



WINDSOR REGIONAL
Employment Network
Windsor-Essex · Chatham-Kent · Sarnia-Lambton

Integrated Employment Services Program Guidelines

Windsor Regional Employment Network
Windsor-Sarnia Service System Manager

December 2023

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SECTION 1: Overview of the Employment Ontario System Transformation

The Government of Ontario is transforming Ontario's employment services with the goal of making them more efficient, streamlined, and outcome-focused. This transformation includes a new service delivery model which integrates social assistance employment services, as well as other government employment services, into Employment Ontario. Also, this model requires the use of Service System Managers (SSMs) to manage the local employment services system.

This new system aims to be more responsive to the needs of job seekers, employers, and local communities. The Government of Ontario expects that this new delivery model will see improved outcomes for job seekers, improved outcomes for employers who need skilled workers to thrive, and improved collaboration with government services including social assistance.

We know that those closest to the front lines of this system have recognized the need to work differently and create change. This transformation offers us a crucial opportunity to do more of what works well, to stop doing what is not working, and to address key gaps. As the SSM for the Windsor-Sarnia catchment, we look forward to working with the Employment Ontario network to lead meaningful, outcomes-focused, and locally driven change.

SECTION 2: The Role of the Service System Manager

This new employment services model required the selection of Service System Managers (SSMs) to more effectively meet the needs of local job seekers, businesses, and communities. Windsor Regional Employment Network (WREN) is the SSM for Employment Ontario Employment Services in Windsor-Essex, Chatham-Kent, and Sarnia-Lambton. The WREN is a consortium led by the Corporation of the City of Windsor in partnership with Workforce WindsorEssex (the Workforce Development Board Windsor Essex).

The purpose of the SSM model is to create a system that is locally responsive, client-centered, and outcome-focused. The SSM's role is to support evidence-based employment service delivery and ensure strong employment outcomes across our service network.

Our vision is a vibrant, inclusive labour market in Windsor-Essex, Chatham-Kent, and Sarnia-Lambton where individuals thrive in fulfilling careers and employers access exceptional talent to drive innovation and growth.

Our mission is to partner with the community to develop a responsive, sustainable labour market system that meets the needs of job seekers, employers, and partners. We invest in our network to provide comprehensive resources that boost the capacity of our partners, creating opportunities for everyone to achieve their career aspirations, and contribute to economic growth.

The SSM's key responsibilities include:

- Designing effective program guidelines and tools in alignment with Ministry requirements,
- Providing a client case management system,
- Creating a robust feedback system and continuous improvement processes,
- Delivering training and capacity building based on the needs of the network, and
- Conducting regular evaluation and monitoring to achieve outcomes.

SECTION 3: The Role of Service Providers

Service Providers are an essential and valued component of the service delivery ecosystem. They are responsible to develop and deliver responsive interventions, programming, and partnerships to support the achievement of client outcomes. Service Providers must deliver programming that values the dignity, worth, and self-determination of all clients including those traditionally identified as being furthest from the labour market.

They will do this through the effective implementation of the program guidelines; utilization of the systems and tools provided; and meaningful participation in the training, evaluation, and continuous improvement processes led by the SSM. Also, they will provide valuable insights as partners to the SSM on local conditions, client needs, and emerging trends in the sector.

The Service Providers' key responsibilities include:

- Developing and delivering programming and interventions aligned with the guidelines and customized to local community context;
- Cultivating community partnerships, co-location opportunities, and service relationships with network partners to enhance outcomes for jobseekers in the catchment;
- Providing staff development that supports practitioners to deliver effective services;
- Participating in all relevant training and capacity building offered by the SSM;
- Providing accurate, timely, and transparent reporting and feedback to the SSM to support the continuous improvement of services;
- Remaining knowledgeable of local data, best practices, and emerging practices; and
- Utilizing resources responsibly and as intended to achieve outcomes.

Service Providers are expected to place a strong emphasis on developing and delivering high quality job development supports, which should include job carving, job placement, job trials, job matching, employer engagement, and ongoing retention supports for both the client and their employer. They should demonstrate commitment to an employment outcome model of service delivery.

Together, the SSM and Service Providers aim to work together to produce positive impact for job seekers, employers, and community partners in the following ways:

- Job Seekers:**
- ✓ Help job seekers find work, prepare a resume, prepare for an interview, develop skills, and support the journey through their first year of a new job
 - ✓ Offer government-funded programs
 - ✓ Help with accessibility needs
- Employers:**
- ✓ Help employers find workers, enhance hiring and onboarding processes, deliver skills training, and retain employees
 - ✓ Offer government-funded programs
 - ✓ Provide outplacement services for displaced employees
- Community Partners:**
- ✓ Engage in local labour market planning
 - ✓ Provide labour market insights
 - ✓ Support talent attraction and retention
 - ✓ Share research and analysis
 - ✓ Support newcomer services
 - ✓ Share reports and guides

SECTION 4: Purpose of the Program Guidelines Document

The Program Guidelines support Service Providers in successfully delivering employment services to job seekers and employers in the catchment area. This document outlines administrative responsibilities and prescriptive components of program delivery and performance management. It should be used to support the requirements outlined in the Service Provider funding agreements. Additional technical documents (including user guides and job aids) and training to support Service Providers are provided by the SSM.

The Integrated Employment Services transformation represents an opportunity to realize a more effective service model which blends jobseeker development (developing goals, reducing barriers, strengthening competencies) and access to employers (job development). The guidelines should reflect this aspiration and should be utilized by Service Providers to inspire innovation and culture change.

The guidelines were designed to help navigate the program's technical requirements while also providing sufficient flexibility so that Service Providers can be innovative and responsive to local conditions. The SSM welcomes ongoing feedback on the guidelines, the structure of this document, and all supporting materials provided in the spirit of continuous improvement.

SECTION 5: Customer Service Charter & Complaints Resolution

The SSM and Service Providers must deliver service that aligns with the expectations of the Integrated Employment Services Customer Service Charter and Complaints Resolution Process. The commitments and processes detailed here must be used in conjunction with existing internal policies or procedures used by the Service Provider, and where potential conflicts may arise the Program Guidelines must take precedence.

Service Providers are required to post a copy of the Charter and Complaints Resolution (provided by the SSM) in all service areas accessible to clients and on their websites, per requirements of their funding agreement. If materials need to be altered to incorporate internal procedures specific to the Service Provider, they must be submitted to the SSM and approved before use.

All Service Providers must ensure that they have policies and/or procedures in place regarding serious occurrences, and that their staff are trained in reporting serious occurrences and know the actions to be taken if a serious incident has occurred. Serious occurrences related to the delivery of Employment Ontario programming must be reported to the SSM immediately.

Serious occurrences include, but may not be limited to, the following situations:

- Death of a client while participating in service;
- Serious injury or illness while participating in service;
- Serious individual action that occurs while participating in service;
- Restrictive intervention (such as physical or mechanical restraint);
- Abuse or mistreatment;
- Error or omission (such as a privacy breach);

- Serious complaint;
- Service disruption, emergency, or disaster impacting ability to provide service;
- Any occurrence which may be expected to result in media coverage.

Customer Service Charter

The SSM and its Service Provider network within the Windsor-Sarnia Catchment area are committed to providing excellent customer service. We are committed to serving job seekers, community members, employers, and organizations in Windsor-Essex, Chatham-Kent, and Sarnia-Lambton. The services provided will be client-centered, responsive, inclusive, and accessible.

The SSM is committed to:

- Treating community members, employers, and service providers with dignity and respect.
- Treating individuals fairly while complying with all required policies, by-laws, and regulations.
- Ensuring our services are accessible for all customers.
- Providing inclusive, culturally responsive, and equitable services.
- Responding to written correspondence within 3 business days.
- Responding to telephone correspondence within 2 business days.
- Providing our service in the most cost-effective and efficient manner possible.
- Using feedback and data to continuously improve our programs and services.

The SSM and network Service Providers are committed to reviewing and addressing all feedback that is provided. The SSM will ensure confidentiality, accountability, and consistency in handling all feedback. All complaint information will be documented through the resolution process. No customer, community member, employer, or Service Provider will be penalized for raising concerns, disputes, or complaints.

There are multiple avenues for submitting feedback and/or complaints. Feedback about our Employment Ontario services can be provided directly to any network Service Provider, through our website at www.wrenetwork.ca/, through annual customer and employer surveys, and through our various community advisory committees.

For Community Members:

Community members can submit verbal or written complaints to the SSM in a number of ways:

- Online at <https://www.wrenetwork.ca/contact/>
- Email (SSM@citywindsor.ca)
- Phone (519-969-5644 or toll free at 1-844-696-5644)
- In-person directly with a Service Provider

If the feedback or complaint involves a specific Service Provider, the complaint will be referred to the Service Provider and they will strive to resolve the complaint within 30 business days from the date of contact.

If the complaint remains unresolved in 30 business days, the Manager, Integrated Employment Services, will strive to resolve the complaint within 15 business days from receiving notification that it remains unresolved.

If the complaint remains unsolved, the Executive Director, Employment and Social Services (Corporation of the City of Windsor) will strive to resolve the complaint within 15 business days from receiving notification that it remains unresolved. The decision of the Executive Director will be final and communicated to the community member.

For Service Providers:

Services Providers can submit a complaint by contacting the Manager, Integrated Employment Services, who will strive to resolve the complaint within 30 business days of receipt.

If the complaint remains unresolved, the Executive Director, Employment and Social Services (Corporation of the City of Windsor) or designate will review the complaint and determine next steps (e.g., mediation, amendments) in consultation with relevant internal departments. The decision of the Executive Director will be final and communicated to the Service Provider within 15 business days of reviewing the complaint.

SECTION 6: Eligibility for Service

In the Integrated Employment Services model for the Windsor-Sarnia catchment, **everyone** is eligible for service. All people are welcome to access services appropriate to their level of need, but that does not mean that everyone is eligible for **all** services.

An individual is eligible for **supported services (case-managed services)** if they:

- Are of working age (15 years of age or older),
- Live in Ontario, and
- Are eligible to work in Canada.

This means that individuals must have a valid Social Insurance Number (SIN) to receive service, as it is used to confirm that the individual is eligible to work in Canada and will provide a unique identifier to track the client through the Employment Ontario Client Management System (CaMS). Clients who do not have a SIN should be supported in connecting to appropriate resources to [apply for one](#), and clients who cannot remember their SIN should be supported in [obtaining confirmation](#) of their SIN. Clients who are not willing to provide their SIN to an Employment Ontario (EO) Service Provider to access service should be provided information on why it is required for service and on the organization's privacy and confidentiality policies.

Prior to beginning the intake process with a potential client, Service Provider caseworkers will be responsible for verifying that the individual meets these requirements. This also includes a process to obtain informed consent and to verify identification. This is covered in *Section 10 – Using the Common Assessment Tool*.

Other considerations for assessing someone's eligibility for case-managed services include:

1. The Individual is Currently Employed

Service providers may offer case-managed services to clients who are currently employed but are looking for another job. This may include clients with imminent lay-offs, clients who are looking for better employment opportunities, and clients who need to consider new employment opportunities due to health, medical, or social issues.

It is important to note for planning purposes that clients who are already working are most likely to be streamed as Stream A. Working with a large volume of clients who are already employed may result in missing outcomes for Stream B and Stream C clients. Additionally, clients who are currently employed can only achieve a Funded Outcome by obtaining new employment with a new employer (see *Section 17: Case Management and Outcome Monitoring*).

2. The Individual is Under Age 18

Individuals who are in training or education programs are eligible for case-managed services, with some exceptions for clients under the age of 18. Clients under the age of 18 must be excused from attending school during the school year per the Ontario Education Act, in order to access case-managed services. Service Providers must document proof of excusal, such as a Supported Alternative Learning letter or equivalent. Clients who have not yet turned 18 but have completed secondary school are eligible for service.

If you have a circumstance where proof of excusal during the school year is not available, or the client under 18 requires other consideration, please consult with the SSM.

3. The Individual is a Refugee or Residency Claimant

Individuals **without** an open work permit or with only an “employer specific work permit” are **not** eligible for case-managed services.

Individuals are eligible for case-managed services if they have a 900-series SIN, an open work permit, and are:

- Waiting for their permanent residence status to be finalized (e.g., Protected Persons and those on a temporary work permit who have received a letter from IRCC confirming they meet the eligibility requirements for permanent residence).
- Refugee claimants.
- Visitors under Emergency Travel measures (e.g., Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel/CUAET measure).

Temporary foreign workers or international students with a 900-series SIN, or visitors under Emergency Travel measures who do not have a 900-series SIN and an open work permit, may only access self-directed services. International students who require career and employment assistance should connect with the career services supports at their educational facility.

Status Quo Clients

Status Quo clients (also referred to as legacy clients, or carry-over clients) are those clients who have active employment service plans in the Windsor-Sarnia catchment during the IES Transition Period and continue to receive services during the delivery period (i.e., after January 1, 2024). This includes clients accessing Employment Services, Youth Job Connection, Youth Job Connection: Summer, Ontario Employment Assistance Service, and Employment Supports Program (formerly Ontario Disability Support Program – Employment Supports).

Any client who exits their legacy program prior to January 1, 2024 is not considered a status quo client and can potentially enter the new IES system and access an Employment Action Plan

(EAP) as of January 1, 2024, regardless of their previous exit date. There is no minimum time requirement between exiting legacy programming and accessing an EAP.

Service plans for status quo clients are not to be systematically closed all at once and then re-entered as new clients in IES. The legacy service plan can only be closed once the client no longer requires the supports offered through the legacy service plan (e.g., closes naturally, voluntarily chooses to leave the program/service, or achieves employment).

Service Providers are not required to follow legacy program guidelines in the delivery of services to status quo clients after January 1, 2024, although they must continue to provide employment services to these clients until the client no longer needs support (i.e., closes naturally, voluntarily chooses to leave the program/service, or achieves employment). For status quo clients, continue to use the legacy service plan in CaMS. Service Providers may choose to use the existing service plan's Plan Items or use the appropriate Sub-Goal's Custom Basic Plan item to reflect service plan activity.

After January 1, 2024, if it is determined additional/new assisted employment services would be beneficial to the client, then the Common Assessment may be administered. The Service Provider must always consider the potential benefit to the client when determining to start an EAP directly after exiting the legacy service plan (e.g., specialized new services that would support their job search).

Outcomes of status quo clients do not have an impact on the Performance Management Framework and Performance-Based Funding for Service Providers. These components apply only to new programming delivered after January 1, 2024 in the IES delivery phase.

A Client Tracker Tool has been developed by the Ministry to monitor status quo clients until their service plans are closed and outcomes are recorded. It will support the Ministry and the SSM to monitor the numbers, scope, progress, and durations of these service plans including clients who re-enter employment services. Service Providers should be prepared to provide reporting on status quo clients to the SSM upon request.

SECTION 7: Assessing Client Readiness

In the Integrated Employment Services (IES) model, "readiness" is defined as a client's ability to actively and meaningfully participate in employment services. Readiness for employment services does not mean that a client is "job-ready," but rather that the individual can actively and meaningfully participate in employment services to prepare for and find a job. Stability support interventions, such as life skills or community supports, can be addressed concurrently and do not prevent the client from being referred to IES.

This definition is separate from disability assessments and refers specifically to the determination of client's readiness to participate in employment-related activities. Particular attention is required for clients with disabilities to ensure that access to employment services is not denied based on their disability or disability-related barriers.

Many jobseekers will be assessed for readiness and entry into the EO system by their Social Assistance provider (discussed further in *Section 8: Referral Pathways*). If a client discloses that they are in a crisis where they may not be able to meaningfully participate in IES, Social

Assistance staff has protocols to work with the client to improve their situation prior to a referral to IES.

For Ontario Works (OW) clients being considered for employment services, OW caseworkers will consider the following employment readiness factors:

- The client's responses to the questions in the Common Assessment Module 1
- The client's progress and commitment to stability support activities
- Identified barriers and established goals in the SA Action Plan
- The client's expressed interest in participating in employment services (i.e., the client is motivated to participate and is not in crisis)
- The client's education, training, and employment history as detailed in the SA application
- Whether stability support services can be supported concurrently with a referral to Employment Services
- Any other information that might impact the client's ability to meaningfully participate in Employment Services

For Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) clients with disabilities being considered for employment services, their participation must be entirely voluntary. The primary reason for referral of ODSP clients with disabilities to employment services should be that they voluntarily expressed an interest in receiving help to find work or employment services. If the ODSP caseworker determines the client is ready for employment services, the client may be referred even if they are not able to or interested in working at least 20 hours per week, to ensure equitable access to employment services.

A Social Assistance client may determine on their own that they are ready to look for work and directly request employment services without the assistance of their Social Assistance caseworker. Additionally, jobseekers not associated with Social Assistance may self-refer to the SSM or directly to an EO Service Provider.

For any individuals determining on their own that they are ready to look for work and self-referring directly to an EO Service Provider (whether or not they are on Social Assistance), the Service Provider should use the same employment readiness factors outlined above as part of their process for making the determination.

SECTION 8: Referral Pathways

There are 3 primary pathways for jobseekers to enter the local EO system:

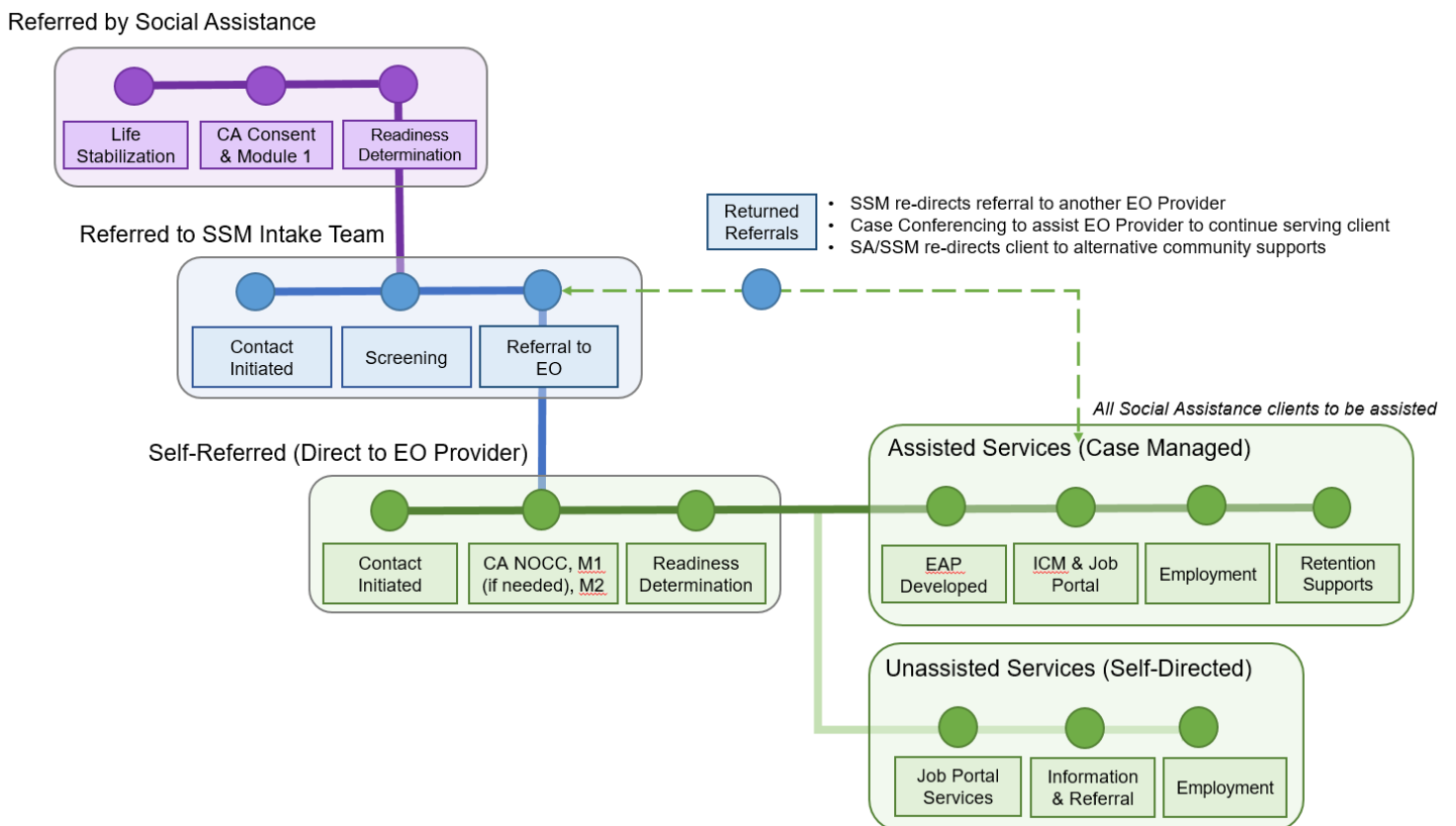
1. Referred by Social Assistance to the SSM Intake Team
2. Referred directly to the SSM Intake Team
3. Self-referred directly to an EO Network Service Provider

The SSM oversees a centralized intake process that will see jobseekers referred into the EO system across the Windsor-Sarnia catchment through an SSM Intake Team. Centralized intake will ensure effective matches between client needs and Service Provider, reduce the amount of time jobseekers spend moving between providers, allow for pro-active supports to prevent returned referrals, and ensure efficient distribution of referrals across the system. The SSM Intake Team maintains an updated list of Service Providers' locations and delivery hours, current service volumes by client stream, services available for Specialized Populations, and other relevant service information to assist with this process.

In all referral pathways, client choice will be prioritized in the decision making process. For all Social Assistance clients referred, if the client voluntarily identifies a choice in EO Service Provider, the caseworker will indicate the choice in the *Notes* section of the CA referral page. If no client choice is indicated, the SSM will use a standardized decision making process to refer the client to a provider in the network. Clients who are self-referred (i.e., walk-in clients who seek out a specific provider for service) will be assigned to that Service Provider.

Entering the EO system for case-managed services requires the completion of the Common Assessment (CA) Modules 1 and 2. The pathway by which a job seeker enters the system will determine who completes each module of the CA, as describe below in the description of each referral pathway.

Image: Simplified Overview of Referral Pathways for Windsor-Sarnia Catchment



Description of Referral Pathways

Pathway	Overview of Referral Process
1. Referred by Social Assistance	
<p>Ontario Works Delivery Partners</p> <p>Includes OW new & existing clients, and ODSP adult family members referred through OW.</p> <p>Ontario Disability Support Program Local Offices</p> <p>Includes ODSP primary clients and spouses with a disability (note that family members without a disability will be referred to OW for EO readiness assessment).</p>	<p>All OW clients will be administered the CA Module 1 by their OW Caseworker and will be assessed for EO service readiness.</p> <p>Only ODSP clients with disabilities that voluntarily express interest in receiving employment services will be assessed for EO service readiness and provided the CA Module 1 by their ODSP Caseworker.</p> <p>The OW/ODSP caseworker is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing Person Centred Supports (PCS) support for OW/ODSP clients prior to and during the client’s participation in employment services • Screening clients for EO eligibility, proof of identity, and readiness • Administering the CA Consent & Module 1 • Referring the CA Module 1 to the SSM for processing <p>The SSM Intake Team is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing CA Module 1 and caseworker notes for the Screening Tool • Using the Referral Decision Matrix to identify most appropriate provider for the client (if no client choice indicated on referral) • Assigning the referral in the CA Tool to the EO Service Provider and sending a Referral/Lead to the EO Service Provider in the Jobs Portal case management system • Supporting with contact issues or potential returned referral <p>The EO Service Provider is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing the CA Module 1 results and caseworker notes • Completing CA Module 2 with the client • Registering the client in CaMS • Registering the client in the Jobs Portal case management system • Developing an Employment Action Plan (EAP) with the client

2. Referral Directly to the SSM Intake Team

<p>Employment Insurance Claimant Information Sessions (Service Canada)</p> <p>Employment Ontario Contact Centre</p> <p>Ministry-Retained Employment Ontario programs and/or service providers (LBS, SDF, BJO, OBTP)</p> <p>Community Organizations</p> <p>Request a Service Provider (RASP)</p> <p>Targeted Employment Insurance (EI) applicants through the Targeting, Referral, and Feedback (TRF) system</p>	<p>The SSM will provide information on EO services through EI Claimant Information Sessions. Contact information and a digital link to the SSM website will be provided for those interested in seeking employment services.</p> <p>Additionally, referrals will be welcomed from the Employment Ontario Contact Centre, other Ministry-retained Employment Ontario programs/service providers (LBS, SDF, BJO, OBTP), and through referrals from other community organizations throughout the catchment. These referrals will be sent directly to the SSM Intake Team.</p> <p>TRF clients are clients that have recently applied for Employment Insurance benefits. The Federal government provides a list of individuals and the TRF system filters clients receiving EI based on a number of factors and demographic variables. A list of TRF Clients will be sent directly to the SSM Intake Team daily in CaMS.</p> <p>The SSM Intake Team is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administering a Screening Tool to the client and conducting a verification of client information in the CA and CaMS if applicable • Using the Referral Decision Matrix to identify most appropriate provider for the client (if no client choice identified during screening) • Sending a Referral/Lead to the EO Service Provider in the Jobs Portal case management system • Supporting with contact issues or potential returned referral <p>The EO Service Provider is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verifying EO eligibility, proof of identity, and readiness of client • Administering the CA Consent, Modules 1 and 2 with the client • Registering the client in CaMS • Registering the client in the Jobs Portal case management system • Developing an EAP with the client
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3. Referral Directly to an EO Network Service Provider (Self-Referred)

<p>Client Self-Referral (i.e., a “walk in” client)</p> <p>Find Employment and Training Services (FEATS)</p> <p>Job Bank</p>	<p>Jobseekers may access services by directly contacting any Service Provider in the network. Service Providers are expected to conduct outreach and recruitment to jobseekers to access their employment support services. This includes having sufficient information on their employment services posted on their website and in their office(s) or publicly accessible spaces.</p> <p>EO Service Providers are also required to ensure their organizational information on the FEATS system and the Job Bank stay updated. All jobseeker requests submitted through these systems will be sent directly to the EO Service Provider of the jobseeker’s choosing.</p> <p>The EO Service Provider is responsible for:</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verifying EO eligibility, proof of identity, and readiness of client • Verifying that the client does not already have an active CA/EAP • Administering the CA Consent, Modules 1 and 2 • Contacting the SSM Intake Team for support with re-directing the referral to a more appropriate provider if needed • Registering the client in CaMS • Registering the client in the Jobs Portal case management system • Developing an Employment Action Plan (EAP) with the client
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Determining an Appropriate EO Service Provider

The centralized intake process, operated by the SSM Intake Team, uses a Screening Tool and a Referral Matrix Tool to aid in determining which EO Service Provider will receive each referral that is processed through the SSM. Key information sources used by the SSM Intake Team to formulate a referral determination include:

- The client's home region (Windsor-Essex, Chatham-Kent, or Sarnia-Lambton)
- General client information
- Service needs identified in the Screening Tool and/or CA Module 1 (if applicable)
- Notes entered by referral source (if applicable)

The Referral Matrix assesses the following factors:

- A) Primary Factors
 - i. Client choice
 - ii. Specialized population

- B) Secondary Factors
 - i. Warm referral needs
 - ii. Client barriers and/or resource needs (Service Provider specialization)
 - iii. Network capacity and equity (caseloads and targets)

If the SSM Intake Worker receives a referral from Social Assistance and the SA caseworker has indicated in the notes section that the client requested a specific Service Provider, the SSM Intake Worker will assign that referral to the client's choice of Service Provider.

If the SSM Intake Worker receives a referral from any source and there is no client choice indicated, they will proceed to assess other referral factors. For example, if the referral indicates no client choice, no specialized population needs for that client, and no warm referral needs, but does indicate that the client has transportation barriers and requires service in a language other than English, the SSM Intake Worker will use the matrix to identify a Service Provider in the network that can best address these barriers based on the client's location and language needs.

If Service Providers have questions about why a specific referral was forwarded to them or about the flow of referrals received from the SSM, they should directly connect with their primary contact on the SSM team for additional information.

This process only applies to referrals that are processed through the SSM. In cases where a client self-refers directly to a Service Provider, there is no screening or approval needed by the SSM and the Service Provider may proceed to intake that client.

Service Standards for Processing Referrals

Our local referral model treats all referrals with immediacy to best meet the needs of job seekers coming into the system, particularly job seekers with unique or complex needs. Service Providers must make a first contact attempt with the referred client **within 2 business days** of receiving the referral from the SSM and will follow prescribed processes to establish connection with a nonresponsive client.

Expectations for Establishing Client Contact

Providers are expected to offer a **minimum of 2 appointments** to a client (either virtual or in-person, collaboratively scheduled with the client at a time that meets their needs) and make a **minimum of 3 distinct contact attempts in the client's preferred manner** (either by phone, text, email, or letter) before considering a client to be non-responsive.

It is expected that Service Providers treat non-responsive clients as clients requiring additional support to engage in services. They should make every effort to consider accessibility of their services and contact attempts before returning their referral to the SSM. If they are unable to make contact with the client despite meeting all required expectations, they would indicate the reason for the returned referral as “*Unable to connect with client.*”

For Social Assistance clients, a key objective is to prevent incomplete or returned referrals. If there are challenges contacting the client, the Service Provider is expected to directly contact the client's Social Assistance caseworker for support as early as possible before considering the client non-responsive. The Service Provider and Social Assistance caseworker should then work together to problem solve the situation or reach consensus that the client is non-responsive. Both partners should leverage the SSM for support as needed to reach a decision about non-responsive clients.

Warm Referrals

In some cases, a “warm referral” may be required to best meet the needs of the client's unique circumstances. This may involve the SA Caseworker initiating the first contact between their client and the EO Caseworker and/or attending the first employment services appointment with the client. Warm referrals may also include a client being supported by an EO Caseworker to directly connect with another EO Service Provider or another community organization.

Warm referrals should be offered to clients when their support needs are complex, they experience barriers that require special consideration, or at the request of the client. Warm referrals should be initiated during the appointment in which the CA is being administered or when referral needs are identified.

They may be initiated through a variety of means including phone call, email, or direct in person where co-location of providers is available. EO Service Providers can expect that the SSM may directly contact them to facilitate a warm referral between SA and the Service Provider, and in some cases this warm referral may need to take place on the same day if Service Provider

capacity allows for this. This may include a request to join a virtual call with the SA Caseworker and the client so that SA can facilitate an introduction and schedule a follow up appointment, or offering the client and their SA Caseworker a same-day in person appointment.

Onsite partnerships between Service Providers should be explored and implemented where possible to aid in the warm referral process. This could include co-location arrangements where it serves the best interests of clients and achieving successful outcomes.

Incomplete or Returned Referrals

Referrals may be returned to the SSM because they are incomplete (pre-service delivery) or at any other time during the delivery of services to the client if the client requests a new service provider, if the current service provider assesses that they are unable to meet the needs of the client, or if any other exceptional service need arises. In all circumstances, the SSM's Intake Team will be the first point of contact for the Service Provider.

Reasons for a returned referral in CaMS include:

- Unable to contact client
- Client declining service
- Client already registered with EO services
- Client cannot meaningfully participate due to crisis
- Client is not eligible for EO services (i.e., not legally entitled to work in Canada)
- Referred in error
- Other

If it is determined that a return is appropriate and in the best interest of the client:

1. The Service Provider should ensure they have exhausted all means of contact and opportunities to support the client's connection to Employment Services, with documentation to demonstrate their efforts.
2. If the client had completed a CA and been registered in CaMS, the Service Provider will enter the return into CaMS for the SSM to process.
If the client had not completed a CA, the Service Provider will re-assign the CA to the SSM with details of the reason for return in the CA Summary page "Notes" section (see *Section 10: Using the Common Assessment Tool* for more detail).
3. The SSM Intake Team will assess the return and reach an approved course of action:
 - a) Return the referral to SA;
 - b) Case conference with the Service Provider to address service challenges;
 - c) Case conference with the Service Provider to identify other appropriate community resources to meet the clients' needs; and/or
 - d) Forward the referral to another Service Provider for employment services.

Service Providers have 120 days from the time a client is referred to them by the SSM to complete the CA and activate an EAP with a client. Referrals will be considered incomplete when the Service Provider is unable to complete the CA Module 2 with the client during that time frame. Incomplete referrals must be returned to the SSM within 120 days of the referral date.

For SA clients, the primary objectives should always be to prevent returned referrals through effective case management and collaboration between the Service Provider and the SA caseworker. Prior to returning a referral, caseworkers from both partner organizations should work together to discuss and resolve the reason for return. SA caseworkers will work with the

client to address their reason for return, and can later assess if the client becomes ready to meaningfully participate in employment services. If the client is then ready, SA can update and re-refer the CA to the SSM.

For self-referred clients, Service Providers should ensure that CA Module 2 is completed and submitted within 120 days of beginning CA Module 1 with the client. If the CA has not been completed in 120 days, it should be considered incomplete and then cancelled in the CA Tool.

SECTION 9: Assessing Service Intensity

After completion of the Common Assessment (CA) Module 1, the Service Provider will make a service level determination for the client. Types of service levels to select in the CA include:

1. Case-managed (Assisted Service) – client will receive one-on-one assistance from an EO caseworker
2. Self-Directed (Unassisted Service) – client will conduct an independent job search
3. Service Pending – service will be paused due to limited intake capacity of the provider

For all clients receiving Social Assistance (Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support Program), service intensity will be **case-managed** until further notice. Note that SA Caseworkers will not be able to complete the service level determination question on the CA Module 1, and this will have to be done by the Service Provider once the referral and “*In Progress*” CA is forwarded to them.

For all other clients (not receiving Social Assistance), the service provider should determine the appropriate service level by using all available client information including the CA responses and reasonable discretion. Service Providers should not use the potential stream of the client identified by the Common Assessment as a key indicator for service intensity required.

Self-directed service is generally intended for those not eligible for case-managed services or those that do not wish to register for employment services.

If a client demonstrates these indicators, **Self-Directed service** can be considered by the Service Provider:

- Client choice to receive self-directed service
- Employment history, education level, and essential skills or qualifications which demonstrate good employability
- High motivation, positive attitudes toward work, and commitment to job seeking activities
- Average or better computer literacy (word processing, internet use, email use, etc.)
- Reporting no significant challenges with employers’ perceptions (i.e. factors that may make employers less willing to hire them)
- Presenting with no significant life stabilization needs

For clients determined to be Self-Directed, Service Providers are not required to complete the full CA (Module 2) or an Employment Action Plan for the client. Service Providers should leave the CA Module 1 “*In Progress*” for 120 days, for situations in which a Self-Directed client’s circumstances may change and they may be updated to case-managed. After this time, if the client remains Self-Directed, the CA may be cancelled.

If the Service Provider is at or above intake capacity, the Service Provider should consult immediately with the SSM Intake Team to identify other service options within the local EO

network for that client. While this consultation is taking place, the Service Provider may indicate “*Service Pending*” for the Service Level Determination when completing a CA and the client can access self-directed services.

SECTION 10: Using the Common Assessment Tool

The Common Assessment (CA) tool is a shared common intake approach. The CA tool is digitally administered as a questionnaire by both the Employment Ontario (EO) and Social Assistance (SA) systems to collect information on clients, including life stabilization needs, strengths, and barriers to employment. Data collected through the tool is used to stream clients using a segmentation model. The CA is designed to support the caseworker’s assessment of the client, which then helps to inform the intensity of services required.

The objectives of the Common Assessment are to:

- Support a client-centered experience where clients only need to tell their story once
- Identify client barriers and supports needed for work and life
- Collect data that supports an integrated view of clients, guiding referrals and coordination between EO and SA
- Support consistent information collection for EO and SA systems
- Connect client outcomes and Performance-Based Funding through a segmentation model

The Common Assessment process can be divided into 4 key components:

1. Search for a Client (Create a New Assessment)
2. Obtaining Consent
3. Verifying Identification
4. Conducting the Assessment

Search for a Client

When the CA tool is launched, it begins with a search page. The first step in completing a CA is to search the client in the system using their name, birthdate, and SIN number. The system uses the SIN number as a key identifier to search a record. Duplicate CAs may inadvertently be created if a Caseworker does not enter the client’s SIN number when they administer Module 1.

The CA tool will check to see if a CA has already been started for the client, and will also check the Case Management System (CaMS) to see if the client has an active Employment Action Plan (EAP). Only one “*In Progress*” assessment can be present at any one time for a client.

If the client already has an “*In Progress*” CA or an active EAP in the CaMS system, this information appears in the search results. Service Providers should avoid creating duplicate assessments, and instead should verify that the existing “*In Progress*” CA belongs to that client and should complete that assessment.

It is important to note that some individuals receiving Social Assistance may self-refer into the EO system without receiving a referral through their SA Caseworker. If this is the case, during the search process, the CA tool will display a system message which indicates that the client is an SA client and will display their Social Assistance Management System (SAMS) Member Identification Number (MID) as obtained during the automated system data match. This automation allows SA

to view EO-created assessments of self-referred clients and view details of the EAP in SAMS. Conversely, the EO caseworker is then able to view portions of the SA Action Plan.

If the search results display no “*In Progress*” assessments or existing EAPs for that client, the EO Caseworker should create a new assessment by selecting “Yes” when prompted.

Obtaining Informed Consent

Prior to the administration of any part of the CA, the EO/SA caseworker must obtain verbal informed consent from the potential client where informed consent is, at a minimum, the reading of the joint **Notice of Collection and Consent (NOCC)** to the client and receiving verbal approval the client has understood and agrees to proceed.

The NOCC provides the client with a summary of how their personal information will be used, to whom the information will be disclosed, the authority in which the personal information is collected, and who to contact if there is a query. The NOCC serves the same purpose as the NOCC previously on page 4 of the Employment Ontario Participation Registration Form used prior to IES delivery.

The NOCC only needs to be administered once by the first point of contact for the client as they begin the CA process. For clients referred through their SA provider, SA will complete the NOCC and it will not need to be completed again by the Service Provider. However, Service Providers should consider verifying with all newly referred SA clients that they understood the NOCC as explained by their SA caseworker and should be prepared to repeat the NOCC if appropriate to ensure informed consent.

Key details of this process include:

- Service Providers administering the NOCC should read the text verbatim to the client and provide a printed copy to the client if needed. If the client requests the NOCC in writing, it is to be made available to the client.
- Service Providers should be comfortable explaining the different aspects of the tool as they read the NOCC to the client to gain verbal consent.
- Alternate mechanisms for obtaining verbal consent can be used to mitigate barriers for the potential client, such as the use of Zoom or other video-based messaging services, as the individual can be visually confirmed to provide consent as well as provide proof of identity and eligibility.
- The client can revoke their consent to the NOCC at any time during service. However, upon withdrawal of consent, the client will not be able to continue receiving EO case-managed services. All case-managed employment services activities are expected to cease once the client withdraws their consent.
- The Service Provider must inform the SSM in writing of any revocation requests received from clients, so that the SSM can inform the Ministry to stop sharing with other Ministries and to remove client personal information from the system.
- If the potential client does not provide their consent to proceed then the assessment must cease (i.e., stop administering CA). These individuals can be referred to life stabilization, community based and/or self-directed services depending on their need. No documentation is required if consent is not provided.

Verification Requirements

Prior to completing the CA and beginning service delivery, Service Providers must verify the client's identity through acceptable photo identification, which must be valid (not expired) government issued ID that can verify their name, date of birth, and address information. Examples include: Driver's License, Ontario Photo Card, Passport, Nexus Card or Enhanced Driver's License, Canadian Citizenship Card, Permanent Residence Card, Certificate of Indian or Metis Status Band Card.

Verification can be conducted in person or via a virtual meeting where the Service Provider can visually verify acceptable photo identification on camera. To protect client privacy, please do not make copies of the identification.

A Health Card or SIN is not considered an acceptable form of identification as this is prohibited by the Privacy Act. If the client is only able to provide their health card as a form of ID, Service Providers may use the dual process method to verify their identity by viewing any two of the following pieces of information from two different reliable sources:

- Information from a reliable source that contains the individual's name and address (e.g., property tax assessment, government issued benefits statement, Notice of Assessment, utility bill).
- Information from a reliable source that contains the individual's name and date of birth (e.g., original birth certificate, marriage certificate, temporary driver's licence).
- Information containing the individual's name that confirms they have a deposit account or credit card or other loan account with a financial institution (e.g., credit card statement, bank statement, or loan account statement).

In all cases, the documents must be originals that are authentic, valid, and current. Photocopies, faxes, and electronic images should not be accepted as proof of identification. The individual does not need to be physically in your presence at the time you verify their identity using the dual process method. For SA clients, you may rely on documentation and other information collected by SA staff to assist with confirming proof of eligibility and identification requirements.

If this creates barriers to accessing service for any potential client, the Service Provider should make all reasonable effort to support the individual in verifying their identity or should contact the SSM directly for guidance.

If a Service Provider cannot assess an individual as eligible or they cannot provide proof of identity, the individual may be assisted through self-directed, life stabilization, and/or other community-based services as determined by the Provider. It is essential in these cases to ensure that clients continue to feel welcome to receive services. Service Providers should utilize any available community resource to assist the client in accessing appropriate identification needed to work and access services in Ontario.

If a client does not have a residential address or no other mailing address is available, Service Providers may use their organizational address as a temporary address for the client to complete the Common Assessment. Once a more permanent address exists, CaMS must be updated to reflect the client's actual address.

Conducting the Common Assessment

After ensuring consent is obtained and verifying client identity, the CA must be completed with the client. The CA is currently divided into two modules. Module 1 (M1) of the CA tool informs the creation of a life stabilization action plan (and also includes the Service Level Determination), while Module 2 (M2) informs an Employment Action Plan (EAP).

Module 1 (M1) – Client Background Information

1. Administrative Information (i.e., basic and contact information)
2. Demographic Information
3. Essential Skills (including Self-Efficacy)
4. Supports and Service Needs (Life Stabilization)

Module 2 (M2) – Income and Employment

1. Income and Assistance
2. Disability Information
3. Employment Status and History
4. Employment Goals (including Work Attitudes)

The client referral pathway will determine how Service Providers access and administer the CA for each referred client:

1. For clients referred from **Social Assistance**:
 - The SA caseworker will administer M1 and then select the SSM as the Service Provider to receive the “*In Progress*” assessment.
 - The SSM will refer the file to the Service Provider (which can then be found on the CA “*Referred Clients*” list on the main page of the CA Tool).
 - The EO Caseworker receiving the referral should familiarize themselves with the information in M1.
 - The EO Caseworker will complete M2.
2. For **EO-only clients** (clients who enter the EO system and do not have an active SA file) that have been **referred through the SSM** or who have **self-referred directly to an Service Provider**:
 - The EO Caseworker will administer M1, which includes the Service Level Determination (case-managed or self-directed).
 - For clients determined to be case-managed, the EO Caseworker will complete M2, and assign the client to themselves on the Summary Page of the CA.
 - The EO Caseworker will then register the client in CaMS and create the EAP to begin providing employment services.

If a client’s Service Level Determination is deemed to be Self-Directed after completion of CA M1, Service Providers are not required to complete the full CA (Module 2) or an Employment Action Plan with that client. Service Providers should leave the CA Module 1 “In Progress” for 120 days, for situations in which a Self-Directed client’s circumstances may change and they may require case-managed services, or if the client seeks services from another EO network Service Provider. After this time, if the client remains Self-Directed, the CA may be cancelled using the reason “Other” and noting rationale for the client being assessed as receiving Self-Directed service.

Referring an Assessment

For SA Clients

After completion of the CA, the SA Caseworker will see the *Select a Service Provider* page and will select the **SSM (Windsor Regional Employment Network)** from the list of available providers.

A *Summary* page will then display all current CA responses, and also includes:

- Common assessment number
- Common assessment status
- Service level determination
- Catchment area
- Employment Ontario Caseworker Information
 - Service system manager
 - Service delivery site
- Social Assistance Caseworker Information (will appear only for SA Referrals)

The CA *Summary* page will be completed by the SA Caseworker immediately after they administer M1. This page contains an optional “Notes” section, and the field can be edited and viewed by both SA and EO caseworkers. This allows for two-way communication between caseworkers to provide additional information regarding the client’s referral.

The SA Caseworker will include the following information in the “Notes” section of the *Summary* page to assist the SSM and/or Service Provider in establishing support for the client:

- Choice of service provider, if indicated by client (for SSM use only)
- Preferred method of contact
- Preferred time of day to contact
- Contextual factors as relevant
 - Barriers to attending appointments: transportation, childcare, language barriers
 - Motivation considerations
 - If warm-handoff is required
- Any other information the SA caseworker judges to be relevant to serving the client

The SA Caseworker will also ensure that the *Social Assistance Caseworker Information* section is complete with the contact information that can be used by the EO Caseworker if they need case consultation to assist in contacting the client.

When the SA Caseworker selects “Refer Assessment,” it will be reviewed by the SSM and assigned to an appropriate Service Provider. The Service Provider will then be able to access the referred CA on the “Referred Clients” list on the main page of the CA Tool in order to complete M2.

For EO-Only Clients

For EO-Only Clients, the CA *Summary* page will appear after the EO Caseworker completes M2. The EO Caseworker should use the “Notes” section of the *Summary* page to input any process or service notes for the client that would be helpful to remember prior to beginning the Employment Action Planning stage.

For the *Employment Ontario Caseworker Information* section, the EO caseworker should select the name of their agency on the Service Delivery Site list and “*Assign*” the assessment to an appropriate staff member.

The EO Caseworker should review all responses for accuracy and completion, and then select “*Submit assessment.*” Once the EO caseworker selects “*Submit assessment*” the button will become disabled and a loading screen may appear. When the submission has completed, the referring individual will be navigated back to the *Summary* page and a confirmation message will appear at the top of the screen. The CA status will also be updated to *Submitted* and a CA segmentation stream will be generated.

Client Segmentation

Once submitted, the *CA Summary* page will show the client’s segmentation. The segmentation process will see the client segmented into one of the following streams based on relative risk of long-term unemployment:

Stream A: “Rapid Employment”

Clients deemed low risk for long-term unemployment. This includes clients who may be able to quickly obtain employment. Clients who fall into this stream usually require less intensive ongoing support. These are the lowest service-intensity clients, and self-service options may be an appropriate fit in many cases. However, it is important to note that a Stream A client may have market perception issues that require Job Development support - this includes barriers specifically related to employer perceptions that may make an employer less likely to hire the individual (e.g., barriers the individual can control such as appropriate workplace attire; or barriers that require focus on the employer’s perceptions such as biases related to visible disabilities).

Stream B: “Employability and Employment”

Clients deemed medium risk for long-term unemployment. This includes clients who may need to focus on improving employability in addition to obtaining employment. Clients who fall into this stream may require a moderate level of ongoing support.

Stream C: “Employability Focused”

Clients deemed high risk for long-term unemployment. This includes clients who may need to focus primarily on improving employability, prior to exploring employment opportunities. Clients who fall into this stream may require intensive and ongoing support to enter the labour market.

Cancelling an In-Progress Assessment

Only assessments that have not yet been submitted (i.e., they have a status of “*In Progress*”) can be cancelled.

The reasons for cancelling an assessment are:

- Client decided not to proceed with completing the assessment
- Unable to connect with the client
- Created in error
- Other (please specify)

If cancelled, the CA record will be left in a read-only state that cannot be edited later, which means if the client returns at a later date, a new CA must be administered. If left in-progress, the CA record can be edited later if the client returns.

For an SA client that decides not to proceed with EO services, or is unable to be contacted, a case conference with the SA caseworker is first recommended. Then, it is recommended that Service Providers return the assessment to the SSM as opposed to cancelling it. Clients referred from SA have 120 days to complete the CA and an EAP with a Service Provider, otherwise the referral must be returned to the SSM (see *Section 8: Referral Pathways*).

Service Providers should leave all CA records in-progress for 120 days before cancelling the record, to ensure the client has time to return and proceed with the assessment should they so choose. If this occurs, Service Providers proceeding with an in-progress assessment should repeat verbatim only the Notice of Consent and Collection portion, and then should briefly review the client's answers to previously covered questions for current accuracy and make updates as required before proceeding to ask questions that were not previously addressed.

If a Service Provider determines through the assessment process that the referral should be returned to the SSM prior to completing it, the Provider should contact the SSM. If this is approved by the SSM, the Service Provider will not cancel the assessment, but will instead re-assign the assessment to the SSM for next steps. The Service Provider should provide detailed explanation for the returning of an "In Progress" assessment using the *Notes* section of the Summary page.

Other Important Notes for CA Administration

- Administration of the CA may take multiple sessions or additional time to complete to build rapport with the client, ensure sensitive and culturally appropriate administration, and ensure accuracy of responses.
- The EO/SA caseworker entering CA data should take care to ensure client data is as accurate as possible at the time of discussion with the client, as it acts as a snapshot into the client's circumstances at the time of intake.
- The CA tool provides information to inform decision making by the caseworkers; it does not directly determine eligibility for SA, service intensity, nor specific services needed.
- The labelling of clients into streams is terminology that should only be used for internal purposes and should not be used as client-facing language.
- Upon completion and submission of a CA, the record and information cannot be modified or deleted. Ensure that all information in the CA is reviewed with the client before completing the record. If an error is discovered after completion, then the completed CA will need to be closed in error and a new CA will need to be created.
- While the CA is a critical element of the Integrated Employment Services delivery model, Service Providers may choose to use other career development tools in addition to the CA to develop a more comprehensive assessment of client needs (e.g., client motivation, employer perception concerns, etc).
- After completion of the CA, if a Provider deems a client not ready for employment services, they may follow the protocol for returning the referral to the SSM.

SECTION 11: Creating an Employment Action Plan

The Employment Action Plan (EAP) is both a process and a living tool that documents client service planning and ensures that revisions to client employment goals and activities are monitored for progress and outcomes.

The EAP is the service plan developed for case-managed clients and is informed by the Common Assessment, which captures:

- Employment goals
- Activities
- Implicated parties
- Sequence of services
- Coordination of employment services with life stabilization and other wrap-around supports (for clients who directly enter EO)
- Client progress and employment outcomes

Action planning is a core component of service delivery within the Integrated Employment Services model. Through this co-constructed process, the client's strengths, needs, and goals are explored to develop an individual's plan for services. Service Providers should utilize a collaborative and strengths-based approach in developing the EAP for all clients regardless of perceived distance from the labour market.

Clients assessed as receiving self-directed services do not require an EAP.

Employment services which make up the EAP are not intended only to be offered prior to employment being gained, but rather to be a suite of the services provided at any time based on client needs. The EAP should be a living document updated with the client throughout the delivery of services and the twelve-month retention period. If client circumstances change, the EAP may need to be altered to address emergent needs.

At this point in the client's journey through the Integrated Employment Services' system, Service Providers should clearly communicate to the client that there will be a requirement to provide documentation (e.g., receipts for financial support purchases, evidence of wages/hours once employed such as pay stubs) as part of the service they are receiving. If the client indicates reluctance to share this documentation, the Service Provider should communicate information on why it is required for service and on the organization's privacy policies in place to protect the client's confidentiality.

Using CaMS to Develop the EAP

As a system tool, the Case Management System (CaMS) EAP includes plan items to support operational business requirements while ensuring flexibility for Service Providers to deliver a full range of core, specialized, and innovative employment activities and services. CaMS functionality also supports the IES Performance Management Framework and the funding model.

The submission and segmentation of the Common Assessment (CA) is a pre-condition for the development of an EAP. Each client can have only one active EAP at any time with only one segmented CA record attached. Therefore, if the EAP is cancelled or closed and the client is

returning for service, they will be required to complete a new CA before they can access a new EAP.

To begin development of the EAP, the EO Caseworker will search for a client in CaMS and choose the EAP service plan from the pick list of service plans for new case-managed clients. The EO Caseworker will then work together with the client to co-construct a detailed EAP that will yield the best employment outcome for that client. This includes selecting Plan Items and Sub Goals which align to their stream of service and support needs.

The EAP includes two goals, one or more sub-goals, and one or more plan items for each sub-goal. The goal is the primary objective or desired outcome of the EAP, which the client is working towards (e.g., "Employment").

The goals can be broken down into a series of more manageable steps, the aim of which are to assist the client in achieving the overall goal. These steps are known as sub-goals, which will consist of one or more scheduled activities or plan items. The successful completion of some or all plan items is required to successfully attain a sub-goal.

The Employment Action Plan sub-goals are:

- Life Stabilization
- Employment Assistance Services
- Employer Financial Supports
- Jobseeker Financial Supports
- Skills Development - Ministry Delivered Programs
- Skills Development - Other
- Retention
- Specialized Services

Plan items are the fundamental building blocks of an EAP. They are the benefits, services, and activities that are added to a sub-goal in order to achieve the plan goal. Plan items can be configured with cost, outcome, and start and end dates.

When the sub-goals and plan-items have been entered into CaMS and the EAP has been activated, a plan summary will be generated. The EO Caseworker may wish to print the plan summary for the client to review, sign, and keep. This provides proof that the client was a participant in the plan development process and ensures transparency between the client and EO Caseworker. Note that if the plan has changed to active before the plan summary has been printed, you will no longer have the option to print off the plan.

As life stabilization activities may be required throughout the lifecycle of the EAP, new plan-items and sub-goals can be added to the client plan after the client has started the monitoring phase. Changes to the EAP should be documented in client case file notes.

The CaMS EAP will show all plan-items as completed and attained at the onset of an outcome; however, Service Providers are expected to maintain evidence of ongoing action planning until all follow-up activities are complete.

A client's EAP may include job advancement supports for clients employed at entry to the Employment Services system, but looking to progress with their current employer (e.g., increasing wage, internal promotion).

The CaMS EAP also allows for use of Custom Basic Plan items, which are meant to reflect new and/or innovative activities that are not currently covered by the existing EAP plan items. This enables Service Providers to use their own innovative activities and not be constrained by the Ministry's plan item list.

EAP Activities

Service Providers will develop and deliver, at minimum, case-managed employment services that address the following areas reflected in EAP plan items and sub goals:

- 1. Pre-Employment Services:** These are activities that support the client to obtain employment (i.e., a new job or a job with a new employer). For the purposes of Performance Management Funding, Pre-Employment Services are activities that would lead to a funded outcome of working at least an average of 20 hours per week or more.
 - a. Client Assessment and Referral:** Service Providers will utilize the CA and EAP framework in CaMS for all case-managed clients. Service Providers may choose to use other assessment tools or approaches beyond this minimum that will allow for deeper understanding of client needs and more effective action planning for positive outcomes.
 - b. Life Stabilization:** In partnership with the client, the Service Provider will create a detailed action plan and coordinate services and referrals across programs (e.g., mental health supports, literacy and essential skills, training, apprenticeship, etc.). This work should center the client in all decision making and coordinate access to services to holistically address their needs.
 - c. Career Exploration, Planning & Management:** Service Providers are expected to offer a suite of services that address job searching skills, resume writing, interview preparation, networking, workplace etiquette, and other areas of focus deemed required. These must include self-service options, and Service Providers should leverage the Jobs Portal provided by the SSM to enable this work.
 - d. Employability Skills Training:** Service Providers will offer programming that develops clients' employability. This may focus on industry-specific needs (e.g., Smart Serve, WHMIS, etc) and also increasing the clients' motivation, reliability, and dependability for employment. This may also include paid job trials and other experiential learning opportunities.
 - e. Job Development:** The Service Providers are expected to utilize comprehensive and innovative job development approaches. This should include job search, matching, development, and placement approaches. Successful program development in this area will be a significant area of focus for SSM monitoring of the network.
 - f. Employment-Related Financial Supports:** Each Service Provider has been provided with funds to supply employment-related financial support (ERFS) to job seekers and employers. These supports are intended to address and/or remove temporary barriers to employment and support successful client placements. See *Section 13* for detailed ERFS guidelines.

g. Specialized Services: Service Providers are expected to develop appropriate programming for people in specialized, equity-deserving populations in alignment with their commitments in their Service and Innovation Planning (SIP) submission and their funding agreement. Populations include Indigenous People, ODSP clients, People with Disabilities, Youth with Higher Support Needs, Racialized Individuals, Francophone Ontarians, and new Canadians. These services must prove they are tailored to the individual's unique needs and demonstrate culturally appropriate services.

2. Referral to Skills Training & Education: Some clients will need short-term or long-term skills upgrading to engage successfully in the workplace. Service Providers are expected to develop approaches to support clients in applying to these services. Education is not a successful outcome by itself; Once the education is complete, the Service Provider should continue to support the client to successful employment.

3. Job Retention: With outcomes measured at 3 months of employment and the expectation of an ongoing relationship with the client for 12 months from employment placement, the SSM expects Service Providers to develop a robust job retention approach. This should include coaching, retention, advancement, and rapid re-employment in the event of termination. Successful program development in this area will be a significant area of focus for SSM monitoring of the network.

The SSM expects Service Providers to implement evidence-informed practices within their delivery approach, which may strengthen the minimum framework provided above and enhance client outcomes. As part of the SSM's monitoring processes, these practices will be evaluated and those proven effective will be included in future revisions of these guidelines for standardization of best-practices across the catchment network.

Additional Notes About Job Development

The Windsor Regional Employment Network recognizes that to achieve new results, we must use new thinking and ways of working, particularly with individuals deemed to be furthest from the labour market. Service Providers must shift from a focus on Employment Readiness to a focus on Employment Outcomes.

This means that Service Providers are expected to move beyond just ensuring clients are prepared for the competitive job search process (skills assessments, resume building, and job search strategies) and should significantly increase their focus on job development, particularly for clients facing more complex barriers to the labour market.

Service Providers are expected to place a strong emphasis on securing employment opportunities for clients, which should include job carving, job placement, job trials, job matching, employer engagement, and ongoing retention supports for both the client and their employer. Client's EAPs should reflect this shift to an employment outcome model, and Service Providers should structure their service delivery plans to be able to effectively deliver on these case-managed plan items and sub-goals.

EAP Closure/Completion

The EAP is intended to capture all client services including retention supports, as required. There is currently no maximum duration for the EAP as each client will move through the program at a pace suitable to their needs and abilities.

For Performance Management Framework and monitoring purposes:

- The EAP will remain open 12 months following the end of pre-employment services OR the funded outcome threshold, whichever comes first.
- The EAP may remain open longer for exceptional cases where clients require more retention support based on operational monitoring/check-ins (i.e., if the client becomes employed close to the final checkpoint, the Service Provider may choose to offer additional retention services beyond the 12-month checkpoint in order to ensure continued employment).
 - Once started, the checkpoints will continue as per schedule, regardless of whether the client loses or gains a job.
 - Keeping the EAP open in these exceptional cases does not impact Performance Management Framework, Performance-Based Funding, or client volume counts.

EAP closure is a manual process – CaMS will not automatically close the EAP at the 12-month checkpoint. Therefore, the EO Caseworker will choose from one of the EAP closure reasons noted in the next section to manually close the EAP. EAP closure does not refer to the end of the Pre-Employment Services period.

The SSM will actively monitor EAP closures. Service Providers should ensure that they are documenting client progress in the EAP and any service challenges experienced in the client Case Notes, so that the SSM can clearly see rationale for EAP closure.

Closure Reasons Available During Pre-Employment:

If the EAP is closed **prior to the completion of the defined pre-employment services or prior to adding an outcome**, the closure reasons available are:

- Client Ineligible
- Client Deceased
- Client Issue - Satisfactory Progress Not Achieved
- Opened in Error
- Referral to EO Training Program
- Voluntary Withdrawal - Personal Reasons
- Voluntary Withdrawal - Moved Outside of Catchment
- Voluntary Withdrawal - Moved Outside of Province
- Voluntary Withdrawal - Client Dissatisfied with Service
- Voluntary Withdrawal - No Longer Seeking Employment
- Unable to Contact Client

Closure Reasons Available During Monitoring:

If the Employment Action Plan is closed at any point during the monitoring phase, the closure reasons available are:

- Client Ineligible
- Client Deceased

- Referral to EO Training Program
- Voluntary Withdrawal - Personal Reasons
- Voluntary Withdrawal - Moved Outside of Catchment
- Voluntary Withdrawal - Moved Outside of Province
- Voluntary Withdrawal - Client Dissatisfied with Service
- Voluntary Withdrawal - No Longer Seeking Employment

Closure Reasons Available After 12-Month Outcome Checkpoint Completion:

If the Employment Action Plan is closed after the completion of the 12-month Outcome Checkpoint, the closure reasons available are:

- Client Ineligible
- Client Deceased
- Completion
- Referral to EO Training Program
- Voluntary Withdrawal - Personal Reasons
- Voluntary Withdrawal - Moved Outside of Catchment
- Voluntary Withdrawal - Moved Outside of Province
- Voluntary Withdrawal - Client Dissatisfied with Service
- Voluntary Withdrawal - No Longer Seeking Employment
- Unable to Contact Client

Collaboration with Ministry-Retained EO Programs

As part of Integrated Employment Services, EO Caseworkers are responsible for skills training referrals based on client need, choice, and appropriateness. Providers are expected to use other Ministry-retained EO programs to ensure that clients receive the support required through their journey to employment.

Service Providers must participate in regular training and information sharing related to other available Ministry-retained EO programs and will have opportunities to build connections with the network of providers to ensure high awareness of services available for their clients.

The SSM's Intake Team also serves as a resource for Providers who can assist with identifying other agencies/programs that can provide additional supports based on the client needs.

Service Providers must not use other services (e.g., Literacy and Basic Skills) to move a client to an alternative service for the sole purpose of ceasing to provide them with employment services. But rather, it is expected that these clients would be jointly served using an integrated case management approach acting in the best interest of the clients.

There are three approaches for handling client referrals to Ministry-retained EO programs:

1. EO skills training programs WITH an immediate expected employment outcome include:

- Skills Advance Ontario (SAO)
- Ontario Bridge Training Program (OBTP)
- Canada-Ontario Job Grant (COJG)
- Apprenticeship Program

Clients that are referred to these programs **are counted against** the client served Key Performance Indicators and **are not eligible** for Performance-Based Funding.

As these EO Skills Training Programs have an outcome of immediate employment, the appropriate training plan item should be added to the client's EAP and the EAP should be closed (indicating "*Referral to EO Training Program*" as the closure reason).

Other Pre-Employment Services plan items should be completed and or closed out accordingly before the EAP is closed. The "*Add an EAP Outcome*" screen should not be completed for the client.

Process for Referral:

1. Client is referred to training in relevant EO program (SAO, OBTP, COJG, or Apprenticeship).
2. Once acceptance into the program is confirmed, their EAP is closed with an early exit closure reason of "Referral to EO Training Program", triggering positive Key Performance Indicators (i.e., Client Served, Inclusion Group, if applicable, and Completion of Training/Education).
3. Once closed, no monitoring period is triggered and thus the client is not eligible for Performance-Based Funding reporting.
4. The client successfully enters and completes training in relevant EO program.

Service Providers should ensure that the client is accepted into the new EO program prior to exiting their EAP to ensure a positive client experience. Should this not happen, the EO caseworker would need to conduct a new CA before developing a new EAP for the client to re-start Integrated Employment Services.

2. EO skills training programs WITHOUT an immediate expected employment outcome include:

- Better Jobs Ontario
- Ontario Job Creation Partnerships Program (OJCP)
- Literacy and Basic Skills Program (LBS)

When a case-managed client is referred to one of these training programs, the Service Provider will keep their case open and continue to provide Integrated Employment Services support.

The appropriate plan item must be entered in CaMS and the EAP should be modified to "*Active - On Hold*" until the client completes the program and returns to the EO Service Provider for additional services.

When the client completes the training or education activity, the plan item is considered successful and the Service Providers should then end the plan item with status of "*Completed*" and outcome of "*Attained*".

The client is counted as a 'client served' once they complete the training program. Subsequently, they may be associated with Performance-Based Funding if the client completes training, finds employment, and meets all other PBF requirements.

3. Other circumstances:

There are cases, such as the Skills Development Fund, where the Ministry will not allow clients to be open in both programs. In cases where a referral to such programs is made, the Service Provider will close the client's EAP (indicating "Referral to EO Training Program" as the reason). However, it will not be counted as a successful outcome. In these cases, Service Providers must act in the client's best interest regardless of impact on their service delivery outcomes.

Service Providers should consult with their primary SSM contact with questions or concerns about other circumstances that may arise.

SECTION 12: Integrated Case Management with Social Assistance

Integrated Case Management (ICM) refers to the set of protocols that guide the interactions between Ontario Works (OW) or Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) and EO Service Providers. All Social Assistance clients receiving case-managed services from both Social Assistance and Employment Services will receive ICM. The goal of ICM is to ensure ongoing collaboration between partners to improve the service experience and outcomes for Social Assistance clients as they move toward employment.

ICM formally begins when the Common Assessment (CA) is completed and an Employment Action Plan (EAP) is developed, at which time the EO Client Management System (CaMS) is used by the EO Caseworker to manage delivery of supports to the client.

The case management tool used by OW and ODSP, Social Assistance Management System (SAMS), contains a client's Social Assistance Action Plan which is a goal-oriented plan that identifies the approved life stabilization and pre-employment activities that the client will undertake with the shared goal of preparing for, finding, and maintaining employment.

Case Noting

In the ICM approach, information will be shared between SAMS and CaMS to ensure alignment between programs. The client's EAP is automatically shared to SAMS so that the SA Caseworker can view all details. At this time, there is no shared communication tool to allow joint case noting between EO and SA across both case management systems and there is no information communicated from SAMS to the CaMS system. **Service Providers should document all notes about client service that are relevant for SA in the EAP "Comments" section under the appropriate plan item.**

Service Providers will use the Jobs Portal for daily case management activities for client service; however, SA Caseworkers will not have access to the Jobs Portal system. Service Providers must document all necessary information about client service required for effective ICM with SA in CaMS, even if this means duplication in some notes between CaMS and the Jobs Portal.

The following information must be recorded in CaMS:

- EAP Plan Item Comments (i.e., case notes that SA can access)
- Use of Employment Related Financial Supports and required proof

- Outcomes
- Monitoring Checkpoint and required proof for Performance Based Funding

All other service related case notes and documentation should be stored in the Jobs Portal case management tools. This is discussed further in *Section 16: Using the Jobs Portal Tool*.

Responsibilities of all Providers within the ICM approach include:

Social Assistance	Employment Services	SSM
Life Stabilization		
Provide life stabilization services, collaborating with EO as required to ensure best outcomes for the client.		
Assessment and Referral for Employment Services		
<p>Assess client readiness for employment services and have proactive conversations with the client about the next steps in the process toward employment. This includes discussion on the common assessment, employment services offered, the client’s options, and addressing client concerns.</p> <p>Complete Module of the Common Assessment and proactively identify any warm referral needs or special considerations for the client. Initiate a shared conversation with the SSM to address these needs during the referral process.</p> <p>Be available for shared conversations about changes in client readiness.</p>	<p>Be available for shared conversations with the SSM and SA about client readiness and to address questions that may arise.</p> <p>Receive the client referral processed by the SSM and follow all guidelines for contacting the client to complete the Common Assessment. This may include being responsive to warm referral needs and other considerations as identified by SA.</p> <p>Communicate with SA about outcomes of the referral process using effective case noting and direct contact channels (phone, email) as required for problem solving.</p>	<p>Be available for shared conversations with SA about client readiness and to address questions that may arise.</p> <p>Provide up-to-date information on the available services and what services best suit different client groups’ needs.</p> <p>Process referrals between SA and EO providers efficiently and provide support to EO/SA as required.</p>
Joint Case Management		
<p>Engage the client in SA Action Plan and ongoing life stabilization supports required to support their readiness for employment services.</p> <p>Initiate case consultation with EO regarding changes in the</p>	<p>Develop an Employment Action Plan with the client that considers their goals, service needs, and alignment with the SA Action Plan.</p> <p>Deliver Integrated Employment Services to the client in accordance with program guidelines.</p>	<p>Provide up-to-date information on service capacity of the network and implementation of procedural or guideline changes.</p>

<p>client's life stabilization needs or life circumstances.</p> <p>Be available for case consultation with EO or the SSM regarding changes in the client's employment needs.</p> <p>Collaborate with EO on coordination of any outstanding or concurrent life stabilization services.</p> <p>Ensure effective documentation of case notes relevant to the client's employment services.</p> <p>Ensure changes in client's primary contact or SA Caseworker are immediately noted in case management systems for EO reference.</p>	<p>Initiate case consultation with SA regarding changes in the client's employment services needs or life circumstances.</p> <p>Be available for case consultation with SA or the SSM regarding changes in the client's life stabilization needs.</p> <p>Collaborate with SA on coordination any outstanding or concurrent life stabilization services.</p> <p>Coordinate referrals to community supports (including other EO Programs) as required to assist the client in moving toward employment. Ensure efficient and effective communication to SA regarding these referrals.</p> <p>Ensure effective case noting using Notes Template Job Aids provided by the SSM to ensure consistency across providers.</p> <p>Ensure changes in client's primary contact or EO Caseworker are immediately noted in case management systems for SA reference.</p> <p>Collaborate with SA on instances of EAP file closures or early exits prior to closure, and on returning clients as soon as service is re-initiated.</p>	<p>Deliver training across providers to ensure consistent understanding of expectations between systems.</p> <p>Support with service delivery or case consultation challenges between systems.</p> <p>Coordinate returned referrals between systems. Support with community referrals to meet client needs as required.</p> <p>Create Notes Template Job Aids that ensure consistency in case noting practices across providers.</p>
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Benefits/Financial Support Coordination

<p>Deliver to the client financial benefits to help address life stabilization-related needs.</p> <p>Collaborate with EO Caseworkers to ensure no duplication of financial supports.</p> <p>Initiate and/or be available for case consultation with EO or</p>	<p>Deliver to the client financial supports to address temporary barriers to participation in employment or employment-related activities.</p> <p>Collaborate with SA Caseworkers to ensure no duplication of financial supports.</p> <p>Initiate and/or be available for case consultation with SA or the SSM to</p>	<p>Support with identification and connection to available community resources as required to maximize impact of financial supports.</p> <p>Provide guidance determining eligible financial supports, include support with negotiation of benefit coverage as required.</p>
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<p>the SSM to problem solve resourcing challenges for the client.</p> <p>Ensure effective documentation of benefits requested/approved.</p> <p>Communicate with EO and the SSM any situations of unmet resourcing needs.</p>	<p>problem solve resourcing challenges for the client.</p> <p>Ensure effective documentation of benefits requested/approved using Notes Template Job Aids provided by the SSM to ensure consistency across providers.</p> <p>Document and report to the SSM any situations of unmet resourcing needs.</p>	<p>Provide timely approvals of requests to use financial supports.</p> <p>Track reporting on unmet resourcing needs experienced within the employment system.</p>
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Additional considerations for Service Providers include:

- Service Providers must participate in all requested case conferencing with SA or the SSM to best meet the needs of SA clients.
- Where challenges with case conferencing occur that impact client experience and outcomes, the SSM should be consulted as soon as possible to assist in reaching a suitable resolution.
- Case conferencing may be conducted using any means which best meets the capacity and needs of all partners, including phone, email, in-person, or virtual.
- All communications between SA and EO partners should be documented in their respective case management systems. EO providers should use the Notes Templates provided by the SSM to ensure documentation maintains consistency across systems.
- Discussions regarding coordination of benefits and financial supports are generally time sensitive, and as such phone and email should be the primary method of communication between partners.
- Partners should include the client in case conferencing discussions as deemed appropriate for the best interest of the client.

SECTION 13: Using Employment Related Financial Supports

Employment Related Financial Supports (ERFS) are financial supports to IES clients (individuals and their employers) for **removing temporary financial barriers to participation in employment or employment-related activities**. These supports are important for driving outcomes and creating positive impact for jobseekers.

Any client receiving case-managed services is eligible for ERFS through an EO service provider. Self-directed clients are not eligible for ERFS.

There are two main ways these supports can be used to support employment outcomes:

1. Client support, using the funds to purchase items or training that support a client to gain employment; and
2. Employer support, using the funds to support employer training of clients.

All providers in the Windsor-Sarnia EO network have been provided funds for ERFS using a base funding per client calculation. Service providers may choose to use less or more than the amount

identified in the funding agreement per client in accordance with these guidelines. Additionally, in accordance with the funding agreement, Service Providers may re-allocate up to 10% of their Operational funding allocation to ERFS (both client and employer financial supports).

These guidelines are intended to provide a flexible and responsive framework for service providers to identify and process eligible financial expenses that should be covered for clients receiving EO supports. Service providers may not use ERFS funding for any purpose other than what is described in these parameters. Any underspending on financial supports at the fiscal year-end must be returned to the SSM per requirements outlined in the funding agreement.

Service Providers should utilize their own internal business processes for decision making in adherence with these guidelines, which may include processes related to pre-approving their staff use of ERFS, securing quotes for purchases, minimum or maximum costs for eligible items, and how financial payments will be processed.

Client Supports

Providers should use the following principles to guide their use of these benefits:

1. Is there clear evidence of need?

- There should be unmistakable evidence of need and a match between client stream, whether the client is part of a Specialized Population, and the amount used. This should include a clear demonstration of why the client or the employer could not have paid for the benefit required.

2. Will the benefit help to address barriers to participation in employment or employment-related activities?

- Priority for funding should be placed on activities with a financial component that directly address those barriers most closely related to increasing employment readiness.
- All benefits must be connected to an Employment Action Plan goal.

3. Is the barrier temporary or short-term?

- Priority for funding should be placed on temporary or short-term barriers that are not long-term systemic challenges that would be addressed through securing employment income.

4. Is there another available funding source?

- The ERFS should not duplicate existing funding available through other community resources or social assistance benefits.
- Where other funding options are available in the community, those funds should be accessed first before considering use of ERFS.
- For social assistance clients, benefit usage should always be coordinated between EO providers and Social Assistance offices.

5. Is the cost to address the barrier reasonable?

- Employment service providers are expected to use reasonable discretion when determining eligibility of requested supports, and the SSM will provide final approval and auditing of all ERFS allocations and expenditures.
- The costs of providing supports may vary based on current market rates of goods or services, and service providers must exercise fiscally responsible judgement in determining a reasonable cost of expenses. Providers should aim to obtain best value for money –

secure products and services with an optimal balance of performance and cost – and ensure adherence to their internal organizational procurement or purchasing policies.

Eligible expenses include:

Expense Category	Examples
Technology	Pre-paid card for cell-phone coverage Internet hotspots Devices needed for employment-related activities
Short-term transportation expenses	Transit fare, gas costs, or car insurance to attend employment-related activities or for onboarding a new job
Work clothing or grooming	Clothing or grooming needed for employment related activities such as a job interview or for onboarding a new job
Special equipment and supplies	Safety equipment (e.g., work boots, safety vest) needed for employment-related activities or onboarding a new job (except for employer-provided personal protective equipment)
Costs related to occupational certification	Taking an exam Obtaining documentation verifying completion of educational/skills training requirements Language skills assessment Academic credential assessment Translation of international academic documents
Short-term training costs (to be completed within 3 months)	Registration fees Tools to complete training Client stipends
Emergency/infrequent childcare (up to maximum of 2 weeks)	One time childcare (or up to a maximum of 2 weeks) to attend employment-related activities or onboarding a new job
Work-related disability supports (for those who self-identify as having a disability)	Diagnostic assessments of employment capacities Work-related assistive devices Adaptive technology Job specific communication skills training On-the-job supports such as sign language interpreter, reader, note taker Others as deemed appropriate
Technology	Pre-paid card for cell-phone coverage Internet hotspots Devices needed for employment-related activities
Short-term transportation expenses	Transit fare, gas costs, or car insurance to attend employment-related activities or for onboarding a new job

Expenses not included on this list may be considered on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the SSM. Service Providers should directly connect with their primary contact at the SSM as soon as possible when these situations arise.

Pre-approval of expenses is required by the SSM prior to confirming coverage to a client and providing payment for the expense or ordering the expense in the following circumstances:

- The total amount of the individual item exceeds \$1,000.00

- Total ERFS used for the specific client exceeds \$3,500.00 over the course of their Employment Action Plan.
- The proposed expense is related to servicing debt (e.g., cell phone debt, car payments)
- The proposed expense is not listed in the Eligible Expenses chart above

A note about Status Quo Clients:

Service providers are not allocated additional per client funding for legacy/status quo clients. Service providers may choose to use ERFS to support legacy/status quo clients only during the first 3 months of the IES delivery period (January 1 – March 31, 2024). The principles, eligibility requirements, and evidence standards outlined in these guidelines still apply, and Service Providers are required to report this usage quarterly to the SSM using a tool provided in the Jobs Portal. Use of ERFS for legacy/status quo clients will not be reported in CaMS.

A note about ODSP Recipients:

In addition to the supports outlined above, ODSP recipients receiving EO supports can access additional financial supports. The Ministry has established an ODSP Client Reserve amount that can only be used to support clients who are ODSP recipients who have disabilities. This reserve may be used for both job seeker and employer supports. ODSP recipients who have disabilities do not need to meet income-based eligibility parameters.

These other supports can include:

1. Workplace accommodations needs, such as assistive devices, adaptive technology, job-specific communication skills training, and on-the-job support (such as sign language interpreter, reader and note taker services, and other specialists as appropriate)
2. Specialized diagnostic assessments to obtain critical insights about a client's capacities related to participating in services and employment (these can only be done when the info cannot be obtained any other way, they have to be completed by a professional, and they require the client's written consent)

Service providers are expected to be aware of and consider the employer's obligations to provide the necessary accommodations for the client as required under the Ontario Human Rights Code, as well as an employer's obligations to accommodate people with a disability under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

Coordinating Benefits with Social Assistance Providers

The SSM requires that employment service providers work with Social Assistance (SA) providers to coordinate use of financial supports to achieve optimal outcomes for shared clients, prevent duplication in benefit use and community resources, and maintain accountability to program delivery guidelines.

SA benefits are financial supports to social assistance clients intended to address life stabilization-related needs. This includes supports for individuals in addressing personal, systemic and/or environmental barriers (e.g., addictions, chronic disease, homelessness) to support an individual in reaching and maintaining a level of stability that allows them to participate in Employment Services. Employment Ontario ERFS are intended to be used to address temporary barriers to participation in employment or employment-related activities only.

Both EO service providers and SA providers should never promise eligibility to a client for a specific benefit from either program on behalf of the partner agency.

Examples of social assistance benefits include:

- Health related benefits (drug coverage, dental, vision and hearing, transitional health)
- Disability-related items and supports (e.g., assistive devices, diabetic supplies)
- Transportation for non-employment activities (medical/other)
- Longer-term childcare
- Medical and non-medical discretionary benefits

Where an EO client is receiving SA (Ontario Works or ODSP Income Support), caseworkers from both systems must follow an Integrated Case Management approach for issuance of client supports. Caseworkers will have discretion for coordinating and negotiating benefits to avoid duplication without negatively impacting client experience and outcomes. Where an item or service may be for both life stabilization and employment purposes, financial responsibility should be based on the primary intent of the benefit at the time of request.

If it appears that a benefit should be considered by the SA provider, the EO caseworker should suggest that client contact their SA caseworker and should assist the client in doing so as required. EO caseworkers should also communicate directly with the client’s SA caseworker by the preferred means for that caseworker relationship for consultation. SA caseworkers should use the same approach should an employment need arise, and an ERFS benefit need to be considered by the EO caseworker. If at any time there are changes to the eligibility for benefits of the client, caseworkers should contact the partner organization to inform them.

Example Scenarios of Social Assistance/EO Benefit Coordination:

Example #1: A client with a disability receiving ODSP is referred to an EO provider for employment support. After assessment, it is concluded that he needs vision care (an eye exam and potentially a new pair of glasses with an updated prescription), mental health counselling, transportation supports, and support to complete a Fork Lift Training certificate. He also requires support negotiating onsite accommodations and will require job development with employer incentives.

Provider	Category	Eligible Expenses	Process Notes
Ontario Disability Support Program	Health	Vision care	After case consultation with EO and action planning, ODSP to follow their own internal processes for benefit approval.
	Community Supports	Counselling Transportation (to allow for frequent medical appointments for the next 12 weeks)	
Employment Ontario	Employment	Certification charges Employer incentives for extended training time (additional costs can be covered using ODSP Client Reserve)	1) Case Consultation initiated by provider who identified the barrier (in this case, EO) 2) Verify alignment with ERFS Guidelines document (and follow any other required internal agency requirements) 3) Provide support to client

			4) Input into CaMS with evidence of expenditure (receipt) and update the plan item outcome 5) Submit for SSM review
<p>Example #2: A client receiving Ontario Works is referred to an EO provider for employment support. The Common Assessment identified that she may benefit from ongoing counselling; a referral to a mental health provider has been completed and she is on the wait list for service. Soon after, she is offered a job that requires construction boots, a hard hat, and a safety vest. She also requires transportation supports. She does not have the available income to cover these costs on short notice to begin work in the next 3 days.</p>			
Provider	Category	Eligible Expenses	Process Notes
Ontario Works	Community Supports	Transportation (to support attendance at regular counselling appointments once she receives a call for active service)	After case consultation with EO and action planning, OW to follow their own internal processes for benefit approval.
Employment Ontario	Employment	Transportation (bus fare to work for 2 weeks while she waits to receive her first pay) Special equipment and supplies needed for employment (safety equipment)	1) Case Consultation initiated by provider who identified the barrier (in this case, EO) 6) Verify alignment with ERFS Guidelines document (and follow any other required internal agency requirements) 2) Provide support to client 3) Input into CaMS with evidence of expenditure (receipt) and update the plan item outcome 4) Submit for SSM review

Employer Supports

ERFS funding may be used to provide Employer Financial Supports only for case-managed clients. These support job development activities for clients facing complex barriers to employment and are intended to support employers with training or additional costs associated with job placements. Generally, Employer Financial Supports should not be used as a first strategy in securing placements. These supports to employers are intended to remove barriers to a client's participation, not provide subsidies to the employer.

To be eligible for financial support, employers must:

1. Be licensed to operate in Ontario;
2. Comply with applicable legislation and maintain appropriate insurance;
3. Not be an SSM or Employment Ontario service provider;
4. Not use the funding to hire family members;
5. Not be currently receiving other funds (federal, provincial or municipal, etc.) for the exact job placement;

6. Maintain appropriate WSIB or alternate workplace safety insurance coverage and have adequate third-party general liability insurance as advised by its insurance broker;
7. Not use supports to replace existing or laid-off employees;

ERFS funding can be used by service providers for:

- Support for on-the-job accommodation(s), except for those that are required to be covered by the employer under the AODA;
- Funding to offset costs for onboarding requirements; and
- Placement incentives (including wage subsidies) for those most distant from the labour market.

In determining the amount of funds to dedicate to a job placement, the service provider should use reasonable discretion and consider the client's stream, the skill level of the job placement, the wage of the placement, if the placement will lead to an apprenticeship, and/or if the employer is using job carving or new role creation to support the placement.

To initiate Employer Financial Support, the service provider must:

1. Ensure the employer meets all eligibility criteria
2. Conduct at least one in-person site visit per employer before any placement(s) to confirm that the employer can provide a suitable and safe work environment (only one site visit per 12-month period is required for each employer; a separate visit is not required for each placement, as long as a site visit has been completed within the last 12-months)
3. Enter into an agreement with the employer which outlines the objectives and a placement schedule with the employer and client (agreement template has been provided by the SSM and should serve as the minimum requirements, which can be enhanced by the service provider as preferred).
4. Ensure that internal organizational policies are adhered to with respect to informed consent to sharing of client information between the Service Provider and the employer, if applicable. This should include detailing for the client any required sharing of documentation or information with the employer to support their successful placement and obtaining appropriate signed consent for the client record.

It should be noted that the SSM reserves the right to withhold reimbursement for employer supports expenses if:

1. Missing or improper evidence of use of funds
2. Evidence of need does not exist
3. The support is not in alignment with the guidelines
4. Pre-approval was not obtained as required
5. The Ministry does not reimburse the SSM for the expense

In addition, the SSM reserves the right to withhold reimbursement should there be indications of malfeasance pending the results of a review.

Connection to Performance-Based Funding

Service Providers who successfully support clients in achieving outcomes will receive Performance-Based Funding (PBF), which has no restrictions on its use. Service Providers are encouraged to consider using PBF to support ERFS expenditures and/or client incentives as they see fit. PBF can also be used to fund expenses that are not eligible through ERFS or Operational

Funding, including gift cards for exceptional circumstances to address client barriers (e.g., immediate financial hardship which requires urgent purchase of resources).

The use of Employer Financial Supports will impact the timing of PBF payments. Service providers are not eligible to receive PBF for a client while Employer Financial Supports are being issued for that client. Service providers will only receive PBF payments for clients meeting outcomes after employer supports are no longer issued. When the client's employer stops receiving supports, any outcome payment(s) owing for the period during which the client was associated with employer supports will be issued retroactively, if the client successfully achieves an unsubsidized Funded Outcome at the next PBF checkpoint.

For example, you may have a client assessed as a Stream B client receiving case-managed services. Her employment caseworker finds her a 22-hour a week job placement with an employer who will receive employer supports for four months. Her employment caseworker notes this in CaMS. After 1 month at her job, she receives a monitoring phone call from her EO Provider, where she reports her success. This happens again 3 months after her job start, with another report of success. The EO Provider records her success and reports it to the SSM, who subsequently reports it to the Ministry.

However, because her employer is receiving financial supports, the EO Provider does not immediately receive the associated PBF payments for the 1- and 3-month checkpoints. Four months after her job start, her employer stops receiving financial supports, as per the agreement. She is doing well at her job, so her employer continues to employ her at 22 hours per week. At the 6-month checkpoint, she gets another monitoring call from her EO Provider. She reports her continued employment along with the required documentation. Because of her success at the 6-month mark, the EO Provider then receives outcome payments for the 1-, 3-, and 6-month checkpoints.

Reporting Use of ERFS – Client Supports

Each use of ERFS – Client Supports should be reported by service providers to the SSM in CaMS within 3 business days of issuing the expenditure. After the details have been reported, the SSM will review for approval.

All reports will be reviewed and must contain all required information, including the attachments of evidence of the expenditure. Evidence of the expenditure must include a copy of an **itemized receipt** for the item. The service provider should retain the original documents on file per the requirements of their funding agreement.

The following are not considered eligible evidence of expenditures:

- Any gift cards provided to clients should be accompanied by an itemized receipt of what was purchased (there is an exception for gas gift cards)
- Screenshots of accounts or account payments will not be considered as evidence
- Debt payments are not considered legitimate expenses without SSM pre-approval
- Purchases from individuals (e.g., handwritten receipts from a buy and sell online group) are not eligible
- Credit card receipts without itemized receipts will not be accepted, (e.g., \$30 visa charge at a gas station without the receipt to show that gas was purchased)

The SSM reserves the right to withhold reimbursement to service providers for client support expenses in the following cases:

1. Missing or improper evidence of use of funds
2. Evidence of need does not exist
3. The support is not in alignment with the guidelines
4. Pre-approval was not obtained as required
5. The Ministry does not reimburse the SSM for the expense

In addition, the SSM reserves the right to withhold reimbursement should there be indications of malfeasance pending the results of a review.

Reporting Use of ERFS – Employer Supports

When arranging a placement for your client, ensure you complete both an **Employer Registration Form** (if the employer is not already registered in the CaMS system) and a **Training Incentive Placement Agreement**.

If this is the first time you are working with an employer, you are expected to do a site visit to ensure that the workplace is appropriate and safe for your client. Please add evidence of this site visit to your placement documents as well as the client's case notes. If you do not need to conduct a site visit because you have prior experience with the employer, please note this in the client's case notes.

Each use of ERFS – Employer Supports should be reported by service providers to the SSM in CaMS within 15 business days of completing the placement. All reports will be reviewed and must contain all required information, including attachments of evidence of the expenditure and the Training Incentive Placement Agreement.

It is expected that your case notes and EAP plan items will continue to demonstrate support for the client in the form of retention activities and employer support during their placement.

When setting up a placement for a client with the intention that the client will be employed past the end of the placement, put the client into outcomes starting on the first day of the placement. Collect the employment information and the paystub at the 1- and 3-month checkpoints and submit these as you would for any employed client. If at the 6-month checkpoint your client is employed, you will now be eligible for the Performance-Based Funding and the SSM will provide Performance-Based Funding at the 1- and 3-month checkpoints retroactively. This is explained further in *Section 17: Case Management and Outcome Monitoring*.

SECTION 14: Delivering Retention Supports

Retention activities are available to any employed case-managed client (including both individuals who enter IES unemployed and employed) to support the client in retaining their employment regardless of the number of hours per week they are employed.

Retention is a core function of the Integrated Employment Services system, and should not be treated as an administrative function of follow-up phone calls. Comprehensive support systems are key to job retention and long-term stability for clients, particularly those facing unique or complex barriers. Service Providers are expected to make retention services available for clients who require further help to keep a job.

Once a client obtains employment, they can access retention services. If, however, a client requires more help (e.g., they lose their job), they can access additional pre-employment services activities (EAP plan items) during the lifetime of the EAP.

Service Providers are expected to develop and deliver their own techniques and approaches for supporting clients with retaining their employment, which may include any of the following best practices:

- 1. Mentorship and Coaching:** Pairing individuals with experienced mentors or coaches who can provide guidance, support, and advice on navigating the workplace. Mentors can help employees develop new skills, set goals, and address challenges, fostering their confidence and job satisfaction.
- 2. Skill Development and Training:** Offering ongoing training and professional development opportunities can enhance employees' skills and knowledge, increasing their value within the organization and their long-term job prospects. This can include workshops, seminars, online courses, or specialized training programs tailored to their job requirements.
- 3. Workplace Accommodations:** Providing workplace accommodations for individuals with disabilities or other specific needs can promote job retention. Accommodations can range from assistive technologies and modifications to workstations to flexible scheduling or modified tasks that allow individuals to perform their job effectively.
- 4. Employee Assistance Programs:** The programs offer confidential counselling services, mental health support, and resources to employees. These programs can assist individuals in managing personal or work-related challenges, reducing stress levels, and improving overall well-being, which can contribute to job retention.
- 5. Supportive Work Environment:** Creating a supportive work environment is crucial for job retention. This includes fostering an inclusive culture, promoting diversity and equity, ensuring fair treatment, and addressing any discrimination or harassment concerns. Open communication channels, employee recognition programs, and opportunities for advancement can also contribute to a positive work environment.
- 6. Work-Life Balance Initiatives:** Supporting work-life balance can help employees maintain job satisfaction and reduce burnout. This can include flexible work arrangements, family-friendly policies, and support for personal responsibilities, such as caregiving or parental leave.
- 7. Financial Wellness Programs:** Offering financial education, counselling, or assistance programs can help individuals manage their finances and reduce financial stress, improving their overall well-being and job stability.
- 8. Peer Support Networks:** Establishing peer support networks or affinity groups can create a sense of community and belonging among employees. These networks provide opportunities for individuals to connect, share experiences, and receive support from colleagues facing similar challenges.

When the client has secured employment and started the retention and monitoring phase, retention plan-items and sub-goals should be added to the client's EAP and all retention-specific case notes should continue to be documented in CaMS.

By providing a comprehensive range of supports, tailored to the specific needs of individuals and their work environments, we can greatly enhance job retention rates for marginalized and equity-seeking groups, fostering sustainable employment and economic well-being.

SECTION 15: Delivering Self-Directed Supports

Self-directed (unassisted) services are activities that individuals can access on their own and are generally intended for those not eligible for case-managed services or those that do not wish to register for employment services.

For clients identified as receiving Self-directed service, providers will offer information on the range of services offered through its programming and the EO network. Service Providers are not required to complete the full Common Assessment (Module 2) or an Employment Action Plan with a client that is determined to be self-directed. Further, Service Providers are not required to conduct outcome follow-ups for self-directed clients.

Examples of self-directed supports that should be offered by EO Service Providers includes:

- Information, resources, and referrals regarding EO services and programs, local training and employment opportunities, community service supports, and occupational and training requirements to support job search;
- Information on career planning and available resources/tools that can support decision-making related to education, training, and employment;
- Digital self-serve features and integration with broader network-wide digital solutions (i.e., the Jobs Portal);
- Supplementary in-person services such as employment resource centers with access to computers, internet, and self-paced job search resources;
- Access or tools uniquely tailored for Specialized Populations.

Service Providers will be encouraged to develop site-specific self-directed and automated job search services, including workshops, templates, and other pieces to support clients.

Resource centres will continue to be made available by the service provider network and will be complemented by the online library of resources to be made available by the SSM on the Jobs Portal tool. This will include resume templates, tip sheets, job boards, resource videos, virtual workshops, and other resources identified as helpful for self-directed clients.

As outlined in *Section 10: Using the Common Assessment Tool*, Service Providers should leave the CA Module 1 “In Progress” for 120 days, for situations in which a Self-Directed client’s circumstances may change and they may require case-managed services. After this time, if the client remains Self-Directed, the CA may be cancelled using the reason “Other” and noting rationale for the client being assessed as receiving Self-Directed service. This will provide a record within the CA system that can be accessed later should the client be referred back to the EO system or should they seek services from a different EO Service Provider.

In addition to the record stored in the CA, Service Providers should utilize an internal process to retain records related to service level determination of Self-Directed clients, which should include their contact information and rationale for determination of self-directed service. Outcome follow-ups are not required for self-directed clients, but Service Providers are expected to offer these

clients an assessment for case-managed services if their circumstances change and they need more intensive support.

Supporting Clients Seeking to Become Self-Employed

At this time, case-managed services are not available for individuals seeking to enter self-employment services and self-employment is not eligible as a Funded Outcome in the Windsor-Sarnia catchment.

Individuals who self-refer or are referred for employment services wishing to become self-employed may be offered self-directed service and should be referred out to receive external self-employment services, which may include a local Small Business Centre. Additional external resources for clients seeking self-employment services may be found through [Community Futures Ontario](#).

Clients who are assessed and referred out for external self-employment services will not be associated with Performance-Based Funding.

SECTION 16: Using the Jobs Portal Tool

The Windsor Regional Employment Network's Jobs Portal tool is a digital service delivery channel that provides a secure, innovative, and accessible online platform for Service Providers to connect more jobseekers to opportunities across the Windsor-Sarnia catchment. Additionally, the Jobs Portal functions as a highly reliable and customizable local case management system for Service Providers to help streamline the referral, case tracking, and reporting needs for service delivery.

Use of the Jobs Portal includes use of the following features for all EO Caseworkers:

- A real-time jobs database which aggregates, eliminates duplication, and classifies job postings from hundreds of online sources.
- A searchable and filterable Job Board, allowing both Case-Managed and Self-Directed clients to discover job opportunities from many online sources in a single location.
- Integrated mapping tools, showing employer locations concurrently with community services such as childcare, public transit, and schools.
- A career portal, allowing both Case-Managed and Self-Directed clients to create a free account for personalized job recommendations based on the individual's skills and experience and occupations/sectors/employers of interest, and to customize their resume. Portal accounts can also be used by Service Providers to assist Self-Directed clients with their job search or resume improvements.
- Occupation and sector libraries, highlighting regional opportunities and wages for specific occupations, as well as regional employers in specific industries.
- Integrated links to education programs, workshops, job fairs, or other relevant programs throughout the platform to facilitate up-skill activities.

Service Providers can view, assist, track, and report on their clients' job search activities in the platform. Additionally, the platform automatically pulls relevant information from CaMS to populate client records for enhanced alignment in service delivery.

Service Providers are expected to use the Jobs Portal as their local case management system to support all Case-Managed clients, in conjunction with the use of CaMS. Since Social Assistance (SA) Caseworkers will not have access to the Jobs Portal system, Service Providers must document all necessary information about client service required for effective integrated case management with SA in CaMS, even if this means occasional duplication in case notes between CaMS and the Jobs Portal.

The following information must be recorded in CaMS:

- EAP Plan Item Comments (i.e., case notes that SA can access)
- Use of Employment Related Financial Supports and required proofs
- Outcomes
- Monitoring Checkpoints and required proofs for Performance Based Funding

Service Providers should use the Jobs Portal for the following:

- Locating referrals (leads) received from the SSM
- Case Notes
- Pre-employment activities (job searching, resume and cover letter building, etc.)
- Managing client cases assigned to internal staff team
- Managing tasks related to client service delivery
- Monitoring key service delivery metrics (e.g., outstanding tasks)
- Monitoring client activity in the Jobs Portal tools

Service Providers will be responsible for registering all Case-Managed clients in the Jobs Portal as part of the general client intake process, using the “+ *Invite Client*” feature located under the **My Clients** portion of the portal. Clients will receive a “Welcome to Employment Ontario Jobs Portal” email once this process is complete – they can either choose to complete the registration process or decline and proceed without use of the Jobs Portal self-service tools at the discretion of the client and the EO Caseworker. In cases where clients will not be using the self-service tools, EO Caseworkers are still expected to use the Jobs Portal for case management of that client for internal network consistency.

Service Providers should offer use of the Jobs Portal self-service features (e.g. Job Board, Job Map, Career Explorer, Career Library, and Career Encyclopedia) to all Self-Directed jobseekers.

SECTION 17: Case Management & Outcome Monitoring

All clients receiving Integrated Employment Supports, both Social Assistance and EO-only clients, receive high quality, customized case management supports. Case Management is a collaborative and client-centered process supporting timely access to the right services and supports to help a client achieve his/her/their employment goals. It may include identifying further needs and supporting access to community-based services that may affect a client’s readiness to participate in IES and employment, such as referral to income support, family support, transportation and health care services.

The intensity and duration of case management varies depending on the individual client’s needs, which may extend beyond a job placement or match to job retention supports and services. Case

management must also take into consideration client needs with respect to culturally appropriate services, with particular attention paid to individuals from Specialized Populations (Indigenous People, ODSP clients, People with Disabilities, Youth with Higher Support Needs, Racialized Individuals, Francophone Ontarians, and new Canadians).

The following definitions will support Service Providers in navigating the outcome monitoring and performance management processes subsequently described in this document:

Client Volume	Number of completed intakes (clients who completed a Common Assessment, an EAP, and are assigned to your case load).
Clients Served	Clients that have been assigned an outcome (i.e. entered monitoring/retention) and completed the 3-month monitoring check point.
Outcome	Assigned to the client's EAP once they have completed pre-employment services (either employed or not employed; including job placements where a client is working at least an average of 20 hours per week).
Funded Outcome	When a client secures employment (or new employment with a new employer) working at least an average of 20 hours per week.
Monitoring Period	The period of 12 months of retention supports that follow once a client is put into an "Outcome" (completes pre-employment services or begins working, whichever comes first).
Early Exit	When the client exits the EAP prior to completing all pre-employment service activities (i.e., is NOT counted as a client served) and the EAP is closed without an outcome.

Funded Outcome

The Funded Outcome is the outcome associated with Performance-Based Funding (PBF) payments for an individual client. The monitoring period is triggered by completion of pre-employment services (i.e., a completed outcome with the client reporting they are not employed) or when a client starts a job at the Funded Outcome, whichever comes first.

The Funded Outcomes include:

- For a client in case-managed services who enters IES either **unemployed** or working **less than 20 hours** on average per week as indicated in the Common Assessment, the Funded Outcome is achieved when the client is working at least an average of 20 hours per week.
- For a client in case-managed services who enters IES **already employed** and working **20 hours or more** on average per week, as indicated in the Common Assessment, the Funded Outcome is when the client is working an average of 20 hours or more per week or more with a **new employer**.
- If an IES client successfully obtains a Funded Outcome but then loses their job, their Funded Outcome becomes that of the second scenario, i.e., the client must be working an average of 20 hours or more per week or more with a new employer.

Monitoring Period

Monitoring must begin at whichever of the following conditions comes first (represents the 'monitoring start date' for PBF funding):

1. The end of a client's pre-employment services (completion of all activities available to clients as part of the EAP that proceed or occur concurrently with obtaining employment; includes all service components except retention services provided once a client is employed); or
2. When a client starts a job that meets their Funded Outcome.

Service Providers should not assign an outcome to a client (i.e., indicating that they have completed an EAP and are either employed or not employed) if the client is still actively working toward their EAP goal. The SSM will monitor that outcomes are not incorrectly assigned for the purpose of achieving a "client served" when the client should still have EAP activities available to them. An outcome should only be assigned to a client that has not obtained employment if the Service Provider can demonstrate that all available and appropriate EAP activities have been offered and/or completed.

The monitoring start date when a client meets their Funded Outcome is when employment commences (or the date at which a client's hours increased to at least an average of 20 hours per week).

Up to 5% of clients at each milestone checkpoint period may be recorded as achieving a Funded Outcome resulting from **job stacking**. Job stacking is the practice of having two or more jobs simultaneously that together reach an average of 20 hours or more per week of employment. For clients who enter service already employed in part-time work, only new jobs may be eligible for calculation of a Funded Outcome through job stacking. Service Providers are responsible for verifying and documenting the proofs for all jobs included in job stacking at each milestone checkpoint, and Funded Outcomes cannot be recorded unless all required documentation is included in the file.

Service Providers are required to note their client's employment or service status in CaMS as soon as possible after they are informed of the client's status change.

Service Providers must monitor all clients through a series of follow-up milestone checkpoints:

- Completion of EAP activities
- 1 month following the monitoring start date
- 3 months following the monitoring start date
- 6 months following the monitoring start date
- 12 months following the monitoring start date

Monitoring takes the form of direct contact between the EO Caseworker and the client at the identified checkpoints. The method of contact is within the discretion of the Service Provider based on each client's unique needs and circumstances. This contact must, at a minimum, involve the issuance of the Ministry's **Employment Status Questionnaire (ESQ)** provided by the SSM. The survey questions pertain to the client's employment status, hours worked, wage, occupation and client satisfaction with services. The client's response will inform if they have successfully achieved the Funded Outcome, and therefore if the Service Provider is eligible for PBF.

Service Providers should continue to provide supports to clients based on their needs during the monitoring period. It is important that Service Providers maintain strong relationships with clients throughout their employment journey, and as such the SSM expects that Service Providers will determine the appropriate level of contact required for individual clients between checkpoints to ensure clients stay engaged in their employment plan.

Monitoring cannot be paused. Monitoring must continue uninterrupted until the final 12-month milestone checkpoint period.

Service Providers are required to collect and maintain documentary proof of the client's employment status, employment start date, and achievement of the Funded Outcome at all monitoring checkpoint periods.

Connection to Performance-Based Funding

Successful achievement of the Funded Outcome at each milestone checkpoint is associated with a PBF payment amount, which varies by client stream as assigned during the Common Assessment (Service Providers should reference their funding agreement for exact amounts).

If a client does not meet the Funded Outcome at a milestone checkpoint, no PBF payment will be awarded to the Service Provider for that specific follow-up. However, the Service Provider may be eligible for subsequent PBF checkpoint payments if the client meets their Funded Outcome at those milestone checkpoint periods. For example, if a client meets the Funded Outcome at the 1-, 3-, and 6-month checkpoints, but does not at the 12-month checkpoint, the Service Provider receives payment for the 1-, 3-, and 6-month outcomes, and not for the unattained 12-month outcome.

Successful achievement of the Funded Outcome is not dependent on sustaining a specific job. As long as the client is meeting their Funded Outcome at the monitoring checkpoint, the Service Provider may record a success and receive a payment for that checkpoint.

Payments to Service Providers for successful achievement of the Funded Outcome will be issued regardless of whether the trigger for starting the PBF monitoring start date was the completion of pre-employment services (a non-funded outcome) or working at least an average of 20 hours per week (a Funded Outcome).

Documentation Requirements

Service Providers are required to show proof that their clients are working 20 or more hours per week to be eligible for PBF. This proof must be uploaded into CaMS at the outcome checkpoint.

Proof of the start date can be in the form of:

1. an offer letter or email from the employer;
2. an initial pay stub that shows zero cumulative hours/pay; or
3. a pay stub that shows the change in hours to at minimum an average of 20 hours per week.

Proof of employment for the monitoring checkpoint can be in the form of:

1. An employment letter from the employer stating continuous employment and average weekly hours; or

2. A pay stub including the checkpoint date, indicating at least an average of 20 hours per week, i.e., the client was employed in the week where the checkpoint date occurred for the threshold (reasonable copies of pay stubs will suffice, e.g., an emailed photograph of a paystub is acceptable).

All evidence used as proof of employment must include the following:

- Client name
- Business name
- Date of the pay period (which includes the outcome date)
- Evidence of at least 20 or more hours per week

Attestation Where Evidence Cannot Be Obtained

In circumstances where the Service Provider has not received any employment documents, is unable to attain from the client proof of employment documents, or the documents do not contain sufficient details, a written attestation from the Service Provider that confirms the client's employment will be considered by the SSM in lieu of the above requirements.

Additionally, an attestation may be requested of the Service Provider from the SSM to support additional information to validate proof of employment in cases where the Ministry may have rejected a submission.

An attestation of the client's employment checkpoint may only be used when all options to obtain proof of employment have been exhausted. **The Service Provider must report to the SSM all instances in which they are unable to obtain evidence of employment and receive pre-approval to submit an attestation.**

If approved by the SSM, an attestation of a client checkpoint must be provided which includes:

- Rationale that explains the evidence that the Service Provider has in support of the accuracy of the attestation;
- Summary of the attempts to collect the employment letter or pay stub; and
- Any other factors relevant to the attestation.

An attestation may be required for only some documentary requirements and should be supported with any available evidence. For example, an attestation may be needed to prove the start date. However, pay stubs are available to provide proof of the checkpoint date.

The attestation must provide enough evidence that a reasonable person would conclude that the client has achieved the Funded Outcome on the checkpoint. The attestation must be signed by the lead employment staff of the client's EAP and must be pre-approved for submission by the SSM.

Early Exits

An early exit is when the client exits the EAP prior to completing all pre-employment service activities (i.e., is NOT counted as a client served) or achieving employment at the Funded Outcome level. This means that the client's EAP is closed without recording an outcome.

Early exits will not result in triggering the monitoring schedule. The EAP will be closed upon an early exit decision and these clients will not count against Performance Management Framework or Performance-Based Funding since the EAP closes prior to the monitoring period. However, they will count against Annual Client Volumes as they did register and start an EAP.

Clients referred to EO skills training programs with an expected employment outcome (Skills Advance Ontario, Ontario Bridge Training Program, Canada-Ontario Job Grant, or Apprenticeship Program) are an exception to this and do count towards Performance Management Framework and Performance-Based Funding.

Potential reasons for an early exit may include all closure reasons previously noted in *Section 11: Creating an Employment Action Plan*, **except for “Completion”**. Early Exits should not be used when an EAP could be appropriately closed with an outcome of completed regardless of employment status.

Re-Association/Returning Clients

Some clients may exit the IES system and return for additional services (e.g., obtained and kept employment for the 12-month monitoring period, then became unemployed and needed to come back into service). For this instance, returning clients should be treated like a new client in that they must complete a new CA and develop a new EAP.

It is expected that Service Providers will ensure these clients' current needs are being considered and their new EAP builds on their previous services (i.e., does not just repeat what has been provided previously).

There is no restriction on the time between exiting one EAP and taking the CA again to begin developing a new EAP. However, the EO Service Provider has the flexibility to consider whether independent job search may be beneficial to the client prior to administering the CA once again if the interval was short in duration.

There are no limits to the number of times a client may enter the system.

Longer Term Clients with Employment Action Plans

The Ministry recognizes that some clients may not exit the system and will continue to need further IES after all the checkpoints have passed (e.g., did not find employment or reach the Funded Outcome, or lost employment gained through IES during the monitoring period).

EO Service Providers are expected to continue to work with clients **needing continuous or further** service after the monitoring period. To support this, the Ministry has set parameters to allow for re-association with Performance-Based Funding (PBF) payments. After all checkpoints have passed, clients are no longer associated with potential PBF payments, unless and until they meet certain conditions.

A client who has *not* exited Employment Services may be re-associated with PBF, if the client:

1. Has been monitored for employment outcomes previously, and has passed all the monitoring checkpoints; That is, the client has had a job or ended pre-employment service and has been monitored by the Service Provider for the employment outcomes at 1, 3, 6, and 12 months.

2. Indicates that they need pre-employment Assisted Services; and
3. Has been re-assessed through the CA following the final monitoring checkpoint.

SECTION 18: Performance Management Framework

The SSM and Windsor-Sarnia network Service Providers are accountable to the Ministry for achieving the following outcomes through the Employment Services Transformation:

- Clients find and sustain good jobs.
- Clients have access to the services they need when they need them.
- Clients decrease dependence on income assistance.
- Employers find the right workers with the right skills.
- The system is sustainable and serves clients more efficiently.

The Performance Management Framework is guided by the following principles set forth by the Ministry:

Mutual accountability: All parties are accountable for the success of the system, including government, stakeholders, government partners and citizens in joint endeavours, and shared commitments to each other.

Transparency: Making available regular, accurate, timely information to support activities, monitoring effectiveness and planning contributing to mutual accountability.

Trust: Achieved by high quality dialogue, negotiation and clear agreements on expectations, roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder in the relationship.

Fairness: Expectations and recognition of achievements are grounded in fair, mutually reinforceable factors.

Proportionality: Only request and collect data needed to measure and report the results across the employment and training system and to monitor the health of the network, for example pertaining to: PMF, Performance Outcomes and Performance-Based Funding.

Innovation: Mechanisms used to continuously evolve the PMF, over time, as services evolve, and lessons are learned.

The Performance Management Framework is intended to evolve through the Integrated Employment Services delivery phase, as the system and our shared processes mature through learning and continuous improvement. The Framework relies on a continuous and reliable flow of information and data between Service Providers and the SSM, and consequently between the SSM and the Ministry.

It is important to note that in the shift to focus on employment outcomes instead of simply employment readiness, the measures of success are evolving. Success in this new model is not measured by a client's job readiness level (e.g., resume quality, interview skills, participation in workshops or training). Success will be measured by outcome factors including the number of clients employed (and profile/stream of clients) and the duration or sustainability of their employment.

Key Performance Indicators

The purpose of performance measurement is to ensure accountability, transparency, and continuous improvement in government-funded services, ensuring that they effectively support individuals in finding and retaining meaningful employment. By measuring Key Performance Indicators, Service Providers can refine their approaches, adapt interventions, and demonstrate the value and impact of their services.

The following Key Performance Indicators will be tracked by the SSM for each Service Provider (ratings to reflect “Not meeting”, “Meets”, or “Exceeds”):

- Number of clients served
- Percentage of clients in each segment served (Stream A, B, C)
- Percentage of ODSP clients served
- Percentage of clients with disabilities (general population) served
- Percentage of Francophone clients served
- Percentage of Indigenous clients served
- Percentage of youth with higher support needs served
- Percentage of newcomer clients served
- Percentage of racialized clients served
- Client progress toward employment
 - Completion of training/education
 - Employment outcomes (at 3 and 12 months)
 - Achievement of employment outcomes by segment/stream
- Client satisfaction with services (at EAP completion and 12 months)

Client satisfaction will primarily be monitored through the completion of the Employment Status Questionnaire (ESQ) provided by the Ministry. Clients must be asked to provide a response to the following question (5-point Likert scale): *How satisfied are you with the service you received, from 1 being completely dissatisfied to 5 being completely satisfied?* An option of ‘Prefer not to answer’ will be available should a client choose not to provide a rating. Additional client experience surveys may be conducted by the SSM and Service Providers are expected to support or facilitate administration of the surveys as required.

Additional data will be monitored by the SSM to identify opportunities for network improvements and training and development needs, which may include referral response rates, intake completion times, returned referral rates, lost contact rates, complaint issues received, responsiveness to Integrated Case Management requests, use of Employment Related Financial Supports, employer experience feedback, and others that may be identified by the SSM.

Performance-Based Funding

Performance-based Funding (PBF) is intended to incentivize high quality service delivery and progressively reward Service Providers for achievement of sustainable outcomes for clients based on relative risk of long-term unemployment.

Service Providers are eligible for PBF payments when case-managed clients achieve a Funded Outcome at checkpoints that occur as part of the monitoring process. Only IES clients with a signed EAP are associated with potential PBF payments. PBF payments vary by client stream (as determined through the Common Assessment and client segmentation process) and by the

checkpoint milestone period, as per the monitoring process. Refer to *Section 17* for details on Funded Outcomes.

Once earned, PBF forms part of the Service Provider’s overall funding and may be used at the Service Provider’s discretion. For example, PBF earnings may be used as additional financial supports funding (for clients and employers) or to fund expenses not permitted through Operational Funding, such as purchasing capital assets or financial incentives (e.g., gift cards) that reward clients for providing the Service Provider with documentation of proof of employment during the monitoring period.

Service Provider Performance Management Plan

Service Providers are expected to proactively communicate with their assigned Quality Assurance and Program Support Coordinator when they face service delivery challenges. Additionally, Service Providers are expected to be responsive to outreach from Coordinators and other SSM staff.

Service Providers can expect to participate in the following performance evaluation and management activities with the SSM each funding cycle:

Evaluation Activity	Description	Frequency
Engagement with the SSM	For the early identification of emerging issues and collaboration on mitigation strategies that can be implemented to address each issue. Will take place primarily through Employment Service Provider Advisory Committee and through individual meetings with SSM Quality Assurance and Program Support Coordinators.	Ongoing
Financial Reporting	For processing of financial payments, including Performance-Based Funding and Employment Related Financial Supports.	Quarterly
Annual Performance Assessment	January - March, the SSM will conduct a review of performance of all dimensions of each Service Provider over the previous year. This will also include risk assessment and year-end financial accountability reporting. This will inform future business planning and continuous improvement plans.	Annual
Continuous Improvement Planning	Based on the annual performance assessment, each Service Provider will work with the SSM to develop and implement Continuous Improvement Plans to support them in enhancing capacity and addressing risks that may impact performance. This may include performance coaching, additional training, or service delivery modification.	Annual
Other as required by the SSM	Based on needs to be identified	As needed

Service Providers can expect to have regular contact with the SSM regarding service delivery and can expect to be treated as a trusted, valued partner in advancing the IES system.

SECTION 19: Marketing & Communications

The Government of Ontario wishes to ensure that Employment Ontario (EO) has a clear, recognizable, and consistent brand identity in all its service delivery locations and that the identity is communicated through all its service delivery channels.

Additionally, the Windsor Regional Employment Network (WREN), as the Service System Manager (SSM) for the Windsor-Sarnia catchment, wish to ensure that the SSM and each Service Provider are recognized as part of the local EO network.

All EO Service Providers in the Windsor-Sarnia network are responsible for:

1. Acknowledging support of the Province of Ontario, the Government of Canada, and the Windsor Regional Employment Network in each of its EO program-related publications, whether written, oral, or visual;
2. Complying with the *Visual Identity and Communication Guidelines* for Employment Ontario Service Providers, available on the [Employment Ontario Partner's Gateway](#);
3. Using only approved logos and taglines included in the *WREN Marketing and Communications Toolkit*;
4. Collaborating with the SSM and the Province on joint opportunities to promote and improve outreach of EO (including social media) to key client groups and communities, as requested by the SSM;
5. Collaborating with the SSM and the Province in local communications opportunities including events, tours, and announcements in the catchment area, as requested by the SSM;
6. Submitting public reports, media advisories, and/or newsletter or magazine articles to the SSM for approval, who will then forward to the Ministry for approval, at least 4 weeks in advance of publication;
7. Notifying the SSM, who will then notify the Ministry for approval, of any public communication opportunities including events, tours, and/or announcements initiated by the Service Provider at least 6 weeks in advance of the opportunity;
8. Submitting to the SSM a minimum of 1 success story per funding year to promote and improve outreach of EO/IES (the success stories could be client-based, community-based, service-based or consist of a best-practice/innovation but cannot include any personal information without the consent of the affected individual client);
9. If requested by the SSM, providing the WREN with copies of all documents where the WREN and EO branding is used, as part of the annual evaluation process.

Recognition

Recognition of EO and the SSM must appear in communication materials of any kind, written or oral, including but not limited to:

- Signage
- Promotional Material – poster, brochure, flyer
- Letterhead – if speaking to the work of IES
- Website Program Page(s)
- Reports
- Media Advisories/Releases
- Newsletters, Magazines
- Digital communications (email)

- Exhibits, Community Fairs, Forums
- Posts on any social media platform
- Activity Registration Forms
- Consent Forms
- Letters to Clients
- Public Announcements
- Program-related events
- Special events

Logo/Wordmark Use

All marketing and promotional materials related to the delivery of the EO must include the following branded logos/wordmarks as provided in the *WREN Marketing and Communication Toolkit*:

- Employment Ontario
- Government of Ontario
- Government of Canada
- Windsor Regional Employment Network

Service Providers must use all three government wordmarks and the WREN logo on all communication materials relating to EO programs and services. A Service Providers own logo may be applied near the required logos/wordmarks.

The preferred placement for the wordmarks is to the right of a Service Providers logo. Regardless of where the wordmarks are placed on the page, in all cases they must be at least equal in size to the provider's own wordmark or logo.

Web and Social Media

Service Providers must have a website that shares information about the EO services available to the public. Websites must indicate that the Service Provider organization that owns the space is part of the EO network and must prominently display the required logos/wordmarks, and if applicable, the acknowledgment line provided in the *WREN Marketing and Communication Toolkit*.

In the case of websites, the logos/wordmarks must be visible at least once on the home page. In cases where an organization's sole focus is not employment or training, the wordmark must be visible at least once in the employment or training or partners section of their website.

When developing your organization's website, please ensure:

1. Clients accessing your organization's website understand that it is maintained by your organization and not the Government of Ontario or the SSM.
2. Clients understand that these services are supported by the Provincial and Federal governments.

Keep these points in mind when referring to EO programs on your organization's social media accounts:

- If you reference EO programs in your social media messaging, use the Employment Ontario wordmark whenever possible.

- Follow the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development on Twitter and Facebook, and watch for messages that you can amplify.
 - The English handle is @ONTatwork for Twitter and Ontario At Work for Facebook.
 - The French handle is @ONTautravail for Twitter and Lieux de travail de l'Ontario for Facebook.
- Follow the Windsor Regional Employment Network on LinkedIn.
- Use the same hashtags mentioned above for promoting programming. Hashtags evolve rapidly, #ONjobs remains fairly stable.
- Employment Ontario and the SSM will sometimes share social media posts with you to coincide with new announcements. Please use them on your own accounts as much as possible.

Escalating Potential Issues

Service Providers must have internal protocols for immediately responding to an urgent request from the SSM or the Province, and for notifying the SSM of potential issues including media inquiries as soon as they are identified.

These protocols must include notifying the SSM immediately in writing of any potential media or public relations issues that may arise or any media requests they receive. Service Providers must align to key messages provided by the SSM in these situations as directed by the SSM or the Province.

Service Providers are not to respond to media inquiries about Employment Ontario or the Integrated Employment Services system on behalf of the SSM. All official statements about the Windsor-Sarnia catchment's EO system should be issued only by the SSM.

SECTION 20: Additional Resources

The SSM has created a forms repository at [Service Provider Forms – WRENnetwork](#) where you can locate additional forms, tools, and templates to support your EO program delivery. Some forms are provided directly by the Ministry through the [Employment Ontario Partner's Gateway \(EOPG\)](#).

The SSM will update the forms and the available resources in the repository as required through delivery.