

July 24, 2019



**Re: Your request for access to information under Part II of the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 2015* [Our File #: AESL/045/2019]**

On June 28, 2019 the Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour received your request for access to the following records/information:

**“May 2019 Decision Note Provincial Meeting of Social Work Staff.”**

I am pleased to inform you that your request for access to this information has been granted and the requested record is attached.

Please be advised that responsive records will be published following a 72 hour period after the response is sent electronically to you or five business days in the case where records are mailed to you. It is the goal to have the responsive records posted to the Completed Access to Information Requests website within one business day following the applicable period of time.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact the undersigned at (709) 729-4276 or [SharonSeaward@gov.nl.ca](mailto:SharonSeaward@gov.nl.ca).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sharon Seaward".

**SHARON SEAWARD**  
ATIPP Coordinator

Attachment

**Decision Note**  
**Department of Advanced Education, Skills & Labour**

**Title:** Provincial Meeting of Social Work Staff

**Decision/Direction Required:**

- Whether to approve costs for departmental social workers to travel to St. John's for a two and a half day session to discuss future direction of social work services within the department.
- It is recommended that the Regional Service Delivery Branch of the Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour (AESL) be directed to approve travel and associated costs for Social Workers in both regions to convene in St. John's for a two and a half day meeting.

**Background and Current Status:**

- The Department currently has 20 Social Workers throughout the province who are assigned distinct roles and responsibilities:
  - Support Application Social Workers who assist income support clients in obtaining child and spousal support; and
  - Liaison Social Workers who work with client with complex needs to help them obtain required services and supports
- Budget 2019 announced changes to the Income and Employment Support Regulations making child support and CPP children's benefits exempt income effective June 1, 2019.
- As it will no longer be mandatory for Income Support clients to pursue child support, it is anticipated that there will be increased capacity for social work staff to focus on other departmental initiatives that support clients in achieving self-reliance.
- The transfer of responsibility for medical transportation and homeless shelters to other entities in the past year, has also had an impact on the workload of social workers, as there have been less requests for consultations from clients with these urgent needs.
- Given recent changes to program and service delivery, it is important to bring this group of staff together to discuss their changing roles and establish a new focus for social work services.

**Analysis:**

- Over the past year, Social Workers have met with Employment Services managers and staff within their respective regions to discuss ways they could better support clients who are in educational or training programs. They have also collected information on current best practices and identified barriers that clients are facing.
- This two day session would provide the opportunity to share this information as a provincial group, develop new initiatives to meet the identified needs, and confirm a new direction for departmental social work services including a work plan for the coming year.
- It is estimated that the total cost of this event will be around \$22,000. There is sufficient funding within the current Regional Services budget to cover this cost.

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**Alternatives:**

**Option 1:** Approve the Regional Service Delivery Branch to invite Social Workers to a two and a half day meeting in St. John's in June 2019. **(Recommended)**

Advantages:

- Provides an opportunity for consensus building on a new direction for social work services.
- Presents an opportunity for networking amongst Social Workers and to share best practices.
- Allows for Income Support and Employment and Training Programs divisions to meet the social work team and provide information on new and upcoming initiatives

Disadvantages:

- Cost incurred for travel and related expenses.

**Option 2:** Not approve Regional Service Delivery Branch to invite social workers to a two and a half day meeting in St. John's in June 2019. **(Not Recommended)**

Advantages:

- The Department would not incur the travel costs associated with having the Social Workers travel to the session.

Disadvantages:

- Work planning and engagement in developing a new direction would have to occur through telephone over two days and would limit staff engagement and effectiveness

Prepared/Approved by: L. Rose/R. Kinden/W. Mavin

Deputy Minister Approval: *J. D. Savage*

May 21, 2019

**Annex A:  
Draft Agenda for the Proposed Social Work Meeting  
(To be finalized pending approval)**

**DAY 1**

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| 8:30 - 9:00   | Welcome and introductions   |
| 9:00 - 9:30   | Looking back, Looking forward <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review history of why positions were created</li> <li>• Changes to service delivery/regional structure</li> <li>• Build on best practices, develop new direction</li> </ul>  |
| 9:30 – 10:30  | Income Support review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Y1,2,3 overview</li> <li>• Focus groups/feedback</li> <li>• Upcoming pilot projects</li> </ul>   |
| 10:30 – 10:45 | Break   |
| 10:45-11:15   | Spotlight on Eastern <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present on initiatives they are involved in</li> <li>• Highlight committee/community work</li> </ul>  |
| 11:15 – 11:45 | Spotlight on Western <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present on initiatives they are involved in</li> <li>• Highlight committee/community work</li> </ul>  |
| 11:45-12:00   | Summary of morning and afternoon preparation  |
| 12:00 – 1:00  | Lunch   |
| 1:00 – 2:30   | Small group discussions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss specific initiatives/activities that social workers can design or get involved in to meet the needs of the following client groups:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Youth</li> <li>○ Single Parents</li> <li>○ Clients in ETP interventions</li> <li>○ Seniors (over age 55)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| 2:30 – 2:45   | Break   |
| 2:45 – 4:00   | Report back on group discussions  |
| 4:00 – 4:30   | End of day check in, outline next day agenda  |

**DAY 2**

- 8:30 – 9:00 Welcome, review agenda for the day
- 9:00 - 10:15 Small group discussions
- Groups will focus on three areas:
    - Referral Process
    - Documentation and Measurement
    - Training
      - What they need
      - What they can offer others
- 10:15 – 10:30 Break
- 10:30 – 12:00 Report back on group discussions
- 12:00 – 1:00 Lunch
- 1:00 – 4:00 Site visit(s) - TBD
- Gathering Place?
  - Choices for Youth social enterprise?
  - Methadone clinic and presentation?

**DAY 3**

- 8:30 – 9:30 Welcome, debrief from site visit
- 9:30 – 10:15 Work planning
- 10:15 – 10:30 Break
- 10:30 – 12:00 Work planning; next steps