



## Supportive Services for Adults with Developmental Disabilities 2020 Value-for-Money Audit

### Why We Did This Audit

- Over the last five years, Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (Ministry) transfer payments for developmental supportive services have increased by 49%, from \$578.7 million in 2015/16 to \$859.4 million in 2019/20.
- Wait lists for supportive services provided by Service Agencies have increased significantly over the past several years.

### Why It Matters

- Approximately 1% of Ontarians have a developmental disability—a lifelong condition that affects a person's intellectual, social and/or behavioural development.
- The services funded by the Ministry are discretionary, meaning not all people receive the supports they are eligible for.

### What We Found

- Clients eligible for supportive services waited an average of 8.1 months to have their needs assessed before they could begin to receive the supports they were eligible for, and wait times for these assessments were affected by where in Ontario a client lives.
- Across the province, the number of people waiting for supportive services provided by Service Agencies grew by 80% in the last five years, from almost 19,000 in 2015/16 to almost 34,200 in 2019/20. The number of people waiting at some Developmental Service Ontario offices grew by more than 100%.
- There are significant differences between the Ministry's five regions in the level of supportive services clients received from Service Agencies, as well as differences in the cost of those services to the Ministry. However, the Ministry had not analyzed these differences to determine whether they were justified.
- The Ministry does not verify the number of clients that Service Agencies report serving. Seventy-three percent of the agencies we sampled could not provide support for the number of clients they reported serving in at least one of their programs, including three agencies that had overstated the clients they served in one or more program by between 13% and 120%.
- The Ministry does not take enforcement action for repeated serious issues at service agencies. In our sample of Service Agencies inspected by the Ministry, we found that 90% of agencies had non-compliance issues recur again in a subsequent inspection. Some of these issues posed serious risks to client safety, such as improperly storing medication.
- Although we have recommended in three separate reports since 1997 that the Ministry put outcome-based performance indicators in place, we found that the Ministry still collects only output data from Service Agencies, such as the number of clients served.
- In 2018/19, the Ministry implemented a policy change that resulted in the immediate approval of \$5,000 per year in Passport funding to all clients eligible for supportive services before completing a needs assessment. However, even if after completing an assessment a client is determined to be entitled to less, they still continue to be allocated \$5,000 per year to address their needs. As a result, we determined that the Ministry annually funds clients for a total of at least \$8.4 million in excess of their needs.
- We found many instances where Passport clients were reimbursed thousands of dollars for tickets to expensive and/or a large number of sporting and entertainment events. This is occurring while the Passport program has limited resources that cannot currently meet the demand for the program. For example, a client was reimbursed \$2,214 for two tickets to a Toronto Raptors game and \$2,070 for two tickets for a concert just three weeks later.

### Conclusions

- The Ministry, together with contracted Service Agencies, does not have effective systems and processes to consistently provide eligible individuals with direct funding and supportive services that are timely, appropriate to their needs, and cost-effectively delivered according to requirements.
- The Ministry does not have effective systems and processes in place to measure, evaluate and publicly report on the effectiveness of the developmental supportive services it funds.