

**Ministry of Labour,
Training and Skills
Development**

Office of the Minister

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Dear Employment Ontario delivery partners:

I am writing to provide you with further information on the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skill Development's (MLTSD) approach to employment and training delivery in light of the evolving COVID-19 outbreak in Ontario.

As Premier Ford has stated throughout the past week, we all need to come together to take the necessary steps to protect the public from COVID-19 and support Ontario families. We want to make sure apprentices and workers can put their health and the health of others first. During this unprecedented time, we all need to do our part to support the recommendations of leading health officials while still ensuring that the valuable services and training you provide are available for those that need it most.

That's why I have directed MLTSD officials to do whatever they can to support your organizations in protecting the health and well-being of your staff as well as supporting our clients. This includes allowing alternative service delivery approaches and rescheduling of non-critical training, as appropriate, in order to minimize face to face contact and reinforce the importance of physical distancing at this time.

I also wanted to share the following steps I have asked the ministry to take:

1. Renew most annual agreements at the same funding level as they received in 2019-20 to ensure continuity of service. This is not the time for our delivery partners to be concerned about negotiating allocations, targets and contracts.
2. Support the completion, rescheduling or alternative delivery approaches to training programs that were impacted by this emergency. Where it is necessary to pause/cease training delivery, Training Delivery Agents (TDAs), Pre-apprenticeship deliverers and other training providers will be supported in the 2020-21 fiscal year when these programs resume. This includes our Ontario Youth Apprenticeship/dual credit students and I have asked that my ministry continue to work closely with the Ministry of Education to address the needs of those clients.

3. Support clients who were in training programs that had to be cancelled in completing their training in 2020-21 and extend the duration of supports for clients whose training was temporarily paused. Further information will be provided regarding clients who were near completion and require income support.
4. Not to consider any drop in the achievement of year end volumes or targets arising from the emergency as part of the assessment of an organization's effectiveness. More than ever we will need employment services that are effective at supporting employers and job seekers, but these circumstances are beyond anyone's control.

I strongly believe that this is a time to focus on leveraging our collective expertise and identifying creative solutions to service and training delivery. We need to provide whatever supports we can in the current environment and prepare to resume our important role for employers and clients as the opportunity arises. Therefore, I have asked that ministry staff exercise their discretionary power and demonstrate reasonable flexibility to support your organizations in adjusting to these circumstances in order to focus our efforts on supporting apprentices, employers and workers, and protecting everyone's health and safety. These are not normal circumstances and we need to be nimble in order to do what is best for the people of Ontario.

As this situation evolves, there will be a continued need to come together to support the employment and training needs of our province's workforce. The work you do is critical and directly impacts the livelihood of our clients - and Ontario's economy.

Thank you for your ongoing support of the province's employment and training system. If you have any questions, please contact your Regional Director.

Sincerely,



Monte McNaughton
Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development