

Local Service System Management in Ontario

In Ontario, core social services like **income support**, **children's services** and **social housing** are planned, managed and co-funded by municipal **Service System Managers**.



In the case of social housing, Ontario's municipal governments fund the majority of costs as a result of the province transferring these responsibilities to the municipal level of government in 1998.

Within this unique landscape, Ontario's 47 Service System Managers oversee **systems planning** and **manage the delivery** of local human services in a way that is **integrated**, **people-focused** and **outcomes-driven**. This includes critical services that Ontarians rely on every day:

- **Employment and income supports**
- **Housing services**
- **Homelessness services and prevention**
- **Child care, children's and early years services**

Social services management was downloaded to municipalities by the Province in 1998.

This led to the creation of 47 Service System Managers, who are Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs), or upper-tier (regional) and single-tier municipal governments across Ontario, and District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSABs) in areas where no regional municipality exists in Ontario's north.

Ontario is the only jurisdiction in Canada where municipal levels of government hold responsibility for social services.

Local Service System Management provides **better value and outcomes** for Ontario's communities

When key services like income support, housing and children's services are planned, coordinated and delivered at the local level by experienced Service System Managers, **we all benefit:**

- ▶ **People remain at the centre** of social services design and delivery, with a focus on the whole spectrum of a person's needs.
- ▶ **Services are planned, coordinated and delivered in a streamlined and integrated way**, in conjunction with local community supports.
- ▶ **People can access a variety of services in one place**, in the communities where they live.
- ▶ **Services continuously improve through innovation, partnership and collaboration** with local leaders in the health, education, justice, Indigenous, community development sectors and more.
- ▶ **Services meet the different needs of Ontario's unique communities** (whether urban, rural or suburban, large or small, north or south) by leveraging Service System Managers' in-depth experience and knowledge of their own communities.
- ▶ **As accountable orders of government**, municipalities work to ensure that taxpayer-funded services are managed with a focus on transparency, quality assurance and strong outcomes.

The Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA) is a non-profit, non-partisan organization whose members are Ontario's Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs) and District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSABs). By supporting, connecting and advocating for our members across Ontario, we help them to achieve their collective mission of delivering the best human services outcomes for Ontario's communities | www.omssa.com

ADDRESSING THE FUNDING GAP

Ontario has the **lowest per capita program spending** of any Canadian province.

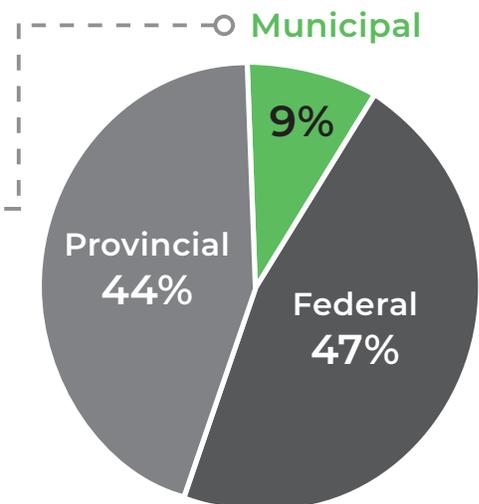
Ontario's Municipal Service System Managers are doing **their part** to ensure that critical services are adequately funded and delivered – but are challenged by the fact that municipal governments **collect only 9% of all tax dollars.**

Additional resources are needed to ensure that those who require vital social services can access them quickly within their home community, and that there is adequate supply of social housing to address growing needs and waiting lists.

Regulatory and legislative decisions (and indecision) at the provincial and federal levels can create significant cost implications for municipal governments.

- ▶ **Municipal governments need access to broader and more flexible revenue tools to support their share in funding critical services.**
- ▶ **Current levels of funding for social and human services must keep pace with needs, and Ontario must ensure it is receiving a fair share of federal equalization funding.**
- ▶ **OMSSA supports the Association of Municipalities of Ontario's (AMO) Local Share campaign, and encourages the Province to work with AMO and the City of Toronto to ensure sustainable funding and more diverse sources of revenue for critical local services.**

SHARE OF TAX DOLLARS



MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

A recent study in the Canadian Medical Association Journal found that from 1981-2011, average per capita health spending was almost three times higher than per capita social services spending.

The study suggested that if governments had spent **one more cent** on social services for every dollar spent on health, life expectancy could have increased by another 5% and avoidable mortality could have dropped an additional 3%.

Service System Manager Priorities

PARTNERING WITH THE PROVINCE

Ontario's Service System Managers bring more than 20 years' experience in outcomes-focused, integrated social services delivery to the table, and they **know their communities best**.

- ▶ **Service System Managers must be engaged and leveraged as partners in the design of social policy and programs, from the outset. This is especially true when the municipality is funding the program.**
- ▶ **Service System Managers are a critical part of the fabric of local and regional government, and should be consulted on any review of regional governance in Ontario.**

LEADING SERVICE INTEGRATION

Ontario's Service System Managers have been leading the way on service integration

– working to simplify and streamline access to services, leading to better outcomes for both clients and taxpayers. To continue this work, we need support and action from our partners at other levels of government:

- ▶ **Integrate how social policies and programs are designed and implemented at the provincial and federal levels.**
- ▶ **Remove legislative barriers and administrative burdens that are obstacles to furthering service integration at the local level.**

ENSURING LOCAL FLEXIBILITY

Ontario's Service System Managers have an in-depth understanding of the unique social, economic, regional and demographic forces that shape and define their communities. They understand that **what works best in Windsor may not be the right approach in Ottawa or Kenora**, and they need the flexibility to deliver services in ways that meet unique local needs.

- ▶ **At the provincial level, program design must have the flexibility to account for the unique circumstances and challenges of urban, rural, suburban, large, small, remote and northern communities, rather than employing a one-size-fits-all approach.**

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