

3. TRANSFER OF FBA CLIENTS TO RMOC SOCIAL SERVICES

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

That Regional Council approve:

1. **The Joint Transition Plan for the transfer of service delivery responsibility for sole support parent and foster care cases from the MCSS local FBA office to the RMOC Social Services Department, as described in this report, subject to final approval by the Minister of Community and Social Services;**
2. **The establishment of staff positions and the recruitment of staff as described in this report in order to provide services to sole support parents and foster care cases in accordance with the requirements of the Ontario Works Act;**
3. **The inclusion of the annualised budget estimates in the amount of \$4,414,232 gross, \$2,207,116 net (minus the reduction in the FBA Administration chargeback), in the development of the 1999 Social Services Department budget, and;**
4. **The acquisition of required space at 170 Laurier Avenue, beginning January 1, 1999, to be negotiated by Property Services and the Social Services Department, subject to final approval of the lease by Corporate Services Committee and Regional Council, in accordance with usual procedures.**

DOCUMENTATION

1. Commissioner, Social Services report dated 9 Jun 98 is immediately attached.
2. Extract of Draft Minute, Community Services Committee, 25 June 1998 to be distributed prior to the Council meeting and will include a record of the vote.

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF OTTAWA-CARLETON
MUNICIPALITÉ RÉGIONALE D'OTTAWA-CARLETON

REPORT
RAPPORT

Our File/N/Réf.
Your File/V/Réf.

DATE 9 June 1998

TO/DEST. Co-ordinator
Community Services Committee

FROM/EXP. Social Services Commissioner

SUBJECT/OBJET **TRANSFER OF FBA CLIENTS TO RMOC SOCIAL SERVICES**

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATIONS

That Community Services Committee and Regional Council approve:

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BACKGROUND

As a result of the Who Does What initiative and the passage of Bill 142, *the Social Assistance Reform Act, 1997*, the Government of Ontario has downloaded service delivery responsibility and costs, for all sole-support parent and foster care cases to municipalities. Until now, these cases were administered by the FBA offices of the Ministry of Community and Social Services. This new responsibility under the Ontario Works Act must be assumed by municipal social services departments by December 31, 1998.

As well, Provincial social assistance reform legislation includes other requirements for municipalities. Each municipal delivery agent must ensure that it has both a Parental Support Worker Program and an Eligibility Review Program which meet the requirements to serve not only the existing municipal caseload, but the sole support parent cases which are being transferred from FBA. Therefore, these requirements are also part of this joint plan for transfer of service delivery.

A detailed Provincial Implementation Tool Kit (April 1998) was introduced by the Ministry of Community and Social Services to guide the transfer of the sole-support parent and foster parent cases into the employment-focused and municipally-managed Ontario Works program. This tool kit required the Social Services Department and the Ottawa Area office of MCSS to engage in local negotiation of a joint transition plan.

A local joint Transition Team has been working together since the Fall of 1997. The joint Team is comprised of senior management from both the local MCSS area office and the Social Services Department, and other knowledgeable staff, including RMOC Human Resources staff. This Team has negotiated a mutually acceptable transition plan, which details the following key elements:

- Human Resources protocol and Staffing requirements
- Budget
- Schedule and Monitoring of Transfer
- Infrastructure: Space, Furniture & Equipment
- File Standards and Case Transfer policies
- Technological requirements
- Communication strategy

This report does not contain all of the detail related to the transfer, which is included in the Joint Implementation Plan. However, the following key elements of the Plan are critical:

HUMAN RESOURCES

Service delivery changes of this magnitude have serious human resources implications both for the Ministry, which is divesting itself of service obligations through social assistance reform, and for the Region of Ottawa-Carleton, which is required to assume these responsibilities.

As required in the process, a Joint Human Resources Protocol has been negotiated, which will inform all parties of the staffing processes. Labour Relations staff of the Human Resources Department have been essential participants in the development of these protocols, which document the procedures and conditions under which offers of employment would be made. The protocol balances the obligations of the RMOC under existing collective agreements, while recognising the impact of these changes on the staff of the local FBA office of the Ministry of Community and Social Services. Staff associations have been consulted throughout this process.

Caseload Demographics

As of March 1998, there were 10,823 sole support parents receiving social assistance in Ottawa-Carleton. A large number of those cases (i.e. 5,498) are receiving Ontario Works Assistance, delivered by the Region, with the remaining number of 5,335 being in receipt of Family Benefits. Due to regular decreases in the FBA caseloads, a projected number of 4,861 cases of sole supports and 100 foster care cases will be transferring to the Region, beginning in the Fall.

The Social Services Department is currently serving more sole support cases than the FBA office of the Province due to a moratorium on the transfer of sole support parents, which began approximately three years ago in anticipation of this initiative.

The new Ontario Works legislation requires clients fitting specific criteria to participate in employment related activity under Ontario Works. As of May 1, 1998, sole support parents with children who are eligible to attend publicly funded education programs (for practical purposes, age 6 and older), have been designated under the law, as Ontario Works participants with mandatory employment participation requirements.

This new requirement has an impact on staffing needs, not only as sole support parents transfer from FBA to the RMOC, but within the existing caseload already served by the Department. Of the 5,498 RMOC cases, 35% or 1,925 cases have school age children and are required to participate. Of the FBA cases being transferred, 65% of the cases (or 3,402) have school age children and will be required to participate in mandatory employment activities.

Managing Towards Outcomes (MTO) is the service delivery model adopted by Social Services Department, as approved by Community Services Committee and Regional Council. This model provides services to clients through one of two service pathways known as the Assured Support pathway and the Employment pathway. These pathways are based, in large measure, on the Ontario Works status of those served. The pathways have different staffing and workload ratios, service expectations and outcome objectives.

The Assured Support pathway serves those who have no Ontario Works employment activity obligations (exempt, or not in receipt of social assistance) or who have been deferred from participation for reasons such as ill health and young children. Sole support parents with children under the age of 6 are served in this pathway at a mathematical ratio 1:180.

The Employment pathway serves those who have Ontario Works employment obligations and those who voluntarily pursue employment activities even though they may not have mandatory participation requirements. The employment pathway is staffed at a mathematical ratio of 1:110, (consistent with the workload ratio recommended by MCSS in its guidelines). This is in recognition of the workload required to offer effective employment supports not only to the participant designated as head of family, but also to every member of the benefit unit who is required to participate.

Applying these ratios to the number of sole support parents now required to be served under the Ontario Works Act would normally result in a requirement for an increase of 50 Case Co-ordinators over what currently exists. (5,442 sole support parents will be served in the Assured Support pathway, with no requirement for increased staffing. 5,547 sole support parents will be served in the Employment pathway. This is new work, entirely due to the new requirements of the Ontario Works Act, and creates the need for 50 additional Case Co-ordinators.)

The Department proposes to reduce that number from 50 to 30, in order to permit the creation of additional Verification Specialist positions, which are essential to effective service delivery. Although this will result in a mathematical increase in the workload ratio in the Employment pathway (from 1:110 to 1:122) the additional Verification Specialists will assume a significant proportion of the administrative workload normally handled by Case Co-ordinators.

Summary of Additional Human Resource Requirements

30 Case Co-ordinators: This number represents the additional staff requirement which is directly attributable to the new Ontario Works requirements for sole support parents, adjusted downward from 50 to 30, in order to permit the creation of more Verification Specialist positions.

25 Verification Specialists: These staff are essential to the verification and administrative requirements of the Ontario Works Act, allowing Case Co-ordinators to do the employability assessments, service plans and participation agreements with all participants, as required by the Ontario Works Act.

3 Field Supervisors: Needed to supervise the above staff.

11 Administrative Services Clerks: This provides additional front line clerical supports in each delivery site, and reflects the increased volume of client calls and traffic.

5 Parental Support Workers: Currently, the Department has 4 Parental Support Workers (PSWs) who work in a joint RMOC/MCSS PSW program with 8 other MCSS Parental Support Workers. This joint arrangement has operated for several years, supervised by an MCSS employee. MCSS will be ending its PSW resource commitment at the time of the sole support parent transfer to the RMOC. These five additional PSWs will bring the Social Services Department PSW complement to 9.

1 PSW Program Supervisor: Needed to supervise the new PSW Program

4 Eligibility Review Workers: Currently, the RMOC has an Eligibility Review Program for its Ontario Works client population. As well, the local FBA office has an Eligibility Review Program comprised of 10.5 resources plus a Supervisor and clerical supports to serve the existing FBA caseload. MCSS will be significantly reducing its ERO staff at the time of the transfer of Sole support parents to the RMOC, with an expectation that the Department will ensure that it has the needed additional resources. These 4 ERW resources reflect the analysis of the Department's additional requirement in light of the transfer.

1 ERW Supervisor: Needed to supervise the expanded ERW Program.

1 System Support Assistant: This is a technology support position, similar to that which exists in other delivery sites, which will be required if approval is given to the Space acquisition strategy described below, for 170 Laurier Avenue.

1 Human Resources Officer: Needed by the Department's HR Service Bureau to handle the human resources activity associated with this transfer and the on-going operation of the Department.

Total: 82 resources

PHYSICAL PLANT AND SPACE REQUIREMENTS

Currently, the Department does not have enough physical space in its existing service delivery locations to accommodate the additional staff, desks, chairs, computers and files associated with the transfer of sole support parents.

Specifically, the offices at 5310 Canotek Road and at 370 Catherine Street have sufficient space, whereas the offices at 1590 Scott Street, 161 Greenbank Road and at 2505 St. Laurent cannot accommodate the required new service delivery staff.

This report recommends the acquisition of approximately 9,850 square feet of space at 170 Laurier Avenue, which is currently under lease to the Ministry of Community and Social Services until December 31, 1998.

This space has been occupied by staff of the local FBA office (and by the Parental Support staff of the Social Services Department) for more than 5 years. It is already configured for social services service delivery. Currently, the annual cost to MCSS for the space is \$199,482.84.

The Department and the MCSS Area Office have negotiated an agreement with regard to the furniture, computers, computer lines, and telephone system, which already exist in the space. These agreements result in a cost-effective solution for both parties.

Upon approval of this direction, the Department will take steps to re-locate staff from various other work sites to 170 Laurier in order to free space for the new service delivery obligations in each of the delivery sites.

Specifically, the following services would be provided from 170 Laurier:

1. Services to Non-Ontario Works clients receiving child care subsidy only and Homemaking services. These services are currently being provided out of two District Social Services offices at St. Laurent and Scott Street.
2. Parental Support Worker Program: This is not a change of work site for this program.
3. Eligibility Review Program administration: Staff would move from 495 Richmond Road
4. Supplementary Aid Program: This program, which provides Supplementary Aid services to FBA (now ODSP) clients, will move from Greenbank Road

SCHEDULE FOR HUMAN RESOURCE PROCESS AND TRANSFER OF CASES

The Implementation Plan provides for FBA cases to be transferred in three stages: 1,935 cases transferred for the October benefit month, 1,286 for the November benefit month and the remaining 1,641 cases for the December benefit month.

This ambitious schedule would require that staff be hired, trained and deployed beginning in late September through to mid November. This would necessitate that the staffing initiatives commence as soon as possible following approval, in order to be completed in time.

BUDGET AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Ministry of Community and Social Services has placed arbitrary limits on the amount of subsidy per case it will pay for the cost of administering services to sole support parents. MCSS will contribute 50% of incremental costs of administration (and of some one-time costs) up to a maximum provincial contribution of \$500.00 of subsidy per year per transferred case.

There is, of course, the required matching 50% contribution from the RMOC. The Department has estimated that there will be 4,861 cases transferred which, at 4,861 cases X \$1,000. = \$4,861,000 annualised gross ceiling on program administration. Actual cost estimates are less, at \$4,414,232 gross.

Annex A of this report details the estimated annual budget expenditures required for 1999. Approval is being sought to include these estimates in the 1999 Social Services Department budget.

There will also be incremental costs (both operating and one-time) in 1998 due to the staged implementation of the Plan. However, the Department proposes to absorb these costs, estimated at approximately \$350,000 net, from within the already approved 1998 Social Services Department budget.

Since January 1, 1998, the RMOC has been paying 50% of the cost of FBA administration and benefit costs, based on figures prepared by the Province, derived as a proportion of the cost of all cases across the province relative to the number of FBA cases in Ottawa-Carleton. In accordance with the figures provided by the Province, the Region has allocated \$5.65 million net in the 1998 Social Services budget, to pay the FBA Administration chargeback.

The annualised budget requirement due to the FBA case transfer shows an increased cost to the Region of \$2.2M net. The Department has clearly stated its expectation that the Province will introduce a corresponding decrease in the ODSP (FBA) chargeback in order to offset the increased costs to the Region.

At the time of writing this report, the Area Office of MCSS has given the Department a written undertaking that the MCSS chargeback will be reduced by at least \$1.42 million in 1999. Depending on the overall cost reductions across Ontario that might occur due to the downloading of service delivery responsibility to Municipalities, it is conceivable that the chargeback could be reduced more, but we have no such assurances at this time.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The Department has not engaged in Public Consultation on these matters, since the requirement to assume these service delivery responsibilities has been mandated by the Provincial government.

Approved by Dick Stewart

MS

FINANCE DEPARTMENT COMMENT

Approval of the Departmental Report recommendations would represent a pre-commitment of the 1999 Budget.

Based on the report, the Department has estimated that the net additional costs to the Region of the Joint Transition Plan will be approximately \$2.2. million. The Department has indicated that it expects the Province to reduce its FBA Administration chargeback in 1999 to offset these increased costs. To the extent that the Province does not decrease its chargeback to fully offset the increased costs and in the absence of other expenditure reductions, Regional property taxes would increase.

Subject to Council Approval.

*Approved by T. Fedec
on behalf of the Finance Commissioner*

ANNEX A

**SOLE SUPPORT PARENT TRANSITION PLAN
1999 ANNUALISED BUDGET ESTIMATES**

EXPENDITURES		
Salaries and Benefits	3,888,332	3,888,332
Conferences and Conventions	1,000	
Staff Training and Development	8,000	
Car Allowance - Taxable and Non-Taxable	50,000	
Security Services	22,000	
R & M - Office and Buildings	1,000	
Rentals - Office Equipment	1,000	
Reproduction and Printing	12,000	
Printed/Video Matter	1,000	
Office Supplies	9,000	
Computer Supplies	500	105,500
Rent	200,000	
Parking - 111 Lisgar	50,000	250,000
Communications/Systems:		
Communications Lines	12,000	
Case Worker Technology Server	26,400	
RMOC Servers (2 - DSS/File, Print, Mail)	31,200	
Case Worker Technology Personal Computers	100,800	170,400
TOTAL EXPENDITURES		4,414,232