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Archived - September 2016 Mandate letter: Community and Social Services

Premier's instructions to the Minister on priorities.



September 23, 2016

The Honourable Helena Jaczek
Minister of Community and Social Services
80 Grosvenor Street
6th Floor, Hepburn Block
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1E9

Dear Minister Jaczek:

Welcome back to your role as Minister of Community and Social Services. As we mark the mid-point of our mandate, we have a strong and new Cabinet, and are poised to redouble our efforts to deliver on our top priority — creating jobs and growth. Guided by our balanced plan to build Ontario up for everyone, we will continue to work together to deliver real benefits and more inclusive growth that will help people in their everyday lives.

We embark on this important part of our mandate knowing that our four-part economic plan is working — we are making the largest investment in public infrastructure in Ontario's history, making postsecondary education more affordable and accessible, leading the transition to a low-carbon economy and the fight against climate change, and building retirement security for workers.

Building on our ambitious and activist agenda, and with a focus on implementing our economic plan, we will continue to forge partnerships with businesses, educators, labour, communities, the not-for-profit sector and with

all Ontarians to foster economic growth and to make a genuine, positive difference in people's lives. Collaboration and active listening remain at the heart of the work we undertake on behalf of the people of Ontario — these are values that ensure a common purpose, stimulate positive change and help achieve desired outcomes. With this in mind, I ask that you work closely with your Cabinet colleagues to deliver positive results on initiatives that cut across several ministries, such as our Climate Change Action Plan, Business Growth Initiative, and the Highly Skilled Workforce Strategy. I also ask you to collaborate with the Minister Responsible for Digital Government to drive digital transformation across government and modernize public service delivery.

We have made tangible progress and have achieved the following key results:

- Committed to investing more than \$130 million annually to increase social assistance rates again in 2016 and put more money into the hands of those with the greatest need.
- Increased the incomes of single-parent families who receive both social assistance and child support payments by exempting child support from social assistance and ensuring that families benefit fully from the new Canada Child Benefit.
- Advanced our vision of independence, inclusion and choice for Ontarians with developmental disabilities. Ontarians with developmental disabilities are doing better today as a result of our investment of \$810 million over three years.

Your mandate is to promote resilience and inclusive communities by helping people achieve their potential, build independence and improve their quality of life. Your specific priorities include working collaboratively with lead and affected ministers, broader public sector partners and stakeholders across the province to:

Support Low-Income Ontarians to Reach Their Full Potential

- Work in partnership with the Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy to design and introduce a Basic Income Pilot, building on the advice of the Special Advisor and broader public consultation, by the end of April 2017.
- Develop a practical and implementable plan for social assistance reform, in a broader income security context, by winter 2017-18. It will be informed by the Income Security Reform Working Group, Indigenous engagement and the work to implement a Basic Income Pilot.
 - While completing the larger plan, continue to work with people with lived experience and delivery partners to find immediate reforms and move toward a more simple, holistic, client-centred approach to the delivery of social assistance.
- Support the transformation of income-based and other benefit programs, with the Minister of Finance, Minister of Government and Consumer Services and human services system partners, focusing on client-focused delivery and information sharing.

Promote Inclusion and Improve Support for Persons with Disabilities, Including Developmental Disabilities

- Work with the ministers of Children and Youth Services, Health and Long-Term Care, Education, Housing, and Advanced Education and Skills Development, to support smooth, timely transitions for young adults with special needs moving from children to adult services and develop a plan for action by fall 2017.
- Implement the three pillars of the Special Needs Strategy in 2017, in partnership with the ministers of Children and Youth Services, Education, and Health and Long-Term Care.
- Working with the Minister Responsible for Accessibility, support the development of a provincial employment strategy for people with disabilities by the end of 2016.
- Through the Employment and Modernization Fund, continue to promote projects that develop job skills and employment and which promote service innovation and modernization across the developmental services sector.

Support Survivors of Human Trafficking, Sexual and Domestic Violence

- Review existing programs and services and create an updated domestic violence action plan, with the Attorney General, Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, and Minister Responsible for Women's Issues.
- Lead the implementation of Ontario's Strategy to End Human Trafficking, including the launch of the Anti-Human Trafficking Provincial Co-ordinating Office, in partnership with the Minister Responsible for Women's Issues and other affected ministries, and support increased awareness, enhanced justice-sector initiatives and improved access to services for survivors.

In addition to the priority activities above, I ask that you also deliver results for Ontarians by driving progress in the following areas:

- Continue to work to end sheltered workshops by working with funded agencies, individuals and their families to develop transition plans to protect people with disabilities and give them competitive employment and meaningful participation in the community.
- Support the work of the Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy on implementing *Realizing Our Potential*, Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy.
- Support the Minister of Housing in the implementation of the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy and in the work to end chronic homelessness.
- Collaborate with the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and others, as required to deliver the second phase of Ontario's Mental Health and Addictions Strategy and work together more broadly to meet the needs of adults with developmental disabilities.
- Continue to work with the federal government, provincial counterparts and municipal delivery partners to leverage shared policy priorities, such as reducing poverty and improving social assistance, driving innovation, reducing duplication and improving efficiency.
- Complete implementation of the investment of \$810 million in the community and development services system and consider further steps to ensure stability and help people be fully included in the fabric of communities and live as independently as possible by:
 - Eliminating the 2014 Passport waitlist.
 - Providing more residential supports for more people with developmental disabilities in urgent need.
 - With the Ministry of Housing, build on the success of the Developmental Services Housing Task Force with further innovative housing solutions for people with developmental disabilities with housing needs.
- Lead the work on human services integration to support integrated system management and service delivery and better co-ordination across provincial programs (social assistance and some employment and training services, child care/early years, and social housing/homelessness) that are provided in partnership with municipalities.

As you know, taking action on the recommendations contained in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report is a priority for our government. That is why we released *The Journey Together*, a document that serves as a blueprint for making our government's commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples a reality. As we move forward with the implementation of the report, I ask you and your fellow Cabinet members to work together, in co-operation with our Indigenous partners, to help achieve real and measurable change for Indigenous communities.

Having made significant progress over the past year in implementing our community hubs strategy, I encourage you and your Cabinet colleagues to ensure that the Premier's Special Advisor on Community Hubs and the Community Hubs Secretariat, at the Ministry of Infrastructure, are given the support they need to continue their vital cross-government work aimed at making better use of public properties, encouraging multi-use spaces and helping communities create financially sustainable hub models.

Responsible fiscal management remains an overarching priority for our government — a priority echoed strongly in our 2016 Budget. Thanks to our disciplined approach to the province's finances over the past two years, we are on track to balance the budget next year, in 2017–18, which will also lower the province's debt-to-GDP ratio. Yet this is not the moment to rest on our past accomplishments: it is essential that we work collaboratively across every sector of government to support evidence-based decision-making to ensure programs and services are effective, efficient and sustainable, in order to balance the budget by 2017–18, maintain balance in 2018–19, and position the province for longer-term fiscal sustainability.

Marathon runners will tell you that an event's halfway mark is an opportunity to reflect on progress made — but they will also tell you that it is the ideal moment to concentrate more intently and to move decisively forward. At this halfway mark of this government's mandate, I encourage you to build on the momentum that we have successfully achieved over the past two years, to work in tandem with your fellow ministers to advance our economic plan and to ensure that Ontario remains a great place to live, work and raise a family.

I look forward to working together with you to build opportunity and prosperity for all Ontarians.

Sincerely,



Kathleen Wynne
Premier

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