



Formerly Special Services at Home Passport Provincial Coalition (SSAHPC)

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Sept 12, 2025

Hon. Michael Parsa, Minister of Children, Community, and Social Services (MCCSS)
7th Floor 438 University Ave.
Toronto, ON M5G 2K8

MinisterMCCSS@ontario.ca

Dear Minister Parsa:

We are writing regarding our continuing concern about the funding and administration of your Ministry's two direct funding programs: Special Services at Home (SSAH) and Passport.

People with developmental disabilities and families relying on Special Services at Home (SSAH) and Passport report worsening access and adequacy. Per person funding has not kept pace with demand or labour costs, waitlists remain large and reimbursement delays create hardship. Families also raise concerns about the alignment of the government's investments with the stated goals of community inclusion and independent living.

Concerns:

- Per-person SSAH funding declined as caseloads grew in 2024/25.
- Purchasing power of direct funding has eroded substantially since the mid-1990.
- Large waitlists persist: 2023/2024 and 2024/25 figures have not been made available.
- SSAH reimbursement delays of 3-4 months have been reported.
- Passport recipients receive funding levels that translate to limited weekly support hours at prevailing wages.
- Stakeholders question whether government investment patterns sufficiently prioritize an everyday life in the community over institutional care.
- Gaps remain in supports causing immense crisis for people with disabilities after parents die.

Background:

- In June 2023 we raised concerns with your ministry about underfunding, waitlists, and reimbursement backlogs in SSAH and Passport. You acknowledged in your response that more work was needed and affirmed the ministry's goals of inclusion and access.
- Since then, conditions have worsened, funding is more inadequate and more people are not being supported.

SSAH Program status:

- Allocation and caseload: The provincial SSAH allocation increased from \$111.3M in 2023/2024 to \$114.2M in 2024/2025. Over the same period, the number of children served grew from 36,610 to 40,200.
- Per-person impact: The average annual allocation per child decreased from approximately \$3,040 to \$2,842, with the average annual amount claimed about \$2,624.
- Purchasing power: In 1995, the average annual allocation per child was about \$5,000. Today it is roughly \$2,624, while Ontario's minimum hourly wage rose from \$6.85 in 1995 to 2004, to \$18 in 2025. As a result, estimated support hours have declined from about 14 hours per week in 2004, to roughly 2.8 hours per week in 2025 at \$18 per hour.
- Waitlists: In 2022/2023 approximately 11,100 eligible children received no SSAH funding, with 357 children waiting for needed increases. Updated 2024/2025 waitlist data has not been provided, although we believe that the total has grown.
- Reimbursements: SSAH is a reimbursement program. Reported processing times of 3-4 months force families to front costs, borrow, and pay interest, creating barriers for lower-income households and those with higher need children with higher allocations.

Passport Program status:

- Distribution: While the overall Passport budget increased in 2024/2025, so did the number of eligible claimants.
- Allocations and hours: About 45% of recipients receive \$5,500 per year, roughly equivalent to 5.8 hours per week at the minimum of \$18 per hour. Among those eligible for higher allocations, the average annual allocation is about \$11,558 per week, or 12 hours of support. In practice many recipients pay much more than \$18 per hour in order to secure competent support staff, further reducing hours.
- Additional unmet needs: In 2023/2024, approximately half of the claimants, or about 30,567 people were waitlisted for additional funding.

Clarification around outcomes of ministry programs:

- Institutional care vs life in the community: A 2025 provincial allocation of \$21M to Safehaven, which provides institutional residential and respite care, has prompted families to doubt your ministry's commitment to support children at home and in the community. We would benefit from some clarification around rationale and intended outcomes.
- Housing and independence: While Developmental Services Ontario offers planning supports, families report serious lack of sustained funding and services that allow adults with developmental disabilities to continue living in their own homes after parental caregivers die.

- Young adults in long-term care facilities: Past ombudsman reports have identified thousands of young people with disabilities living in long-term care facilities, indicating a lack of appropriate support in the community.

Impacts on families:

- Reduced hours of support constrain inclusion, respite, and stability at home.
- Long reimbursement timelines create cash-flow strain, credit costs and interruptions in care and family life.
- Inadequate funding and waitlists impede transitions to independent living and community participation.

Recommendations:

- Publish current performance data: caseloads, waitlists, average allocations, processing times, and actual realized hours of support, with quarterly updates.
- Restore purchasing power: Adjust per-person allocations to reflect wage and inflation trends, and index to appropriate daily costs.
- Eliminate payment backlogs: Set clear service standards (e.g. processing and payment timelines) and report publicly on compliance; explore advances or direct-payment options to reduce out-of-pocket burdens.
- Reduce waitlists: Targeted investments to move people from no funding/insufficient funding to adequate levels tied to assessed needs.
- Align investments with the stated program goals: Ensure funding decisions demonstrably prioritize supports that help people live at home and in their communities.
- Clarify timelines: Provide a time-bound plan with milestones for implementing SIPDDA and the Journey to Belonging vision, including housing supports after caregiver death.
- Strengthen accountability: Annual public reporting that connects funding inputs to outputs (hours of support, continuity of care) and outcomes (participation, stability of living arrangements).

We would welcome a meeting to review these data, clarify family concerns and discuss solutions and timelines.

Sincerely,

Alison Ouellette and Susann Palmiere

Co-Chairs

cc :

Betty Daley, President, Family Alliance ON

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