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## **Services and supports for people labelled with an intellectual disability**

ARCH Disability Law Centre and the South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario (SALCO) have partnered to develop this factsheet for settlement and frontline workers. The factsheet discusses services and supports that may be available through Developmental Services Ontario (DSO).

This fact sheet does not give legal advice. You will find general information here only. Contact a lawyer or legal clinic for legal advice about your own situation.

This information is current as of December 2018.

# Services and supports for people labelled with intellectual disabilities

Adults labelled with intellectual disabilities may be able to get some services and supports through Developmental Services Ontario (DSO). The DSO is part of the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services.

The Ministry pays other agencies to give the services and supports. But the first step is to apply to the DSO.

## Why do front line workers need to know about this?

This fact sheet is for settlement and frontline workers. Frontline workers may be able to:

- tell people about these services and supports;
- help people gather the documents they need to apply; and
- tell people where to get more information if the DSO does not help them.

## Who can receive DSO services and supports?

A person is eligible for DSO supports and services if they qualify under the *Services and Supports to Promote the Social Inclusion of Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act*. This law is sometimes called the *Social Inclusion Act* or SIPDDA. To qualify:

- the person must be over 18 years old;
- have a developmental disability; and
- be a current resident of Ontario.

A person can apply for DSO services and supports when they are 16 or older. However, they will only receive services and supports when they are

18 or older. Wait lists for some services and supports can be very long, so applying as early as possible can help to lessen the time a person waits for services and supports after they become eligible.

## **How can someone show that they are over 18?**

They must give the DSO a document that shows their name and age, such as a birth or baptismal certificate, passport, Ontario health card or driver's licence. Some DSOs may accept other religious documents as proof of age. These documents are more likely to be accepted if they indicate the person's full legal name and date of birth.

## **How can someone show that they have a developmental disability?**

They should give the DSO a psychological assessment or report from a psychologist who is a member of the College of Psychologists in Ontario, or the College of another province. The assessment or report should say that the person has a developmental disability.

The Act defines a developmental disability as “significant limitations in cognitive functioning and adaptive functioning”, which:

- started before the person turned 18 years old;
- will probably last their whole life; and
- affects large parts of their life, such as personal care, speaking with others, learning, and living on their own.

If a person has a psychological assessment or report from another country, they should contact the DSO in their area to ask whether their document would assist the DSO in determining their eligibility for services and supports.

## **How can someone show that they are a current resident of Ontario?**

The Ministry has Policy Directives for Application Entities under the *Social Inclusion Act*. According to Policy Directive 2.0, applicants must show documents to prove they have an Ontario address. This could be an Ontario photo card, rental or lease papers, pay stub, bank account statement, utility bill, or Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) statement of direct deposit.

The Policy Directive also says that the DSO accepts Canadian citizenship and/or immigration documents as proof of Ontario residency.

## **Which immigration documents will the DSO accept as proof of residency?**

There is no immigration status requirement to be eligible for DSO. However, certain immigration documents could be used as proof of Ontario residency.

It is unclear exactly which immigration documents the DSO will accept. Government-issued documents which indicate the person's address in Ontario are most helpful. If the law and the policy directive are given the most liberal meaning, then someone could just show proof of an Ontario address along with an immigration document that has not expired.

Although there is no immigration status requirement to be eligible for DSO, the developmental services agencies that provide services and supports may have their own eligibility criteria which may include immigration status. Practically, this means that a person may qualify for DSO, but may not be eligible to receive services from certain agencies if they do not meet those agencies' immigration status requirements.

## **What about people who cannot show that they live in Ontario?**

It is also not clear how the DSO will treat people who cannot show that they live in Ontario. For example, many transient or homeless people are not eligible for an Ontario health card. These people may not have documents to prove that they live in Ontario. Or they may only have an Ontario Works (OW) stub. Some DSOs accept OW stubs as proof of Ontario residency, however It is not clear whether all DSOs take the same approach.

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**If someone thinks they need developmental services and they currently live in Ontario, then they should apply to the DSO.**

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## **What kinds of services and supports can someone apply for?**

Here are the main services that people might be eligible for:

- 1. Residential services and supports** for finding a place to live and related services such as:
  - Group homes and group living supports.
  - Supported independent living / individual living supports.
  - Host family home / associate living supports
  - Individual residential models
  - Specialized accommodation
- 2. Activities of daily living services, and supports** for tasks such as:
  - making meals
  - getting dressed
  - personal care such as bathing, brushing teeth and using the toilet

- taking medication
- training for managing money, banking, using public transit and taxis, and other life skills

**3. Community participation services and supports for:**

- social and recreational activities, such as using community centre programs or joining a local club
- work activities
- volunteer activities
- some other community supports

**4. Relief services and supports** for the main family members or friends who care for an adult with a developmental disability such as services from a:

- psychologist
- social worker
- speech language pathologist
- other professionals

**5. Person-directed planning services and supports** to help adults with a developmental disability:

- identify and plan for their life goals
- find services and supports to make their plan happen

**6. Direct Funding:** A person can also apply for direct funding to pay for supports and services. This means the person with the disability will be in charge of the services. For example, they can use direct funding to hire their own job coach, personal support worker, caregiver, or to pay for help to develop a person-directed plan.

As of 2018, direct funding is mainly through a program called Passport. That program funds a maximum of \$35,000 per person per year. The Passport Guidelines set out which amounts are admissible, and which are not. You can read the Guidelines at:

<https://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/developmental/service-support/passport.aspx>

Passport can also be used to receive supports directly from an agency, rather than money.

As part of its 2018 budget, the Government of Ontario announced that every adult who is eligible for DSO will receive at least \$5,000 per year in Passport funding to assist them to participate in their community and provide respite for their caregivers.

## **Is DSO or Passport funding counted as income for ODSP?**

No. According to ODSP Policy 5.1, payments received under the *Services and Supports to Promote the Social Inclusion of Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act* are considered income exemptions.

## **How does someone apply for DSO services and supports?**

To apply, contact the DSO in person, by telephone, by email, or through their website.

To find the local DSO, visit the DSO website at [www.dsontario.ca/agencies](http://www.dsontario.ca/agencies). Enter the postal code in the box for Option 1, "Search by postal code". Or check the list of DSO Regional Offices at the end of this fact sheet. The list gives phone numbers and email addresses for the DSO office in each region.

The DSO will give the person an application form. Fill in that form and return it to the DSO. Check whether the DSO has a deadline for returning the application or any other forms.

After that, the DSO will assess the person's needs before deciding whether to give services and supports.

The DSO will probably put the person on a waiting list. The DSO is supposed to help people on the waiting list who urgently need supports.

## **Where to get more information or assistance:**

**ARCH Disability Law Centre** is a specialty legal clinic that deals with legal issues affecting people with disabilities. ARCH's website address is [www.archdisabilitylaw.ca](http://www.archdisabilitylaw.ca). Persons with a disability can contact ARCH at:

Toll-free	1-866-482-2724
Toronto	416-482-8255
TTY Toll-free	1-866-482-2728
TTY Toronto	416-482-1254
Email	<a href="mailto:archlib@lao.on.ca">archlib@lao.on.ca</a>

**Community legal clinics** give information, advice and representation on various legal issues affecting low income people. Some community legal clinics may assist with issues related to DSO services and supports. To find the nearest community legal clinic, visit the Legal Aid Ontario website and enter your postal code at: [www.legalaid.on.ca/en/contact/contact.asp?type=cl](http://www.legalaid.on.ca/en/contact/contact.asp?type=cl)

You can also call Legal Aid Ontario at:

Toll-free 1-800-668-8258

Toronto 416-979-1446

TTY Toll-free TTY 1-866-641-8867

TTY Toronto TTY 416-598-8867



**Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services** can give information about DSO services. You can visit their website at <https://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/en/mcsc/programs/developmental/index.aspx>.

You can also call them:

Toll-free 1-888-789-4199

Toronto 416-325-5666

DSO Regional Offices	Contact Info
<p><b>DSO Central East Region</b>  Serving Durham, Haliburton, Northumberland,  Peterborough, Simcoe, Kawartha Lakes and York</p> <p><a href="https://www.yssn.ca/DSO-Ontario-Central-East-Region">https://www.yssn.ca/DSO-Ontario-Central-East-Region</a></p>	<p>905-953-0796  or  1-855-277-2121</p> <p>TTY 905-898-1609</p>
<p><b>DSO Central West Region</b>  Serving Waterloo, Wellington, Dufferin, Halton and Peel</p> <p><a href="http://www.dsocwr.ca/">http://www.dsocwr.ca/</a></p>	<p>1-888-941-1121</p> <p><a href="mailto:dso@dscwr.com">dso@dscwr.com</a></p> <p>TTY instructions can be found here  <a href="http://www.dsonario.ca/calling-via-tty">http://www.dsonario.ca/calling-via-tty</a></p>
<p><b>DSO Eastern Region</b>  Serving Stormont, Dundas &amp; Glengarry, Prescott-Russell,  Ottawa Region, Renfrew County</p> <p><a href="https://scsottawa.on.ca/services/dsoer/">https://scsottawa.on.ca/services/dsoer/</a></p>	<p>1-855-DSO-ERDS  (1-855-376-3737)</p> <p>admin@dsoer.ca</p> <p>TTY 1-855-777-5787</p>
<p><b>DSO Hamilton-Niagara Region</b>  Serving Brant, Haldimand and Norfolk,  Hamilton, Niagara, Six Nations of the Grand River,  Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation</p> <p><a href="http://dsohnr.ca/en/">http://dsohnr.ca/en/</a></p>	<p>1-877-DSO-HNR4  (1-877-376-4674)</p> <p><a href="mailto:info@dsohnr.ca">info@dsohnr.ca</a></p> <p>TTY instructions can be found here  <a href="http://www.dsonario.ca/calling-via-tty">http://www.dsonario.ca/calling-via-tty</a></p>
<p><b>DSO North-East Region</b>  Serving Cochrane, Muskoka, Nipissing, Parry Sound,  Timiskaming, James Bay Coast</p> <p><a href="http://www.thefamilyhelpnetwork.ca/developmental-services-ontario-north-east-region">http://www.thefamilyhelpnetwork.ca/developmental-services-ontario-north-east-region</a></p>	<p>1-855-376-6376  <a href="mailto:dso@handstfhn.ca">dso@handstfhn.ca</a></p> <p>TTY 1-800-855-0511</p>

DSO Regional Offices	Contact Info
<p><b>DSO Northern Region</b> Serving Algoma, Dryden, Kenora, Manitoulin, Rainy River, Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury and Thunder Bay</p> <p><a href="http://www.lcctbay.org/dsonr/en/index.html">http://www.lcctbay.org/dsonr/en/index.html</a></p>	<p>1-855-DSO-NORD (1-855-376-6673)</p> <p>TTY 1-866-752-5427</p>
<p><b>DSO South-East Region</b> Serving Hastings, Kingston, Lanark, Frontenac, Leeds &amp; Grenville, Lennox &amp; Addington, and Prince Edward County</p> <p><a href="http://www.eafkingston.com/classes-1/">http://www.eafkingston.com/classes-1/</a></p>	<p>1-855-237-6737 or 1-613-354-7977</p> <p>TTY instructions can be found here <a href="http://www.dsontario.ca/calling-via-tty">http://www.dsontario.ca/calling-via-tty</a></p>
<p><b>DSO South-West Region</b> Serving the Counties of London-Middlesex, Oxford, Elgin, Huron, Bruce, Perth, Grey, Windsor-Essex, Chatham-Kent and Sarnia-Lambton</p> <p><a href="http://cscn.on.ca/site/en/developmental-services-ontario">http://cscn.on.ca/site/en/developmental-services-ontario</a></p>	<p>1-855-437-6797</p> <p>TTY instructions can be found here <a href="http://www.dsontario.ca/calling-via-tty">http://www.dsontario.ca/calling-via-tty</a></p>
<p><b>DSO Toronto Region</b> Serving Toronto, Etobicoke, East York, North York and Scarborough</p> <p><a href="https://www.dsotoronto.ca/">https://www.dsotoronto.ca/</a></p>	<p>1-855-DS-ADULT (1-855-372-3858)</p> <p><a href="mailto:DSOTR@surreyplace.on.ca">DSOTR@surreyplace.on.ca</a></p> <p>TTY instructions can be found here <a href="http://www.dsontario.ca/calling-via-tty">http://www.dsontario.ca/calling-via-tty</a></p>