

Transformational Changes in Social Assistance: Providing Clients a Clear Path to Support

Background & Mandate

- As of February 1, 2017, child support and CPP Orphan benefits are exempt income for purposes of Ontario Works
- With this change we had two mandates:
 - Explore what options are available for the Family Support Unit
 - Provide a clear path to clients who are interested in pursuing support



Developing our Clear Path for Support

Commissioner & ED met with all affected staff and reviewed information



Hired external consultant to gather information



Management attended the Ontario Court of Justice to understand client journey including Rule 40 Court and Mandatory Information Program



Worked with partner agencies to determine what services were available to our clients



Agency representatives presented at our caseworker team meetings



Information is also available through our computers at the Employment Resource Centre

Pursuing Child & Spousal Support

Any amount collected for child support is exempt from income tax. Child and spousal support will be able to keep the full amount of child support. Spousal support continues to be tax-deductible.

Several community organizations are willing to assist individuals in pursuing child and/or spousal support orders. It is a new claim or a change to an existing court order.

HOW TO PROCEED
Several local organizations are willing to assist individuals to pursue a new child or spousal support order, or to review an existing court order due to a change in circumstance. The first point of contact should be to one of the following organizations:

Bridging Family Conflict
Community Legal Aid
Legal Aid Ontario

Bridging Family Conflict
Bridging Family Conflict provides free mediation and information services for family law matters in Windsor and Essex County at local courthouses, and individual sites for mediation outside of the courthouses.
Telephone: 519-944-0108
Website: www.bridgingfamilyconflict.com
Address: 2225 Tecumseh Rd. E., Windsor, ON N9E 1H2

Legal Aid Ontario
Legal Aid Ontario promotes access to justice throughout Ontario for low-income individuals by providing consistent, high quality legal aid services in a cost-effective and efficient manner.
Telephone: 1-800-668-8288
Website: www.legalaid.on.ca/en/partners/your_family.asp
Address: 220 City Hall Square 3, Windsor, ON N9A 6R5

IF A COURT ORDER IS NOT IN PLACE
The Family Responsibility Office collects, distributes and enforces court-ordered child and spousal support payments.
Telephone: 1-800-267-7263
Website: http://www.fro.gov.on.ca/en/main/fro/parents/fro_info/froparent.cfm

Developed flyers in partnership with the partner agencies that are available in every interview room

Transition of FSW Unit

- Through council approval, we dissolved our Family Support Unit (6 FSWs and 1 clerical position) and repurposed these positions to be 6 OW Caseworker-Floats.
- This allowed us to address a gap in our services, as completing applications pulls caseworkers away from completing high impact activities.
- **Through this transition, we are able to improve customer service, ensure that we meet province's service requirements (granting in 4 days) and caseworkers have the time to do high impact activities.**

Transformational Changes in Social Assistance

- The changes to the treatment of child support were part of the transformational changes occurring in social assistance.
- As delivery agents, we are responsible for making progress and ensuring success of these changes
- Developing a clear path for clients was important for two reasons:
 - Ensuring that the transformational changes are successful
 - Lifting people out of poverty

How do we measure success?

- Providing clients with relevant information
- Planting the seed- letting the information and knowledge germinate to have long-term impact
- Importance of cultural diversity

Connect with Local Resources

- Legal Clinics:

<https://www.legalaid.on.ca/en/contact/contact.asp?type=cl>

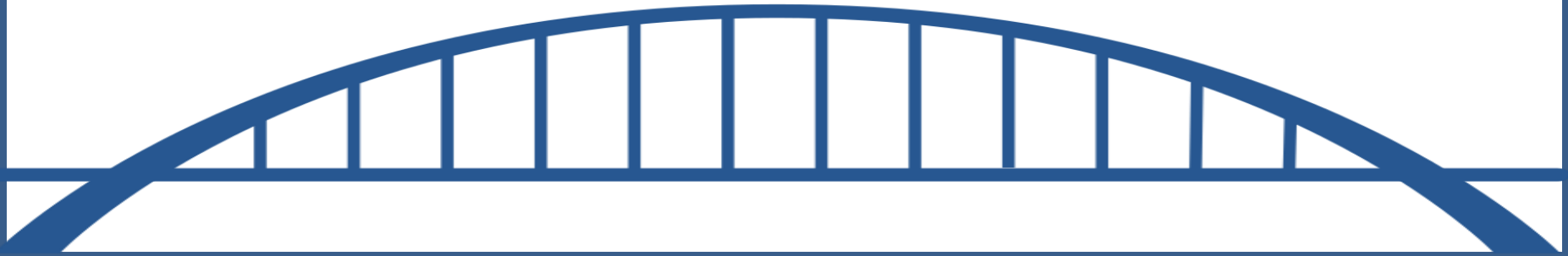
<https://www.legalaid.on.ca/en/contact/contact.asp?type=slclass>

- Family Mediation Services:

https://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/family/service_provider_by_family_court_location.php

- FLICS:

https://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/courts/Court_Addresses/



Please connect with us!

Contact:

Tanya Antoniw

Manager, Policy & Staff
Development

tantoniw@citywindsor.ca

519-255-5200 ext. 5386



THANK YOU!

Questions?