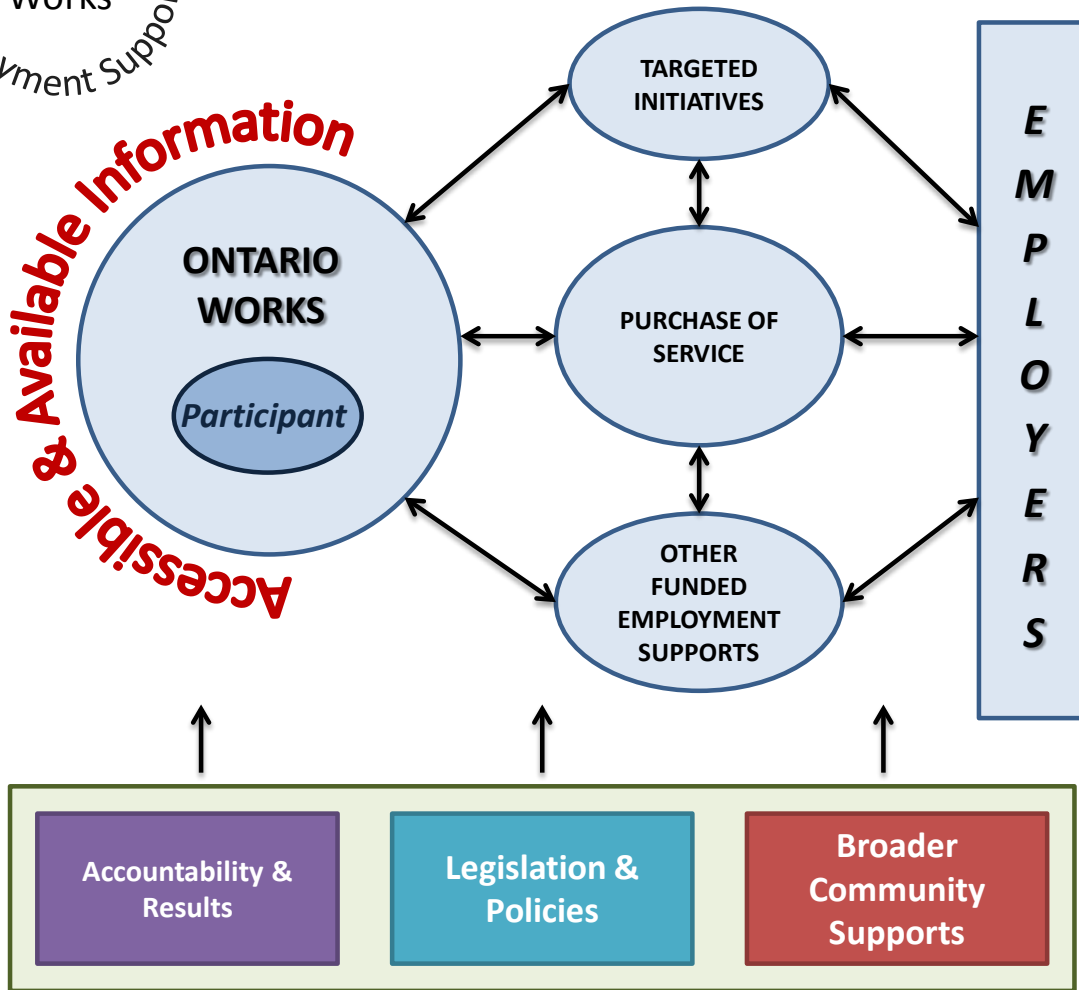
Ontario Works Employment Advisory Group

An Ontario Works Employment Advisory Group will support service integration and workforce development. Members of the Ontario Works Employment Advisory Group will come from the

broader workforce development sector, including Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities, Employment Ontario, Elgin Middlesex Oxford Workforce Planning and Development Board, Pillar Nonprofit Network, the London Economic Development Corporation (LEDC), and the London Chamber of Commerce in addition to local employment services agencies. This Advisory Group is an evolution of the existing Purchase of Service Strategic Advisory Group.

Income Support
Ontario Works
Employment Support

Employment Assistance Framework



LEGEND				
<p>ONTARIO WORKS: Team Structure; Pilot Initiatives; Employer Incentives; Individual Services & Supports; Assessment; Employment Planning; Participation Agreements; Stabilization & Income Support; Crisis Intervention; Intensive Case Management; Referrals</p>	<p>OTHER FUNDED EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS: Literacy; Basic Education & Training; Employment Ontario; Immigrant Employment Services; Pillar</p>	<p>ACCOUNTABILITY & RESULTS: Quality Assurance; Communication; Commitment to Reporting; Customer Satisfaction; Education and Employment Outcomes</p>	<p>TARGETED INITIATIVES Employer facing; One time; Employment outcome</p>	<p>Purchase of Service (POS): Employment Placement; Essential Employment Services (Foundational Skills, Career Management, Workplace Experience, Individualized Program Delivery); Skills Training Linked to Employment; Pilot Initiatives; Specialized Individual Supports; Self-Employment Development</p>

Priority Populations

While all people currently receiving and potentially receiving Ontario Works assistance need to receive employment services that meet their individual needs, our caseload data and consultation process identified a number of groups as populations that need specialized attention.

Figure 2: Groups Needing Specialized Attention



- Challenges such as homelessness, addictions, mental health
- Criminal records
- Disabilities
- Higher education or training
- Immigrants
- Limited work experience
- Long term Ontario Works, motivated to work but unsuccessful
- Lower education or training
- New to Ontario Works
- Older or experienced workers
- Single individuals
- Youth

Employment Services Components

The 2005 Framework was comprised of three major components: Purchase of Service (POS) Supports, Individualized Services and Supports, and Pilot Initiatives. Distinct components within the POS component include Employment Development Services, Community Placement, Employment Placement, Skills Training Directly Linked to Employment, and Self Employment.

Key Benefits of the New Framework

- *Enhanced Participant-centred delivery:*
Greater emphasis will be given to providing customized services and greater attention will be given to tailoring the employment service plan to meet the specific needs and goals of participants through an enhanced assessment process.
- *Strengthened focus on providing supports and referrals for all Ontario Works participants:*
Participants will also play a more active role with increased input into decisions made regarding their service priorities.
- *Broader range of quality services:*
Improved and more flexible program design which includes an expectation that all employment service agencies (excluding Self Employment Development and Specialized Individual Services) provide essential (foundational) employment services.
- *Responding to emerging needs:*
Ontario Works will have greater flexibility to engage local service providers based on the needs of participants, labour market, and employer. The framework offers the necessary basis for piloting new and innovative initiatives.
- *Stakeholder accountability:*
Open, fair and transparent competitive processes with a strengthened accountability and quality assurance approach. Program criteria are clearly defined and expected outcomes clearly communicated.

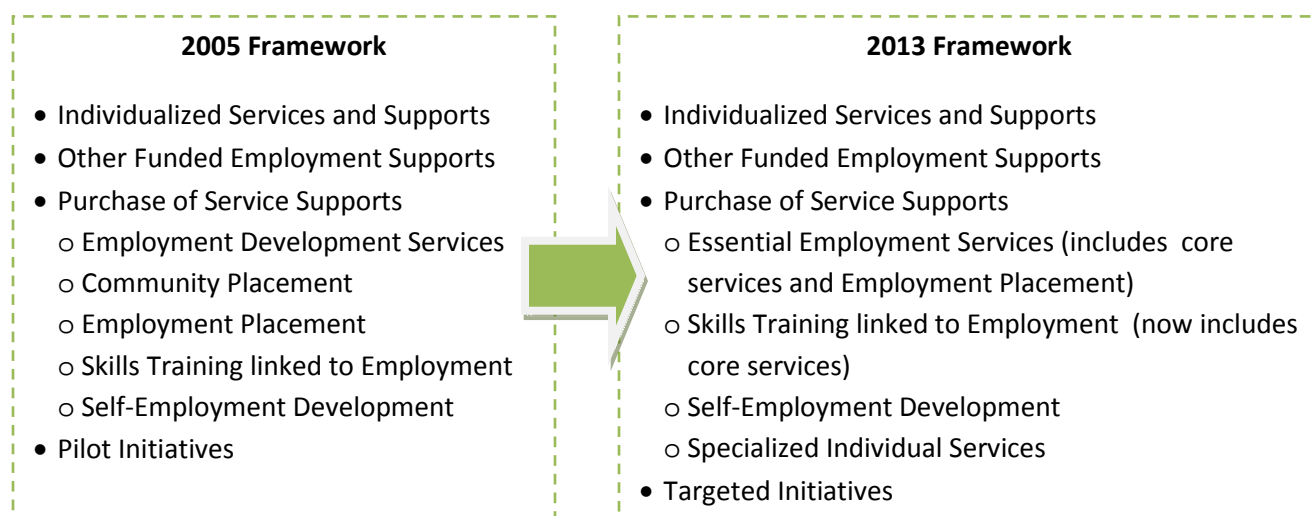
New Features

The 2013 to 2018 Framework builds on the successes and strengths of the 2005 Framework. New features of the 2013 to 2018 Framework include:

- The evolution of the Purchase of Service Strategic Group into Ontario Works Employment Advisory Group with enhanced membership to situate Ontario Works employment programs within the community's broader workforce development network
- A greater attention to tailoring the employment service plan (Participation Agreement) to meet the specific needs and goals of participants through an enhanced assessment process with the introduction of an enhanced internal employment review meeting

occurring one month following entry into Ontario Works and at regular intervals thereafter

- An expectation that all employment service agencies (excluding Self Employment Development and Specialized Individual Services) provide core employment services
- Community Placement will not be a separate contracted service but will be a core employment service provided by Purchase of Service agencies and will also be a direct service provided by Ontario Works
- Strengthened accountability and quality assurance approach
- Strengthened focus on providing supports and referrals for all Ontario Works participants



Component: Individualized Services and Supports

Rationale: The Ontario Works office is the central point of contact for Ontario Works participants, has the ultimate responsibility for supporting Ontario Works participants and for delivering the Ontario Works program in compliance with Provincial legislation.

Description: The Ontario Works office is responsible for assessing, monitoring, and supporting the individual employment needs of participants on an ongoing basis.

Employment Services Provided by Ontario Works:

Employment Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An in depth employment review completed by Ontario Works staff identifies interests and experience Conducted one month after an individual is granted eligibility for Ontario Works with reassessments occurring at regular intervals Results of review drive service planning
Service Planning and Community Placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Results in the creation of a detailed Participation Agreement and Employment Plan Employment Plan identifies referrals to agencies and supports Includes staff encouraging Community Placement by actively working with participant to access volunteer data bases and inventories to pursue volunteer opportunities that match interests and skills
Referrals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To most appropriate employment service providers To specialized individualized services (such as counselling, literacy and numeracy, diagnostics) To specialized Ontario Works case management teams To other community services that support stabilization such as child care, housing, obtaining pardons, et cetera
Financial Aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To cover the cost of employment related expenses To cover stand-alone job specific skill training or other employment programming that increases participant's employability. For example, computer training, translation, credentialing, appropriate clothing
Learning, Earning and Parenting (LEAP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For parents age 16 to 25 who have not finished high school and are on the path to complete high school Includes an Individual Service Plan, supports to cover expenses, and \$500 bursary to successful graduates

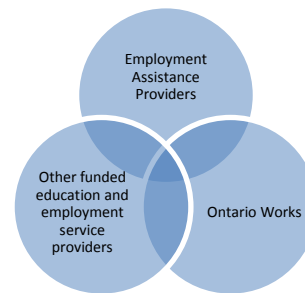
Accountability and Results Key Outcomes and Indicators:

- Participant satisfaction
- Referrals
- Referral show rate
- Successful graduation from LEAP
- Employment gained
- Exits to employment

Component: Other Funded Employment Supports

Rationale: Consistent with Ontario Works principles, service delivery is based on a collaborative model that maximizes the use of cost effective and expert resources within the community to streamline and rationalize services. Working within the broader workforce development system helps Ontario Works to leverage opportunity and link people to a broader range of services.

Figure 3: Community Based Employment Services



Description: Where appropriate, the Ontario Works office will refer participants to community-based employment services that are funded by other Ministries and Departments. A key referral point is to Employment Ontario. Employment Ontario serves Ontario Works participants who:

- are prepared to engage in developing plans for employment preparation and planning steps;
- are prepared to participate with employment assessment, employment counselling and developing an individualized employment plan;
- have already completed programs through Purchase of Service partners and remain in receipt of assistance;
- do not wish to be referred to a Purchase of Service partner for employment assistance; and
- are already involved with an “Employment Ontario” site

Services to be provided include:

- Education
- Literacy and Basic Skills
- Employment services such as assessment of skills and experience, job search strategies and resumé preparation, information about different careers and occupations, local labour market, employment and training opportunities, information about all Employment Ontario programs and services, as well as advice about and referral information to other community services and supports.

Accountability and Key Indicators:

- Referrals
- Referral show rate
- Employment gained
- Successful completion

Component: Purchase of Service Agreements

Rationale: Our research found that the existing purchase of service model (revised fall of 2005) is working well. Overall, our system has had good outcomes with the achievement of most targets and strong employment outcomes. These services provide more targeted and intensive supports to assist employment outcomes for participants with barriers.

Description: Purchased Services will be identified through a Request for Proposal process to establish multi-year legally executed contracts in accordance with the City's Purchasing by-laws. Employment Services to be purchased include:

- **Essential Employment Services:** Agencies offering this service must be able to provide assessment and planning, career management, foundational skills services and Employment Placement services. In addition, an agency may provide wraparound supports and services for a more intensive employment support needs. An agency approved to deliver Essential Employment Services may apply to the Ontario Works office to develop and deliver a pilot employment focused project.
- **Skills Training Directly Linked to Employment.** In addition to providing Essential Employment Services, agencies providing a Skills Training Program will:
 - a. Be relevant for the existing and short term future labour market
 - b. Involve employers in the development or delivery of the skills training curriculum
 - c. Provide the successful graduate with a certificateAn agency approved to deliver Skills Training may apply to the Ontario Works office to develop and deliver a pilot employment focused project.
- **Self-Employment Development.** An agency approved to deliver a Self Employment Development (SED) program will assess participant suitability for Self Employment Development, and will provide an orientation to the program and self-employment to help individuals self-assess their suitability. They will support individuals to develop a business plan and continue to provide support up to 2 years. The SED program may offer networking opportunities as part of their services.
- **Specialized Individual Support.** An agency approved to deliver Specialized Individual Support must describe the link between the specialized support and employment barriers. The agency also must be credentialed or licensed to provide the specific specialized service.

Accountability and Key Outcomes:

- Participant satisfaction
- Program graduations/completions
- Successful work experience
- Move to higher education
- Employment

Purchase of Service Program Description

Essential Employment Services	Skills Training Directly Linked to Employment	Specialized Individual Support	Self-Employment Development
<p>Services include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment using Common Assessment Tool • Vocational counselling • Life skills • Resiliency • Working with people • Workplace expectations • Resume and interview support • Job finding support such as a job club • Workplace expectations – involve employers • Employer networking • Workplace experience (community placement, internship) • Strong employer connections • Structured job search & job matching • Employment Placement <p>Some agencies may provide Intensive Employment Supports that include wraparound supports and services and enhanced life skills</p> <p>Agencies may negotiate or apply to develop and deliver a pilot initiative that is based on labour market needs and involves employers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporates all of the services found in Essential Employment Services • Is based on labour market/employer needs • Provides specific skills training including life & work skills • Is curriculum based with employer involvement in curriculum development and delivery • Provides a certificate to graduates 	<p>Psychosocial services e.g. Counselling, Literacy, Diagnostics such as Work Readiness Assessment, & GED preparation</p>	<p>Orientation</p> <p>Business Plan Development</p> <p>Supports to business development</p>
Employment Placement			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • structured job search and job matching • retention and follow up support 			

Component: Targeted Initiatives

Rationale: Targeted Initiatives provide the Community Services Department with the ability to meet emerging employer hiring needs on a “just in time” basis.

Description: Local employers and community organizations submit an application to the Community Services Department for a customized training program that meets the hiring needs of the employer or community agency or leverages other employment focused funding opportunities. Projects can include a range of service elements including job placement, post-hiring supports, life skills, skill training and work placements.

At the individual level, this could be an Enhanced Job Placement opportunity which results in the hiring of the participant.

At the group level, this could be a short-term employment program that provides focused, specialized training that is specific to the immediate hiring needs of an employer or community agency.

Examples of such initiatives include:

- A skill training organization in partnership with an employer or employers, providing the Skill Training curriculum to meet the job requirements of the employer with the employer hiring the Ontario Works participant upon successful completion of the training period.
- Involvement with LEDC, Chamber of Commerce, and other employers facing organizations in supporting employer attraction and retention through supports for Ontario Works participants.

The targeted initiative will result in:

- the employer hiring Ontario Works participants who successfully complete the training or
- the employer mentoring participants until such time that they obtain employment.

Funding

Funding for Ontario Works Employment Assistance is provided through the Ontario Works Program Delivery funding envelope and is cost shared with the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) and the City. This funding is divided into two portions: expenditure-based funding which includes Purchase of Service contracts, cost shared 50/50; and outcome-based funding.

Following this same approach, Employment Service agencies will receive a combination of service level or administrative funding and outcome based funding. Negotiation of the contracts will establish a fee schedule combining fixed cost and pay-for-performance amounts for actual services delivered.

Supports for the Framework

The Employment Assistance Framework is an integral component of the comprehensive Ontario Works delivery structure/compendium. In order to achieve maximum results for strong outcomes and effective delivery, work will be undertaken related to the following:

- A strong marketing approach to educate and inform employers about the profile of people receiving assistance and to provide success stories, particularly to small and medium sized business owners where most hiring is occurring and who may be concerned about hiring an Ontario Works participant.
- The inventory of employment services and service providers needs to be enhanced to help participants and staff to have information about the range of services available. This inventory will need to be managed regularly and may need to be in multiple formats.
- Opportunities for developing and using on-line interactive technology to support service selection should be identified and investigated on an ongoing basis.

Appendix A: Summary of Research Key Findings

Overall, we have heard that the 2005 Framework fundamentally is working well with partnerships and contracted services. Our system had good outcomes with the achievement of most targets and employment outcomes that continue to be strong. The development of the 2013 to 2018 Framework is an opportunity to learn from what we have been doing so that we can build on it to enhance what we already have. This section of the report highlights the information gathering key findings and recommendations which support the recommended new Framework.

Employment Community and Ontario Works Staff Consultation Findings

Ontario Works staff and employment community representatives were consistent in their identification of the need for a range of employment services focusing on career management, foundational skills, work experience, and skill development. They also articulated the need for individualized assessment early in the process in order that employment planning is tailored to individual needs. All of the components of the 2005 Framework were identified as components to have in the revised Framework; however, a number of suggestions were made specific to the Employment Development Services and Community Placement components:

- Employment Development Services should include a broad range of services and should be individualized, and
- Community Placement should not be a separate component but should continue to be part of the employment plan.

The importance of a system that is integrated through communications and referrals was articulated, noting that currently this is an area where enhancements are needed. As well, staff identified that more information about the programs and services offered by the various agencies is needed in order to help caseworkers make appropriate referrals. Staff suggested that offering specific employment assistance programs in modules may enhance system flexibility and support individualized employment plans. Community agencies noted the importance of funding that recognizes the level of service provided and is reflective of the cost of service delivery, as well as recognizing outcomes. With regards to measurement, both staff and agency representatives noted that measurement should go beyond employment outcomes. Staff also indicated the need for quality programming.

Participant Consultation Findings

The employment service needs identified by Ontario Works participants fell into the career management and work experience categories as well as noting the importance of an employment service system that includes a psychosocial component to provide encouragement and motivation. The importance of a more individualized approach to employment service planning including an early assessment of each person's employment service needs was expressed. Work experience and resume development emerged as key desired employment services. Although focus group participants acknowledged the importance of the Community Placement component, much of the discussion reflected their general dissatisfaction with the

current approach noting that placements felt mandatory, that they had little knowledge about this, and that they did not feel the placements reflected their employment goal or interests. Some concern was expressed about Skill Development programs for people with higher levels of education and about the value added of Employment Placement unless the placements result in participants receiving mentoring or coaching from their supervisor. Overall, participants said they would like more information about the employment services that were available. They indicated that they liked the idea of receiving services from more than one agency, if this would better meet their needs. They would like to be connected to an employment agency more quickly than is currently their experience, and they would like to be able to provide feedback on the usefulness of specific programs.

Key Informant Interview Findings

Work ethic, flexibility, education and skills, people and sales skills, customer service, initiative, reading and oral communication skills, and team work skills were all attributes noted by key informants and by employers surveyed for the Talbotville Ford Assembly Plant Closure Economic Impact and Action Plan report (2011). Financial incentives of sufficient amount and duration as well as the assurance of the provision of job coaching by Ontario Works may help to connect Ontario Works participants to employees particularly for small and medium sized businesses and new businesses who may not have or feel they have the capacity to hire someone who is receiving social assistance or who may not know about this labour pool. Marketing tools and a database of potential employees could further help in connecting employers to Ontario Works participants. In addition to agencies developing relationships with employers, the LEDC and the Chamber of Commerce are important partners.

Best Practices

While robust evidence about “what works” in employment service delivery is difficult to come by, individualized assessment, a range of employment services from pre-employment or foundational to work experience and job retention support were consistent themes in the literature. Additionally, the importance of strong linkages to employers in order to incorporate a demand-side focus in employment programs appeared repeatedly as was the need to adopt a longer term focus on employment programs as part of career development rather than simply helping people get “any job”.

Most of the municipalities scanned, with the exception of Toronto, have limited or targeted contracts with outside agencies to deliver employment services. These contracts may be time limited (for example, one year), tied to Provincial funding initiatives such as Enhanced Employment Services, skills training or employment placement focused, or specific to particular population groups such as youth or participants with addictions. Two municipalities do contract for intensive assessments for participants with significant barriers. One partners with employers and community agencies to create jobs.

Purchase of Service Outcome and Impact Review and Employability Study

In 2011, the Social and Community Supports Division assessed the outcomes of contracted employment services and also partnered with Pathways Skills Development and Placement Centre to investigate the impact of Employment Development Services (EDS). Recommendations in the review of contracted services include the need to:

- Ensure the quality of employment services' programs and their delivery;
- Enhance measurement and accountability;
- Maintain or increase the availability of Employment Placement, Skills Training Directly Linked to Employment, Work Readiness Assessments, and Skills that Work London;
- Enhance the Community Placement program by offering more options and finding a way to make it more attractive for participants; and
- Continue to offer Employment Development Services however noted that there is a need to make program content more interesting and to individualize the services participants receive.

The EDS study compared the presence of barriers and the level of confidence of a sample of participants before they entered the EDS program and after they completed it. While this study is small with data for 160 participants and is impacted by the timeframe in which it was completed (summer of 2011), we do conclude that pre-employment programs may increase employability through a reduction in the number of barriers experienced, excluding health and criminal related barriers, and an increase in confidence levels with regards to employment measures.

Appendix B: Key Service Areas

To achieve a full range of participant and employer-focused employment services, the following key service areas are needed. These service areas form the basis for the Employment Services Framework for 2013 to 2018.

A participant may receive services from more than one key service area at a time as identified during assessment.

1. Individualized Services and Supports

The goal of Individualized Services and Supports is to customize employment programs and services to the needs of the individual client. Funding covers the costs of stand-alone job specific skill training, or other employment programming to increase the participant's employability.

Individualized Services and Supports includes Stabilization Services². The goal of Stabilization Services is to support participants to obtain those ancillary supports that support employment. Examples include: obtaining pardons, child care, transportation, housing, et cetera.

- Support for identifying and obtaining the stabilization type supports needed for employment is the responsibility of Ontario Works case management staff.
- It is expected that as a result of Stabilization Services, ancillary barriers to employment will be removed.

2. Assessment and Employment Planning

Individualized assessment:

- The goal of individualized assessment is to identify the specific employment service needs and interests of the individual taking into account their longer term employment goal for the purposes of developing a tailored Employment Action Plan that fits within the scope of Ontario Works but allows for moving beyond Ontario Works towards higher education and skill development.
- Individualized assessment will make use of the Common Assessment Process tool and more intensive diagnostics such as the Work Readiness Assessment where appropriate. A literacy assessment may also be used.
- Each Ontario Works participant should be assessed within the first month of entering Ontario Works for their current capacities and deficits, their interests, and their longer term ambitions. The results can be used to create a "roadmap" that will be used by the participant and service providers to guide the participant's path to employment.
- It is expected that as a result of this assessment, a participant's strengths and deficits will be identified, and an employment plan will be developed.

² With the 2005 Framework, it appeared that stabilization services were provided by agencies who delivered Employment Development Services as the lack of things like child care, driver's license, housing, et cetera, were identified as barriers to employment.

Employment Plan:

- The goal of the Employment Plan is to guide participants and service providers in the steps taken to reach employment.
- The Employment Plan may be a visualized model that can be modified as needed. The Employment Plan should contain specific information about career management, foundational, and stability strengths, deficits or needs as they relate to employment, as well as containing clear action steps.
- The Employment Plan will be developed in partnership with the participant, and will be revisited and reassessed at regular intervals.
- It is expected that through this process an employment plan that participants are satisfied with will be developed and referral show rates will improve.

3. Career Management Services

- The goal of career management services is to provide Ontario Works participants with the supports and services needed to develop and enhance their employment portfolio.
- Services include:
 - Resume development
 - Interview skills
 - Tailored, structured and strategic job searching
 - Career or vocational counselling
 - Employer networking
 - Facilitated job finding club
- Services may be provided individually, in group settings, and/or using Information and Communication technology in order to meet the needs of adult learners.
- Programs could be offered in modules in order that participants may participate only in those activities that meet their needs at that time.
- It is expected that career management services will provide participants with the tools needed to gain employment. It is noteworthy that some participants will move to post-secondary education because of career or vocational counselling.

4. Foundational Skills

- The goal of Foundational Skills is to provide participants with the training and support they need to acquire the essential skills needed for employment.
- Services include:
 - Literacy and numeracy
 - Workplace expectations
 - Working with people
 - Life skills
 - Psychosocial services including counselling, resiliency and motivation
- Services may be provided individually, in group settings, and/or using Information and Communication technology in order to meet the needs of adult learners.

- Programs could be offered in modules in order that participants may participate only in those activities that meet their needs at that time.
- It is expected that foundational skills services will reduce personal barriers to employment and increase confidence.

5. Education

- The goal of Education is to support participants who have not completed their high school education to obtain their high school diploma or General Education Diploma.

6. Workplace Experience

- The goal of Work Experience is to provide participants with an actual job experience.
- Services include:
 - Volunteering that is directly linked to the participant's employment goals or interests so that it is value added. This is also known as Community Placement.
 - Internship
 - Job coaching
 - Post-hiring supports
- It is expected that workplace experience will result in workplace skill development, increased participant confidence, and employment.

7. Employment Placement

- The goal of Employment Placement is to assist job ready participants to find and maintain suitable employment.
- Close linkages and relationships with employers are needed to make these placements meaningful.
- Incentives in the form of training allowances may be offered to employers for the purposes of covering the costs of training and education.
- In addition to Employment Placement, job coaching and post hiring supports, services could include a broad spectrum including career management services and foundational skills as needed by the individual.
- It is expected that Employment Placement will result in people gaining and maintaining employment.

8. Targeted Training Initiatives

The goal of targeted training initiatives is to provide employers, employment service providers, and neighbourhoods with the opportunity to develop and implement a targeted employment program for a targeted population.

- Targeted training initiatives provides funding for skills training and employment development programs that meet the identified labour needs of employers, particularly new employers and small or medium-sized businesses and/or the target population.

- Partnership program developed and delivered by the employment service agency with the direct involvement of employers.
- Services provided include the broad spectrum offered based on the needs of the employer and the target population.
- It is expected that targeted training initiatives will result in workplace skill development, increased participant confidence, and employment.

9. Intensive Employment Supports

The goal of Intensive Employment Supports is to provide participants with significant barriers to employment such as mental health issues, disabilities, addictions or other undiagnosed and undetermined challenges to participate in education, training, or employment while receiving wraparound support.

- It is expected that intensive employment supports will help participants with more significant barriers complete their training or gain and maintain employment, as well as increase confidence.

10. Self-Employment Development

The goal of Self Employment Development is to assist participants in developing their own business to become self-employed.

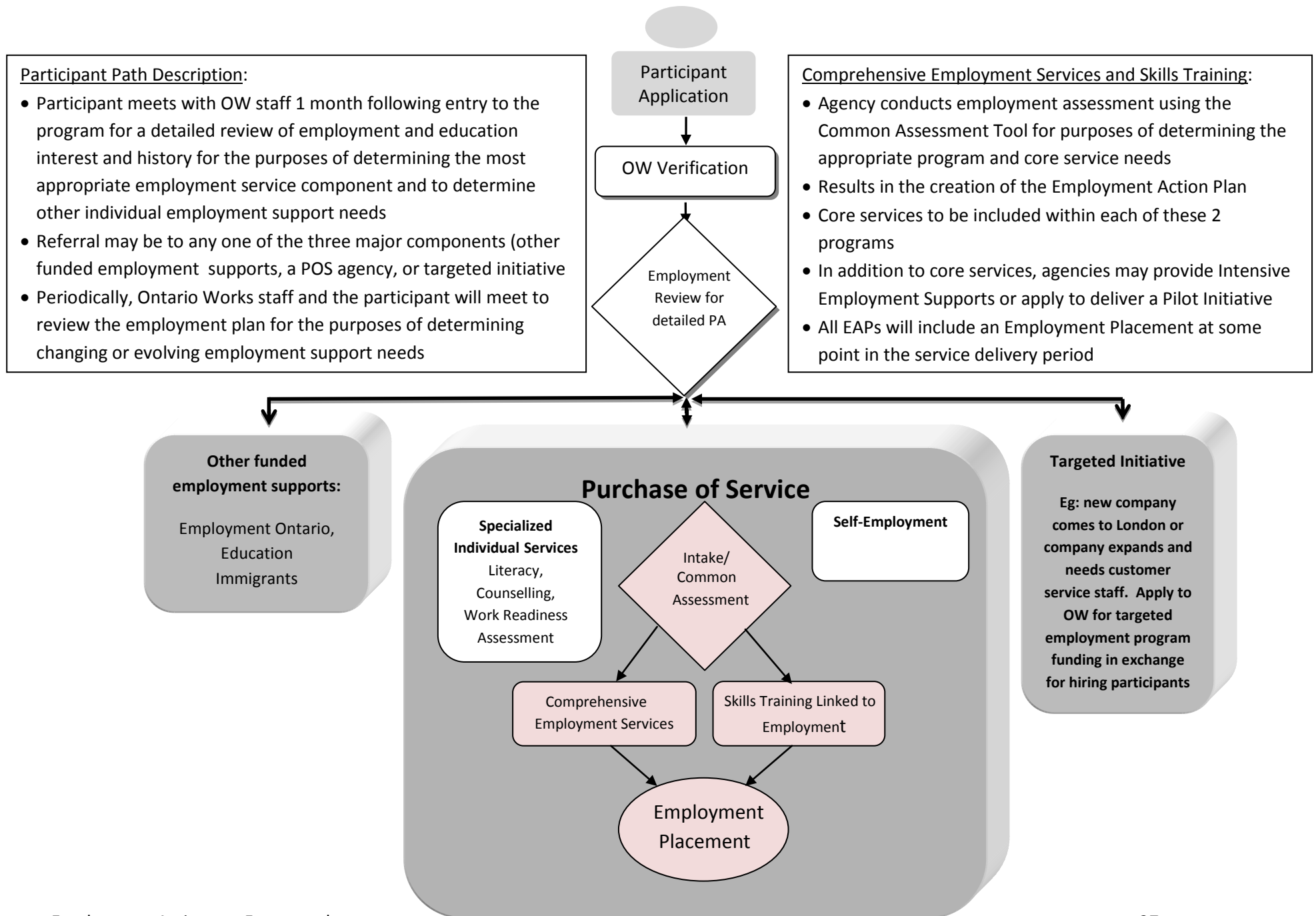
- It is expected that through SED some participants will become self-employed, others will gain employment and others will identify post-secondary education and training as a next step.

11. Skills Training Directly Linked to Employment

The goal of Skill Training Directly Linked to Employment is to assist participants to find and maintain employment by improving their marketable skills through training and practical work experience.

- Curriculum-based training. Employer involvement is important in developing and delivering the skill training curriculum.
- Services include the broad spectrum offered based on the needs of the employer and the target population. Employment Placement services and supports are mandatory for this service area.
- It is expected that Skills Training Directly Linked to Employment will result in workplace skill development, increased participant confidence, and employment.

Appendix C: Participant Path to Employment Service



Appendix D: Reference Materials

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