

What is ODSP?

The Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) is a provincial government program that provides social assistance to people with disabilities.

OPSEU/SEFPO members who work for the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) provide compassionate and essential support to their clients, and are specially trained to understand and provide the services that people with disabilities need.

Don't dump ODSP to municipalities

The Ontario Government has announced that they are downloading ODSP casework to municipalities, and automating the application process.

It's bad for ODSP clients, bad for ODSP workers, and bad for Ontario.

Digitizing and dehumanizing the application process

The ministry plans to automate the application process for ODSP, Ontario Works (OW), and special benefits (like Special Diet Allowances).

Removing human beings from reviewing applications will lead to mistaken rejections, forcing vulnerable clients through unnecessary appeals. And it will cause overpayments that clients in financial distress will be forced to pay back.

Digitizing applications will also make it more difficult for clients without access to tech devices, internet and data plans to apply for benefits.

Decisions that affect financially vulnerable clients should be made by caseworkers. Human beings – not algorithms.

For more information, visit

www.opseu.org/ODSP

Don't dump ODSP to municipalities

Forcing ODSP clients back to OW offices

The ministry plans to download ODSP casework to municipal Ontario Works offices. That means ODSP clients will be reassigned to caseworkers in OW offices.

ODSP is a fundamentally different program than OW. ODSP is a long-term program that recognizes that, while some of their clients can work to a limited degree, most are unable to work in the short term, and many cannot work in the long term either. On the other hand, OW is focused on getting all of their clients into a job and off social assistance as soon as possible.

Most ODSP clients start out on lower-paying OW benefits. They work hard to prove that their disability qualifies them for ODSP. ODSP clients aren't well-served by a service delivery model that forces them to look for work when they can't. They shouldn't have to constantly justify why they are unable to work.

ODSP workers understand this well, and they are best suited to work with clients with disabilities.

Downloading ODSP to cash-strapped municipalities

It makes no sense to have dozens of municipal governments running a provincial social assistance program. Municipal governments vary widely in size and capacity to run social programs.

Now, more than ever, our province should be centralizing supports for social assistance clients and standardizing services, so all social assistance clients across the province have the same supports. This is why OPSEU/SEFPO has always advocated for uploading social assistance programs, not downloading them. We don't need yet another social program downloaded to our municipalities.

ODSP is an Ontario government program. It should be funded, directly run and staffed by the Ontario Public Service.

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