

Social Policy and Human Services Transformation Task Force

Terms of Reference

Context:

Municipal governments and District Social Service Administration Boards (DSSABS) are facing renewed capacity and fiscal pressures on human services exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Urgent need for affordable and supportive housing and long-term homelessness solutions have been left out of provincial housing supply action plans; the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) System is transforming childcare across the province; Indigenous communities and service providers are highlighting the importance of Indigenous-led social and community supports to address ongoing inequitable social outcomes; and rapidly increasing costs of living and life stability issues are adding new challenges to people living on social assistance.

Social policy changes and human service transformation by the Ontario government are required to better support municipalities and DSSABs to meet the needs of residents and communities. Several provincial transformation and change initiatives are underway. More action and different approaches are needed in other areas. All of these discussions require municipal input to inform government decision making about future directions in the best interests of people and communities.

The Social Policy and Human Services Transformation Task Force builds on the success of AMO's previous Affordable Housing and Homelessness Prevention Task Force by expanding the Task Force's mandate to represent the integrated nature of social and human services policy.

Purpose:

The Social Policy and Human Services Task Force is established to inform AMO's advocacy strategy and positions on the social policy changes and human services transformation initiatives with the objective of eliminating poverty in Ontario, including ending homelessness.

Mandate:

The Social Policy and Human Services Transformation Task Force will work toward the goal of eliminating poverty and the realization of socially and economic inclusive communities. This will be achieved by informing a proactive advocacy approach to the provincial and federal governments about the social policy changes and the human service transformation initiatives that are required in Ontario to support municipalities to reach this goal.

Social policy will be broadly interpreted as anything that impacts the social welfare of people. Examination of municipal human services will include housing, homelessness, child care, early years programming, social assistance and employment services. Other related issues such as accessibility for persons with disabilities may also be considered. An integration lens will be applied for human services and appropriate connections with the health care and public health systems will be promoted. The task force will articulate ways that social policy changes and human services transformation can contribute meaningfully to truth and reconciliation with Indigenous People.

Further, the role of digital government will be considered as an enabler of human services transformation.

The Task Force will play a role to advise both the Board and the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Team (on a confidential basis) on matters relating to social policy and human service transformation initiatives.

The Task Force will provide a forum for municipal representatives to discuss the challenges of addressing poverty in their communities to help guide province-wide solutions. The Task Force will focus on integrated approaches to develop high level strategic positions that support municipal governments and provide instructive feedback and recommendations to the provincial and federal governments.

The Task Force, where appropriate and needed, will also serve as a forum for dialogue between municipalities and relevant provincial ministries on matters relevant to the mandate. The focus of these discussions is to provide the municipal perspective on policy, funding, and program delivery decisions. This includes implications on the social service care system and municipalities as a whole.

Membership:

Membership will include municipal representation at the level of elected officials and senior staff decision makers who reflect different size, type, and geographic locations of Ontario's municipalities. Members may also be drawn from other organizations where there is a potential to align advocacy and communications work in a manner that is consistent with AMO's policy priorities. Designation will not be allowed. Other attendees will include guests from relevant stakeholder groups and sector partners.

The Chair may establish working groups as needed with different members to advise the task force on specific matters where technical subject matter expertise is required. These working groups will be chaired by the Vice Chair, or AMO staff in their absence.

Chairing the Task Force:

The agenda will be developed by AMO staff and approved by the Chair. Meetings will take place as required at the call of the Chair.

Duration:

The Task Force will meet on an ongoing basis for one year, at which time the duration may be extended at the discretion of the Chair for another year.

Meeting Frequency:

It is expected that the Task Force will meet a minimum of four times annually and more frequently as needed at the discretion of the Chair.

Integration:

In presenting its work to the AMO Board, the Task Force will consider how best to integrate and present its advice in a way that complements the work of other AMO Task Forces and AMO policy priorities.