



# Staff Report to Council - for Information

**Title:** Q2 2024 Income and Support Services Update

**From:** Tina Metcalfe, Director Human Services

**Date:** September 5, 2024

**Report Number:** HS-2024-030

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## Report Purpose:

This report is for information.

## Report Summary:

The activities detailed in this report illustrate Income and Support Services' steadfast dedication to assisting individuals and families applying for and receiving social assistance in achieving stability and preparing for employment services. Through strategic interventions, collaborative partnerships, and proactive outreach, we aim to empower our program participants, improve their well-being, and promote their independence.

## Background/Analysis:

### Caseloads

Social Assistance caseloads remained steady throughout Q2, averaging 622 households per month. This represents an increase of 11.5% over the same period in 2023. Application volumes remain high and there have been 349 applications for Ontario Works and Temporary Care Assistance received for Bruce County thus far in 2024. In addition, there have been 28 Emergency Assistance applications processed.

Income and Support Services staff have noted a marked increase in the number of applications for assistance with direct burial/cremation. As at the end of Q2 there have been 27 applications processed and approved, compared to 12 over the same period in 2023. Of the total applications received in 2024, 59% have been on behalf of individuals who were receiving social assistance and 41% have been for Indigent persons, such as seniors. The costs of direct burial/cremation for indigent persons are not covered by program delivery funding from the province and are therefore paid by the municipality. Staff continue to seek reimbursements from any assets of the deceased's estate and the Canada Pension Death Benefit to minimize these costs.

### Integrated Employment Services

Thus far in 2024, approximately 93% of Ontario Works participants in Bruce County have completed a Social Assistance Action Plan and 23% have been referred to Employment Ontario (EO) for employment services. Key staff continue to meet monthly with our EO providers to identify and address any systemic issues. In an effort to reduce the number of

returned referrals due to no contact, new protocols have been established with two of our EO providers to re-engage social assistance program participants and successfully connect them with employment services through EO.

In May, ISS staff attended an information session regarding the new In Motion & Momentum+ program being delivered by YMCA Owen Sound Grey Bruce on behalf of the SSM to participants in Grey and Bruce Counties. The program is a 10-13-week strengths-based action-oriented program that focuses on participants' strengths and skills, assists individuals in setting goals and supports individuals in building a vision for their future. Additionally, it provides a connection to their community and the supports they need to achieve positive outcomes. At the end of Q2, staff began making referrals to the first cohort of the In Motion & Momentum+ program which was scheduled to start in July in Saugeen Shores.

### **Person Centered Supports**

During Q2, our staff have been actively engaged in Bruce County Outreach initiatives, contributing to community-focused efforts provide individuals in need of services with the knowledge and awareness of supports in their communities.

Inter-agency meetings are now established in four key locations: Wiarton, Saugeen Shores, Kincardine, and South Grey Bruce, with a designated Income & Support Services staff member attending each regularly. These meetings have successfully brought together direct client-service staff from over 40 community agencies, enhancing collaboration, resource-sharing, and integrated case management.

Our staff have facilitated referrals to over 50 external community programs and services, demonstrating a commitment to comprehensive client care. Additionally, referrals to 8 internal partners have strengthened the support network for clients. The three support needs identified most frequently on Social Assistance Action Plans in 2024 have been housing, food security, and health (mental and physical). Income & Support Services staff are working with Housing Services and YMCA Owen Sound Grey Bruce to streamline emergency shelter processes and payments for Ontario Works (OW) clients and maximize OW financial supports for maintaining shelter.

In Q2, Income and Support Services staff successfully facilitated another cohort of the Make Your Way program, in partnership with the Adult Learning Centre and Grey County Social Services. This life skills-based program, aimed at building self-confidence, critical thinking, independence, and effective communication, saw 11 participants complete the course.

### **Financial/Staffing/Legal/IT Considerations:**

There are no financial, staffing, legal, or IT considerations associated with this report.

### **Interdepartmental Consultation:**

There were no interdepartmental consultations with this report.

**Link to Strategic Goals and Objectives:**

Community and Partnerships - Enhance and grow partnerships

Community and Partnerships - Build a strong and inclusive community

**Link to Departmental Plan Goals and Objectives, if any:**

**Report Author:**

Aryn Becker, Income and Support Services Manager

**Departmental Approval:**

Tina Metcalfe, Director

**Approved for Submission:**

Christine MacDonald, Chief Administrative Officer