



Employment Services Transformation Updates



Important Information about upcoming changes to the Ontario Works Program.

Employment Services Transformation – EST

EST is a new service delivery model that integrates the current Ontario Works (OW) employment services into Employment Ontario (EO).

As part of EST, Ontario Works will work with Employment Ontario along with other community agencies and/or supports to help you get ready to secure long-term employment.

Employment Ontario will help & support recipients of Ontario Works, in many ways including but not limited to:

- learning about job and career opportunities,
- writing a resume,
- preparing for an interview,
- building job-related skills,
- participate in training, and
- finding and keeping a job

They will assist in providing resources, services, workshops, and programs that would benefit you entering the workforce, keeping, and advancing in a job.

What is changing for you?

Ontario Works has been an employment-focused program that requires you to participate in employment readiness activities to keep receiving financial assistance each month.

Employment assistance activities will now be offered through Employment Ontario and the number of employment service providers that work with OW clients will increase providing you with more options.

The role of your Ontario Works caseworker will be to meet with you and support you in different areas that will assist with getting you ready to enter (or re-enter) the workforce. Your caseworker will be able to offer supports such as:

- connection to various community supports,

- addressing issues that may involve your personal safety,
 - discussing health, and life skills that may require supports.
- This means that your participation requirements have expanded to include participation in services, programs, and resources that will bring you closer to being ready for employment.

When you are ready, Ontario Works will refer you directly to Employment Ontario. Once your referral has been accepted, your Employment Ontario caseworker and Ontario Works caseworker will work together to support both your employment and personal goals. Your Ontario Works caseworker will be able to continue to support you as you work with Employment Ontario.

Participation requirements are mandatory to remain eligible for financial assistance. This is however based on your unique circumstances and will be supported and monitored by both the Ontario Works and Employment Ontario staff to ensure you are receiving the supports and services you need.

What about my benefits?

The money you receive for basic needs/ shelter allowance will not be impacted. However, changes will occur to the benefits you receive for employment related activities (i.e., Bus pass, internet, phone etc.). What does this mean for you?

- Benefits related to personal support needs will be reviewed by your Ontario Works caseworker to determine eligibility in January 2024 and onward.
- Benefits related to employment supports will be reviewed by your Employment Ontario caseworker to determine eligibility.

What's next?

Over the coming months, your caseworker will contact you to complete an assessment and action plan. These are two new case management tools under Employment Services Transformation to help assess your needs and create a plan that will best support you.

For any questions or concerns about what this change means for you, please contact your Ontario Works Caseworker.

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