

LONDON FOR ALL

A ROADMAP TO END POVERTY

Income & Employment

2.21 Reorganize individual social assistance funds, subsidies and vouchers to make it easier for people to access resources

City of London Social Services moved from the food voucher system to giving grocery store gift cards instead. The benefits to doing this are:

- Dignity of the client – gift cards keep their social assistance status private.
- Individuals can use the card to purchase whatever they need at the grocery store where the food voucher was somewhat prescriptive.
- Individuals can use the gift card over multiple occurrences and have full access to all the funds on the card. With the food voucher, they had to spend all the money in one occurrence and if didn't spend it all, were not provided change (or only a minimal amount of change ... i.e. maximum of \$3) – even though the full value of the food voucher was deducted from their next cheque.

Employment Related Expenses (ERE) can be tailored to the needs of clients.

- Funds are used to purchase clothing (including Clothing Works for interviews and first days on the job), employment related funds.
- Efforts over the last 1 ½ years to promote ERE flexibility has resulted in increased spending on individuals on a case-by-case basis
- Employment resources are focussed on providing services based on the individual's participation agreement – somewhat specific to the needs of the individual. Ongoing work with community agencies such as WIL, YOU, Leads for example to address specific populations supports. Continue to work with College Boreal, and Nokeekwe. Limited to provincial guidelines
- RFP has highlighted utilizing community agencies as part of the employment framework so that access to community resources and knowledge of available resources are more easily accessed
- RFP (and community consultations) has organized employment assistance into 3 streams (entry, re-entry and rapid re-entry) and proponents have added individualized services so that the agencies can be more responsive to individual needs. (providing more 1:1 supports where needed)

The City of London Social Services through their Ontario Works employment framework transformation have realigned all employment Purchase of Service (POS) agreements to focus on labour market; Entry, Re-Entry, and Rapid Re-Entry to maximize and prioritize the level of support needed for successful employment retention.