

CITY OF HAMILTON

MOTION

Council Date: July 12, 2024

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR T. HWANG.....

SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR

Request for the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) to Advocate to the Government of Ontario to Increase Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) and Ontario Works (OW) Rates in Ontario

WHEREAS, the Hamilton Social Work Action Committee delegated to the Emergency & Community Services Committee on June 20, 2024, to ask the City of Hamilton to encourage the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) to leverage its collective power to advocate to the Government of Ontario for it to significantly increase the rates for the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) and Ontario Works (OW);

WHEREAS, about 500,000 Ontarians with disabilities rely on ODSP, with a maximum of \$1,368 per month for a single person and about 445,000 Ontarians rely on Ontario Works, with a maximum of \$733 per month for a single person, that the average ODSP or OW recipient is entitled to much less, when adjusting for inflation, than they did in the late 1990s;

WHEREAS, ODSP rates were frozen from 2018 to 2022 and that even with the indexation of ODSP rates, they remain lower than when they were frozen in 2018, whereas OW rates remain frozen since 2018, which resulted in a 15% decline in inflation-adjusted rates from 2018 to 2024;

WHEREAS, even with the rate of inflation increase for ODSP, the social assistance income of individuals with a disability is not only well below the poverty line but also below the deep income poverty threshold;

WHEREAS, current ODSP and OW rates are contributing to the housing precarity of recipients of social assistance, leading some to experience homelessness, thereby exacerbating existing disabilities and food insecurity, and that homelessness is a social, economic, and health crisis;

WHEREAS, AMO, through the 2024 Ontario budget preparation, advocated to the Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services (MCCSS) to 1) increase provincial social assistance rates to adequate rates so people can pay rent and feed themselves and their families, 2) to provide base shelter amounts to unhoused people on ODSP and OW to help them get out of homelessness, 3) to increase amount of money individuals on OW can earn without impacts to monthly benefits, and 4) to increase cap on discretionary benefits administered by municipal system managers; and

WHEREAS, increasing the income of people with disabilities, and those experiencing deep poverty, supports the Council priority of Safe and Thriving Neighbourhoods (i.e. reducing chronic homelessness) and the Hamilton Community Safety and Well-being plan (i.e. housing and homelessness and access to income).

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

- (a) That staff be directed to draft a letter to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) requesting, at its upcoming Annual General Meeting (AGM), that it advocate to the Government of Ontario to substantially increase the rates for Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) and Ontario Works (OW) to lift Ontarians living with disabilities out of deep poverty; and
- (b) That a copy of this motion be sent to the Premier of Ontario (premier@ontario.ca), the Minister of Children, Community, and Social Services (MinisterMCCSS@ontario.ca), the Minister of Finance (minister.fin@ontario.ca), to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (amo@amo.on.ca), and to the 443 municipalities of Ontario.