



CITY OF HAMILTON
COMMUNITY AND EMERGENCY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
Benefit Eligibility Division

TO:	Chair and Members Emergency & Community Services Department
COMMITTEE DATE:	April 25, 2016
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Ontario Works French Language Services Compliance Report (CS11038(a)) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Carole Zoghaib 905-546-2424 Ext. 7000 Pat Jackman 905-546-2424 Ext. 7830
SUBMITTED BY:	Carole Zoghaib Acting Director, Benefit Eligibility Community and Emergency Services Department
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

That the Ontario Works French Language Services Compliance Report attached as Appendix A to Report CS11038(a) be approved.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Minister responsible for Francophone Affairs requires that Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs) in designated areas be bound by the French Language Services Act. The City of Hamilton (City) is one of 25 designated sites and on behalf of the Government of Ontario administers the Ontario Works Program through the Employment and Income Support and Benefit Eligibility Divisions in the Community and Emergency Services Department.

The Employment and Income Support and Benefit Eligibility Divisions have been in compliance of the Act since 2010 by submitting annual Ontario Works Program Action Plans describing the capacity to provide French Language Services to interested clients. The Ontario Works Program Action Plans have been positively received and approved annually.

In 2016, the Ministry developed a new French Language Services Compliance Report to replace the previous French Language Services Action Plan templates. The Compliance Report requires Council approval.

The French Language Compliance Report identifies the Employment and Income Support and Benefit Eligibility Divisions' capacity to make active offers of service in French, recognize existing gaps and determine an action plan to improve capacity. The Ministry will be looking for improvements each year such as, but not limited to, services

being provided at an advanced level of French, an identified mechanism for resolution of complaints pertaining to the delivery of French Language Services, appropriate staff training and orientation of French Language Service legislation and obligations, and community promotion and collaboration.

Alternatives for Consideration - Not Applicable

FINANCIAL - STAFFING - LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial:

There are no financial implications associated with Report CS11038(a).

Staffing:

There are no staffing implications associated with Report CS11038(a).

Legal:

There are no legal implications associated with Report CS11038(a).

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The French Language Services Act, passed in 1986, forms part of a broader legal framework of linguistic rights in Ontario. Section 5.1 of the French Language Services Act states:

“A person has the right in accordance with this Act to communicate in French with, and to receive available services in French from, head or central office of a government agency or institution of the Legislature that is designated by the regulation, and has the same right in respect of any other office of such agency or institution that is located in or serves an area designated in the Schedule.”

In 2009, the above regulation from the Act, set forth by the Minister responsible for Francophone Affairs, required that CMSMs and transfer payment agencies, in designated areas, be bound by the Act. The City of Hamilton is one of 25 designated areas and therefore mandated to comply with the Act.

In the Employment and Income Support and Benefit Eligibility Divisions, where the City of Hamilton acts on behalf of the Government of Ontario as a CMSM delivering the Ontario Works Program, their respective Ministry required that the City provide an annual Ontario Works Program Action Plan describing the capacity to provide French Language Services. An annual Ontario Works Program Action Plan was initiated and submitted to the Ministry of Community and Social Services in December 2009 for 2010. This and subsequent annual Ontario Works Program Action Plans have received positive feedback and have been approved accordingly.

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In 2016, the Ministry developed a new French Language Services Compliance Report to replace the previous French Language Services Action Plan templates. This Report has been developed to:

- Formalize Ministry expectations and service providers' responsibilities with regard to French Language Services provision.
- Provide clearer definition and service clause expectations.
- Continue conversations with service providers and/or community stakeholders in areas where there are service gaps.
- Provide a roadmap for agencies to increase French Language Services capacity and improve quality of service.

Effective March 2016, the Employment and Income Support and Benefit Eligibility Divisions will submit the Ontario Works Program Compliance Report annually along with their budget submission.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

There are no policy or legislative implications associated with Report CS11038(a).

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Not applicable.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONAL FOR RECOMMENDATION

The Minister of Francophone Affairs required that CMSMs and transfer payment agencies, in designated areas, be bound by the French Language Services Act. The City of Hamilton is one of 25 designated areas and therefore mandated to comply with the Act.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

None.

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2012 - 2015 STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Priority #2

Valued & Sustainable Services

WE deliver high quality services that meet citizen needs and expectations, in a cost effective and responsible manner.

Strategic Objective

2.3 Enhance customer service satisfaction.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix A to Report CS11038(a): French Language Services Compliance Report for
2016/2017 Services & Respective Clauses