

Community Services
Social Assistance
Discretionary Client Benefits

Public Health and Social Services Committee
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Agenda

- Basic Necessities
- Discretionary Client Benefits
- Local Priorities and Policy
- Response to Client Needs
- Mechanism for Change

Basic Needs

- **Health:** dental, glasses, counselling
- **Personal:** sanitary supplies, clothing, haircut, funeral
- **Family:** car seat, stroller, formula, school supplies
- **Home:** furniture, cleaning supplies, last month's rent
- **Communication:** internet, cell phone, laptop
- **Transportation:** gas, bus pass, parking, insurance

Discretionary Client Benefits

- Provided to Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program recipients where failure to provide would result in a detriment to the health of the person or family or supports employability

Budget \$11.7M

30,740 OW and ODSP adults

\$32/month per adult

Current Priorities

- Beds
- Glasses
- Funerals
- Transportation
- Medical Devices
- Emergency Dental
- Fridges and Stoves
- Cell phone and Internet
- Housing Related Benefits



Local Policy

- Legislative guidelines to support local policy development
- Local policy establishes clear eligibility criteria, frequency and monetary maximums for essential items to stay within available funding



People Served

- 30% - Transportation at \$44/month avg.
- 26% - Phones/internet at \$41/month avg.
- 10% - Glasses/year
- 9% - Housing related benefits /year
- 8% - Dental/dentures /year
- 4% - Beds /year



Items Not Covered

- Counselling service
- Furniture and linen
- Bed bug extermination
- Clothing and grooming
- Cell phone and laptop
- Diapers, formula, stroller
- Sanitary items and toiletries
- Cleaning and laundry supplies



Mechanism for Change

Niagara Poverty Reduction community consultation pointed to income as the primary determinant of poverty and the need for greater advocacy for increased social assistance rates and consideration of a basic income.



Questions ?