



Formerly Special Services at Home Passport Provincial Coalition (SSAHPC)

1270 Walker Rd, Unit 2
Windsor, ON
N8Y 4T4
pfpfontario@gmail.com

August 9, 2022

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton
Minister of Children, Community and Social Services
Room 281
Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1A1
MinisterMCCSS@ontario.ca

Dear Minister Fullerton:

We are writing to ask that your Ministry adopt an urgent but simple improvement in its administration of Passport, Special Services at Home, Enhanced Respite, and other direct funding for disabled children, youth and adults.

Your government passed a law requiring a well-deserved \$3 an hour wage enhancement for support workers. However, giving everyone a 10% increase in direct funding has created unacceptable inequity among recipients. It is a bonus allowing those using direct funding to purchase more approved items; however, it reduces benefits to others. If recipients use most or all of their funds to pay workers, they will suffer reduced hours of support, especially if they pay less than \$30 an hour.¹ We know that the people who require worker support have the greatest needs and work hardest at being included in their communities. While a 20% increase would be welcome, it would not resolve the inequity.

Your government committed to providing health and social service agencies enough additional funds to provide the additional \$3 an hour for all hours worked by their employees. Competing with agencies for workers is a serious and growing challenge for people using direct funding. Thus, MCCSS must also ensure that recipients have

¹ This was documented in the June 20, 2022 letter sent to you by Family Alliance Ontario, in conjunction with People for Personalized Funding, the Independent Facilitation Network of Ontario and the Individualized Funding Coalition of Ontario.

enough direct funding to fully compensate their workers for all the hours they work, between July 1, 2022 and March 31, 2023 and thereafter. (These calculations should not be based on hours of support worked during the pandemic when people were staying home to be safe.) Those who have employees should receive enough direct funding to pay for benefits, as agencies do.

At this time of widely-reported staffing shortages, this is one issue that can be resolved quickly. We ask that you provide recipients the option to continue using the accounting system that has been working well with Passport, when the wage enhancement was temporary. This system should also be made available for families who receive direct funding for children and youth with disabilities. The \$3 wage enhancement would simply be documented on an extra line on their invoices and be fully reimbursed.

Administered fairly, direct funding strengthens people and families, flexibly responds to individual circumstances and requirements and reduces the need for more costly segregated services. People who cannot survive and live fulfilling lives without worker support need a solution right away. One month of this inequitable situation has already passed.

We appreciate your immediate attention and resolution of this matter. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Alison Ouellette and Susann Palmiere,
Co-Chairs of People for Personalized Funding

Cc:

Monique Taylor - Critic; Children, Community and Social Services
Bhutila Karpoche - Critic; Early Childhood Development
Lisa Gretzky - Critic; Mental Health and Addiction
Lise Vaugois - Critic; Seniors, Persons living with Disabilities and Accessibility
John Fraser - Critic; Children, Community and Social Services
Mary-Margaret McMahon - Critic, Seniors and Accessibility
Family Alliance Ontario
Ontario Independent Facilitation Network
Individualized Funding Coalition for Ontario
Community Living Ontario
The Provincial Network on Developmental Services