Committee Report

To: Warden Mitch Twolan
Members of the Human Services Committee

From: Christine MacDonald
Director of Human Services

Date: May 2, 2019

Re: Q1- Income and Employment Supports Update

Recommendation:

The Q1 Income and Employment Supports Update is for information.

Background:

Income Supports
The Ontario Works caseload for the period of January 1, 2019 to March 31, 2019 is an average of 555 per month. This represents a decrease in the caseload of 3.38% compared to the same time in 2018.

With the low unemployment rate in the region, the decreased caseload reflects that individuals are securing employment.

Transition of Human Services Staff to the Lakeshore Hub
Human Services staff assigned to the Port Elgin Human Services office moved to their new location at the Lakeshore Hub, formerly known as the Library Headquarters. Staff will continue to offer the same level of service as in the previous location. The relocation of the Human Services staff aligns with the corporate vision of establishing hubs of service. The relocation of staff will increase interaction and partnerships with Library Services and
Planning and Development. The Lakeshore Hub will offer residents access to more services in one location.

Employment Supports

On February 12, 2019, the province announced a plan to Transform Ontario Employment Services. At this time, there are no impacts on Ontario Works delivery partners or individuals seeking employment services. The announcement indicated changes to employment services would be implemented gradually, over several years, including a competitive, local service delivery model starting with three prototypes in fall 2019. The announcement indicated the Ministry would be working closely with delivery partners to develop a plan to phase-in changes in a manner that recognizes local needs.

The Getting Ahead program is a Bridges-out-of-Poverty initiative that is a forward thinking program for participants. Getting Ahead facilitates a process that allows those that have been in generational poverty to think beyond the difficulties of the moment and explore the possibilities of a different approach to their lives. The 8-week program is comprised of 15 sessions at 3 hours each. For the Q1 reporting period, the Getting Ahead program is being offered in Wiarton and began on March 18, 2019.

Eligibility Review Process

The Eligibility Verification Process (EVP) is the risk-based case audit process that ensures client eligibility for Ontario Works is determined based on accurate financial and personal information provided by the client. Every second month 3% of high risk cases are selected from each municipalities’ caseload for audit. The EVP auditor is responsible for reviewing a client’s circumstances to ensure that the client is meeting the eligibility criteria for social assistance. Audit outcomes can result in no change to entitlement, underpayments, overpayments or termination of benefits.

For the period of January 1 to February 28, 2019, 13 cases were selected for review with five cases having a change in entitlement. Changes in entitlement can include an overpayment or arrears. One case was referred to the Eligibility Review Officer for further review of eligibility.

Financial/Staffing/Legal/IT Considerations:

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

Interdepartmental Consultation:

There was no specific interdepartmental consultation associated with this report.

Link to Strategic Goals and Elements:

Goal #3 -Find creative ways to engage our public
Goal #6 -Explore alternate options to improve efficiency and service

Written by: Nancy Reinhart, Income and Employment Supports Manager
Approved by:

Murray Clarke
Acting Chief Administrative Officer