

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF OTTAWA-CARLETON
MUNICIPALITÉ RÉGIONALE D'OTTAWA-CARLETON

REPORT
RAPPORT

Our File/N/Réf. 03-07-98-0090
Your File/V/Réf.

DATE 26 August 1998

TO/DEST. Community Services Committee

FROM/EXP. Committee Co-ordinator

SUBJECT/OBJET **DISCONTINUATION OF SHARED PARENTING BENEFITS**

REPORT RECOMMENDATION

For Committee discussion.

BACKGROUND

On 13 July 1998, a copy of the attached Memorandum was forwarded to all Members of Council for their information.

The Community Services Committee Chair, Councillor A. Munter, has requested that this item be placed on the Agenda for the meeting of 3 Sep 98, for discussion.

Approved by
M. J. Beauregard

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF OTTAWA-CARLETON

MEMORANDUM

MUNICIPALITÉ RÉGIONALE D'OTTAWA-CARLETON

NOTE DE SERVICE

Our File/N/Réf..
Your File/V/Réf.

Information Previously Distributed

To be listed on the
Community Services Agenda
3 September 1998

DATE 13 July 1998

TO/DEST. The Chair and Members of Council

FROM/EXP. Social Services Commissioner

SUBJECT/OBJET **DISCONTINUATION OF SHARED PARENTING BENEFITS**

This information is being provided to all Regional Councillors in the event that you receive calls from residents of your ward regarding this change.

For several years, the Social Services Department has had a progressive Shared Parenting policy, which provided a modest additional sum of money to separated and divorced parents receiving Social Assistance, who had shared parenting arrangements and who shared the cost of caring for their child(ren). This assistance was granted where a parent could demonstrate an on-going shared parenting arrangement. It reflected our commitment to addressing child poverty.

The proclamation of the Ontario Works Act on May 1st, 1998, introduced a new provision that only the primary custodial parent is eligible to receive social assistance benefits on behalf of a child. The “non-custodial” parent is to be treated as a single person.

By Provincial definition, the primary custodial parent is the one who receives, or is eligible to receive, the Federal Child Tax Credit/ National Child Benefit. This applies regardless of any formal/legal shared parenting or joint custody arrangements.

The Department has already introduced this new requirement for all new Ontario Works applicants. However, we are also unable to continue to grant additional financial support to existing non-custodial parent cases.

In recognition of the hardship that this change may cause, the Department has decided to provide clients with at least 90 days notice of the discontinuation of this assistance. Therefore, all existing cases receiving this assistance will be notified by the end of August, 1998, that the extra benefit will no longer be available as of December 1st, 1998.

Attached to this memo is a sample letter which will be provided to all recipients currently receiving the shared parenting benefits. The letters will be sent by August 31, 1998.

The Department is treating this as a “touch the file” initiative, which is how MCSS describes those policy changes which came with the proclamation of the Ontario Works Act, but which need not be fully implemented before the end of 1998.

An analysis was completed of our expenditures for this benefit in December, 1997. In that month, there were 630 cases which received extra assistance for shared parenting, at an average cost of \$159 per case, for a total of \$100,260. Annualised, this is an expenditure of \$1,203,120.

*Approved by
Dick Stewart*

cc: Chief Administrative Officer
Senior Staff

SAMPLE LETTER TO CLIENTS

Dear

On May 1st, 1998, the Government of Ontario replaced the General Welfare Assistance Act (GWA) with the Ontario Works Act (OWA). Effective that date, many rules have changed.

The new law prevents the Social Services Department from giving benefits for a child or children, to anyone other than the primary care giver or custodial parent. This is the parent who receives, or is eligible to receive, the Federal Child Tax Benefit.

You have been identified as one of the parents who has been receiving extra money. Unfortunately, starting December 1st, 1998, your Ontario Works cheque will no longer include an amount for shared parenting.

Should you have any questions about the amount of money you will get, you can call your worker. If you have concerns about the new rules, you can contact your Provincial Member of Parliament .

Original Signed By

*Dick Stewart
Social Services Commissioner*