



15 February 2019

John Yakabuski, MPP
Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke
84 Isabella Street, Unit 6,
Pembroke, Ontario K8A 5S5

Re: Developmental Services in Ontario – Three Key Priorities

MPP Yakabuski:

Our three Community Living agencies represent a workforce of over 300 employees in Renfrew County. We have a combined budget of \$17,478,850 and a history of service delivery of over 60 years.

To regain control of public finances, we recognize that the government must address the factors contributing to the growth of transfer payments. Cutting red tape and finding efficiencies are key to this effort. By and large, developmental services are provided through transfer payment agreements with the government. We provide the services and support that people need on shoestring budgets with incredibly determined volunteers and staff. Unfortunately, dedication is not enough.

Our 3 agencies have been starved of resources for a decade now. As hydro, grocery, and property tax bills have risen, our three agencies have adapted to having less and less money to serve a large and growing need. As support needs for an aging population has grown, we have worked hard to meet ministry expectations.

We know that the government has difficult decisions ahead to restore balance and confidence in public finances. We want to be part of that conversation and help government understand the choices that decision-makers face.

As we said, we want to help. Three priorities will help ensure a stable developmental services sector and will help streamline efficiencies:

1. Preserve funding for frontline services

Our sector as mentioned has endured a decade of chronic underinvestment and increasing operating and regulatory burden imposed by government. Against all odds, we made it work, but only just. We are confident that we can continue the successes we have achieved if we avoid cuts to frontline services. Cuts here mean job losses, longer wait lists, and people and their families losing the services they count on.



2. Maintain the Passport Guarantee

Currently, some individuals receive direct funding through the Passport program to purchase services in their communities. This is real money in people's pockets that they can direct however they see fit. It is an investment in part of an early intervention continuum. Unfortunately, the waitlist for Passport funding is over five years. All families on the Passport waitlist can now receive \$5,000 per year until they reach the top of this list. Money has already begun to flow. Removing this program would mean pulling money out of family budgets and real cuts to the services these families purchase. We ask that this program be maintained and that all families on the Passport waitlist receive a minimum of \$5,000 per year.

3. Let us help you cut red tape in Developmental Services

We are encouraged by the government's commitment to removing red tape and making it easier to do business. Over the years, our sector has endured ever-increasing bureaucratic and reporting requirements that have eroded our already limited funding as agencies have had to dedicate staff time and consultant fees to meeting new requirements from government. We have developed a top ten list of red tape in three areas that, if removed by government, would free-up our sector to deliver higher-value work. We have worked hard to secure broad consensus across our very diverse sector on this list, including a comprehensive survey that received nearly 100 responses.

We are ready and eager to work with the government to operationalize these ideas. These ideas are meant simply as a starting point for discussion. Given the opportunity, we can work together to preserve and strengthen services for people with a developmental disability.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Creeden
Executive Director
Community Living Renfrew County South

Monica Prymack
Executive Director
Madawaska Valley Association for Community Living

Chris Grayson
Executive Director
Community Living Upper Ottawa Valley