

**Ministry of Children,
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127-2021-5473

July 22, 2021

Ms. Alison Ouellette
Ms. Susann Palmiere
Co-chairs, People for Personalized Funding
pfpfontario@gmail.com

Dear Ms. Ouellette and Ms. Palmiere:

Thank you for the congratulatory e-mail on my new role as the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services and your follow-up letter regarding the Passport program.

2020-21 saw changes to the Passport program and processes as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic to better support recipients and their families. The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services implemented several initiatives in recognition of the challenges that individuals and families faced supporting their family member during the pandemic. This included temporarily expanding eligible expenditures for Passport to allow recipients to use their funding for goods and services that may make it easier to stay at home during this time. As a result, Passport claims required additional manual review which resulted in a temporary increase in processing times for submitted claims.

I understand how important it is that recipients and families are reimbursed in a timely way. The ministry, PassportONE and Passport agencies have implemented several strategies to expedite the review and payment of invoices and return processing timelines to the standard. As a result, the processing times for claims is now averaging within two to three weeks. The strategies have included:

- Increasing year-end staff capacity for claims processing.
- Adjusting the claims review process to reduce the number of claims requiring manual review based on a risk-based approach.
- Continuous improvement measures, including enhancements to existing electronic filing options such as allowing for expanded supporting documentation.

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- Implementing strategies to streamline the manual review of claims submitted under the temporary expansion of admissible expenditures due to COVID-19 to support faster claims processing.
- Passport agencies added auto-reply messages to keep families up to date on current processing wait times.

The ministry, working with PassportONE and Passport Agencies, will continue to implement improvements, including:

- Increasing enrollment/usage of e-platforms such as [MyDirectPlan \(MDP\)](#) and [eClaim](#). These online platforms support faster claims processing.
- Providing supports people need by continuing to allow them to use funding for technology-related supports introduced during COVID-19.
- Improving communications and providing clearer guidelines to recipients. This includes updating the [Passport program guidelines](#).
- Advance planning to address the year-end surge in claims submissions for the end of the fiscal year 2021-22.

Your feedback will be taken into consideration as we focus on these improvements, and on the long-term plan for reform of developmental services. Our immediate actions will be to improve current supports and services, and commitments for foundational reforms that will be further designed and developed over the coming years. The ministry will continue having conversations with a broad range of individuals and agency partners from across the province to discuss ways to improve supports for the families and individuals served.

Thank you again for writing.

Sincerely,



Dr. Merrilee Fullerton
Minister