Ottawa

Office of the Auditor General

AUDIT OF THE EMPLOYMENT AND FINANCIAL

ASSISTANCE BRANCH

2006 Report

Chapter 2

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Audit of the Employment and Financial Assistance (EFA) Branch was included as part of the 2006 Audit Plan of the Office of the Auditor General, first presented to Council in December 2004.

EFA has seen many changes in recent years. The two main drivers of change have been the introduction of the Province's Ontario Works (OW) legislation in 1998 and the amalgamation to the new City of Ottawa in 2001.

OW, which is the largest social assistance program delivered by the EFA Branch, provides employment and financial assistance to eligible persons in temporary financial need. Basic financial assistance and benefits are cost-shared with the municipalities, also known as Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs).

Audit Objectives and Scope

The objective of this audit was to conduct a comprehensive review of the EFA Branch, including:

- Review the overall management control framework for the Branch. This was the largest portion of the audit work, and it focused on the management controls, from a department-wide perspective, that are in place to administer the Branch's programs and services. Such controls involve those policies, procedures, processes, structures, systems, and practices that management has at its disposal to help ensure the achievement of objectives.

- Review the cheque disbursement processes for manual and electronic cheques.

- Review two of the Branch's non-mandated/non-legislated programs - Essential Health and Social Support (EHSS) 100%, and Home Support Programs - to determine efficiency, effectiveness, and compliance to City policy.

- Determine the comprehensiveness of the provincial audit and control framework for the OW program, which included a review of the annual audit of OW files, the Correction Action Plan follow-up, and the Consolidated Verification Process (CVP).

The scope of the audit included:

- A comprehensive review of the EFA Branch – all four district offices, Operations and Program Support, and Employment and Community Programs;

- The internal processes that support the administration of OW and other EFA programs; and

- Programs and services that are not reviewed as a part of the provincial audit, monitoring and control framework.

The scope did not include:

- A compliance audit of OW files to the provincial legislation as this type of audit is done annually by the Ministry of Community and Social Services;

- A detailed systems audit of the provincial Service Delivery Model Technology (SDMT) web-based business application used to administer the OW program; and

- An audit of the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) that is administered by the Province and is cost-shared by the City.

Key Findings

The Branch has demonstrated several key strengths, one of which is the committed, forward-thinking Senior Management Team, which provides strong leadership for a Branch that must operate in a complex and challenging environment. This has also resulted in the Branch having a positive and cooperative working relationship with the Province, which was acknowledged in our meetings with provincial representatives.

Other strengths of the EFA Branch include:

- **Frequent formal communication between staff** – This included communication from management through regularly scheduled general staff meetings, district office staff meetings, email communications, and the EFA Intranet site on MOE. Some staff indicated that the communication should be clearer in terms of the direction that the Branch is heading. Issues related to inconsistencies in the interpretation of policies have been identified during the audit and are discussed more fully under Detailed Observations.

- **Focus on training for OW staff** – Many staff indicated their satisfaction with the move to modular training. The Branch's Training Committee, which is represented by all four district offices, meets regularly to discuss, analyze, and determine the training needs of OW staff.

- **Increased focus on Performance Development Process (PDP)** – Since 2001, Senior Management has been committed to implementing the PDP across the Branch. The Branch, in consultation with Employee Services, has developed its own PDP tool for union staff. The Branch is now in the process of evaluating the implementation of the PDP to ensure consistency in the way the tool is used. There remains a requirement to increase performance monitoring of staff. This issue is discussed later in this report.

- **Good access to policies and resource information** – All staff interviewed indicated that there was adequate access to policy and resource information.

- **Focus on succession planning** – The Senior Management Team has acknowledged that many key positions in the Branch will be vacated in the next two to five years due to retirement. The Senior Management Team has recently been reorganized and two new positions have been created with the intention of developing and preparing EFA staff to qualify for positions as staff retire.

- **Good resource and budget planning** – On a monthly basis, resource levels are analysed Branch-wide to determine gaps. When required, resources are moved around within the Branch to cover off gaps and new staff are only hired when there is a demonstrated long-term need for additional resources. A review of the 2003, 2004, and 2005 EFA budgets shows that the Branch was able to manage within its budget each year.

- **Matrix approach** – The Branch has implemented a matrix approach through its committees, workgroups and initiatives, which are represented by staff across all four district offices. Capacity management is an initiative aimed at determining best practices within the Branch and ensuring that those practices are shared across district offices, where appropriate. The Staff Investment Survey Workgroup was set up to develop an implementation plan to address the issues identified in the survey developed and administered by Community and Protective Services across all branches within the Department.

- **Good controls in place for manual cheque disbursement** – The processes, procedures, and controls that are in place for manual cheque disbursement were reviewed at each of the four district offices. It was found that EFA has a Branch-wide policy on control of manual cheque disbursement and that all district offices are following the policy.

The audit has noted several areas for improvement with respect to the management control framework of the Branch. As a part of the audit, we presented and validated these areas for improvement with the EFA management team. The six key areas that require improvement are:

- **Improved role clarity for supervisor position** – The role, responsibilities, expectations, and accountabilities for the supervisor position need to be more clearly defined and communicated by the EFA Senior Management Team and reinforced by the District Managers. There is not a consistent understanding by supervisors or staff as to what the role of the supervisor is. This has resulted in a lack of consistency in interpreting policies and administering benefits.

- **Increased performance monitoring of staff** – Many staff interviewed indicated that they do not feel that their performance is monitored and perceived a lack of

accountability for performance. Based on the interviews, many staff do not have an up-to-date performance evaluation on file. As well, some staff feel that the tendency for many supervisors is to "turn a blind eye" instead of dealing with performance issues. The lack of performance monitoring makes it difficult to ensure consistent service delivery.

- **Staffing** – All supervisors indicated that the three-month probationary period is not enough time to evaluate the performance of new hires. However, it is rare that a request is made to extend the three-month probationary period to six months, which is permitted under the CUPE 503 collective agreement.

- **Training** – The focus of the Committee has been for generic OW training, however, the training requirements of other specialty groups are not considered. Family Support Workers, Residential Care Workers, and Employment Specialists would benefit from more specialized training in addition to the core OW policy and SDMT computer training that are offered on a regular and ongoing basis.

- **Continued improvement of the Employment Service Delivery Model** – The Branch implemented a new Employment Service Delivery Model in March 2006, partly in response to changes made by the Province in allocating OW employment funding. The move from activity-based funding to outcome-based funding is a major change for the City, and many staff indicated that they do not have a good understanding of this new initiative and do not fully understand the role and responsibilities of the Case Coordinators and Employment Specialists when it comes to employment. It is important to note that the success of the new outcome-based Employment Service Delivery Model will have a direct impact on the funding received from the Province in the future.

- **Increased attention to the non-mandated, non-legislated programs** – This audit reviewed the Branch's EHSS program which is 100% funded with City money, as well as the Home Help and Home Management Programs, which are both cost shared at a rate of 80/20 with the Province's Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. It was found that all three of these programs are not well understood or well accessed by staff across EFA. With the exception of EHSS 100%, information about the other programs is not contained on the Branch's Intranet site.

Recommendation 1

Ensure the consistent interpretation of policies and administration of benefits across all district offices.

Management Response

Management agrees with the recommendation. For the OW Program, the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) currently tracks policy compliance through their provincial audits that result in corrective action plans that are approved and

monitored.   These audits also include documenting any concerns arising from overpayments of Community Start Up Benefits (CSUM). In recent provincial audits, there were no concerns raised with the administration of CSUM benefits. In relation to the auditor's concerns about the number of ERO file terminations in the West district office, a file review was conducted that confirmed that the West District Office had the same rate of terminations as the other three offices.

In early 2007, the Branch is implementing a new database (Datamart)* that will produce enhanced management reports that will assist in the tracking of benefits and services. Any anomalies will trigger a review by the supervisor who will ensure that the payment/service is legitimate as an exception as outlined in provincial legislation or Council direction and that any corrective action is taken as required. Furthermore, in early 2007, the Branch is assessing the feasibility (need, cost, program implications, and resources) of implementing a new case review unit that would complete random sample case audits for all of the EFA programs and services.

*The Datamart is an EFA database and reporting tool that provides the Branch with the necessary reporting capacity to support performance management.

Recommendation 2
Clearly define and communicate the role, responsibilities and accountabilities of the supervisor position.

Management Response

Management agrees with the recommendation. The Branch in conjunction with Employee Services has already written and signed-off on the a new supervisor's job description, which reflects more accurately the supervisors' new responsibilities including a significant focus on performance management. This has been forwarded for scoping and rating and is expected to be complete by Q2 2007.

To further support supervisors with the changes, the Branch is also developing a detailed Performance Management Program (PMP) that will provide supervisors with clear expectations, the required training, tools and feedback to perform their duties.   The PMP was presented to the management team (supervisors and managers) in the fall of 2006. The first iteration of the program will be implemented by the Q2 2007.

Recommendation 3
Develop a "tool kit" (i.e., reports, evaluation mechanisms, core training, etc.) required to be used by all supervisors to assist them in the management of their Teams.

Management Response

Management agrees with the recommendation. As part of the PMP, additional tools are being developed and implemented that will provide supervisors with the

resources they need to ensure that staff achieve the program, branch and departmental goals and outcomes that have been identified. This would include additional Branch specific and corporate training, management reports, tools and supports and will be implemented by Q2 2007.

Recommendation 4

Re-instate the Supervisors Committee as a mechanism for supervisors to meet on a regular basis to share information.

Management Response

Management disagrees with the recommendation. There are already opportunities in place that support supervisor information sharing such as: weekly management team meetings; topical management committees; management specific training and development sessions; and bi annual management forums and working sessions.

Recommendation 5

Develop reporting and feedback mechanisms to be used to monitor and assess staff performance and accountability in order to ensure consistent application of policies.

Management Response

Management agrees with the recommendation. The implementation of other reporting and feedback mechanisms as part of the PMP (specifically the Datamart in Q2 2007), will bolster the existing performance management framework that includes:

- provincial audits and resulting corrective action plan

- consolidated verification program (every OW file is reviewed and updated annually)

- 43 pre-determined monthly and weekly Ontario Works management reports (produced from the provincial web-based Service Delivery Technology)

- monthly reports to inform management on the progress towards specific outcomes and targets, such as:

  - level of participation in employment activities (e.g. employment placements, self-employment, community placements, completed training) against MCSS Service Level Contract
  - intake levels and response times
  - number of terminations
  - number and outcomes of ODSP referrals
  - number of Consolidated Verification Reviews against MCSS target
  - number and outcome of Job Specific Skills Training

Furthermore, the Branch is continuing to set expectations and provide the necessary tools and training to supervisors and Managers to ensure that they complete individual contribution agreements (PDP) with their staff.

Recommendation 6

Provide supervisors with the training and skills required to adequately manage staff.

Management Response

Management agrees with the recommendation. The supervisors' training and skill development is a work-in-progress and is evolving as the responsibilities and skills of the supervisor change. Since 2003, the supervisors have attended the following mandatory training and development sessions to increase competencies in the areas of leadership, accountability, role of a coach, effective relationships, decision-making and problem solving:

- supervisors accountability framework in a matrix management environment (2 days)

- working sessions to develop performance standards for completing the ICA (½ day)

- change management session (1 day)

- Phase One: Provincial Management Development Program (10 days)

- situational leadership and decision making training (1 day)

- dialogic model for managers (1/2 day)

- review and evaluate ICA tools (1/2 day)

- Phase Two: Management Development Program (5 days)

- refresher on system reports and screens to assess staff performance (1 day)

- performance management (1/2 day)

On a case-by-case basis, supervisors have also been encouraged to participate in the various corporate training sessions as identified either by their manager or themselves. To complement the existing training and to support the new PMP, a supervisor's training continuum is being developed to help supervisors manage in the new outcome based culture. The management team endeavours to balance the supervisors' training needs with the operational requirement of having supervisors on site to provide leadership and direction.

Recommendation 7

Through the Branch's Senior Management Team, establish and enforce a tone of accountability across the Branch.

Management Response

Management agrees with the recommendation and is committed to ensuring accountability in the Branch. The Branch has successfully achieved all of its provincial targets for employment activities, Enhanced Eligibility Review/Family Support and the Consolidated Verification Program. This success is attributable to many initiatives introduced over the past several years such as the development of accountability frameworks, setting, monitoring and correcting progress toward program specific outcomes and the provincial targets.

Management agrees that furthering accountability across the Branch is helping to ensure that provincial employment targets (outcomes to be finalized '07-'08) and other Branch objectives are met. To further clarify the expectations and outcomes, the Branch is the process of developing, in collaboration with the staff, a program-by-program outcome measures as a component of the PMP.

The Branch is also committed to the 2006 Corporate Performance Measurement and Reporting Framework as evidenced by our significant involvement in OMBI and ongoing submissions of a high number of measures for the Quarterly Performance Reports to Council.

Recommendation 8

Use a consistent approach during the three-month probationary period for new hires to ensure that new hires are adequately and consistently mentored, monitored and assessed by supervisors.

Management Response

Management agrees with the recommendation. By the end of Q4 2007, the Branch will deliver clear messaging about expectations, and will develop and implement tools to ensure that an assessment of new staff is done consistently. This will include a how to use the newly completed code of conduct companion guide that assists managers and supervisors in explaining in very clear terms how the code of conduct applies to EFA.

Recommendation 9

Extend the three-month probationary period to six months (as allowed under the terms of the CUPE 503 collective agreement) when it is determined that more time is necessary to assess performance.

Management Response

Management agrees with the recommendation. As per recommendation #8, with the systematic application of an assessment tool and clearer expectations of how to monitor newly hired staff's performance, supervisors will be better able to identify

the need for, on an as needed basis, the extension of the probationary period based on an assessment of performance.

Recommendation 10

Coordinate OW policy training and SDMT computer training with start date of new hires.

Management Response

Management agrees with the recommendation. It is an important practice to ensure efficiencies by deploying trained staff as early as possible and by maximizing the number of trainees per session. For these reasons, the EFA Branch, in collaboration with Employee Services, has developed an efficient staffing process of batching competitions by positions thereby permitting the scheduling of training to coincide with the start dates of most new hires. In those instances where there may be a short gap between hires, EFA Centres have other orientation and short-term training approaches that help staff prepare for the core training.

Recommendation 11

Develop an internal training package for newly hired Employment Specialists to ensure they receive adequate skills training to be effective in their new role.

Management Response

Management agrees in principle with the recommendation. In the case of the Employment Specialists (ES) they play a similar role to the Case Coordinators (CC) in that they both deliver employment and financial assistance to varying degrees. The CCs have a larger focus on financial eligibility/assistance as well as managing the employment requirements of clients who have been on social assistance for less than 12 months and those not referable to ES but who remain active on their caseloads.

The ES' specialize in the delivery of employment programs and services but also have financial responsibility to determine eligibility for certain benefits. As such OW Policy and Procedure and SDMT/ systems training is provided to staff in both positions. ESs also receives generic Branch training and refreshers as identified in recommendation #13. The Service Delivery Model training planned for early 2007 (see recommendation #15) will also benefit the ES. In Q4 2008, once the training is complete and the outcome measures and corresponding changes to the Service Delivery Model have been introduced, EFA will consult with the Employment Specialist to determine if there is a training gap.

Recommendation 12

Provide periodic refresher training on the City EHSS 100% program to ensure that the policy and administration of this program is well understood across the Branch.

Management Response

Management agrees with the recommendation. EFA will be reviewing its EHSS 100% program in Q4 2007 to assess the benefits of centralizing the services with a specialized team. Once the review is complete, refresher training will be provided to those who deliver the program.

Recommendation 13

Expand the mandate of the Training Committee to address the training needs of all EFA staff, not just the training needs of staff delivering the OW program.

Management Response

Management agrees with the recommendation. The training committee coordinates core/generic Branch training while the leads/managers of the various pilots and smaller programs are responsible for the coordination of their specialized training. In 2006, centralizing training began for all staff in the SAP training database and at this time have recorded almost 2000 entries by individual, program, type of training and hours. EFA will continue to populate this list and ensure that it reflects training from all sources including those that are provided to specialties such as from the Province, the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association and community agencies. This information and the subsequent analysis of the data will permit the Branch to better understand the training needs of all staff.

Recommendation 14

Evaluate and assess the implementation of the new Employment Service Delivery Model to ensure its future effectiveness, including the development of performance measurement targets.

Management Response

Management agrees with the recommendation. The Employment Service Delivery Model is and will continue to be a work-in-progress. The need to evaluate and assess our performance is necessary to respond to the ever-changing mandate/directives of the Province. Under the previous Act, (General Welfare Assistance) there was no performance funding components to the program. With the proclamation of the Ontario Works Act in 1997, municipalities were mandated to provide a very specific list of employment activities for clients to participate in for which funding would be provided. Municipalities were required to submit a yearly service agreement that specified the targets to be met with the corresponding funding levels based on the number of individuals participating by type of activity. Each year there would be changes either to, the funding, the type of employment activities to be delivered or the directives.

More significant changes are being introduced in 2006 and 2007, as MCSS will be shifting from funding clients who are taking part in employment <u>activities</u> to funding clients who achieve employment <u>outcomes</u>. This will include outcomes such as clients having more earnings, more clients leaving for employment and lastly 80% will be based on outcomes related to increasing a client's employability. The latter is in recognition that many clients have barriers and need to increase their basic competencies if they are to successfully exit social assistance. It is not expected that this provincial initiative will be fully implemented until 2008. The work to be completed is the finalizing of the outcomes, identifying the measures, developing the necessary valid reports, and confirming the funding model. In response to the evolving provincial direction, the Employment Service Delivery Model continues to undergo constant evaluation and adjustments.

Recommendation 15

Improve the working relationship between Case Coordinators and Employment Specialists through increased communication and training.

Management Response

Management agrees with the recommendation. Before 2000, employees delivering employment programs were at different sites than those delivering financial assistance. The EFA Branch has since integrated employment and financial services in each of the four existing sites (previously 9 sites) as a one point of service strategy. This as well as other Branch initiatives, has significantly improved the understanding and acceptance of each other's roles and responsibilities.

Furthermore, with the new Service Delivery Model, more clarification and details will be provided specific to expectations and contributions toward outcomes (four training modules will be delivered in 2007). As previously stated in recommendation #14, there will be ongoing reviews of the model with a focus on enhanced communication and further opportunities for integration.

Recommendation 16

Develop an exit interview process to collect data on clients terminating OW due to employment to identify which employment programs and initiatives are leading to desired outcomes.

Management Response

Management agrees with recommendation. Over the past year, the Branch has piloted a termination checklist and process (includes contacting participants who have likely exited for employment reasons) in two of its four sites with favourable results. Therefore EFA will introduce this termination approach consistently across the Branch in Q3 2007.The Branch also has other mechanisms such as outcome

measures by program, an employment readiness tool and questionnaires/surveys. This composite approach to gathering data all contribute to the identification of which employment programs and initiatives are successful.

Recommendation 17

Link the new outcome-based measures to the City's Quarterly Performance Report.

Management Response

Management agrees with the recommendation. The Ministry of Community and Social Services introduced performance-based funding in the early 2000's by setting targets related to clients participating in employment-related activities (i.e. job search, training and education, employment placements, community placements). Since 2002 the EFA Branch has consistently met its targets as contracted between the City and the Province in the yearly Ontario Works Service Plan. Between 2006 and the end of 2007, the Province will be finalizing new measures and reports that will be employment outcome based. One aspect of finalizing these measures, is improving the integrity of the reports as this was tabled as an issue. As a result the Province has created a joint Data Integrity Workgroup that is working on improving the reports. As these measures (pertaining to approximately 22,000 participants improving in the areas of earnings, employment and employability), are released in 2007, EFA will build them into the various reporting documents including the City's Quarterly Performance Report.

Recommendation 18

Develop a process to review and update (if necessary) policies for EHSS 100%, Home Help and Home Management programs on a regular basis.

Management Response:

Management agrees with the recommendation. The Branch began a policy and procedure review of the EHSS Program in 2006 and will build into a review of Home Help and Home Management workplan. To ensure that this is completed on a regular basis, EFA will build in a bring-forward mechanism to indicate that a general review is due on one of the programs based on a staggered four-year cycle. The mechanism will be in place by Q3 2007.

Recommendation 19

Provide complete information on EHSS 100%, Home Help and Home Management programs on the EFA Intranet site.

Management Response

Management agrees with the recommendation. The EFA Branch has one of the largest Intranet sites in the corporation. The site provides frontline staff with an

efficient self-serve mechanism to access the provincial and municipal information and tools they need on a daily basis to complete their tasks. Once a review of the programs mentioned above has been completed, EFA will ensure that the information is posted on the Intranet. The Branch will continue to post all documentation related to all of its programs on the Intranet.

Recommendation 20

Develop a file review function for EHSS 100%, Home Help and Home Management programs to ensure ongoing integrity and compliance.

Management Response

Management agrees with the recommendation. An additional mechanism is required to review the EHSS, Home Help and Home Management Programs. As stated in recommendation #1, the Branch is considering the implementation of a new case review unit that would complete random sample case audits on all of the EFA programs and services. The determination of the value of this function will be completed in Q4 2007

Recommendation 21

Review the Home Management Program and explore organizational changes (e.g., centralization of Home Management Counsellors in the EFA district offices) to maximize staff utilization and value to the community.

Management Response:

Management agrees with the recommendation. One possible outcome of a review of the Home Management Program would be to relocate the Home Management Counsellors in the EFA Centres. Therefore, in collaboration with the stakeholders, EFA will conduct a review of the existing program in Q4 2007 and will introduce any required changes to ensure a cost effective and efficient service delivery model.

Recommendation 22

Develop an assessment tool to determine financial eligibility for Home Management Services.

Management Response

Management disagrees with the recommendation. An assessment tool for the Home Management program already exists. The vast majority of residents receiving home management services are ODSP and OW clients. The assessment tool used for those who are not in receipt of social assistance (low income) is the same as the one used to assess low-income applicants for the Home Help Program.

Conclusion

Overall, the EFA Branch meets many of the criteria used to assess the management control framework of the Branch, but needs to focus efforts to ensure all criteria are met. The Branch has come a long way in strengthening social assistance programs. Compared to past years, there are now better controls for assessing initial and ongoing eligibility and disbursing benefits.

However, the management control framework needs to be strengthened to ensure performance accountability for all levels of staff and consistency in program delivery. This audit has identified several areas where there is a lack of consistency in interpreting policies and administering benefits across district offices. As such, the Branch needs to focus more attention on clearly defining the role of the supervisor, as it is a critical role in the management of the organization, and ensuring appropriate oversight of staff. There are real challenges to managing in a unionized environment however, union collective agreements do not preclude the Branch from establishing performance measures, using tools to regularly monitor performance, and holding staff accountable for poor performance. These are common functions of good management.

The Branch needs to address the issues with the Employment Service Delivery Model to ensure employment objectives set by the Province and the City are being met in a cost-effective manner.

The Branch's Senior Management Team has already identified many of the observations outlined in this report as issues. It is now time for the EFA Senior Management Team to act on these recommendations to ensure that the management control framework of the Branch is strengthened.

Acknowledgement

We wish to express our appreciation for the cooperation and assistance afforded the audit team by management.

Also, we appreciate the time taken by provincial staff at the Ministry of Community and Social Services to meet with us at the outset of this audit.

SOMMAIRE

La vérification de la Direction des services d'emploi et d'aide financière (SEAF) était inscrite au plan de vérification 2006 du Bureau du vérificateur général, qui a été présenté au Conseil en décembre 2004.

Les SEAF ont subi de nombreux changements. Les deux principaux déterminants de ces changements ont été l'adoption de la loi provinciale sur le programme Ontario au travail (OT), en 1998, et la fusion créant la nouvelle Ville d'Ottawa, en 2001.

Le programme OT, plus important programme d'aide sociale exécuté par les SEAF, fournit de l'emploi et de l'aide financière aux personnes admissibles qui éprouvent des difficultés financières temporaires. Les coûts de l'aide financière de base et des prestations sont partagés avec les municipalités, également connues sous le nom de Gestionnaires de services municipaux regroupés (GSMR).

Objectifs et portée de la vérification

La présente vérification avait pour objectif de procéder à un examen complet de la Direction des SEAF, notamment :

- Examiner le Cadre de contrôle de gestion de la Direction. La plus grande partie du travail de vérification y a été consacrée et l'accent a été mis sur les contrôles de gestion qui visent l'ensemble du Service et qui ont été instaurés pour administrer les programmes et services de la Direction. Ces contrôles concernent les politiques, procédures, procédés, structures, systèmes et pratiques dont disposent les gestionnaires pour s'assurer que les objectifs sont atteints.

- Examiner les processus de remise des chèques, tant les chèques produits manuellement que les chèques produits de façon électronique.

- Examiner deux des programmes non obligatoires/non prescrits par la loi – le Programme des services sociaux et de santé essentiels (SSSE) financé entièrement par la Ville et le Programme d'appui à domicile – pour établir s'ils sont efficients, efficaces et conformes à la politique de la Ville.

- Déterminer l'exhaustivité du cadre provincial de vérification et de contrôle en ce qui concerne le programme OT, ce qui incluait un examen des dossiers de la vérification annuelle du programme OT, le suivi du plan de mesures correctives et le Processus de vérification intégré (PVI).

Étendue de la vérification portait sur :

- Un examen complet de la Direction des SEAF – les quatre bureaux de district, Soutien aux opérations et aux programmes et Emploi et programmes communautaires;

- Les processus internes qui soutiennent l'administration du programmeOT et les autres programmes des SEAF; et

- Programmes et services non visés par les examens que prévoit le cadre provincial de vérification, de surveillance et de contrôle.

Exclusions :

- Vérification de la conformité des dossiers du programme OT en regard de la législation provinciale, étant donné que le ministère des Services sociaux et communautaires effectue chaque année ce genre de vérification;

- Vérification détaillée du Système de gestion du modèle de prestation des services (SGMPS), application Web du gouvernement provincial utilisée pour l'administration du programme OT;

- Vérification du Programme ontarien de soutien aux personnes handicapées (POSPH) qui est administré par le gouvernement provincial et qui fait l'objet d'un partage de coûts avec la Ville.

Principales constatations

La Direction affiche plusieurs importants points forts. Parmi ceux-ci, une équipe de direction motivée et avant-gardiste qui offre un solide leadership à la Direction, qui doit exercer ses activités dans un environnement complexe et exigeant. Cette situation a permis l'établissement d'une relation de travail positive marquée par la collaboration avec le gouvernement provincial, ce qui a été reconnu lors de nos rencontres avec les représentants provinciaux.

Autres points forts de la Direction des SEAF :

- **Fréquence des communications officielles entre employés** – Parmi celles-ci, les communications de la direction dans le cadre des réunions générales du personnel qui se tiennent régulièrement, les réunions du personnel des bureaux de district, les communications par courriel et le site intranet des SEAF sur MOE. Certains employés ont indiqué que la Direction devrait exprimer plus clairement l'orientation qu'elle entend prendre. Certaines préoccupations relatives à un manque d'uniformité dans l'interprétation des politiques ont été relevées au cours de la vérification et elles font l'objet d'un examen plus approfondi à la rubrique Observations détaillées.

- **Importance accordée à la formation du personnel du programme Ontario au travail** – De nombreux employés ont exprimé leur satisfaction à l'égard du passage à la formation par modules. Le Comité de formation de la Direction, qui compte des représentants de chacun des quatre bureaux de district, se réunit régulièrement pour échanger sur les besoins en formation du personnel du programme OT, ainsi que pour analyser et cerner ces besoins.

- **Importance accordée au Processus d'amélioration du rendement (PAR)** – Depuis 2001, l'Équipe de direction se montre résolue à mettre en œuvre le Processus d'amélioration du rendement à l'échelle de la Direction. De concert avec les Services aux employés, la Direction a mis au point son propre outil PAR à l'intention du personnel syndiqué. La Direction évalue actuellement la mise en œuvre du PAR afin d'assurer une utilisation uniforme de cet outil. Il demeure nécessaire d'accroître la surveillance du rendement du personnel. Il en sera question plus loin dans le présent rapport.

- **Accès convenable aux politiques et à l'information sur les ressources** – Tout le personnel passé en entrevue a souligné que l'accès aux politiques et à l'information sur les ressources était convenable.

- **Importance accordée à la planification de la relève**– L'Équipe de direction des SEAF a reconnu qu'un grand nombre des postes clés de la Direction deviendront vacants d'ici deux à cinq ans, en raison de départs à la retraite. L'Équipe de direction a récemment fait l'objet d'une restructuration et deux nouveaux postes ont été créés dans le but de préparer les employés des SEAF à occuper les postes qui seront libérés.

- **Bonne planification des ressources et du budget** – Tous les mois, les niveaux de ressources sont analysés, à l'échelle de la Direction, pour établir les écarts. Au besoin, les ressources sont redistribuées à l'intérieur de la Direction pour combler les écarts et de nouveaux employés ne sont recrutés que lorsqu'il existe manifestement un besoin à long terme de ressources additionnelles. Un examen des budgets 2003, 2004 et 2005 des SEAF révèle que chaque année, la Direction a été en mesure de respecter son budget.

- **Approche matricielle** – La Direction a adopté une approche matricielle grâce à ses comités, groupes de travail et initiatives, qui comptent des représentants de chacun des quatre bureaux de district. L'initiative de gestion de la capacité a pour but de relever les pratiques exemplaires mises en œuvre au sein de la Direction et de veiller à ce que ces pratiques soient communiquées à tous les bureaux de district, s'il y a lieu. Un Groupe de travail sur le sondage concernant l'investissement dans le personnel a été créé; il a pour mandat d'élaborer un plan de mise en œuvre pour régler les problèmes soulevés dans le sondage mis au

point et distribué par les Services communautaires et de protection (SCP) dans toutes les directions du Service.

- **Instauration de contrôles adéquats pour la remise des chèques produits manuellement** – Les processus, procédures et contrôles qui ont été instaurés pour les chèques produits manuellement ont été examinés dans chacun des quatre bureaux de district. Il a été établi que les SEAF disposent d'une politique de contrôle de la remise des chèques produits manuellement pour l'ensemble de la Direction et que tous les bureaux de district suivent la politique.

La vérification a permis de relever plusieurs points à améliorer, en ce qui a trait au Cadre de contrôle de gestion de la Direction. Au cours de notre vérification, nous avons présenté et confirmé ces points à améliorer auprès de l'équipe de gestion des SEAF. Les six principaux points à améliorer sont les suivants :

- **Définition plus claire du rôle d'un superviseur** – Le rôle, les responsabilités, les attentes et obligation de rendre compte associés à un poste de superviseur doivent être plus clairement définis et communiqués par l'Équipe de direction et renforcés par les gestionnaires de district. Les superviseurs ou le personnel ne comprennent pas toujours de la même façon en quoi consiste le rôle d'un superviseur. Il en résulte un manque d'uniformité dans l'interprétation des politiques et l'administration des prestations.

- **Surveillance accrue du rendement du personnel** – De nombreux employés passés en entrevue ne croyaient pas que leur rendement était surveillé et avaient l'impression que la responsabilisation à l'égard du rendement faisait défaut. Il ressort des entrevues que, de nombreux employés n'ont pas d'évaluation du rendement à jour dans leur dossier. De même, certains employés estiment qu'un grand nombre de superviseurs ont tendance à « fermer les yeux » plutôt qu'à faire face aux problèmes de rendement. Compte tenu du peu de surveillance du rendement, il est difficile d'assurer une prestation uniforme des services.

- **Dotation en personnel** – Tous les superviseurs ont indiqué que la période de stage probatoire de trois mois est trop courte pour qu'ils puissent évaluer le rendement des nouveaux employés. Toutefois, il est rare que soit présentée une demande de prolongation du stage, pour le porter de trois à six mois, comme le permet la convention collective de la section locale 503 du SCFP.

- **Formation** – Le Comité a mis l'accent sur la formation générale liée au programme OT; toutefois, les besoins en formation d'autres groupes spécialisés ne sont pas pris en compte. Les agents d'aide au recouvrement, les travailleurs en foyer d'accueil spécialisé et les spécialistes de l'emploi profiteraient d'une formation plus spécialisée, en plus de la formation de base sur le programme OT et de la formation sur le SGMPS qui sont offertes sur une base régulière.

- **Amélioration continue du Modèle de prestation des services d'emploi** – La Direction a mis en œuvre un nouveau Modèle de prestation des services d'emploi en mars 2006, en partie en réaction aux changements apportés par le gouvernement provincial, en ce qui a trait à la répartition des fonds du programme OT consacrés à l'emploi. Le passage du financement par activités au financement basé sur les résultats représente un changement majeur pour la Ville, et de nombreux employés ont admis ne pas bien comprendre cette nouvelle initiative et ne pas comprendre totalement le rôle et les responsabilités des coordonnateurs de cas et des spécialistes de l'emploi, lorsqu'il s'agit d'emploi. Il importe de noter que le succès du nouveau Modèle de prestation des services d'emploi basé sur les résultats aura des répercussions directes sur le financement qui proviendra du gouvernement provincial dans l'avenir.

- **Attention accrue aux programmes non obligatoires, non prescrits par la loi** – La vérification a donné lieu à l'examen du Programme SSSE de la Direction, financé entièrement par la Ville, ainsi que du Programme d'aide à domicile et du Programme de gestion familiale, dont les coûts sont partagés avec le ministère provincial de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée, dans une proportion de 80/20. Il a été constaté que ces trois programmes ne sont pas bien compris par le personnel des SEAF et que celui-ci n'y a pas recours comme il se doit. Exception faite du Programme SSSE entièrement financé par la Ville, le site intranet de la Direction ne contient aucune information sur les autres programmes.

Recommandations

Recommandation 1

Assurer une uniformité dans l'interprétation des politiques et l'administration des prestations, dans tous les bureaux de district.

Réponse de la direction

La direction appuie la recommandation. En ce qui a trait au programme OT, le ministère des Services sociaux et communautaires (MSSC) assure actuellement un suivi du respect des politiques grâce aux vérifications provinciales effectuées, lesquelles donnent lieu à des plans de mesures correctives qui sont approuvés et surveillés. Dans le cadre de ces vérifications, toute préoccupation attribuable aux trop-payés des Prestations pour l'établissement d'un nouveau domicile dans la collectivité (PENDC) est documentée. Dans les vérifications provinciales récentes, aucune préoccupation n'a été soulevée quant à l'administration des PENDC. Pour ce qui est des préoccupations du vérificateur à l'égard du nombre de fermetures de dossiers d'agent d'évaluation de l'admissibilité au bureau de district de l'Ouest, un examen des dossiers a permis de confirmer que le bureau de district de l'Ouest affichait le même taux de fermetures que les trois autres bureaux.

Au début de 2007, la Direction lancera une nouvelle base de données (Datamart)* qui produira des rapports de gestion améliorés; il sera ainsi plus facile d'assurer un suivi des prestations et des services. Dès qu'une anomalie sera relevée, le superviseur amorcera un examen pour vérifier si le paiement/service est légitime, en tant qu'exception, selon la loi provinciale ou les directives du Conseil, et voir à ce que toute mesure corrective qui s'impose soit prise. En outre, au début de 2007, la Direction évaluera la faisabilité (besoin, coût, répercussions sur le programme et ressources) d'une nouvelle unité d'examen des cas qui effectuerait des vérifications aléatoires de cas pour tous les programmes et services des SEAF.

* Le Datamart est une base de données et un outil de présentation de rapports des SEAF; il procure à la Direction la capacité de production de rapports dont elle a besoin pour appuyer sa gestion du rendement.

Recommandation 2
Définir et communiquer clairement le rôle, les responsabilités et obligation de rendre compte du poste de superviseur.

Réponse de la direction

La direction appuie la recommandation. Conjointement avec les Services aux employés, la Direction a déjà rédigé et approuvé une nouvelle description de travail pour le poste de superviseur, qui reflète avec plus d'exactitude les nouvelles responsabilités des superviseurs, notamment l'importance considérable accordée à la gestion du rendement. Le document a été acheminé pour qu'on en définisse la portée et qu'on en assure la notation; on s'attend à ce que le tout soit complêté d'ici le deuxième trimestre de 2007.

Pour aider davantage les superviseurs à intégrer ces changements, la Direction met également au point un Programme de gestion du rendement (PGR) détaillé qui fournira aux superviseurs des attentes claires, la formation nécessaire, les outils et les commentaires dont ils ont besoin pour remplir leurs fonctions. Le PGR a été présenté à l'équipe de gestion (superviseurs et gestionnaires) à l'automne 2006. La première itération du programme sera effectuée d'ici le deuxième trimestre de 2007.

Recommandation 3
Élaborer une « trousse d'outils » (c.-à-d. rapports, mécanismes d'évaluation, formation de base, etc.) qu'utiliseront tous les superviseurs pour faciliter la gestion de leurs équipes.

Réponse de la direction

La direction appuie la recommandation. Dans le cadre du PGR, des outils additionnels sont en cours d'élaboration et de mise en œuvre; ils fourniront aux superviseurs les ressources dont ils ont besoin pour s'assurer que le personnel atteint

les buts et obtient les résultats fixés par le programme, la Direction et le ministère. Ces outils pourraient comprendre une formation additionnelle axée précisément sur la Direction ou une formation générale, des rapports de gestion, des outils et des mesures de soutien. Ils seront mis en œuvre d'ici le deuxième trimestre de 2007.

Recommandation 4

Rétablir le Comité des superviseurs en tant que mécanisme leur permettant de se rencontrer régulièrement pour partager l'information.

Réponse de la direction

La direction n'appuie pas la recommandation. Les superviseurs ont déjà plusieurs occasions de partager l'information, notamment : réunions hebdomadaires de l'équipe de gestion; comités de gestion thématiques; séances de formation et de perfectionnement destinées aux gestionnaires; forums de gestion semestriels et séances de travail.

Recommandation 5

Instaurer des mécanismes de production de rapports et de rétroaction qui permettront de surveiller et d'évaluer le rendement et la responsabilisation du personnel, afin d'assurer une application uniforme des politiques.

Réponse de la direction

La direction appuie la recommandation. La mise en œuvre d'autres mécanismes de production de rapports et de rétroaction dans le cadre du PGR (tout particulièrement le Datamart au deuxième trimestre de 2007) renforcera l'actuel cadre de gestion du rendement, qui comprend :
  o les vérifications provinciales et le plan de mesures correctives en découlant;
  o le Programme de vérification intégré (chaque dossier du programme OT est examiné et mis à jour annuellement);
  o 43 rapports de gestion mensuels et hebdomadaires du programme Ontario au travail déterminés au préalable (produits par le Système de gestion du modèle de prestation des services, une application Web de la province);
  o les rapports mensuels informant la direction des progrès accomplis quant à l'atteinte des résultats et des objectifs, par exemple :
    • le niveau de participation aux activités relatives à l'emploi (p. ex. placements dans un emploi rémunéré, travail indépendant, placements dans la communauté, formation menée à terme) en regard du contrat sur les niveaux de service du MSSC;
    • niveaux d'admission et délais de réponse;
    • nombre de départs;
    • nombre de présentations au POSPH et résultats;
    • nombre d'examens de vérification intégrés en regard de l'objectif du MSSC;

• nombre de personnes suivant une formation pour acquérir des compétences propres à un emploi en particulier et résultats.

En outre, la Direction continue de déterminer les attentes et de fournir les outils et la formation nécessaires aux superviseurs et gestionnaires pour s'assurer qu'ils remplissent chacun des accords de contribution individuelle (ACI) (PAR) avec leurs employés.

Recommandation 6

Fournir aux superviseurs la formation et les compétences dont ils ont besoin pour assurer une gestion convenable de leur personnel.

Réponse de la direction

La direction appuie la recommandation. La formation et le perfectionnement des compétences des superviseurs constituent un processus continu et ils évoluent à mesure que changent les responsabilités et les compétences du superviseur. Depuis 2003, les superviseurs ont suivi les séances de formation et de perfectionnement obligatoires suivantes afin d'accroître leurs compétences en ce a trait au leadership, à la responsabilisation, à leur rôle d'encadreur, à l'établissement de bonnes relations, à la prise de décisions et au règlement de problèmes :

o Cadre de responsabilisation des superviseurs dans un environnement de gestion matricielle (2 jours);
o Séances de travail visant l'élaboration de normes de rendement pour les ACI (½ journée);
o Séance sur la gestion du changement (1 journée);
o Première étape : Programme provincial de perfectionnement des gestionnaires (10 jours);
o Formation en leadership situationnel et prise de décision (1 journée);
o Modèle dialogique pour les gestionnaires (½ journée);
o Examen et évaluation des outils des ACI (½ journée);
o Deuxième étape : Programme de perfectionnement des gestionnaires (5 jours);
o Formation d'appoint sur les rapports et écrans du système d'évaluation du rendement du personnel (1 journée);
o Gestion du rendement (½ journée).

Au cas par cas, les superviseurs sont également encouragés à participer aux diverses séances de formation générales qui sont sélectionnées soit par leur gestionnaire, soit par eux-mêmes. Pour compléter la formation actuelle et appuyer le nouveau PGR, un continuum de formation du superviseur est en cours d'élaboration; il aidera les superviseurs à gérer dans le nouvel environnement basé sur les résultats. L'équipe de gestion s'efforce de trouver un équilibre entre les besoins en formation des superviseurs et les exigences opérationnelles qui consistent à avoir des superviseurs sur place pour assurer le leadership et donner des orientations.

Recommandation 7

Par l'intermédiaire de l'Équipe de direction des SEAF, créer et appliquer un esprit de responsabilisation à l'échelle de la Direction.

Réponse de la direction

La direction appuie la recommandation et elle est déterminée à assurer la responsabilisation au sein de la Direction. La Direction a atteint la totalité de ses objectifs provinciaux en ce qui a trait aux activités relatives à l'emploi, à l'amélioration de l'examen de l'admissibilité/Aide à la famille et au Programme de vérification intégré. Ce succès est attribuable aux nombreuses initiatives mises en œuvre au cours des dernières années, notamment l'élaboration de cadres de responsabilisation, la détermination, la surveillance et la rectification des progrès accomplis à l'égard des résultats propres au programme et des objectifs provinciaux.

La direction convient qu'en favorisant une responsabilisation à l'échelle de la Direction, il devient plus facile de s'assurer que les objectifs provinciaux en matière d'emploi (les résultats seront établis définitivement en 2007-2008) et les autres objectifs de la Direction sont atteints. Pour préciser davantage les attentes et résultats, la Direction est en voie d'élaborer, en collaboration avec le personnel, des mesures des résultats, programme par programme, en tant que composante du PGR.

La Direction a également à cœur le respect du Plan de mesure et d'évaluation du rendement de 2006, comme en témoignent notre importante participation à l'IACSM et la présentation régulière d'un grand nombre de mesures pour les rapports trimestriels de rendement remis au Conseil.

Recommandation 8

Recourir à une approche uniforme, au cours du stage probatoire de trois mois imposé aux nouveaux employés, pour s'assurer qu'ils sont convenablement et uniformément encadrés, surveillés et évalués par les superviseurs.

Réponse de la direction

La direction appuie la recommandation. D'ici la fin du quatrième trimestre de 2007, la Direction transmettra des messages clairs au sujet des attentes, et elle élaborera et mettra en application des outils pour assurer une évaluation uniforme des nouveaux employés. Parmi ces outils, mentionnons un mode d'emploi du guide qui accompagne le tout nouveau Code de conduite; il aidera les gestionnaires et les superviseurs à expliquer très clairement comment le Code de conduite s'applique aux SEAF.

Recommandation 9

Porter la durée du stage probatoire de trois à six mois (comme le permet la convention collective de la section locale 503 du SCFP) lorsqu'il est établi qu'il faudra plus de temps pour évaluer le rendement.

Réponse de la direction

La direction appuie la recommandation. Conformément à la recommandation 8, avec le recours systématique à un outil d'évaluation et des attentes plus claires quant à la façon de surveiller le rendement des nouveaux employés, les superviseurs seront davantage en mesure de déterminer l'opportunité de prolonger le stage probatoire, en fonction d'une évaluation du rendement.

Recommandation 10

Coordonner la formation sur les politiques du programme OT et la formation sur le SGMPS avec la date d'entrée en fonction des nouveaux employés.

Réponse de la direction

La direction appuie la recommandation. Il s'agit d'une pratique importante si on veut assurer l'efficacité, soit affecter le plus rapidement possible du personnel formé et maximiser le nombre de stagiaires par séance. Pour ces raisons, les SEAF, en collaboration avec les Services aux employés, ont mis au point un processus de dotation efficient qui consiste à regrouper les concours par postes, ce qui permet d'établir le calendrier de la formation de sorte qu'il coïncide avec les dates d'entrée en fonction de la plupart des nouveaux employés. Dans les cas où il peut y avoir un écart, les Centres des SEAF disposent d'autres approches en matière d'orientation et de formation de courte durée pour aider le personnel à se préparer à la formation de base.

Recommandation 11

Élaborer un programme de formation interne pour les spécialistes de l'emploi nouvellement recrutés afin de s'assurer qu'ils acquièrent les compétences dont ils ont besoin pour exercer efficacement leur nouveau rôle.

Réponse de la direction

En principe, la direction appuie la recommandation. En ce qui a trait aux spécialistes de l'emploi (SE), ils jouent un rôle semblable à celui des coordonnateurs de cas (CC) en ce sens qu'ils offrent tous deux de l'aide en matière d'emploi et de financement, à divers degrés. Les CC concentrent davantage leurs efforts sur l'admissibilité au financement/à l'aide financière et sur la gestion des besoins relatifs à l'emploi des clients qui touchent des prestations d'aide sociale depuis moins de 12 mois et des clients qui ne peuvent être dirigés vers les SE, mais qui demeurent actifs dans leur charge de travail.

Les SE se spécialisent dans l'exécution des programmes et services d'emploi, mais ils ont également la responsabilité financière d'établir l'admissibilité à certaines prestations. Ainsi, la formation sur les politiques et procédures relatives au programme OT et la formation sur le SGMPS/les systèmes est donnée au personnel exerçant des deux fonctions. Les SE bénéficient en outre de la formation générale et de la formation d'appoint données par la Direction, tel que mentionné à la recommandation 13. La formation relative au Modèle de prestation des services prévue pour le début de 2007 (voir la recommandation 15) profitera également aux SE. Au quatrième trimestre de 2008, une fois que la formation sera terminée, que les mesures des résultats et les changements connexes au Modèle de prestation des services auront été adoptés, les SEAF consulteront les spécialistes de l'emploi afin d'établir s'il manque de la formation.

Recommandation 12

Offrir périodiquement une formation d'appoint sur le Programme SSSE financé entièrement par la Ville pour garantir que les politiques et l'administration de ce programme sont bien compris dans l'ensemble de la Direction.

Réponse de la direction

La direction appuie la recommandation. Les SEAF examineront le Programme SSSE entièrement financé par la Ville, au cours du quatrième trimestre de 2007, afin d'évaluer s'il serait avantageux de centraliser les services auprès d'une équipe spécialisée. Une fois l'examen effectué, une formation d'appoint sera donnée aux personnes qui exécutent le programme.

Recommandation 13

Élargir le mandat du Comité de formation de sorte qu'il réponde aux besoins en formation de tout le personnel des SEAF, pas seulement aux besoins du personnel qui exécute le programme OT.

Réponse de la direction

La direction appuie la recommandation. Le Comité de formation coordonne la formation de base/générale de la Direction tandis que les responsables/gestionnaires des divers projets pilotes et programmes de plus petite taille s'occupent de coordonner leur formation spécialisée. En 2006, on a commencé à centraliser la formation de tout le personnel dans la base de données sur la formation du SAP, et en cette date, près de 2 000 entrées ont été enregistrées par personne, par programme, par type de formation et nombre d'heures. Les SEAF continueront d'alimenter cette liste et de s'assurer qu'elle tient compte de la formation de toutes sources, y compris celle donnée aux spécialistes, notamment par le gouvernement provincial, l'Association des services sociaux des municipalités de l'Ontario et les organismes communautaires. Cette information et l'analyse de données subséquente

permettront à la Direction de mieux comprendre les besoins en formation de l'ensemble du personnel.

Recommandation 14

Évaluer la mise en application du nouveau Modèle de prestation des services d'emploi afin d'assurer son efficacité future, y compris l'établissement d'objectifs de mesure du rendement.

Réponse de la direction

La direction appuie la recommandation. Le Modèle de prestation des services d'emploi a, et continuera d'avoir, un caractère évolutif. Il est nécessaire d'évaluer notre rendement pour répondre au mandat/aux directives du gouvernement provincial, qui changent continuellement. Selon la *Loi* précédente (Aide sociale générale), aucun élément de financement en fonction du rendement n'était rattaché au programme. Avec la promulgation de la *Loi de 1997 sur le programme Ontario au travail* les municipalités ont reçu le mandat de dresser une liste très précise des activités relatives à l'emploi auxquelles les clients peuvent participer et pour lesquelles un financement serait accordé. Les municipalités étaient tenues de présenter chaque année une entente de service qui précisait les objectifs à atteindre et les niveaux de financement correspondants, d'après le nombre de participants par type d'activité. Chaque année, des changements étaient apportés au financement, au type d'activités d'emploi à exécuter ou aux directives.

Des changements plus importants entrent en vigueur en 2006 et en 2007, étant donné que le MSSC accordera un financement pour les clients qui obtiennent des résultats d'emploi, plutôt qu'un financement pour les clients qui prennent part aux activités relatives à l'emploi. Ainsi, les résultats pourraient être des gains accrus pour les clients et une hausse du nombre de clients qui quittent le programme pour occuper un emploi. Enfin, 80 % du financement sera basé sur la plus grande employabilité des clients. Ce dernier élément vient reconnaître que de nombreux clients se heurtent à des obstacles et doivent accroître leurs compétences de base s'ils veulent réussir à quitter l'aide sociale. On ne s'attend pas à ce que cette initiative provinciale soit mise en œuvre intégralement avant 2008. Le travail qu'il reste à faire consiste à finaliser les résultats, à déterminer les mesures, à élaborer les rapports valides nécessaires et à confirmer le modèle de financement. Face à l'évolution des directives provinciales, le Modèle de prestation des services d'emploi fait l'objet d'évaluations et de rajustements constants.

Recommandation 15

Améliorer les relations de travail entre les coordonnateurs de cas et les spécialistes de l'emploi grâce à une communication et une formation accrues.

Réponse de la direction

La direction appuie la recommandation. Avant 2000, les employés exécutant les programmes d'emploi et les employés accordant l'aide financière travaillaient à des endroits différents. Depuis, les SEAF ont adopté une stratégie de point de service unique et intégré les services d'emploi et les services financiers à chacun des quatre lieux de travail actuels (il y en avait neuf auparavant). Cette intégration ainsi que d'autres initiatives de la Direction ont considérablement amélioré la compréhension et l'acceptation des rôles et responsabilités de chacun.

En outre, avec le nouveau Modèle de prestation des services d'emploi, davantage de précisions et de détails seront fournis, particulièrement sur les attentes et les contributions aux résultats (quatre modules de formation seront donnés en 2007). Tel que mentionné précédemment, à la recommandation 14, le Modèle fera l'objet d'examens réguliers et l'accent sera mis sur l'amélioration de la communication et les nouvelles occasions d'intégration.

Recommandation 16
Instaurer un processus d'entrevue de départ pour recueillir des données sur les clients qui quittent le programme OT parce qu'ils ont trouvé un emploi, afin de déterminer quels programmes et initiatives d'emploi produisent les résultats escomptés.

Réponse de la direction

La direction appuie la recommandation. Au cours de la dernière année, la Direction a mis à l'essai une liste de contrôle et un processus relatifs aux départs (incluant un contact avec les participants susceptibles d'avoir quitté le programme parce qu'ils ont trouvé un emploi) dans deux de ses quatre bureaux, avec de bons résultats. Par conséquent, au cours du troisième trimestre de 2007, les SEAF étendront cette approche à l'ensemble de la Direction. La Direction dispose également d'autres mécanismes tels que les mesures du rendement par programme, un outil et des questionnaires/sondages sur l'employabilité. Cette approche mixte face à la collecte des données aide à déterminer les programmes et initiatives d'emploi qui produisent de bons résultats.

Recommandation 17
Créer un lien entre les nouvelles mesures basées sur le rendement et le Rapport trimestriel sur le rendement de la Ville.

Réponse de la direction

La direction appuie la recommandation. Le Ministère des services sociaux et communautaires a instauré le financement basé sur le rendement au début de 2000, en fixant des objectifs quant au nombre de clients participant à des activités liées à

l'emploi (c.-à-d. recherche d'emploi, formation et études, placements dans des emplois rémunérés, placements dans la communauté). Depuis 2002, les SEAF ont constamment atteint les objectifs prévus par la Ville et le gouvernement provincial dans le Plan de services annuel du programme Ontario au travail. Entre 2006 et la fin de 2007, le gouvernement provincial finalisera de nouvelles mesures et de nouveaux rapports qui seront basés sur les résultats d'emploi. L'un des aspects de la mise au point définitive de ces mesures est l'amélioration de l'intégrité des rapports, car celle-ci fut identifier comme un problème. Ainsi, le gouvernement provincial a créé un Groupe de travail mixte sur l'intégrité des données, qui travaille à l'amélioration des rapports. Lorsque ces mesures (visant approximativement 22 000 participants qui ont vu leur situation s'améliorer en ce qui a trait aux gains, à l'emploi et à l'employabilité) seront diffusées en 2007, les SEAF les intégreront aux divers rapports, y compris le Rapport trimestriel sur le rendement de la Ville.

Recommandation 18

Mettre au point un processus d'examen et de mise à jour (s'il y a lieu) réguliers des politiques relatives au programme SSSE entièrement financé par la Ville, au Programme d'aide à domicile et au Programme de gestion familiale.

Réponse de la direction:

La direction appuie la recommandation. La Direction a amorcé un examen des politiques et procédures du Programme SSSE en 2006, et elle l'intégrera à un examen du plan de travail du Programme d'aide à domicile et du Programme de gestion familiale. Pour s'assurer de le faire régulièrement, les SEAF établiront un mécanisme de rappel qui indiquera qu'un examen général doit être fait à l'égard de l'un des programmes, suivant un cycle étalé sur quatre ans. Ce mécanisme sera en place d'ici le troisième trimestre de 2007.

Recommandation 19

Sur l'intranet des SEAF, fournir des renseignements complets sur le programme SSSE entièrement financé, le Programme d'aide à domicile et le Programme de gestion familiale.

Réponse de la direction

La direction appuie la recommandation. Les SEAF possèdent l'un des plus gros sites intranet de la Ville d'Ottawa. Pour le personnel de première ligne, le site est un outil libre-service efficace qui lui permet d'accéder à l'information provinciale et municipale et aux outils dont il a besoin quotidiennement dans l'exercice de ses tâches. Une fois l'examen des programmes mentionnés plus haut effectué, les SEAF veilleront à ce que l'information soit affichée sur l'intranet. La Direction continuera d'afficher toute la documentation relative à l'ensemble de ses programmes sur l'intranet.

Recommandation 20

Mettre au point une fonction d'examen des dossiers pour le programme SSSE entièrement financé, le Programme d'aide à domicile et le Programme de gestion familiale, afin d'en assurer l'intégrité et le respect en tout temps.

Réponse de la direction

La direction appuie la recommandation. Un autre mécanisme doit être instauré pour l'examen du programme SSSE, du Programme d'aide à domicile et du Programme de gestion familiale. Tel qu'indiqué à la recommandation 1, la Direction envisage la mise en œuvre d'une nouvelle unité d'examen des cas qui effectuerait des vérifications aléatoires de cas relatifs à tous les programmes et services des SEAF. La valeur de cette fonction sera déterminée au quatrième trimestre de 2007.

Recommandation 21

Faire un examen du Programme de gestion familiale et explorer les changements organisationnels possibles (p. ex. centralisation des conseillers en gestion familiale dans les bureaux de district des SEAF) afin d'utiliser au mieux le personnel et d'optimiser leur valeur pour la communauté.

Réponse de la direction

La direction appuie la recommandation. L'un des résultats possibles d'un examen du Programme de gestion familiale consisterait à installer les conseillers en gestion familiale dans les centres d'emploi et d'aide financière. En conséquence, en collaboration avec les intéressés, les SEAF procéderont à un examen du programme actuel au cours du quatrième trimestre de 2007, et apporteront tous les changements nécessaires pour assurer l'existence d'un modèle rentable et efficient de prestation des services.

Recommandation 22

Mettre au point un outil d'évaluation pour déterminer l'admissibilité aux Services de gestion familiale.

Réponse de la direction

La direction n'appuie pas la recommandation. Il existe déjà un outil d'évaluation du Programme de gestion familiale. La vaste majorité des résidants qui bénéficient des services de gestion familiale sont des clients du POSPH et du programme OT. L'outil d'évaluation utilisé pour les personnes qui ne touchent pas de prestations d'aide sociale (faible revenu) est le même que celui utilisé pour évaluer les demandeurs à faible revenu du Programme d'aide à domicile.

Conclusion

De façon générale, la Direction des SEAF répondent à bon nombre des critères utilisés pour évaluer le Cadre de contrôle de gestion de la Direction, mais il faut concentrer les efforts pour s'assurer que tous les critères sont respectés. La Direction a fait d'importants progrès au chapitre du renforcement des programmes d'aide sociale. Comparativement aux années précédentes, des contrôles plus serrés sont maintenant en place pour l'évaluation de l'admissibilité initiale et continue et le versement des prestations.

Toutefois, le Cadre de contrôle de gestion doit être renforcé pour garantir une reddition de comptes en matière de rendement à tous les niveaux du personnel et assurer l'uniformité dans l'exécution des programmes. La présente vérification a permis de mettre au jour plusieurs secteurs où l'interprétation des politiques et l'administration des prestations manquent d'uniformité à l'échelle des bureaux de district. Ainsi, la Direction doit concentrer davantage ses efforts sur une définition plus claire du rôle du superviseur, étant donné qu'il s'agit d'un rôle essentiel dans la gestion de l'organisation, et sur une surveillance accrue du personnel. La gestion dans un environnement syndiqué comporte de réels défis, mais les conventions collectives n'empêchent pas la Direction d'établir des mesures du rendement, d'utiliser des outils pour assurer une surveillance régulière du rendement et de tenir le personnel responsable en cas de faible rendement. Il s'agit, en l'occurrence, des fonctions courantes d'une saine gestion.

La Direction doit régler les problèmes relatifs au Modèle de prestation des services d'emploi pour s'assurer que les objectifs d'emploi fixés par le gouvernement provincial et la Ville sont atteints de manière rentable.

L'Équipe de direction des SEAF a déjà fait siennes bon nombre des observations formulées dans le présent rapport. Il est maintenant temps qu'elle donne suite à ces recommandations pour assurer un renforcement du Cadre de contrôle de gestion.

Remerciements

Nous désirons remercier la direction pour la collaboration et l'aide apportées à l'équipe de vérification.

Nous remercions aussi le personnel du Ministère des services sociaux et communautaires de l'Ontario, qui a pris le temps de nous rencontrer au début de la présente vérification.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview of EFA Branch

The Audit of the Employment and Financial Assistance Branch (EFA) was included as part of the 2006 Audit Plan of the Office of the Auditor General, first presented to Council in December 2004.

EFA Branch has seen many changes in recent years. The two main drivers of change have been the introduction of the Province's Ontario Works (OW) legislation in 1998 and the amalgamation to the new City of Ottawa in 2001.

A change in the provincial government in 1995 resulted in fundamental changes to provincial legislation and welfare policy. The Social Assistance Reform Act, 1997, created two separate statutes, the *Ontario Works Act (OWA), 1997* (proclaimed May 1, 1998 replacing the General Welfare Act), and the *Ontario Disability Support Program Act (ODSPA), 1997* (proclaimed June 1 1998). These changes impacted the Branch's administration and delivery of its largest social assistance program. The three main features of the OW program were decreased benefit levels, increased eligibility requirements (with a focus on employment), and the introduction of fraud-control mechanisms (i.e., single Province-wide database, expanded information sharing among government bodies including Human Resources Development Canada and Canada Revenue Agency, and an automated eligibility review process).

The Branch was formerly known as the Social Services Department in the former Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton and at the time of amalgamation, the Transition Board recommended that the EFA Branch be created. This resulted in a major reorganization of the management structure and service delivery model of the Branch. District offices were reduced from 9 locations to 4 (East, West, South, and Central), and the number of Directors on the management team was reduced to one Director of the EFA Branch.

The overall objectives for the EFA Branch are to:

- Deliver efficient and effective client-focused services as foreseen in the Service and Accountability Agendas of the City Corporate Plan.

- Fulfill the City's legislated Ontario Works obligations by determining, issuing and monitoring citizens' eligibility for financial and employment services.

- Assist clients to become job ready, find and maintain employment, reduce reliance on social assistance, become financially independent, remain in their homes, and contribute to the overall prosperity of the community.

- Maximize performance-based funding by attaining the employment outcomes as negotiated with the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

1.2 EFA Branch Structure

EFA Branch is one of eleven Branches under the responsibility of the Deputy City Manager, Community and Protective Services and is organized as follows:

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                  ┌─────────────────────────────┐
                  │   Deputy City Manager,      │
                  │ Community and Protective    │
                  │         Services            │
                  └──────────────┬──────────────┘
                                 │
                        ┌────────┴────────┐
                        │  Director, EFA  │
                        └────────┬────────┘
```

| District Manager, West District Office | District Manager, East District Office | District Manager, South District Office | District Manager, Central District Office | District Manager, Employment and Community Programs | Manager, Operations and Support |
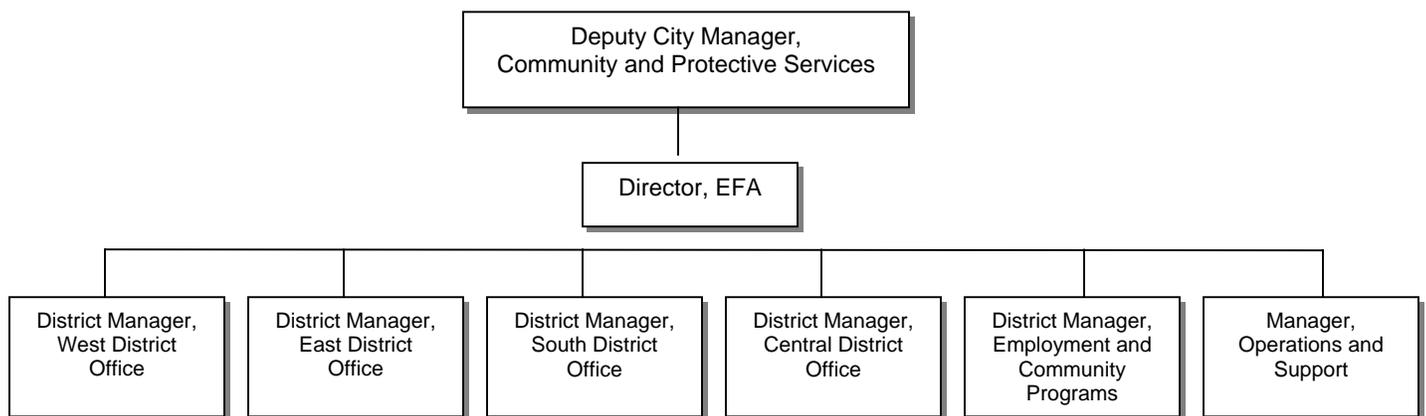
Note: since completing this audit in August 2006, two additional positions have been added to the EFA Management Team – Manager, Labour Market Integration (Immigration Initiative) and District Manager, EFA.

- **4 District Offices – East, West, South and Central**
  o Staff in each office include Administrative Support Staff, supervisors, Verification Specialists, Case Coordinators, CVP Workers, and Employment Specialists.
  o Certain offices are responsible for specific Branch-wide service/program portfolios – i.e., Learning, Earning and Parenting (LEAP), Family Support, Eligibility Review, Addiction Services Initiative (ASI), etc.

- **Operations and Program Support**
  o Functions include policy, training, communications, complaint resolution, systems support, HR staffing and planning, reporting, and the Application Screening Unit (ASU).
  o Essential Health and Social Supports (EHSS), Home Help, Home Management Services, Employment Support Services, Youth Zone Jeunesse, Jobs Now and Employment Opportunities.

The Branch has approximately 600 FTEs, plus temporary staff.

More detailed information about EFA programs and services can be found in Annex A: EFA Programs and Services.

1.3 EFA Budget

Many of the programs are cost shared with the Province (Ministry of Community and Social Services and Ministry of Health and Long-term Care) or the Federal Government's Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC) for employment programs. The EFA Branch accounts for approximately 5% of the City's FTEs and 5% of the City's expenditures. At the Branch level, factoring out cost-sharing arrangements, the City's cost for EFA is $104.4 million, (based on 2005 figures), which represents 40% of the total gross expenditures for the Branch. Details are provided in the table below.

2005 Budget for EFA Branch		Cost Sharing Ratio	Discretionary
Program	**Actual ($000)**		
Ontario Works (OW)			
Financial Assistance	$171,091	80/20	NO
Employment Programs	$18,962	80/20	NO
Essential Health and Social Supports (EHSS)	$8,762	80/20	YES
Essential Health and Social Supports (EHSS) – 100% City	$1,600	100% City	YES
Home Support Programs	$3,454	80/20	YES
EFA Program Delivery	$38,468	50/50	NO
City Funded Provincial Programs (primarily ODSP)	$51,193	80/20	NO
Total Gross Expenditures	**$293,530**		
Client Recoveries	($37,032)		
Federal/Provincial Revenues	($152,076)		
Net EFA Requirement	**$104,422**		

It should be noted that, of the total gross expenditures, the City only has discretion on certain line items, as shown in the table. Therefore, the City has discretion over approximately $13.8 million (4.7%) of the gross expenditures, or $4 million (3.9%) of the net expenditures, once cost sharing arrangements have been factored in.

2 AUDIT OBJECTIVES, SCOPE AND CRITERIA

2.1 Audit Objectives and Scope

The objective of this audit was to conduct a comprehensive review of the EFA Branch. However, before determining the detailed objectives and scope of the audit, we met with provincial staff (Ministry of Community and Social Services) from Program and Compliance Review to understand the mandate of their audit and review function for the OW program, as we did not want to duplicate work that is covered in their audit mandate.

It was determined that this audit should address areas of the Branch that are not covered in the provincial audit. It was determined that the objectives of the audit were to:

- Review the overall management control framework for the Branch. This was the largest portion of the audit work, and it focused on the management controls, from a department-wide perspective, that are in place to administer the Branch's programs and services. Such controls involve those policies, procedures, processes, structures, systems, and practices that management has at its disposal to help ensure the achievement of objectives.

- Review the cheque disbursement processes for manual and electronic cheques.

- Review two of the Branch's non-mandated/non-legislated programs – EHSS 100% and Home Support Programs - to determine efficiency, effectiveness, and compliance to City policy.

- Determine the comprehensiveness of the provincial audit and control framework for the OW program, which included a review of the annual audit of OW files, the Correction Action Plan follow-up, and the Consolidated Verification Process (CVP).

The scope of the audit included:

- A comprehensive review of the EFA Branch – all four district offices, Operations and Program Support, and Employment and Community Programs;

- The internal processes that support the administration of OW and other EFA programs; and

- Programs and services that are not reviewed as a part of the provincial audit, monitoring and control framework.

The scope did not include:

- A compliance audit of OW files to the provincial legislation as this type of audit is done annually by the Ministry of Community and Social Services;

- A detailed systems audit of the provincial SDMT web-based business application used to administer the OW program; and

- An audit of the ODSP program that is administered by the Province and is cost-shared by the City.

2.2 Audit Criteria

For the management control framework portion of the audit, the audit criteria used were adapted from the CICA's Criteria of Control model. This model includes a number of specific audit criteria that were used to guide the audit of the EFA Branch, as follows:

1. Is the management control framework (MCF) for the EFA Branch appropriate?
• Are objectives clearly defined, communicated and well understood?
• Are policies established, communicated and well understood?
• Is planning well managed?
• Are performance measures established and monitored?
• Is there a process for establishing HR policies and practices, including the performance appraisal system?
• Has authority, responsibility and accountability been defined and communicated?
• Is information shared openly with staff?
• Are key communication processes in place?
• Are the right people, skills, tools and resources in place to achieve the Branch's objectives?
• Is information adequate and timely to allow performance of tasks?
• Is there coordination of decisions and actions across the organization?
• Are control activities designed and documented?

The audit criteria used to determine the appropriateness of the processes and controls in place for cheque disbursement include:

2. Are the processes and controls in place for cheque disbursement appropriate?
• Are there policies and procedures in place to ensure that manual cheque amounts are correctly calculated?
• Are there policies and procedures in place to ensure segregation of duties for cheque disbursement?
• Do the cheque disbursement processes comply with policies and procedures?

The audit criteria used to determine the efficiency, effectiveness, and compliance to City policy for delivery of the non-mandated, non-legislated programs include:

3. Are EFA's non-mandated, non-legislated programs efficient, effective, and in compliance with City policy?
• Are policies for the programs established, communicated and well understood?
• Is performance of the programs measured to monitor effectiveness and efficiency and improve operations?
• Is there consistent application of programs in terms of client eligibility?
• Is the administration of the programs effective and efficient?

The audit criteria used to determine the comprehensiveness of the provincial audit and control framework for the OW program include:

4. Is the provincial audit and control framework for the OW program comprehensive and adequate?
• Are the Corrective Actions Plans issued by the Province implemented in a timely and efficient manner?
• Is the CVP process operating as an effective control?
• Are the annual audits of the OW files comprehensive enough to assess the effective and efficient administration of the mandatory benefits?

Audit results for each specific criterion are presented in Section 3 - Observations and Recommendations.

2.3 Audit Approach

The audit approach included interviews with EFA staff, interviews with provincial representatives from the Ministry of Community and Social Services, and a detailed document and file review. Specifically, the audit approach included:

- Interviews with 45 EFA staff:

    o Branch Director
    o 4 District Managers
    o 12 Supervisors
    o 2 Employment Managers
    o 2 Employment Specialists
    o 8 Case Coordinators
    o 2 Verification Specialists
    o 6 Staff from Operations and Program Support
    o 4 Staff from Employment and Community Programs
    o 4 Cheque Control Administrators

The interviews covered all functional areas – Consolidated Verification Process (CVP), Assignment of Benefits (AOB), Intake, Crisis, Employment, Residential Care, Family Support, Eligibility Review, and Learning Earning and Parenting (LEAP).

- Review of legislation, policies, and other relevant documentation:

    o Ontario Works Act
    o Ontario Works Policy Directives
    o EFA Policy Directives
    o EFA local office policies and procedures
    o Provincial audit results from 2003-2005
    o Data, statistics, and reports on the Ministry Intranet site
    o EFA Operations Reports
    o Sample of EHSS and Home Help client files

3 DETAILED OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 EFA Branch Statistics

The following table provides some statistics for the Branch which are based on 2006 monthly averages to date (as of July 2006) and compared to 2004 and 2005 monthly averages:

EFA Statistics	2004	2005 Monthly Average	2006 Monthly Average
OW – Total Benefit Units (# of family units)	17,780	17,552	16,876
OW – Total Benefit Unit Members (# of individuals)	36,981	35,661	33,753
ODSP – Total Benefit Units	16,865	17,454	17,898
ODSP – Total Benefit Unit Members	24,938	25,830	26,329
Intake – Total Benefit Units Granted Assistance	1,203	1,233	1,180
Terminations – Total Terminations	1,295	1,344	1,373
Terminations – Employed	129	177	189
Total Individuals Meeting Participation Agreement (PA) Criteria	22,433	21,863	20,691

The statistics indicate:

- A slight monthly decrease in total OW Benefit Units and Benefit Unit Members since 2004. However, it is important to consider this statistic in conjunction with the slight increase in the ODSP Benefit Units and Benefit Unit Members in the same time period. The total OW Benefit Units has decreased by 903 and the total ODSP Benefit Units has increased by 1,033.

- ODSP is a provincially mandated program with specific eligibility criteria. When it is determined that ODSP is the appropriate program for an OW client and they are transferred from OW to ODSP, the OW caseload as well as the City's 20% portion of financial assistance is reduced but the City is now required to pay 20% of the client ODSP benefits, which are at a higher rate than OW. Therefore, it is important to take these caseload statistics into consideration when looking at the Branch's budget. The transfer of clients from OW to ODSP reduces caseload statistics but increases the overall financial pressure of the Branch.

- The number of monthly intakes has remained relatively stable since 2004, with an average of 1,200 new intakes per month. The total number of terminations has increased from a monthly average of 1,295 in 2004 to 1,373 in 2006. However, of the total number of terminations each month, the number of clients leaving due to employment is an average of only 189 clients per month in 2006 (or 13.8% of terminations). It should be noted that the three most common reasons for termination are (1) failure to provide information (356 per month in 2006), (2) reasons categorized as "Other" (233 per month in 2006), and (3) total income verification not provided (227 per month in 2006).

- The number of clients meeting Participation Agreement (PA) criteria per month has decreased from 22,433 in 2004 to 20,691 in 2006, or 1,742 clients. The statistics also show that in 2006, 372 of the 20,691 clients who meet the PA criteria do not have one on file. As well, 4,598 clients have a PA that is overdue (the Province requires that

PAs are updated every six months). This means that 24% of clients who should have an up-to-date PA on file either do not have one or it is out of date.

Based on a review of EFA statistics, the key issues identified are as follows:

- Even though there has been a slight monthly decrease in the OW caseload since 2004, the corresponding increase in the ODSP caseload results in an increased financial pressure to the City. The basic amount of OW assistance for a single is $536 per month, whereas the basic amount of ODSP assistance for a single is $930 per month.

- The number of terminations per month due to employment is very low (189 out of 1373 total terminations per month) even though the City is spending the maximum employment funding available from the Province, almost $19 million in 2005. In addition, 24% of clients who should have an up-to-date PA on file either do not have one or it is out of date. The Participation Agreement is one of the primary tools to confirm a client's commitment to working towards employment, and assessing and tracking a client's employment activities. These employment issues are discussed later in the report in Section 3.3.5 Employment Service Delivery Model.

3.2 Summary of Issues and Observations

The Branch has demonstrated several key strengths. One of the key strengths of the Branch is the committed, forward-thinking Senior Management Team, which provides strong leadership for a Branch that must operate in a complex and challenging environment. This has also resulted in the Branch having a positive and cooperative working relationship with the Province, which was acknowledged in our meetings with provincial representatives.

Other strengths of the EFA Branch include:

- **Frequent formal communication between staff** – This included communication from management through regularly scheduled general staff meetings, district office staff meetings, email communications, and the EFA Intranet site on MOE. Some staff indicated that the communication should be clearer in terms of the direction that the Branch is heading. Issues related to inconsistencies in the interpretation of policies have been identified during the audit and are discussed more fully under Detailed Observations.

- **Focus on training for OW staff** – Many staff indicated their satisfaction with the move to modular training. The Branch's Training Committee, which is represented by all four district offices, meets regularly to discuss, analyze, and determine the training needs of OW staff.

- **Increased Focus on Performance Development Process (PDP)** – Since 2001, Senior Management has been committed to implementing the PDP across the Branch. The Branch, in consultation with Employee Services, has developed its own PDP tool for union staff. The Branch is now in the process of evaluating the implementation of the PDP to ensure consistency in the way the tool is used. There remains a requirement to increase performance monitoring of staff. This issue is discussed later in this report.

- **Good access to policies and resource information** – All staff interviewed indicated that there was adequate access to policy and resource information.

- **Focus on succession planning** – The Senior Management Team has acknowledged that many key positions in the Branch will be vacated in the next two to five years due to retirement. The Senior Management Team has recently been reorganized and two new positions have been created with the intention of developing and preparing EFA staff to qualify for positions as staff retire.

- **Good resource and budget planning** – On a monthly basis, resource levels are analysed Branch-wide to determine gaps. When required, resources are moved around within the Branch to cover off gaps and new staff are only hired when there is a demonstrated long-term need for additional resources. A review of the 2003, 2004, and 2005 EFA budgets shows that the Branch was able to manage within its budget each year.

- **Matrix approach** – The Branch has implemented a matrix approach through its committees, workgroups and initiatives, which are represented by staff across all four district offices. Capacity management is an initiative aimed at determining best practices within the Branch and ensuring that those practices are shared across district offices, where appropriate. The Staff Investment Survey Workgroup was set up to develop an implementation plan to address the issues identified in the survey developed and administered by Community and Protective Services across all branches within the Department.

- **Good controls in place for manual cheque disbursement** – The processes, procedures, and controls that are in place for manual cheque disbursement were reviewed at each of the four district offices. It was found that EFA has a Branch-wide policy on control of manual cheque disbursement and that all district offices are following the policy.

The audit has noted several areas for improvement with respect to the management control framework of the Branch. As a part of the audit, we presented and validated these areas for improvement with the EFA management team. The six key areas that require improvement are:

- **Improved role clarity for supervisor position** – The role, responsibilities, expectations, and accountabilities for the supervisor position need to be more clearly defined and communicated by the Senior Management Team and reinforced by the District Managers. There is not a consistent understanding by supervisors or staff as to what the role of the supervisor is. This has resulted in a lack of consistency in interpreting policies and administering benefits.

- **Increased performance monitoring of staff** – Many staff interviewed indicated that they do not feel that their performance is monitored and perceived a lack of accountability for performance. Based on the interviews, many staff do not have an up-to-date performance evaluation on file. As well, some staff feel that the tendency for many supervisors is to "turn a blind eye" instead of dealing with performance issues. The lack of performance monitoring makes it difficult to ensure consistent service delivery.

- **Staffing** – All supervisors indicated that the three-month probationary period is not enough time to evaluate the performance of new hires. However, it is rare that a request is made to extend the three-month probationary period to six months, which is permitted under the CUPE 503 collective agreement.

- **Training** – The focus of the Committee has been for generic OW training, however, the training requirements of other specialty groups are not considered. Family Support Workers, Residential Care Workers, and Employment Specialists would benefit from more specialized training in addition to the core OW policy and SDMT computer training that are offered on a regular and ongoing basis.

- **Continued improvement of the Employment Service Delivery Model** – The Branch implemented a new Employment Service Delivery Model in March 2006, partly in response to changes made by the Province in allocating OW employment funding. The move from activity-based funding to outcome-based funding is a major change for the City, and many staff indicated that they do not have a good understanding of this new initiative and did not fully understand the role and responsibilities of the Case Coordinators and Employment Specialists when it comes to employment. It is important to note that the success of the new outcome-based Employment Service Delivery Model will have a direct impact on the funding received from the Province in the future.

- **Increased attention to the non-mandated, non-legislated programs** – This audit reviewed the Branch's EHSS program which is 100% funded with City money, as well as the Home Help and Home Management Programs, which are both cost shared at a rate of 80/20 with the Province's Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. It was found that all three of these programs are not well understood or well accessed by staff across EFA. With the exception of EHSS 100%, information about the other programs is not contained on the Branch's Intranet site.

3.3 Summary of Audit Results by Criterion

As previously mentioned, the audit criteria used for this audit were adapted from the CICA's Criteria of Control model. The current management control framework was assessed against best practices, and not against the practices of other municipalities delivering similar programs and services.

The table below presents each of the audit criteria used to assess the management control framework and other audit objectives, and summarizes the results of the audit for each. Detailed observations in areas where there are opportunities for improvement are discussed in the sections following the table.

AUDIT CRITERIA	AUDIT RESULTS
1. Is the management control framework (MCF) for the EFA Branch appropriate?	
• Are objectives clearly defined, communicated and well understood?	Achieved
• Are policies established, communicated and well understood?	See Section 3.3.5
• Is planning well managed?	Achieved
• Are performance measures established and monitored?	See Section 3.3.2
• Is there a process for establishing HR policies and practices, including the performance appraisal system?	See Section 3.3.1
• Has authority, responsibility and accountability been defined and communicated?	See Section 3.3.1 and 3.3.2
• Is information shared openly with staff?	Achieved
• Are key communication processes in place?	Achieved
• Are the right people, skills, tools and resources in place to achieve the Branch's objectives?	See Section 3.3.3 and 3.3.4
• Is information adequate and timely to allow performance of tasks?	Achieved
• Is there coordination of decisions and actions across the organization?	See Section 3.3.1
• Are control activities designed and documented?	See Section 3.3.2
2. Are the processes and controls in place for cheque disbursement appropriate?	
• Are there policies and procedures in place to ensure that manual cheque amounts are correctly calculated?	Achieved
• Are there policies and procedures in place to ensure segregation of duties for cheque disbursement?	Achieved
• Do the cheque disbursement processes comply with policies and procedures?	Achieved
3. Are EFA's non-mandated, non-legislated programs efficient, effective, and in compliance with City policy?	

AUDIT CRITERIA	AUDIT RESULTS
• Are policies for the programs established, communicated and well understood?	See Section 3.3.6
• Is performance of the programs measured to monitor effectiveness and efficiency and improve operations?	See Section 3.3.6
• Is there consistent application of programs in terms of client eligibility?	See Section 3.3.6
• Is the administration of the programs effective and efficient?	See Section 3.3.6
4. **Is the provincial audit and control framework for the OW program comprehensive and adequate?**	
• Are the Corrective Actions Plans issued by the Province implemented in a timely and efficient manner?	Achieved
• Is the CVP process operating as an effective control?	See Section 3.3.2
• Are the annual audits of the OW files comprehensive enough to assess the effective and efficient administration of the mandatory benefits?	Achieved

3.3.1 Role Clarity

There are approximately 45 supervisors across EFA who are each responsible for managing a team of 10-12 staff (each team is generally made up of 10 Case Coordinators and 2 Verification Specialists). This means that collectively, the supervisors have a span of control over more than 400 staff, thereby making the supervisor position a critical element of the management control framework of the Branch.

Broadly speaking, the role of the supervisor is split between two important responsibilities – managing a team of 10-12 staff and portfolio responsibilities (each supervisor is assigned portfolio responsibilities to represent the various committees and workgroups within the Branch). The role of the supervisor is not consistently understood by the supervisors themselves or the staff that they manage. The approach taken by supervisors to manage their teams varies greatly as there are no standard or required management tools or controls used by supervisors. There are variations with such things as the frequency of staff meetings, completion of PDPs, random file reviews, accessibility to staff, and direction on interpreting policy and administering benefits. Some of the issues identified include:

• **Accessibility of supervisors** – Some staff reported that their supervisors are very accessible and available in the office to answer questions and provide direction. Other staff reported that they rarely see their own supervisor because they are often off site dealing with committee and portfolio responsibilities.

- **"Supervisor-Shopping"** – Many Case Coordinators and supervisors indicated that "supervisor-shopping" was a common occurrence – which means if a staff member anticipates that they will not like the response of their own supervisor, they will wait until he/she is out of the office and ask a cover-off supervisor.

- **Supervisor Training** – Responses varied when supervisors were asked about corporate training courses taken outside of EFA at the City's Learning Centre (i.e., Managing in a Unionized Environment, Leading Teams, Managing for Optimum Performance, and Developing Performance Excellence). These courses are designed specifically for City of Ottawa supervisors and managers to support staff in developing skills in performance management, coaching and mentoring, and leading teams. Some supervisors have taken some or all of the courses available to them, and others have not taken any courses offered by the Learning Centre. These courses are deemed core training requirements by the Branch but they are not mandatory for supervisors.   It is important to note that prior to becoming supervisors, the majority of supervisors were Case Coordinators within the Branch. These roles are very different as the role of the Case Coordinator is very process-oriented and the role of the supervisor is to manage and lead.

- **No Access to SAP** – Supervisors do not have access to SAP to allow them to manage absenteeism and attendance.   They are required to do manual monthly reconciliations to SAP reports from their own manual attendance records (some supervisors use a binder and paper system and others use an Excel spreadsheet).

- **Union Status** – Supervisors are CUPE 503 staff managing CUPE 503 staff. As such, it can be challenging for supervisors to deal with performance and labour relation issues. Supervisors do not have full disciplinary powers and can only issue letters of warning. The Senior Management Team has acknowledged this as an issue and is actively considering strategies to address it.

- **Administration of PDPs** – The approach used in administering the PDP varies across the Branch. Some supervisors use the tool as it was intended by meeting with staff annually to discuss performance development objectives and then scheduling meetings throughout the year to assess performance. However, many staff still do not have PDPs completed or indicated that they meet with their supervisor once to discuss it but that no follow-up meetings are conducted.

- **Information Sharing** – Previously, the Branch had a Supervisors Committee which was a forum for supervisors to meet, share information, and resolve issues. The Committee was eliminated as other committees and workgroups were identified as higher priority.

These issues around role clarity of the supervisor position have resulted in a lack of consistency in interpreting policies and administering benefits. The scope of this audit did not include a file review of SDMT client files to attempt to quantify the degree of

inconsistency in interpreting policies and administering benefits. However, an analysis of SDMT data in the following areas provides concrete examples of lack of consistency in interpreting policies and administering benefits as a significant issue in the Branch:

- **Family Support** – Cases are referred to Family Support Workers when a client is determined to be a sole support parent. The Family Support Worker assists the client to ensure reasonable effort is made to pursue support from the non-custodial parent. If the Family Support Worker determines that the client is not making a reasonable effort to pursue support, a deemed income charge is recommended (a reduction in the client's basic financial assistance equal to the amount of support not collected). The Family Support Workers make the recommendation for deemed income charges to the client's Case Coordinators, and it is the Case Coordinators who must make the adjustment to the client's basic financial assistance.

  The Family Support Unit does not monitor or track the incidents of deemed income charges and does not have reports that would identify the number of incidents by district office. However, it was identified during the interviews that the West District Office rarely adds a deemed income charge to a client's file, even when recommended by a Family Support Worker. As a result, we requested SDMT data on deemed income charges by office in order to determine whether this was a consistent practice across the Branch. The analysis showed that the West District Office actually has the highest incidents of deemed income charges. This is an example of the importance of improved performance reporting to adequately monitor the consistent delivery of the program. It is also important to note that the provincial data for 2004 and 2005 shows that Ottawa is well below the provincial average for the percentage of sole support cases with support provisions in place (20% in 2004 vs. the provincial average of 28%, and 22% in 2005 vs. the provincial average of 29%).

- **Eligibility Review** – Cases are referred to Eligibility Review Officers (ERO) when it has been identified that a client's eligibility status is in question. Once an eligibility review is complete and a client is determined to be ineligible to receive OW benefits, an ERO will terminate the client's file, except in the West District Office where the business process is different. The EROs do not terminate client files directly in the West District Office but rather make a recommendation to terminate to the client's Case Coordinator. A review of SDMT data indicates that in 2005, there were a total of 440 clients terminated by ERO's. However, of the 440 terminations, the SDMT report indicates zero (0) terminations in the West District Office, as shown in the table below. Management acknowledges that the West District Office follows a different process and does not track or monitor ERO terminations for that Office, and as a result could not determine the number of cases that have been terminated. The only way to determine the number of terminations in the West District Office as compared to the other offices would be through a manual file review.

	Central	East	South	West	Total
Total Complaints Rec'd	1,668	1,145	460	569	3,842
Terminations	245	121	74	0	440
Percentage (%) Terminated	14.7%	10.6%	16.1%	0%	11.5%

- **Community Start-Up and Maintenance Benefit (CSUM)** – During the interview process, several staff mentioned that CSUM benefits were not always administered consistently. There are no management reports available to track and monitor CSUM benefits. Therefore, we requested raw SDMT data and conducted a high-level analysis, which shows that for the period August 2004 to July 2006 (24 months), 16,304 benefits units received CSUM payments. Out of the 16,304 benefit units, 938 received over $1,500. The maximum CSUM allowable is $799 for singles and couples with dependants, and $1,500 for sole support parents and couples with dependants in a 24 month period. There are provisions in the OW policy to allow for payments over the maximum amounts if certain criteria are met (i.e., family violence, fire, and flood, as were reported incidents in the City of Ottawa in 2004 and 2005). If a CVP worker identifies a CSUM overpayment, it is noted as an overpayment due to worker error but the payment cannot be recovered from the client. There is no control in SDMT to not allow a CSUM payment over the maximum amount and the Branch does not generate a report to track CSUM payments/overpayments by benefit unit. As identified by Management, a case-by-case review would be required to determine which overpayments are legitimate. However, this is not a practical review and monitoring mechanism, and there are currently no other review or monitoring mechanisms in place to assess consistent application of CSUM payment to clients. It should be noted that CSUM is one of the higher value benefits which is open to Case Coordinator discretion and therefore, should be monitored more closely.

- During the audit, the West District Office indicated that they would be analyzing CSUM payments to verify application of the policy as potential overpayment issues were identified.

- **Participation Agreements (PAs)** – Twenty-four percent (24%) of clients who should have an up-to-date PA on file either do not have one or it is out of date. This was identified as an issue in the provincial audit and a recommendation was made to improve compliance for completing, updating, and regularly reviewing PAs. The Branch provided a management response through a Corrective Action Plan which indicates EFA will work towards implementing the recommendation.

- **SDMT notes** – There is not a consistent approach across the Branch to documenting and inputting notes in SDMT. This has been identified as an issue in the capacity

management plan, and the Branch is developing a training package for staff to address the issue.

Recommendation 1

Ensure the consistent interpretation of policies and administration of benefits across all district offices.

Management Response

Management agrees with the recommendation. For the OW Program, the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) currently tracks policy compliance through their provincial audits that result in corrective action plans that are approved and monitored. These audits also include documenting any concerns arising from overpayments of Community Start Up Benefits (CSUM). In recent provincial audits, there were no concerns raised with the administration of CSUM benefits. In relation to the auditor's concerns about the number of ERO file terminations in the West District Office, a file review was conducted that confirmed that the West District Office had the same rate of terminations as the other three offices.

In early 2007, the Branch is implementing a new database (Datamart)* that will produce enhanced management reports that will assist in the tracking of benefits and services. Any anomalies will trigger a review by the supervisor who will ensure that the payment/service is legitimate as an exception as outlined in provincial legislation or Council direction and that any corrective action is taken as required. Furthermore, in early 2007, the Branch is assessing the feasibility (need, cost, program implications, and resources) of implementing a new case review unit that would complete random sample case audits for all of the EFA programs and services.

*The Datamart is an EFA database and reporting tool that provides the Branch with the necessary reporting capacity to support performance management.

Recommendation 2

Clearly define and communicate the role, responsibilities and accountabilities of the supervisor position.

Management Response

Management agrees with the recommendation. The Branch in conjunction with Employee Services has already written and signed-off on the a new supervisor's job description, which reflects more accurately the supervisors' new responsibilities including a significant focus on performance management. This has been forwarded for scoping and rating and is expected to be complete by Q2 2007.

To further support supervisors with the changes, the Branch is also developing a detailed Performance Management Program (PMP) that will provide supervisors

with clear expectations, the required training, tools and feedback to perform their duties. The PMP was presented to the management team (supervisors and managers) in the fall of 2006. The first iteration of the program will be implemented by the Q2 2007.

Recommendation 3
Develop a "tool kit" (i.e., reports, evaluation mechanisms, core training, etc.) required to be used by all supervisors to assist them in the management of their teams.

Management Response

Management agrees with the recommendation. As part of the PMP, additional tools are being developed and implemented that will provide supervisors with the resources they need to ensure that staff achieve the program, branch and departmental goals and outcomes that have been identified. This would include additional Branch specific and corporate training, management reports, tools and supports and will be implemented by Q2 2007.

Recommendation 4
Re-instate the Supervisors Committee as a mechanism for supervisors to meet on a regular basis to share information.

Management Response

Management disagrees with the recommendation. There are already opportunities in place that support supervisor information sharing such as: weekly management team meetings; topical management committees; management specific training and development sessions; and bi annual management forums and working sessions.

3.3.2 Performance Monitoring

The observations regarding performance monitoring in EFA are directly related to the observations made in section 3.3.1 on the need to clarify the role of the supervisor. The current framework in place in the EFA Branch does not facilitate adequate performance monitoring and measurement. There are few management and administrative controls and tools available to supervisors to adequately monitor and assess the performance of staff. Although the Senior Management Team has put an emphasis on completing PDPs, this is not being done consistently across the Branch. Also, SDMT (the Province's Internet business application) does not produce specific reports related to performance monitoring to allow supervisors to assess individual performance on an ongoing basis. SDMT does produce monthly reports on EFA statistics and demographics (43 in total) that are housed on a central network directory and are available to supervisors via a desktop icon, but it is not a requirement for supervisors to use these reports as management tools. Our assessment of these reports is that supervisors do not regularly or routinely access them, and that for the most part, they do not contain meaningful

relevant performance information that allows supervisors to monitor program and employee performance.

When asked about performance monitoring, most staff feel that their work is not closely monitored. They are aware of the provincial audit every three years which reviews a sample of files. Any errors identified by the provincial audit are corrected by the Case Coordinator or worker who made the error, but there is often limited follow up action to ensure future errors are not made. It is evident that the attitude of many staff is that they do not feel that their performance is being actively monitored and that there are few consequences for poor performance. However, staff feel confident in their position and indicated that they would not welcome regular performance monitoring.

The provincial requirements for tracking and reporting on certain statistics (e.g., number of applicants, number of callers, monthly caseload, percentage of cases exiting with support income, and percentage of participants provided the various levels of employment services, etc.) have become very aggressive. As such, some staff feel that meeting the provincial statistics have become the Branch's only concern. Some staff perceive that supervisors manage by these statistics only. Unfortunately, the tracking of mandatory provincial statistics does not replace the need for performance reports and management information. As well, the provincial data and statistics would not identify inconsistencies in administering benefits across district offices as the information is generally presented at the Branch level.

There is an opportunity for the Branch to track performance through the CVP, which is a mandated process by the Province to confirm initial and ongoing eligibility of clients. The Branch has implemented the CVP function to comply with the provincial directives. However, it is a "catch and fix" process for file mistakes or oversights. In other words, when a CVP worker notes an error on the file, the CVP worker fixes the error but the error and the correction is never brought to the attention of the Case Coordinator who may have made the error. Essentially, there are no mechanisms to identify trends in errors or repeated errors made by the same employee. Most supervisors do not review CVP reports and there is no mechanism to link mistakes back to individuals.

Recommendation 5
Develop reporting and feedback mechanisms to be used to monitor and assess staff performance and accountability in order to ensure consistent application of policies.

Management Response
Management agrees with the recommendation. The implementation of other reporting and feedback mechanisms as part of the PMP (specifically the Datamart in

Q2 2007), will bolster the existing performance management framework that includes:

o provincial audits and resulting corrective action plan

o consolidated verification program (every OW file is reviewed and updated annually)

o 43 pre-determined monthly and weekly Ontario Works management reports (produced from the provincial web-based Service Delivery Technology)

o monthly reports to inform management on the progress towards specific outcomes and targets, such as:

- level of participation in employment activities (e.g. employment placements, self-employment, community placements, completed training) against MCSS Service Level Contract

- intake levels and response times

- number of terminations

- number and outcomes of ODSP referrals

- number of Consolidated Verification Reviews against MCSS target

- number and outcome of Job Specific Skills Training

Furthermore, the Branch is continuing to set expectations and provide the necessary tools and training to supervisors and Managers to ensure that they complete individual contribution agreements (PDP) with their staff.

Recommendation 6
Provide supervisors with the training and skills required to adequately manage staff.

Management Response

Management agrees with the recommendation. The supervisors' training and skill development is a work-in-progress and is evolving as the responsibilities and skills of the supervisor change. Since 2003, the supervisors have attended the following mandatory training and development sessions to increase competencies in the areas of leadership, accountability, role of a coach, effective relationships, decision-making and problem solving:

o supervisors accountability framework in a matrix management environment (2 days)

o working sessions to develop performance standards for completing the ICA (½ day)

o change management session (1 day)

o Phase One: Provincial Management Development Program (10 days)

o situational leadership and decision making training (1 day)

o dialogic model for managers (1/2 day)

o review and evaluate ICA tools (1/2 day)

o Phase Two: Management Development Program (5 days)

o refresher on system reports and screens to assess staff performance (1 day)
o performance management (1/2 day)

On a case-by-case basis, supervisors have also been encouraged to participate in the various corporate training sessions as identified either by their manager or themselves. To complement the existing training and to support the new PMP, a supervisor's training continuum is being developed to help supervisors manage in the new outcome based culture. The management team endeavours to balance the supervisors' training needs with the operational requirement of having supervisors on site to provide leadership and direction.

Recommendation 7
Through the Branch's Senior Management Team, establish and enforce a tone of accountability across the Branch.

Management Response
Management agrees with the recommendation and is committed to ensuring accountability in the Branch. The Branch has successfully achieved all of its provincial targets for employment activities, Enhanced Eligibility Review/Family Support and the Consolidated Verification Program. This success is attributable to many initiatives introduced over the past several years such as the development of accountability frameworks, setting, monitoring and correcting progress toward program specific outcomes and the provincial targets.

Management agrees that furthering accountability across the Branch is helping to ensure that provincial employment targets (outcomes to be finalized '07-'08) and other Branch objectives are met. To further clarify the expectations and outcomes, the Branch is the process of developing, in collaboration with the staff, a program-by-program outcome measures as a component of the PMP.

The Branch is also committed to the 2006 Corporate Performance Measurement and Reporting Framework as evidenced by our significant involvement in OMBI and ongoing submissions of a high number of measures for the Quarterly Performance Reports to Council.

3.3.3 Staffing
The Branch has a Staffing Committee that is responsible for coordinating the staffing of new positions. The Committee conducts the interviews and selects successful candidates for new positions, both internally and externally. Many of the staff interviewed indicated that they feel staffing in the Branch has become more transparent in recent years.

As well, there has been a significant effort by the Senior Management Team to explain to staff the complexities of the hiring process – i.e., staffing CIPP positions vs. staffing CUPE 503 positions – over the last year. The Senior Management Team has communicated with staff through a detailed presentation at general staff meetings and provided the same information on the EFA Intranet site. Many staff feel the hiring process has improved since the CUPE 503 collective agreement was changed to allow hiring of supervisors based on merit, not just seniority.

All supervisors indicated that the three-month probationary period is not enough time to evaluate the performance of new hires. However, it is rare that a request is made to extend the three-month probationary period to six months, which is permitted under the CUPE 503 collective agreement.

Also, there is also not a common standard within the Branch as to what is expected of supervisors during this 3-month probationary period. When new Case Coordinators are hired into the position, their orientation generally includes a review of local office policies and procedures as well as corporate policies and procedures (i.e., Code of Conduct, pay and benefits, Employee Assistance Program (EAP), etc.). The new Case Coordinators are also required to take one week of OW policy training and one week of SDMT computer training. However, OW policy training and SDMT computer training is sometimes not offered by the Branch at the start date of new hires. Some Case Coordinators wait weeks before the training is available and are left to observe and shadow other EFA staff, as they do not yet have the training to do their jobs as Case Coordinators.

Once they have completed the required training, the new Case Coordinators are returned to their team but there is not a consistent approach to the oversight or orientation of new hires at this point. Some supervisors indicated that they pair the new Case Coordinator up with other Case Coordinators and let them job shadow for a period before giving them a reduced caseload. Other supervisors indicated that they give new Case Coordinators a reduced caseload right away and try to closely monitor performance. Some Case Coordinators indicated that supervisors are very busy with other Branch responsibilities and are not often around to mentor and monitor new staff, and it becomes the team's responsibility.

Recommendation 8
Use a consistent approach during the three-month probationary period for new hires to ensure that new hires are adequately and consistently mentored, monitored and assessed by supervisors.

Management Response

Management agrees with the recommendation. By the end of Q4 2007, the Branch will deliver clear messaging about expectations, and will develop and implement tools to ensure that an assessment of new staff is done consistently. This will include a how to use the newly completed code of conduct companion guide that assists managers and supervisors in explaining in very clear terms how the code of conduct applies to EFA.

Recommendation 9

Extend the three-month probationary period to six months (as allowed under the terms of the CUPE 503 collective agreement) when it is determined that more time is necessary to assess performance.

Management Response

Management agrees with the recommendation. As per recommendation #8, with the systematic application of an assessment tool and clearer expectations of how to monitor newly hired staff's performance, supervisors will be better able to identify the need for, on an as needed basis, the extension of the probationary period based on an assessment of performance.

Recommendation 10

Coordinate OW policy training and SDMT computer training with start date of new hires.

Management Response

Management agrees with the recommendation. It is an important practice to ensure efficiencies by deploying trained staff as early as possible and by maximizing the number of trainees per session. For these reasons, the EFA Branch, in collaboration with Employee Services, has developed an efficient staffing process of batching competitions by positions thereby permitting the scheduling of training to coincide with the start dates of most new hires. In those instances where there may be a short gap between hires, EFA Centres have other orientation and short-term training approaches that help staff prepare for the core training.

3.3.4 Training

The Branch is committed to continually identify and address the training needs of staff. It has a well-established Training Committee which is governed by a very detailed and comprehensive terms of reference. The terms of reference states that a part of the Committee's mandate is "to develop, deliver and/or coordinate a training curriculum for all programs and positions". However, the focus of the Committee has been for generic OW training. The training requirements of other specialty groups are not considered. Both Family Support Workers and Residential Care Workers indicated that

they would benefit from more specialized training in addition to the core OW policy and SDMT computer training that are offered on a regular and ongoing basis.

Also, the majority of Employment Specialists are former Case Coordinators. However, once they become Employment Specialists, they do not receive employment-focused training. Their orientation includes job shadowing and on-the-job learning. All Employment Specialists interviewed indicated that they would benefit from targeted employment training.

Finally, there is no training or re-fresher training available for staff on the City's EHSS 100% Program. Many staff interviewed indicated that they were not familiar with the details of this program. Even the Crisis Workers who regularly administer benefits under this program indicated that they do not receive refresher training and that they interpret the policy based on their own judgement and understanding of the program.

Recommendation 11

Develop an internal training package for newly hired Employment Specialists to ensure they receive adequate skills training to be effective in their new role.

Management Response

Management agrees in principle with the recommendation. In the case of the Employment Specialists (ES) they play a similar role to the Case Coordinators (CC) in that they both deliver employment and financial assistance to varying degrees. The CCs have a larger focus on financial eligibility/assistance as well as managing the employment requirements of clients who have been on social assistance for less than 12 months and those not referable to ES but who remain active on their caseloads.

The ES' specialize in the delivery of employment programs and services but also have financial responsibility to determine eligibility for certain benefits. As such OW Policy and Procedure and SDMT/ systems training is provided to staff in both positions. ESs also receives generic Branch training and refreshers as identified in recommendation #13. The Service Delivery Model training planned for early 2007 (see recommendation #15) will also benefit the ES. In Q4 2008, once the training is complete and the outcome measures and corresponding changes to the Service Delivery Model have been introduced, EFA will consult with the Employment Specialist to determine if there is a training gap.

Recommendation 12

Provide periodic refresher training on the City EHSS 100% program to ensure that the policy and administration of this program is well understood across the Branch.

Management Response

Management agrees with the recommendation. EFA will be reviewing its EHSS 100% program in Q4 2007 to assess the benefits of centralizing the services with a specialized team. Once the review is complete, refresher training will be provided to those who deliver the program.

Recommendation 13

Expand the mandate of the Training Committee to address the training needs of all EFA staff, not just the training needs of staff delivering the OW program.

Management Response

Management agrees with the recommendation. The training committee coordinates core/generic Branch training while the leads/managers of the various pilots and smaller programs are responsible for the coordination of their specialized training. In 2006, centralizing training began for all staff in the SAP training database and at this time have recorded almost 2000 entries by individual, program, type of training and hours. EFA will continue to populate this list and ensure that it reflects training from all sources including those that are provided to specialties such as from the Province, the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association and community agencies. This information and the subsequent analysis of the data will permit the Branch to better understand the training needs of all staff.

3.3.5 Employment Service Delivery Model

As stated previously, the Branch implemented a new Employment Service Delivery Model in March 2006, partly in response to the provincial change in calculating OW employment funding. In the past, individual client *activities* were counted towards employment funding but under the new model, funding will be tied to employment *outcomes* that clients achieve, specifically employment, increased earnings, and increased employability. Under the previous provincial program for employment, EFA consistently met (and in many cases exceeded) the targets set by the Province for clients in employment activities. As these targets were tied to funding for employment programs, EFA received the maximum funding available each year. Under the new outcome-based employment program, EFA will have to meet different targets set by the Province in order to receive funding for the employment programs. The year 2007 is considered to be a transition year and the Province will continue to provide previously established employment funding until 2008, at which time employment funding will be determined by the City's ability to meet the newly defined employment outcomes.

We recognize that the focus of EFA to date in terms of employment measures has been around employment activities (versus employment) as this was how the Province allocated funding and, to some extent, measured the success of the program. Therefore,

EFA has not emphasised employment, or tracking and reporting on employment statistics. Given that the Province is changing to an outcome-based approach to be fully implemented in 2008, a change in focus for employment outcomes will be required. It is therefore important to assess where the employment program is currently in terms of employment outcomes, as a starting point under the new model. Our analysis shows that employment statistics for 2006 for the Branch indicate that of the 1,373 clients exiting OW each month, only 189 clients (13.8%) are exiting due to employment. Some of the other reasons for exiting include failure to provide information (356), income verification not provided (227), and granted ODSP (114). Provincial data for 2004 also shows that Ottawa was well below the provincial average for exits to employment. For Ottawa, 8.42% of the caseload exited due to employment (either voluntarily withdrew or income precludes) while the provincial average was 11.37% (2004 Data Resource Guide). Provincial data for 2005 and 2006 to-date show exits to employment for Ottawa increased to 19.16% and 23.46% respectively, with the provincial average at 20.2%. However, Management has acknowledged that provincial data is not reliable and that "there is a general consensus at the provincial and municipal level that the actual number of participants exiting for reasons of employment is significantly under-represented across the Province as participants do not call to provide their reasons for leaving". Therefore, if provincial data is not reliable, and EFA does not have a mechanism for tracking this data, it becomes difficult to assess the current cost effectiveness of the Employment Service Delivery Model, and gauge whether the model is designed to effectively respond to the change to outcome-based funding. It should be noted that EFA undertook two point-in-time surveys to capture "reasons for leaving OW" data but this data is not captured or monitored on an ongoing basis.

Although the Branch is not required to seek the maximum earned provincial funding for employment programs and services, under the activity-based funding model, the Branch has received this maximum (cost shared at a rate of 80/20). In 2005, EFA spent almost $19 million (including $2.2 million of 100% federal funding) on employment programs which, based on the provincial data available, resulted in 2,268 incidents of clients exiting OW due to employment.

The Branch has struggled with the implementation of the Employment Service Delivery Model, in part due to lack of role clarity between Case Coordinators and Employment Specialists. The lack of communication and a positive working relationship has existed for many years under various employment models. Under the new Employment Service Delivery Model for the Branch, one of the guiding principles is that "everyone is responsible for employment outcomes". In broad terms, the delivery of the OW program is divided between financial assistance (or income maintenance) and employment. There are two distinct groups that deal with delivering these aspects of the program. Case Coordinators are responsible for financial assistance and

employment for those clients who are on assistance for less than 12 months or for clients who are not appropriate to be referred to Employment Specialists. Employment Specialists provide more intensive employment supports and also issue financial assistance. However, it is apparent that many staff do not have a good understanding of the employment support model and do not fully understand the role and responsibilities of the Case Coordinator versus the Employment Specialist under the new model. The Branch, to date, has been unable to create an atmosphere where these two roles are mutually understood and respected, and are able to work together to serve the needs of the client.

Moving from activity-based funding to outcome-based funding is a major change for the City and it is yet to be determined what the funding implications of these changes will be. This change, coupled with the internal challenges of role clarity and communication, make it critical that the Branch closely monitor the implementation and ongoing effectiveness of the Employment Service Delivery Model to ensure it is achieving its objectives. It will be important for the Branch to incorporate these new outcome-based measures into the City's Quarterly Performance Report rather than the activity-based measures currently included in the report so that the effectiveness of the new model can be adequately monitored.

In determining the most effective model for providing employment programs, it is important to recognize that many of the OW clients being served may have one or multiple barriers to employment (i.e., lack of skills, many years out of the work force, mental health issues, addiction issues, etc.). Therefore, with the current employment statistics, the Branch should be reassessing the cost effectiveness of its employment support model on an ongoing basis. Many employment services are available to OW clients and non-OW clients in Ottawa through various other agencies (e.g., Manpower, HRSDC, Northern Lights, Experica, etc.). Many of these agencies offer similar services to the services provided by the EFA employment support program. As a result, the Branch should be examining whether other approaches could allow the City to spend less on employment programs and services by increasing the partnerships with these other agencies, while still achieving the same (or improved) employment statistics.

Recommendation 14

Evaluate and assess the implementation of the new Employment Service Delivery Model to ensure its future effectiveness, including the development of performance measurement targets.

Management Response

Management agrees with the recommendation. The Employment Service Delivery Model is and will continue to be a work-in-progress. The need to evaluate and assess our performance is necessary to respond to the ever-changing mandate/directives of

the Province.   Under the previous Act, (General Welfare Assistance) there was no performance funding components to the program.   With the proclamation of the Ontario Works Act in 1997, municipalities were mandated to provide a very specific list of employment activities for clients to participate in for which funding would be provided.   Municipalities were required to submit a yearly service agreement that specified the targets to be met with the corresponding funding levels based on the number of individuals participating by type of activity.   Each year there would be changes either to, the funding, the type of employment activities to be delivered or the directives.

More significant changes are being introduced in 2006 and 2007, as MCSS will be shifting from funding clients who are taking part in employment <u>activities</u> to funding clients who achieve employment <u>outcomes</u>.   This will include outcomes such as clients having more earnings, more clients leaving for employment and lastly 80% will be based on outcomes related to increasing a client's employability.   The latter is in recognition that many clients have barriers and need to increase their basic competencies if they are to successfully exit social assistance.   It is not expected that this provincial initiative will be fully implemented until 2008.   The work to be completed is the finalizing of the outcomes, identifying the measures, developing the necessary valid reports, and confirming the funding model.   In response to the evolving provincial direction, the Employment Service Delivery Model continues to undergo constant evaluation and adjustments.

Recommendation 15

Improve the working relationship between Case Coordinators and Employment Specialists through increased communication and training.

Management Response

Management agrees with the recommendation.   Before 2000, employees delivering employment programs were at different sites than those delivering financial assistance.   The EFA Branch has since integrated employment and financial services in each of the four existing sites (previously 9 sites) as a one point of service strategy. This as well as other Branch initiatives, has significantly improved the understanding and acceptance of each other's roles and responsibilities.

Furthermore, with the new Service Delivery Model, more clarification and details will be provided specific to expectations and contributions toward outcomes (four training modules will be delivered in 2007).   As previously stated in recommendation #14, there will be ongoing reviews of the model with a focus on enhanced communication and further opportunities for integration.

Recommendation 16

Develop an exit interview process to collect data on clients terminating OW due to employment to identify which employment programs and initiatives are leading to desired outcomes.

Management Response

Management agrees with recommendation. Over the past year, the Branch has piloted a termination checklist and process (includes contacting participants who have likely exited for employment reasons) in two of its four sites with favourable results. Therefore EFA will introduce this termination approach consistently across the Branch in Q3 2007.The Branch also has other mechanisms such as outcome measures by program, an employment readiness tool and questionnaires/surveys. This composite approach to gathering data all contribute to the identification of which employment programs and initiatives are successful.

Recommendation 17

Link the new outcome-based measures to the City's Quarterly Performance Report.

Management Response

Management agrees with the recommendation. The Ministry of Community and Social Services introduced performance-based funding in the early 2000's by setting targets related to clients participating in employment-related activities (i.e. job search, training and education, employment placements, community placements). Since 2002 the EFA Branch has consistently met its targets as contracted between the City and the Province in the yearly Ontario Works Service Plan. Between 2006 and the end of 2007, the Province will be finalizing new measures and reports that will be employment outcome based. One aspect of finalizing these measures, is improving the integrity of the reports as this was tabled as an issue. As a result the Province has created a joint Data Integrity Workgroup that is working on improving the reports. As these measures (pertaining to approximately 22,000 participants improving in the areas of earnings, employment and employability), are released in 2007, EFA will build them into the various reporting documents including the City's Quarterly Performance Report.

3.3.6 Non-Mandated/Non-Legislated Programs

OW is the largest program administered by the Branch, which is mandated by the Province. Three of the Branch's smaller social assistance programs, which are non-mandated, include:

Essential Health and Social Supports (EHSS) 100%:
- Funded 100% by the City

- 2005 gross budget of $1.6 million

- Provides health related supplies and essential household items issued to low-income residents not on social assistance

Home Help Program:
- Cost shared at a rate of 80/20 with Ministry of Health and Long-term Care

- 2005 gross budget of $2.2 million

- Provides homemaking services (approximately 2.5 hours per week) to support independent living arrangements for OW, ODSP, and low/fixed income clients

Home Management Program:
- Cost shared at a rate of 80/20 with Ministry of Health and Long-term Care

- 2005 gross budget of $1.2 million

- Provides housekeeping and respite childcare to OW and ODSP clients, as well as individual and group teaching services (i.e., parenting effectiveness, budgeting, cooking skills, collective kitchens and other homemaking topics) to OW, ODSP, and low-income clients

For all three of these programs, it was identified that there is no formal policy review process, and in the case of EHSS 100% the policy has not been reviewed and updated since 1999. Also, these programs are not subject to any provincial audit process and there is no formal file review process to ensure the benefits are administered in compliance with the policies and to assess ongoing eligibility of clients.

Specifically for EHSS (100%), a total of 71 files (out of approximately 1,100) were reviewed (East - 13, South - 12, West - 16, Central - 15, Rochester - 15) and it was found that file numbering and coding of files was not the same across district offices and in one district office, 30 files had to be requested to review 16 as staff had difficulty locating files. It was also found that in the district offices, many of the physical files lacked supporting documentation (i.e., quotes, prescriptions, invoices, etc.) to support information entered into the RSVP computer system. Other issues identified include:

- Lack of consistency in the notes entered into RSVP (the City's system to Record Services and Verify Payments for vendor and vouchers payments). Some client files are very detailed; others contain only one or two lines of information making it very difficult to determine the justification for the benefit; and others say "refer to SDMT notes". The EHSS 100% does not contain specific guidelines as to the level of documentation required on file.

- The EHSS 100% policy states "once payment of the arrears takes place, the applicant is no longer eligible to receive subsequent arrears payments in the future unless

approved by a District Manager". Six (6) out of 56 files, or 11%, indicated multiple arrear payments for rent and/or utilities had been paid out to clients.

- Eighteen (18) out of 56 files, or 32%, did not have financial eligibility forms or had incomplete eligibility forms on file.

For the Home Help program, 15 files were reviewed and were found to be generally in good order.

For the Home Management Services Program, a number of inefficiencies were identified. Twelve Home Management Counsellors are located in 12 community centres across Ottawa. The City is required to pay a total of approximately $27,365 in rent annually to have staff located in these centres. Even though staff are City employees and report to an EFA supervisor located at Rochester Street, they also have a quazi-reporting relationship to Executive Directors of the community centres. As such, Home Management Counsellors spend a significant portion of their time involved in community centre activities and staff meetings. There is a lack of performance accountability for Home Management Counsellors as they only meet with Program Managers once every one to two months.

Home Management Counsellors have computers available to them in the community centres but they only have dial-up computer access to City email and do not have access to SDMT or RSVP, the two fundamental EFA systems used to assess eligibility and administer social assistance benefits. Therefore, Home Management Counsellors are not able to check client histories and determine eligibility directly. All intakes, time reporting and benefit determinations are done manually, and the information is mailed or faxed to Rochester Street for data entry. It was also identified that there is no financial eligibility test done for clients. It is simply assumed that if they are using the services of the community centre, that they are financially eligible for Home Management Services.

In addition, Home Management Counsellors have a comparatively low caseload of 15-20 clients per months (as compared to the caseload of a Case Coordinator at 120 clients) and there is a low volume of referrals from other EFA staff. As such, there are opportunities to better utilize these resources.

Recommendation 18
Develop a process to review and update (if necessary) policies for EHSS 100%, Home Help and Home Management programs on a regular basis.

Management Response:
Management agrees with the recommendation. The Branch began a policy and procedure review of the EHSS Program in 2006 and will build into a review of Home

Help and Home Management workplan. To ensure that this is completed on a regular basis, EFA will build in a bring-forward mechanism to indicate that a general review is due on one of the programs based on a staggered four-year cycle. The mechanism will be in place by Q3 2007.

Recommendation 19

Provide complete information on EHSS 100%, Home Help and Home Management programs on the EFA Intranet site.

Management Response

Management agrees with the recommendation. The EFA Branch has one of the largest Intranet sites in the corporation. The site provides frontline staff with an efficient self-serve mechanism to access the provincial and municipal information and tools they need on a daily basis to complete their tasks. Once a review of the programs mentioned above has been completed, EFA will ensure that the information is posted on the Intranet. The Branch will continue to post all documentation related to all of its programs on the Intranet.

Recommendation 20

Develop a file review function for EHSS 100%, Home Help and Home Management programs to ensure ongoing integrity and compliance.

Management Response

Management agrees with the recommendation. An additional mechanism is required to review the EHSS, Home Help and Home Management Programs. As stated in recommendation #1, the Branch is considering the implementation of a new case review unit that would complete random sample case audits on all of the EFA programs and services. The determination of the value of this function will be completed in Q4 2007

Recommendation 21

Review the Home Management Program and explore organizational changes (e.g., centralization of Home Management Counsellors in the EFA district offices) to maximize staff utilization and value to the community.

Management Response:

Management agrees with the recommendation. One possible outcome of a review of the Home Management Program would be to relocate the Home Management Counsellors in the EFA Centres. Therefore, in collaboration with the stakeholders, EFA will conduct a review of the existing program in Q4 2007 and will introduce any required changes to ensure a cost effective and efficient service delivery model.

Recommendation 22

Develop an assessment tool to determine financial eligibility for Home Management Services.

Management Response

Management disagrees with the recommendation. An assessment tool for the Home Management program already exists. The vast majority of residents receiving home management services are ODSP and OW clients. The assessment tool used for those who are not in receipt of social assistance (low income) is the same as the one used to assess low-income applicants for the Home Help Program.

4   CONCLUSION

Overall, the EFA Branch meets many of the criteria used to assess the management control framework of the Branch, but needs to focus efforts to ensure all criteria are met. The Branch has come a long way in strengthening social assistance programs. Compared to past years, there are now better controls for assessing initial and ongoing eligibility and disbursing benefits.

However, the management control framework needs to be strengthened to ensure performance accountability for all levels of staff and consistency in program delivery. This audit has identified several areas where there is a lack of consistency in interpreting policies and administering benefits across district offices. As such, the Branch needs to focus more attention on clearly defining the role of the supervisor, as it is a critical role in the management of the organization, and ensuring appropriate oversight of staff. There are real challenges to managing in a unionized environment however, union collective agreements do not preclude the Branch from establishing performance measures, using tools to regularly monitor performance, and holding staff accountable for poor performance. These are common functions of good management.

The Branch needs to address the issues with the Employment Service Delivery Model to ensure employment objectives set by the Province and the City are being met in a cost-effective manner.

The Branch's Senior Management Team has already identified many of the observations outlined in this report as issues. It is now time for the Senior Management Team to act on these recommendations to ensure that the management control framework of the Branch is strengthened.

5 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We wish to express our appreciation for the cooperation and assistance afforded the audit team by Management.

Also, we appreciate the time taken by provincial staff at the Ministry of Community and Social Services to meet with us at the outset of this audit.

ANNEX A: EFA Programs and Services

OW, which is the largest social assistance program delivered by the EFA Branch, provides employment and financial assistance to eligible persons in temporary financial need. Basic financial assistance and benefits are cost-shared with the municipalities, also known as Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs). At a high level, the main components of the program are outline in Figure 1: High Level Overview of Ontario Works, on the following page.

In addition to basic OW, there are "specialty" teams of Case Coordinators that carry a caseload of clients with targeted needs, such as:

- Learning, Earning and Parenting (LEAP) – LEAP is a mandated program aimed at helping young parents aged 16-21 years old to complete their education and help them and their children become self-reliant. Participation in LEAP is a requirement of OW for 16 and 17 year old parents who have not completed their high school education. They must also participate in the three elements of LEAP (learning, earning, and parenting/child development). Parents aged 18-21 years old on OW who have not completed high school are not required to participate in LEAP but are encouraged to do so.

- Employment Youth Assistance Program (EYAP) – EYAP is a non-mandated program (by the Province) targeted at singles aged 16-21 years old to help them finish high school and gain employment.

- Addiction Services Initiative (ASI) – This is a new provincially funded initiative to address the needs of clients suffering from addiction, which result in barriers to employment. Clients who self-disclose their addiction are referred to an ASI Case Coordinator who works with the client to develop a treatment plan, makes referrals to specialized information sessions, and collaborates with the addiction service community in Ottawa.

- Residential Care – Case Coordinators whose clients reside in Domiciliary Hostel facilities that are subsidized by the City. These are EFA staff that are funded by the Housing Branch. Clients in these facilities are generally elderly and/or suffer from mental illness.

Figure 1: High Level Overview of Ontario Works

Application Screening Unit (ASU)

A potential client calls the centralized Application Screen Unit (ASU). The ASU conducts a preliminary eligibility assessment over the phone by asking a series of scripted questions. If the person passes the preliminary eligibility assessment, he/she is booked into a mandatory Information Session at one of the four EFA Centres (EFACs), depending on their home address. Clients are told at this time of all the information and documentation that is required to be submitted during the intake interview, and that if the information is not provided, eligibility will not be granted.

Information Session

Information Sessions are conducted at all EFACs. Clients are given a detailed overview of the OW program, information and documentation requirements. For clients with mobility issues who cannot attend the sessions or for clients whose first language is not English, alternate arrangements are made to provide this information.

Intake Interview

Clients are given appointments with Case Coordinators for an Intake Interview. All the required information and documentation is required to submitted at this time and the Case Coordinator determines eligibility.

Participation Agreement (PA)

All clients who meet the criteria are required to sign a Participation Agreement (PA) which outlines the activities they will engage in to work towards employment (i.e., job search, skills and language training, workshops, volunteer and community placements, etc.). The PA is to be updated every six months.

Referral to Employment Specialist

The Branch implemented a new Employment Service Delivery Model in April 2006. The new model stipulates that once clients have been on assistance for 12 months, and meet the referral criteria, they are referred to an Employment Specialist. The Employment Specialist is responsible for the employment portion of the OW file and provides more target assistance in helping the client move towards employment. The Case Coordinator is still responsible for maintaining the financial assistance portion of the OW file.

Terminating Assistance / Closing File

A file is closed when it is determined that a client is no longer eligible for assistance or does not have sufficient information to determine eligibility. A client may no longer be eligible due to income, assets, non-compliance, or other eligibility factors.

Job Retention Services

The Branch has implemented Job Retention Services for clients who leave OW due to finding employment. Job Retention Workers continue to work with clients to provide the supports necessary to transition back to the workforce.

Consolidated Verification Process (CVP) – Mandated function to review OW files for ongoing eligibility. Files for review are automatically determined by SDMT based on "flags" built into the application. All files are reviewed and updated at least once every 12 months.

Eligibility Review – Mandated function to investigate and report on suspected incidences of fraud.

Family Support – Mandated function to ensure that OW clients who are sole support parents are making all reasonable efforts to seek support payments from the non-custodial parent.

Other programs delivered by the Branch include:

- **Essential Health and Social Supports (EHSS) 100**% – Provides health related supplies and essential household items issued to low-income residents not on social assistance. The 2005 gross budget amount for this program was $1.6 million and is funded 100% by the City.

- **Home Help Program** – Provides homemaking services (approximately 2.5 hours per week) to support independent living arrangements for OW, ODSP, and low/fixed income clients. The 2005 gross budget amount for this program was $2.2 million and is cost shared at a rate of 80/20 with Ministry of Health and Long-term Care.

- **Home Management Program** – Provides housekeeping and respite childcare to OW and ODSP clients, as well as individual and group teaching services (i.e., parenting effectiveness, budgeting, cooking skills, collective kitchens and other homemaking topics) to OW, ODSP, and low-income clients. The 2005 gross budget amount for this program was $1.2 million and is cost shared at a rate of 80/20 with Ministry of Health and Long-term Care.

The Branch is also responsible for cost sharing on an 80/20 basis the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), which is administered by the Province. ODSP provides income and employment supports to people with disabilities.