

<p>1. SOCIAL ASSISTANCE INTAKE SCREENING UNIT (ISU) FOR EASTERN ONTARIO</p>
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COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

That Council approve that the Social Services Department submit a Business Case Proposal to the Ministry of Community and Social Services to establish and operate a Social Assistance Intake Screening Unit (ISU) to serve Eastern Ontario.

DOCUMENTATION

1. Social Services Commissioner's report dated 20 Mar 00 is immediately attached.
2. Documents entitled "The Service Delivery Model, General Overview" and "Business Transformation Project" follow the report.

REGION OF OTTAWA-CARLETON
RÉGION D'OTTAWA-CARLETON

REPORT
RAPPORT

Our File/N/Réf.
 Your File/V/Réf.

DATE 20 March 2000

TO/DEST. Co-ordinator
 Community Services Committee

FROM/EXP. Social Services Commissioner

SUBJECT/OBJET **MCSS BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION PROJECT: SOCIAL ASSISTANCE INTAKE SCREENING UNIT (ISU) FOR EASTERN ONTARIO**

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION

That the Community Services Committee recommend Council approve that the Social Services Department submit a Business Case Proposal to the Ministry of Community and Social Services to establish and operate a Social Assistance Intake Screening Unit (ISU) to serve Eastern Ontario.

BACKGROUND

In January 1996, the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) signed a contract with Andersen Consulting to re-design the social assistance service delivery system in Ontario and to provide a new computer system to support it. Since then, enormous effort has gone into the design and development work. Municipalities, including Ottawa-Carleton, have contributed thousands of hours of staff time and many resources to the design effort. This has resulted in what is now called the new Service Delivery Model or SDM.

In January 2000, MCSS convened a meeting of all municipal and provincial delivery agents to announce its intention to implement the new SDM across Ontario by January 26, 2002. MCSS has the legislative authority and mandate to require this to be done.

An essential element of the new SDM is the use of telephone screening of all applications for social assistance, both Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program, through a structure called an Intake Screening Unit, an advanced call centre model.

Seven Intake Screening Units

MCSS made a decision that there will be seven Intake Screening Units across Ontario. One of the locations will be the City of Toronto. The others will be located in six geographic regions as defined by MCSS.

Ottawa-Carleton is included in the geographic area of Eastern Ontario which also includes Prescott-Russell County, Cornwall (Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry), Lanark County, Renfrew County, Kingston (Frontenac), Hastings County, Leeds and Grenville County, and Lennox and Addington County.

The precise location of the Eastern Ontario ISU, and all the others, will be determined through a competitive process, in which interested Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs) are required to present a detailed Business Case in accordance with guidelines provided by MCSS.

The deadline for submission of a proposal is April 19, 2000. The Ministry intends to announce its decisions in May 2000.

DISCUSSION

The requirements for the ISU Business Case are extensive and have many implications for the Municipality which is selected to establish and manage the Intake Screening Unit.

Reciprocal Service Agreements

Because the host municipality will be operating the ISU on behalf of several other municipalities in Eastern Ontario, there will be a requirement to negotiate Service Agreements with each of the municipal partners. The agreements will focus primarily on the funding of the ISU. However, there will be other factors to consider related to service standards and business practices.

To date, there is no formula established for the sharing of costs between the municipal partners. However, MCSS has indicated its intention to develop a formula in the near future. The Eastern Ontario service area currently includes 46,336 cases of which 26,676 (**57%**) are in the Region. It is clear that Ottawa-Carleton will pay its proportionate share, whether it is selected to host the ISU or if another municipality in Eastern Ontario is selected.

Human Resources

Based on Provincial guidelines, the Eastern Ontario ISU will require at the outset no less than 48 staff, comprised of 1 Manager, 4 Supervisors, 39 caseworker level staff and 4 clerical support staff. These staff resources will be employees of the host municipality. It is understood that every CMSM already employs a certain number of Full Time Equivalent staff (FTEs) who are handling Intake. It can be expected that any CMSM which is not selected to host the ISU will be required to reduce its staff complement by a proportionate number, since the Intake work will be done elsewhere.

Thus, if Ottawa-Carleton does not make a proposal or if Ottawa-Carleton is not selected, it can be anticipated that there will be a requirement to reduce the staff complement by an as yet unknown number, in recognition of the work transferred to the new ISU.

Physical Plant

The standards set by MCSS require the Eastern Ontario ISU to have about 10,000 square feet of space to accommodate initial requirements and to allow for a 50% increase in space and staff in the event that Intake volumes increase over time.

The space needs to be on one floor plate, with a significant degree of predictability in terms of cost, term of occupancy and infrastructure. While there can be some flexibility in location, there must be excellent telecommunications and technology capability. MCSS has set specific standards with regard to work stations, computers and physical environment, which also dictate space requirements.

Social Services does not have this amount of space already available under lease. Space options are currently being explored.

Telephony and Technology Requirements

The ISU will be a state-of-the-art Call Centre, requiring computer technology and telephone technology which is highly advanced. Clients will not go in person to this site.

The technology must support a service standard which will result in 80% of the telephone calls being answered within 60 seconds.

There is a requirement for advanced Automatic Call Distribution (ACD) hardware and software which, in addition to handling call distribution, will provide managers and supervisors with detailed reports, tracking all necessary performance management information.

There is also a requirement for an overhead Electronic Bulletin Board which monitors the status of the call centre queue and provides real time status information for the use of all staff.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Province will provide 100% funding for all approved facility start-up costs for the Intake Screening Unit. This includes: Professional design fees, leasehold improvements, furniture/ workstation systems, electrical system, HVAC, data cabling for LAN, telephones in addition to the ACD telephony system, teletypewriter, fire protection systems, security systems, plumbing and all moving costs.

The Province will provide 100% funding for all approved one-time costs for the ACD telephony system.

The Province will provide 100% funding for the first six months of operating costs for the telephony system and 50% funding thereafter.

The Province will cost-share 50/50 the on-going operating costs of the ISU. The municipalities served by the ISU will jointly pay the 50% municipal share in accordance with a formula either established by the Province or through negotiation.

Ottawa-Carleton will be required to pay its proportionate share of the on-going costs of the ISU whether or not the ISU is located in Ottawa-Carleton or in another municipality. This cost share is entirely unknown at this time.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Public consultation is not required for this report.

CONCLUSION

There will be an Intake Screening Unit located somewhere in Eastern/South-Eastern Ontario which will be the new service access point for residents of Ottawa-Carleton applying for social assistance.

Ottawa-Carleton offers many compelling reasons why it should be the site selected for the ISU. We have had some experience in piloting a call centre approach in the Department with the introduction of the 560-6000 access point. Our current service delivery model already separates intake screening and verification functions. As host municipality, we would be in a unique position to ensure that appropriate service standards are adhered to, including French language services. This would also enable the Department to influence the interpretation of Provincial regulation and directives in a more direct manner than were we required to negotiate a service agreement with another host municipality. Therefore, Social Services is seeking the approval of Council to prepare a Business Case and submit a bid to the Provincial government.

*Approved by
Dick Stewart*



The Service Delivery Model

General Overview

November 1999

Business Transformation Project
MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES

1. Introduction

The Ministry of Community and Social Services' Business Transformation Project (BTP) is currently designing and developing the business processes and technology needed to support the delivery of the Ontario Works (OW) and Ontario Disability Support Programs (ODSP). The Service Delivery Model (SDM) design supports the ministry's key objectives to improve client service, reduce the cost and size of government, improve program integrity, and promote client self-sufficiency. The SDM includes new business processes, a new computer system, organizational models and a training plan.

2. Key Features of the Service Delivery Model

Common Database

A common province-wide database will provide immediate access to active or archived case file information for people receiving assistance, who have moved within the province or for people who are re-applying for assistance. A unique identifier for each participant will prevent the creation of duplicate records.

New Intake Process

Currently, people looking for information or services from a municipality may telephone or visit a municipal office. Implementation of the new Service Delivery Model will not change this. Consequently, where it is determined by any municipality that a person wishes to apply for Social Assistance, that person will be directed to the first step of the new two-step intake process described below.

Two-Step Intake Process

The two-step intake process is a standardized application process for both OW and ODSP applicants that incorporates telephone screening and a personal verification interview. This standardized process will promote consistency in eligibility determination, resulting in a reduction in the number of overpayments and underpayments, and will allow staff more time to focus on OW participant's need for employment and other services.

Telephone screening

During the telephone screening process, eligibility information will be collected through standardized questions. If telephone screening indicates that the applicant may be eligible for financial assistance, the applicant will be referred on to a personal verification interview at a local service delivery office. Applicants who are ineligible for financial assistance will be informed at this time and will not require an interview. This process will be supported by technology that will allow staff to search for case file information on the province-wide database, immediately view information relevant to eligibility determination and budget information, and initiate third-party verification checks to validate applicant information. Telephone screening and new system supports will result in fewer ineligible applicants proceeding to the personal verification interview step. Alternatives will be available to applicants unable to use the telephone screening process.

Personal verification interview

The personal verification interview will allow staff to confirm eligibility and develop a Participation Agreement to support the employment requirements of OW. Information gathered during the telephone screening process will be confirmed along with information gathered from third-party sources and documentation provided by the applicant. After financial eligibility is confirmed, OW participants will focus on their employment goals and other needs. For those applying for ODSP, intake verification will include a link to the Disability Adjudication Unit (DAU). Once the DAU confirms the applicant's disability status, the case will be transferred to the provincial ODSP office.

Case Management

Once the participant is deemed eligible for assistance, ongoing case management begins. New functions will be added to current case management practices to help streamline work.

Financial Assessment Review

The financial assessment review is a standardized process used to verify ongoing eligibility for financial assistance. This new verification process amalgamates several processes into a single integrated verification process. The review approach will shift from a time-based system to a priority-based system and will use third-party information to confirm financial eligibility. System-generated correspondence will help free-up staff time and will keep participants better informed.

Automated Support for Employment Assistance

The technology to support employment assistance will allow programming to be linked to local factors such as the economy and employment opportunities and will assist staff in delivering employment supports to OW participants.

Case File Transfer

The province-wide database will facilitate the sharing of information and transfer of case files between offices and programs (OW and ODSP). Participants will not have to reapply for assistance when moving within the province.

Interactive Voice Response

The Interactive Voice Response (IVR) will give participants access to an automated inquiry and income reporting system through a touch-tone telephone. The direct inquiry system will provide general information as well as specific case file information such as cheque amount. Some participants will be able to report income changes through the IVR. The system will offer participants the convenience of having access to information outside of regular office hours, and will reduce staff time used to answer inquiries.

Incident Reporting/Safety Flags/Service Delivery Flags

Incident reporting will be mandatory in situations where the safety of a staff member has been threatened or compromised. The new technology will offer an electronic safety flag that will identify participants and addresses, which may pose a threat to staff. Service delivery flags will also appear to alert staff of special or exceptional client circumstances.

Eligibility and Payments

The new intake screening and case management process are supported by better access to historical data. Current and retroactive budget calculations and eligibility determination will be automated, as eligibility rules will be built into the system. This will promote consistent application of policy, reduce administrative errors, and simplify administrative effort.

Payment processes include issuing, tracking, and reconciling of payments. The system will permit the tracking of overpayments by benefit unit member to accommodate legislated requirements regarding the portability of overpayments between programs and municipalities, and the splitting of overpayments between benefit unit members. The system will track and monitor special items and benefits. Improved on-line payment reports and enhanced financial assistance stubs will help staff provide quicker and more accurate explanations of payments/overpayments. The provincial health card will replace the paper drug card issued today to reduce administrative time spent replacing lost, stolen or damaged cards. Use of the provincial health card will also reduce fraudulent access to drug benefits.

Program Standards

The Program Standards/Integrity function provides standardized processes and structures for program measurement, accountability, monitoring, and maintenance. This function will help to enforce program standards for eligibility determination and the quality of client service by integrating monitoring, accountability, and performance management concepts at all levels.

Organizational Models

The changes required to implement the SDM design will have implications for organizational structure, roles, functional groupings, reporting relationships and management processes.

Training Plan

The training plan outlines an approach to provide staff with the skills necessary to use the components of the SDM, including both the business process changes and new technology. The plan takes a modular approach and allows implementation teams to tailor both the computer-based and instructor led training to reflect local needs.

BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION PROJECT

***The New Service Delivery Model for Social
Assistance***

Community Services Committee

April 6, 2000

Business Transformation Project Status

ANALYSIS:

- ❖ refined the vision of how social assistance could be delivered in the future through the gathering of business requirements

Analysis

01/98 - 11/98

Design

12/98 - 08/99

Build & Test

09/99 - 2000

We are here

Implement

09/99 - 12/01

DESIGN:

- ❖ finalized Business Requirements
- ❖ defined each component of the Service Delivery Model

BUILD & TEST:

- ❖ create Detailed Designs based on specifications
- ❖ develop an implementation plan

IMPLEMENTATION:

- ❖ planning roll-out of IVR, Intake, Case Management and Payments
- ❖ implementing CVP

Key Features of the Service Delivery Model (SDM)

➤ **Province-wide Common Database**

A web based real-time database across all of Ontario for both Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program

➤ **New Two-Step Intake Process**

- telephone screening: financial eligibility and employment
- face to face interviews to verify eligibility and initiate Participation Agreement
- performance management

Key Features of the Service Delivery Model (SDM)

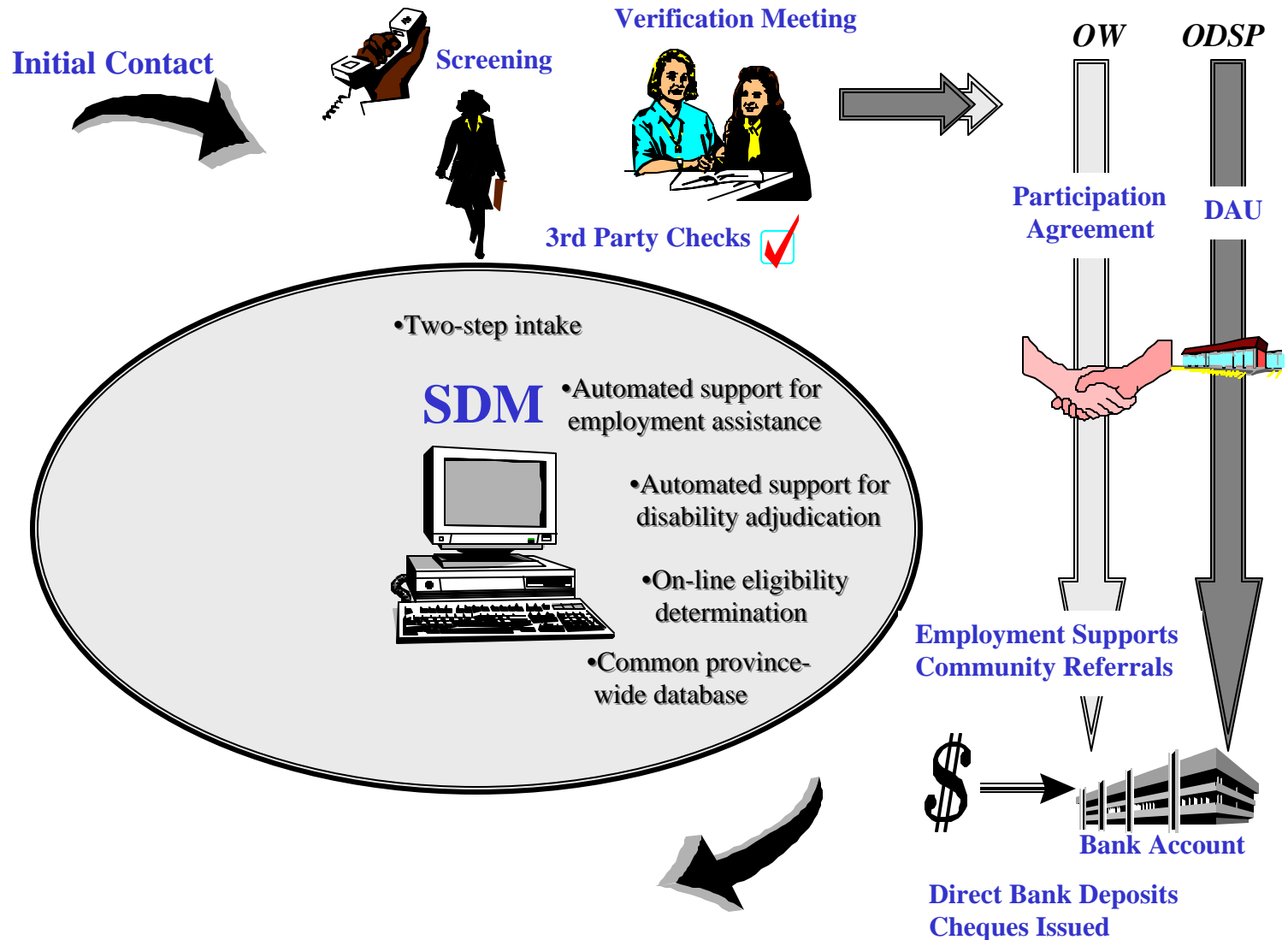
➤ **Interactive Voice Response (IVR)**

- automated interactive voice response system to enable clients to make inquiries about the status of their file and to report monthly income

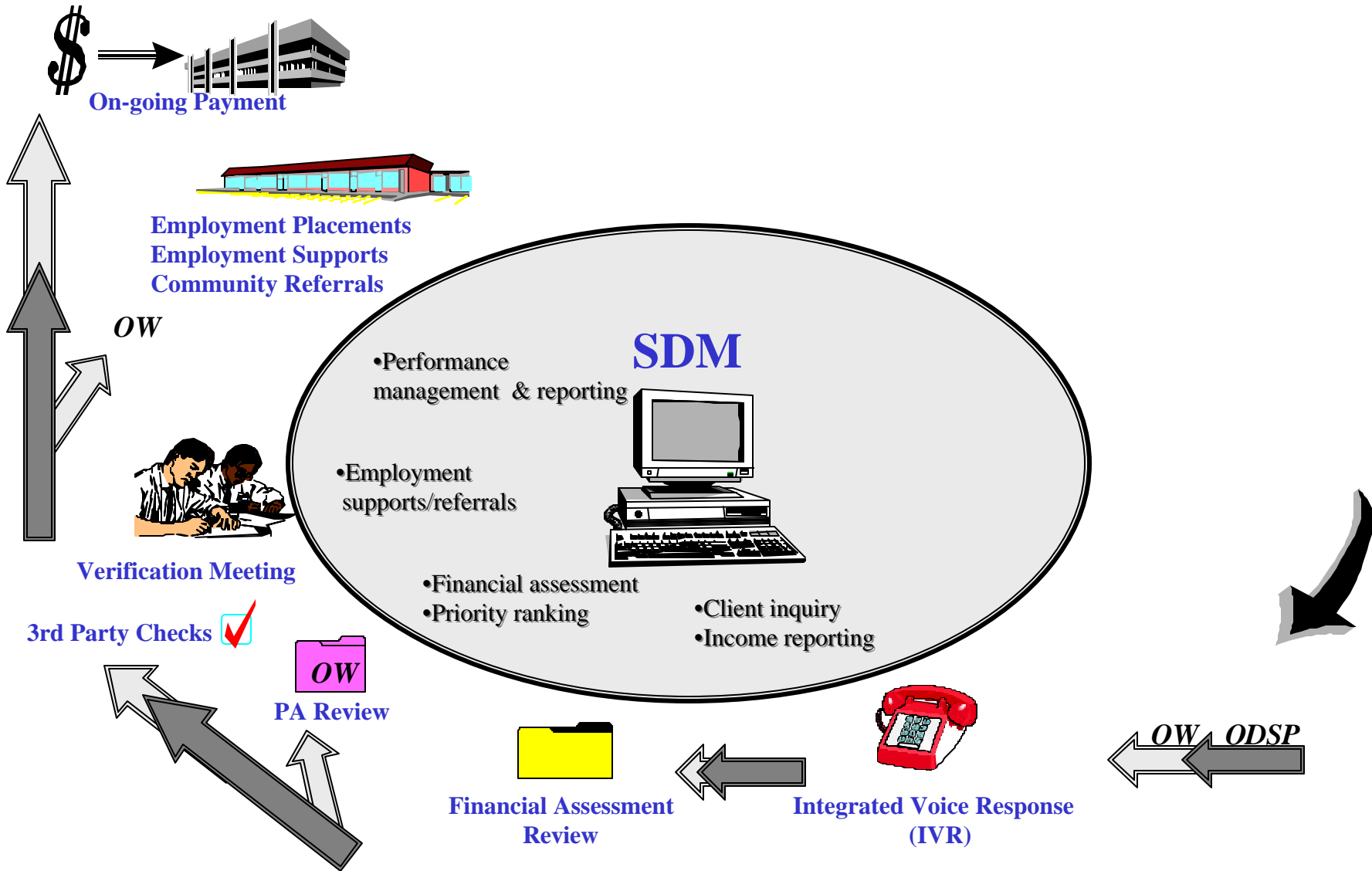
➤ **Case Management and Payment**

- financial assessment review & priority ranking
- automated support for employment assistance
- support participation agreement (employment support)
- common province-wide database for information sharing and the transfer of files (net-centric mainframe, web based environment)
- standardized financial eligibility

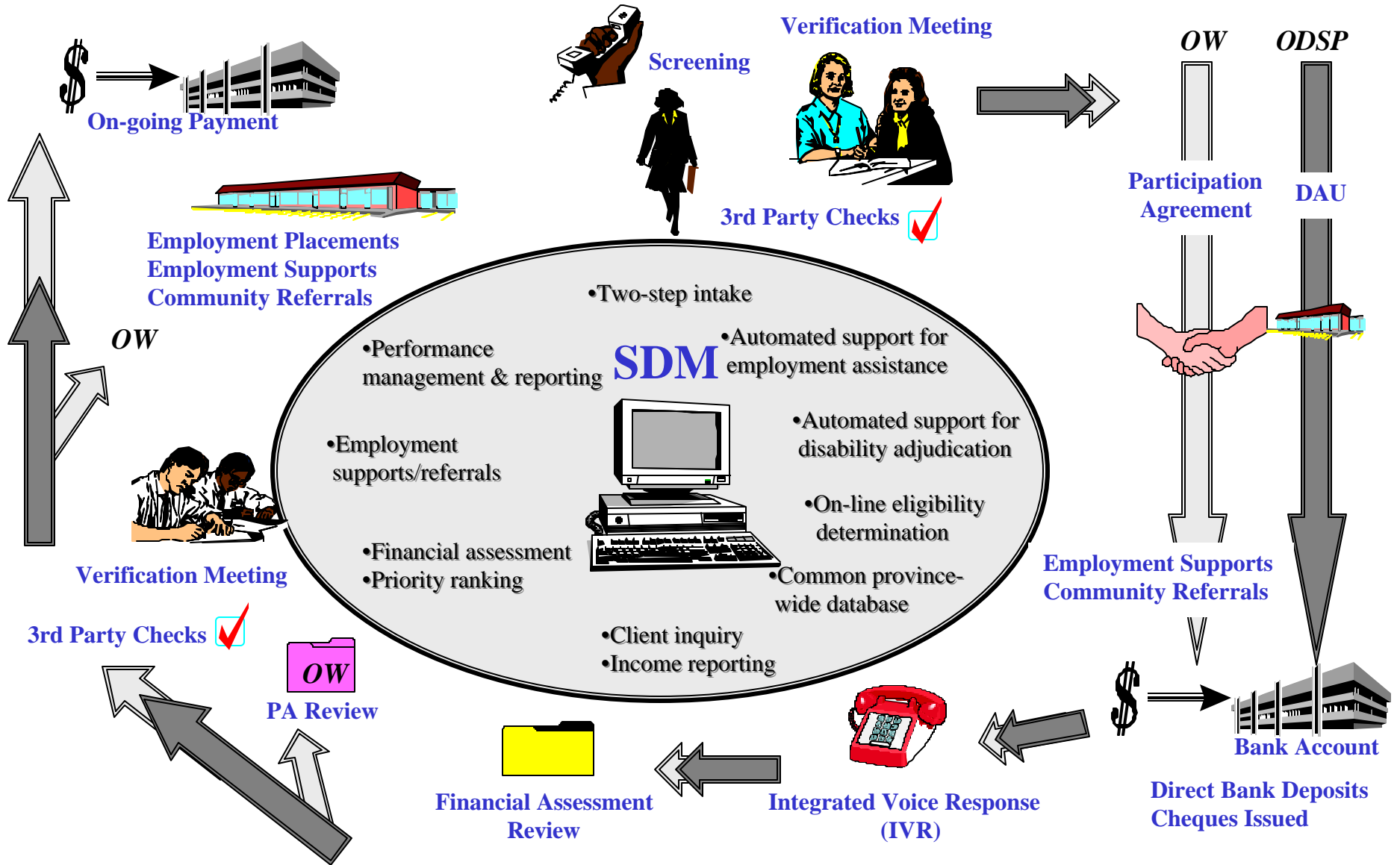
Service Delivery Model for Social Assistance



Service Delivery Model for Social Assistance



Service Delivery Model for Social Assistance



Social Assistance Intake Screening

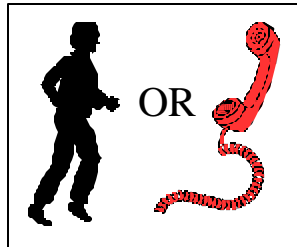
There will be 7 Intake Screening Units in Ontario

The City of Toronto has already been selected

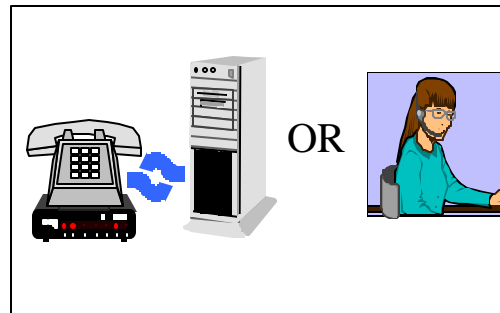
The other six ISU sites will be selected through a competitive Business Case Process

Intake Screening

OW - Person contacts the local CMSM
Phone #
ODSP - Person contacts 1-800 number



Directing Inquiries



Case Information

Other CMSM Services
(Childcare, Housing)

General Inquiry

Application for Assistance

Ask Streaming Questions

- Is applicant in immediate need? (ODSP)
- Identify special needs (interpreter, crisis)
- Is the appropriate person present/on phone?
- Is applicant at correct entry point? (ODSP/OW)
-
-



Other Programs

ODSP

OW

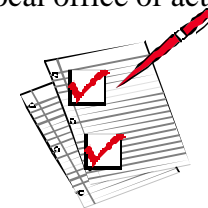
Ask Screening Questions

- Applicant notified that information will be collected, retained and verified
- Obtain approval to start the application process
- Search for applicant
- Discuss OW/ODSP eligibility requirements
- Obtain verbal authorization for 3rd party checks
- Ask standardized screening questions and collect all eligibility information

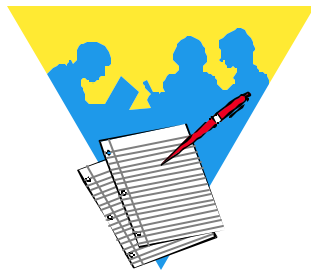


Next Steps

- If ineligible, verbal and written notification including reason for ineligibility and right to appeal decision
- If eligible, advise applicant of documentation requirements
- Complete financial and community referrals
- Initiate 3rd party checks
- Schedule Interview / Orientation session or notify local office of action required

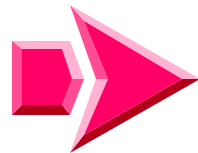


Scheduling



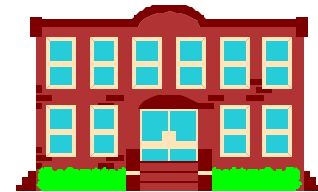
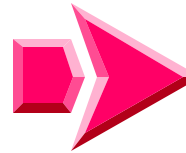
Local Office

- provides time and date and location availability



Intake Screening Unit

- will determine next point of contact for applicant:
- orientation session
 - office interview
 - requires local office action



Local Office Interview

- Location, date and time

OR



Orientation Session

- Location, date and time

OR

Advise Local Office - no next contact scheduled

- requires home visit
- potential mail out

Eligibility Verification

OW Intake Verification

Prepare for Verification Interview

- Compare information from interface checks
- Prepare questions and interview notes



Attend Orientation Session (CMSM discretion)

- Establish participation expectations
- Orient to local community resources



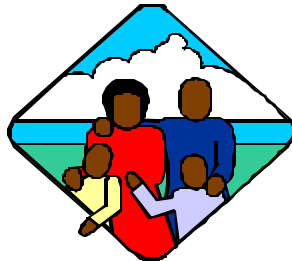
Interview Applicant

- Confirm information gathered at Intake Screening
- Ensure all applicable documents have been verified
- Complete and sign application forms
- Formalize OW Participation (PA)



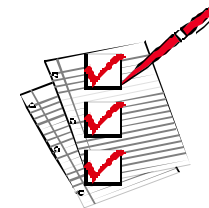
Create Benefit Unit & Initiate Payment

- Determine Payee
- Determine Grant Date



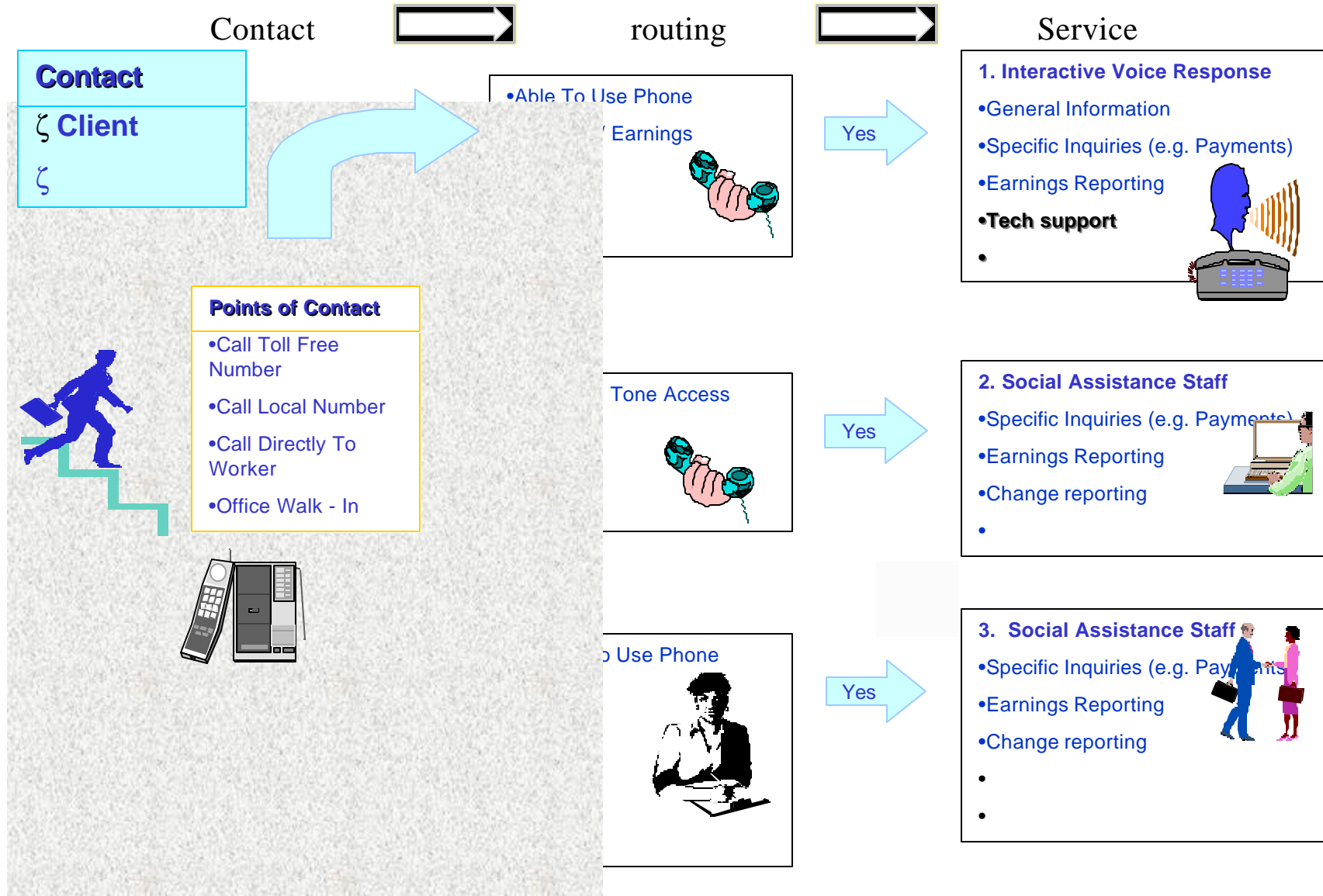
Next Steps

Verifier ensures all necessary steps are completed prior to hand off to case management



Interactive Voice Response System (IVR)

Answering Inquiries



Income Reporting

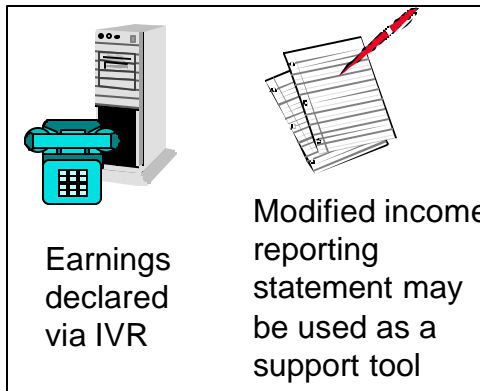
From a process design perspective, participants/clients will use either IVR or Income Reporting statements for Income Reporting.

Simple Income: No income



Participant/client declares

- simple income
- no income



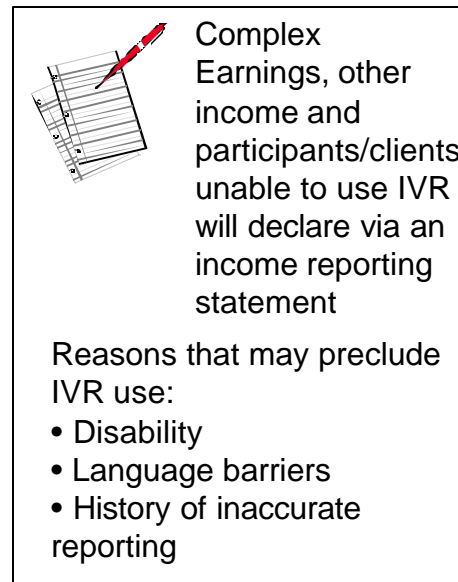
Eligibility Determination and Payment Production

Complex Income: Unable to use IVR



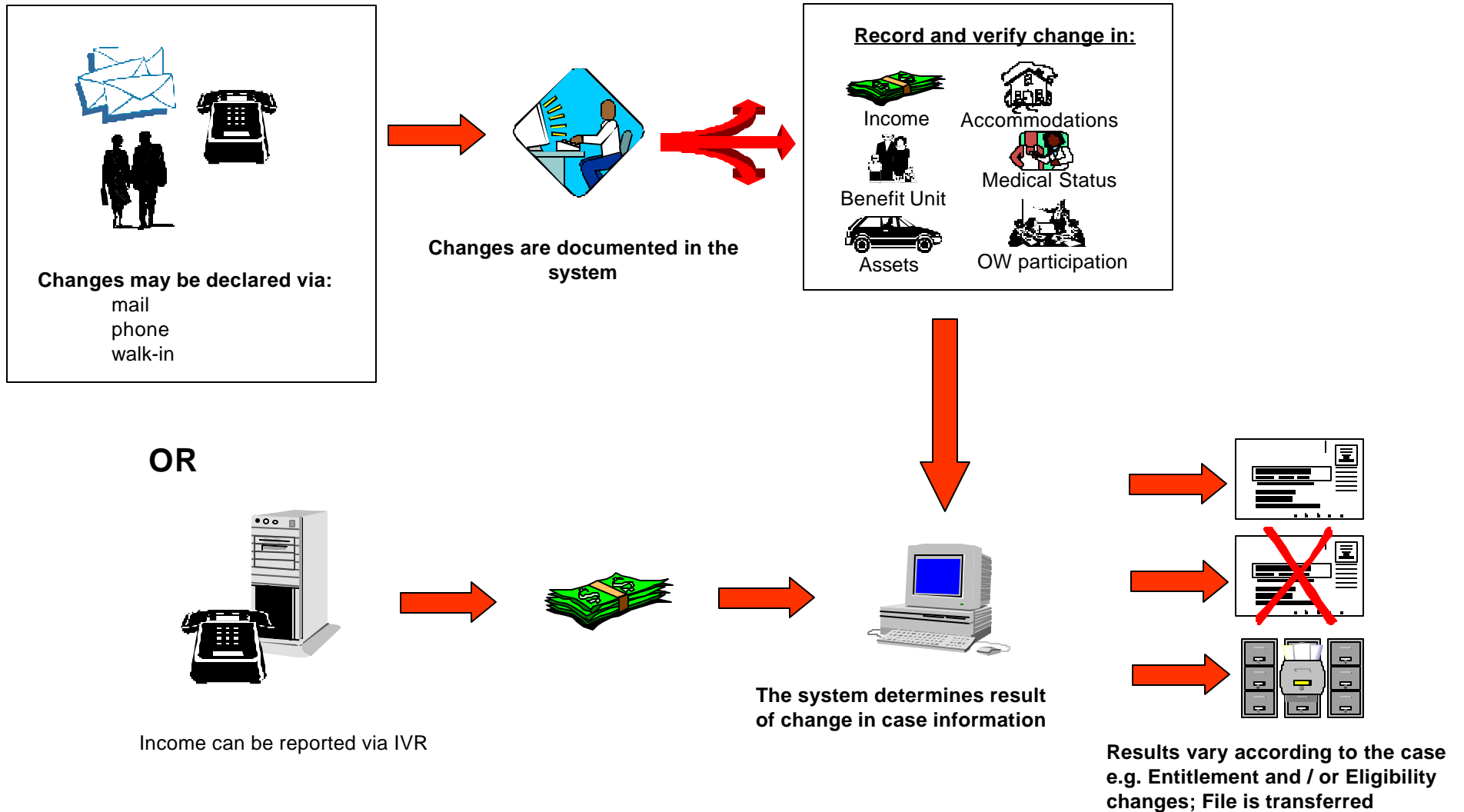
Participant/client declares

- complex income e.g. self employment earnings
- other income e.g. private pension, support



Eligibility Determination and Payment Production

Update Case Information

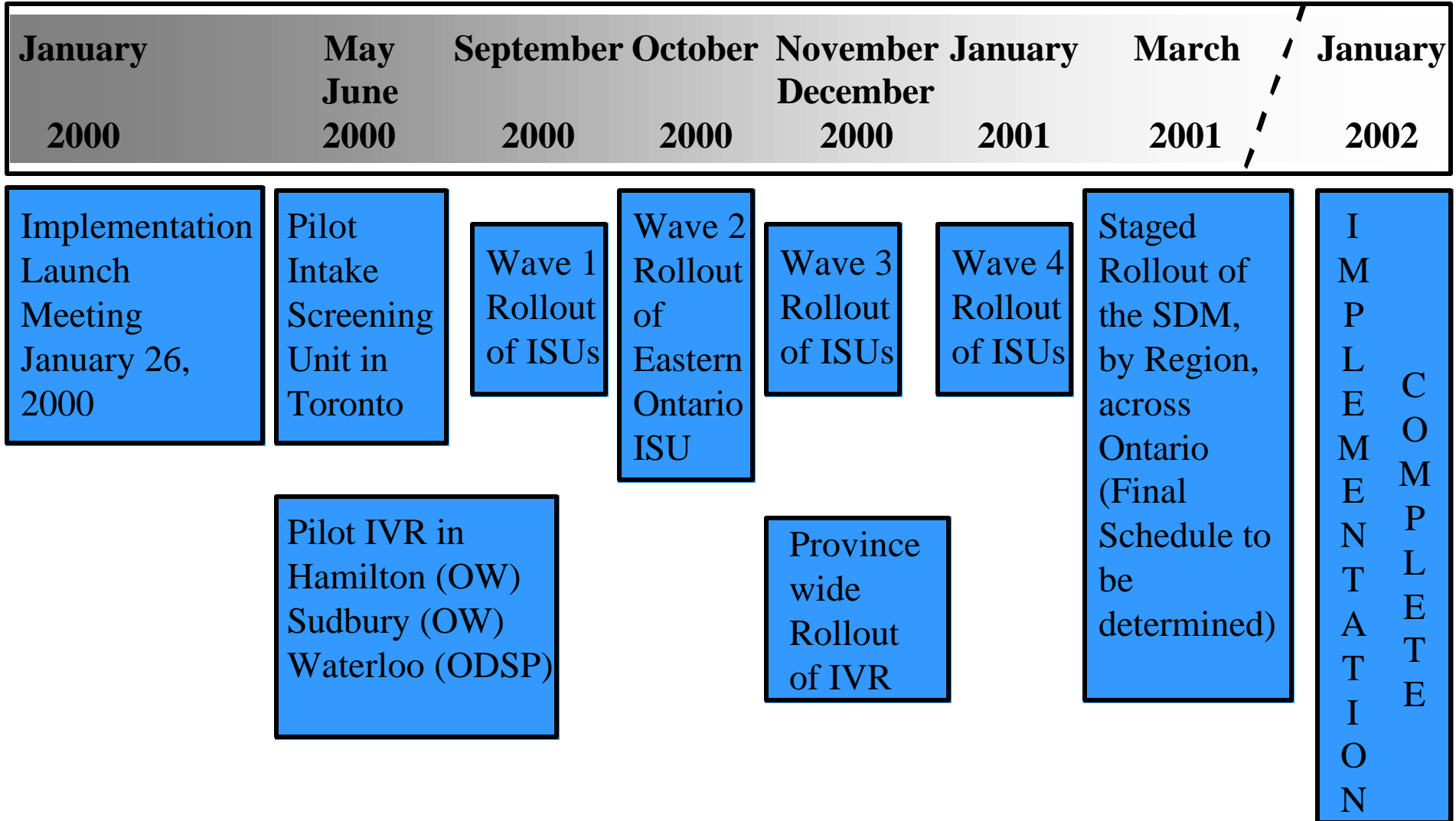


Implementation Planning

BTP Implementation Objectives

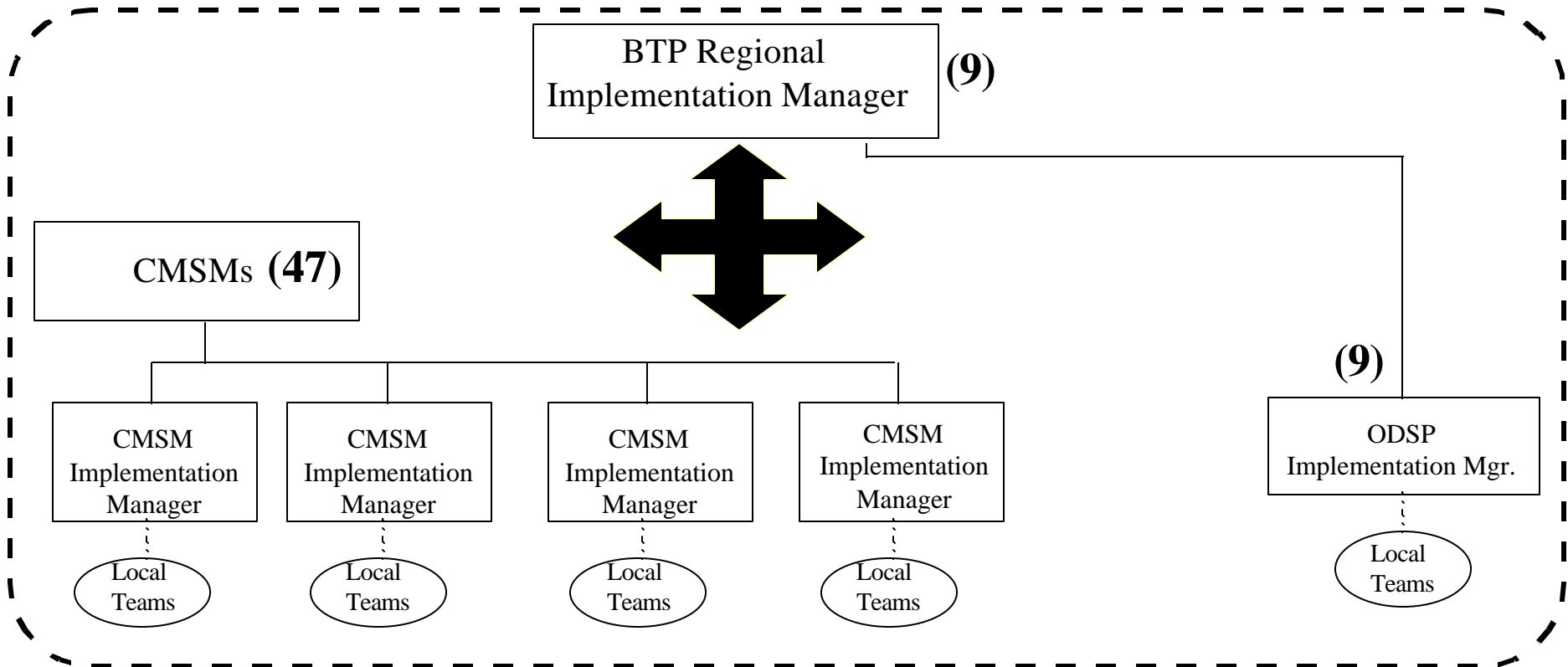
- Set up more than 200 Municipal (OW) and Provincial (ODSP) delivery sites by January 2002
- Recognize CMSM requirements for the integration/compatibility of other municipal initiatives & strategies
- Ensure consistency with overall Ministry / Ontario government directions
- Continue to deliver quality services to people during the change process

Current Implementation Timeline



Regional Implementation Structure

Joint Partnership and a Reinforced Relationship between Municipalities and the Province for Implementation Planning and Delivery



BTP Implementation Activities

BTP

Province - Wide Plan	Local Implementation Requirements	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Framework• Schedule• Tools / Supports• Issue Resolution• Regional Team Set-up• Implementation Resourcing and Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Process Changes• Human Resources / Labour Relations• Transition Support• Communication and Stakeholder Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Data Clean-up / Conversion• Facilities and Technology Infrastructure• Training

Status in Ottawa-Carleton

- The Department has named an Assistant Director, Area Operations, to be the full-time Implementation Manager for the new Service Delivery Model
- The Department is establishing its SDM Implementation Team to meet the January, 2002 target
- The Department is seeking approval of Committee and Council to submit a bid to host the Eastern Ontario Intake Screening Unit