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February 10, 2015

**MEMORANDUM TO:** Employment Supports Service Providers

**FROM:** Gloria Lee  
A-Director  
Ontario Disability Support Program

**RE:** **Postponed Implementation of the Employment-Related Benefit (ERB)**

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As you are aware, in the 2014 Ontario Budget, as part of ongoing efforts to reform social assistance, the province announced that it would be replacing seven existing Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) employment benefits with a simple discretionary benefit in each program.

The benefits being consolidated include:

- Employment-related expenses (Ontario Works)
- Other employment and employment assistance activities benefit (Ontario Works)
- Full-time employment benefit (Ontario Works)
- Vocational training (Ontario Works)
- Work-related benefit (ODSP)
- Employment training and start-up benefit (ODSP)
- Employment transition benefit (ODSP)

Over the last several months, we have engaged with staff, clients, service providers and community stakeholders to obtain input on the design and delivery of the ERB. The ministry is still finalizing some details of the new ERB in social assistance.

Replacing seven different employment benefits is a complex process and represents a major change for social assistance clients, particularly those receiving ODSP, staff and our municipal partners who deliver these employment related benefits. We also

recognize the feedback that we have received from front-line staff and our municipal delivery partners regarding the difficulty in implementing this change for April 1<sup>st</sup>.

To give everyone involved the time needed to be ready for these important changes, we have made the decision to postpone the implementation of the ERB until October 2015. All of the current employment-related benefits, including the Work-related benefit, will continue to be available until the ERB is implemented.

We will continue to provide you with updates as details on the ERB are finalized. To support the October 2015 implementation, the ministry will be sharing standard communication and orientation products, issuing service guidelines and revised products (e.g., policy directives and business processes) and providing staff with training and support tools. Regional sessions may also be organized to share information, establish clear referral processes, and strengthen relationships.

Should you have any questions, please contact Donna Gallagher at [Donna.Gallagher@Ontario.ca](mailto:Donna.Gallagher@Ontario.ca).

*Original signed by*

Gloria Lee

- c. Jeff Bowen, Director, Social Assistance Municipal Operations Branch  
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