



LONDON FOR ALL

A ROADMAP TO END POVERTY



Income & Employment

2.20 Provide supports to address bad credit by collaborating with the financial sector to provide banking alternatives and credit counseling, eliminating the need for predatory lending

City of London Social Services – Cheque Encashment Program

Throughout 2019, the City of London implemented and expanded a Cheque Encashment program in partnership with local Scotiabank branches which provided a safe and secure way for those on Social Assistance that receive monthly entitlement cheques but do not have a bank account, to have their cheques cashed without depending on Alternative Financial Institutions (AFI's).

The City of London Social Services team continues to assist those in receipt of Social Assistance to obtain a bank account for the purposes of Direct Benefit Deposit. Direct Deposit remains the preferred method of financial support both for those in receipt of social assistance as well as third party vendors such as landlords and utility companies.

The City of London Social Services will be implementing Reloadable Payment Cards (RPC's) in March of 2020 in one pilot site as the program begins to roll out throughout the year and beyond. The RPC's provide a modernized and dignified means of ensuring those in receipt of social assistance are not reliant on AFI's for cheque cashing when a bank account does not exist or is not accessible.

This means that OW clients would not need to use the services of payday lenders to cash cheques. As a result, in 2019, (and because City of London can track where cheques are cashed) more than \$102,000 was diverted from payday lending businesses. This is money that would have been paid by OW clients to payday lenders in service fees. More than 6,000 cheques that would have typically been cashed at payday lenders did not need to be.

Money Coach Services – Housing Stability Bank – Salvation Army Centre of Hope

The Housing Stability Bank now provides one-to-one coaching regarding financial matters such as budgeting, banking, direct deposits, credit and debt management, benefit entitlement, completing applications and more. They also provide relevant connections to community services.