



#WaitingToBelong

Pre-Budget Submission Engagement Toolkit

November 2024

Pre-Budget Consultation Tool Kit November 2024

Objective

For more than a year the Developmental Services (DS) sector has actively campaigned for more funding through the **#5ToSurvive campaign** to provide sector stabilisation to DS agencies by adding a 5% increase to agency base budgets.

This resulted in the 2024 Ontario Budget, tabled in March 2024, announcing **\$310 Million** over three years would be provided to community organisations funded by the Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services, including those in Developmental Services. This translated to a one-time increase of approximately **3%** to base allocations.

In a June 2024 webinar, OASIS, Community Living Ontario, and Community Living Toronto urged our members and the sector as a whole to continue engaging with local MPPs throughout the summer through local community activities, such as barbecues, using engagement tool kits as a guide in order to make it easier to build personal relationships in a less formal setting and keep DS front of mind for MPPs.

Now, as we move into the **#WaitingtoBelong** campaign, with the Legislature resuming, and the Fall Economic Statement having been tabled, we are encouraging members to take part in the **Pre-Budget Consultation process**.

This guide outlines the steps to help agencies and other parties to participate in the pre-budget consultation process and effectively raise our sector's issues through these engagements.

Pre-Budget consultations are important in any year. However, given that it appears there will be an early election in Ontario, potentially as soon as this Spring, raising our issues publicly for a Budget that may be the basis of an election platform is much more significant.

The Pre-Budget Consultation process is crucial for conveying the sector's priorities and your specific needs from a local perspective. It further underscores that the needs of people with developmental disabilities, their families, and the agencies supporting them remain a focus for the Government.

Overview of the Pre-Budget Submission Process:

The Government of Ontario holds consultations in advance of each provincial budget to gather feedback from various sectors, including non-profits, community organisations, businesses, and the public. This is an opportunity to raise issues and propose recommendations for how the provincial budget can best address pressing needs.

Who is Involved?

- **Ontario Ministry of Finance:** Responsible for the preparation of the provincial budget, including gathering and reviewing public submissions.
- **Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs (SCFEA):** This committee also reviews submissions and may invite stakeholders to present their recommendations.
- **MPPS:** Local Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs) and government ministers, such as the Minister of Finance, often engage with sectors, organisations and individuals directly during consultations

Consultation Announcement: The government usually announces pre-budget consultations in the autumn or early winter. The Ministry of Finance Consultations for 2025 launched on **Thursday, 14th November**. Written submissions are being accepted until **February 3, 2025**. More details, including public consultations, will be published as they become available. on the Ministry of Finance's 2025 Consultation website, which can be found [HERE](#). There is also currently a survey available through the Ministry of Finance which can be found [HERE](#). this webpage

No such page has been made available through SCFEA yet, however please review the Committee website [HERE](#) to see when consultations and notice of hearings are made available.

Types of Submissions:

- **Written Submissions:** These are the most common form of participation, and organisations typically submit detailed documents addressing their budget priorities.
- **Verbal Presentations/Public Hearings:** In addition to written submissions, there may be public hearings or town halls. Organisations may be invited to present at public hearings or consultations. They can be in-person or virtual and provide a chance for organisations to present their submissions directly to the Ministry or committees. Presentations are typically short (5-10 minutes), and it's important to use this time to clearly articulate key priorities. These dates will also be made available through the websites.
- **Online Surveys:** Occasionally, there may be surveys or digital forms for submitting feedback. These often ask for more general or high-level responses.

Submission Deadlines: Typically, the submission window lasts from late fall to early winter (October - January). As mentioned, submissions are now being accepted until Written submissions are being accepted until **February 3, 2025**. Check the Ministry of Finance website linked above for other deadlines as they become available.

Submitting Your Proposal: On the websites linked above, there is a link to an online web portal where you can either upload your entire document or complete a fillable form. The portal can also be found [HERE](#).

Telling Your Story in the Pre-Budget Submission Process:

Your Voice is Vital! Engaging in the pre-budget process requires clear planning and effective communication from a local perspective. Here are some key tips to effectively participate.

a. Understand the Context

Before drafting a Pre-Budget Submission, organisations should take the time to familiarise themselves with the submissions prepared by **OASIS** and **Community Living Ontario**. This will ensure that your submission will represent the broader needs of the developmental services sector, and help the sector have a unified position that strengthens the case for increased support.

b. Focus on Key Local Issues

Whilst aligning with sector-wide priorities, it's also important for each agency or advocate to highlight their own **specific needs** and the unique challenges faced in their local communities. This combination will provide a more compelling and comprehensive narrative to government. Organisations and other constituents all have numerous issues they face, the pre-budget submission should focus on a few key, high-impact areas to ensure that their message is clear and their proposals are achievable.

c. Be Clear and Concise

Budget submissions are often reviewed by public servants and legislators who may not be experts in developmental services. Be sure to articulate your points in simple, non-technical language.

Consider starting with an executive summary that highlights the key issues and recommendations in bullet-point form.

TEMPLATE PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION

Outlined below is a template that you can use to craft your own Pre-Budget Submission to send to the Ministry of Finance and the Standing Committee on Financial and Economic Affairs, as well as use as the basis for any presentations or meetings around Budget Consultations. Your submission should clearly and as succinctly as possible outline the purpose and importance of the issues you're trying to highlight, as well as suggested solutions.

COVER PAGE

On any cover page, please use the following:

- *Logo & Name of your Organisation, Network, etc.*
- *Title of your Proposal and sub-heading (i.e., A Pre-Budget Submission to the Government of Ontario)*
- *Date of Submission (can be just the month submitted)*

1. **INTRODUCTION:**

This should consist of two parts:

- I. A Brief introduction to your organisation/network/etc.; and*
- II. An outline of your key points.*

Provide a short introduction to your organisation/network/etc., its mission, and the specific services and/or supports you offer. Include the scope of your work (e.g., number of individuals supported, geographic area, services provided).

This should be followed by a brief outline of the key points of your submission, including the main issue(s) and the specific funding requests or policy changes you are proposing.

This introduction should not be long, a page or a page and a half at most.

2. **Context and Current Challenges**

Identify and describe the key challenges facing the Developmental Services sector, issues such as funding shortages, staffing challenges, long waitlists, service accessibility, and the impact on people with developmental disabilities and their families. Be sure to thank the provincial government for including a 3% base budget increase in last year's budget, but also highlight the ongoing needs of the sector and how much the cost of living has increased. For agencies, it will be important to focus on cutbacks that have been needed due to lack of base funding for decades (i.e., reduction of staff, reduction of services etc.)

Be sure to use similar language and point to issues and solutions highlighted by OASIS and Community Living Ontario, including the need to end waitlists and providing direct support to people and families alongside sustained agency funding, the need for a sustainable and stable workforce and having more options for housing. However, at the same time, providing your own relevant local information will only help to illustrate the severity of these challenges.

3. Provide Budget Solutions

For each issue, provide:

- **Specific Recommendation:** State exactly what you are requesting from the government (e.g., increased funding, ending the waitlists, changes to funding formula, new programmes, more housing, more labour resources, etc. Again, use Community Living Ontario and OASIS' information as a guide).
- **Anticipated Impact:** Explain the positive outcomes that could result from the proposed changes (e.g., reduced waitlists, improved quality of life for people with developmental disabilities, long-term savings to other sectors such as Health, Justice, and Long-Term Care).

4. Conclusion

The conclusion should reiterate your issues and proposed solutions.

You should emphasize your willingness to collaborate with the provincial government to implement these recommendations effectively.

Thank the government for considering your submission and offer to provide further information or meet in person.

5. Contact Information

If you haven't already listed it, you should include at the end of your submission

- *Name of the primary contact person(s)*
- *Position(s) and organisation/network name*
- *Email address and phone number*

Following Up Actions after Submission:

- **Engage with MPPs:** After making a budget submission, follow up by sharing it with your local Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP). Offer to meet with them to brief them on the submission and request their support.
- **Public Hearings:** Even after making your submission, make sure to continue to monitor opportunities for presentations at Public Hearings. If invited to present:
 - **Confirm Your Invitation:** If invited, ensure you confirm your participation and ask for details about the format (in-person, virtual) and time allocation (usually 5-10 minutes per presentation).
 - **Be Concise and Impactful:** Present a high-level summary of your written submission, emphasizing your most pressing recommendations. Use stories, data, and personal testimonies to make a compelling case.
 - **Questions:** During your presentation, Be prepared for questions and ensure you can respond succinctly, reinforcing the key points of your submission. Respond to any calls for additional input or consultations.
 - **Thank the Committee:** If you are chosen to present at SCFEA, after your presentation, send a follow-up email via the Clerk of the Committee (**Vanessa Kattar**, scfea@ola.org), thanking the committee for their time and reiterating your key recommendations. Provide any additional information they may have requested or that you think could support your case.

Utilizing Media and Social Media to Amplify Your Story: Extend Your Reach Beyond the Submission


While the formal Pre-Budget Submission is important, don't overlook the power of **media** and **social media** to help amplify your message. These platforms will further tell your story, raise awareness, and generate public support for the sector's Pre-Budget Asks:

Media Coverage: *If you have the opportunity to share your story through local news, press releases, or interviews, take it. Journalists are often looking for compelling human-interest stories, and your submission could be a great opportunity for media coverage.*

Teresa Kruze, who spearheaded our #5TOSURVIVE Media Campaign is working with us once again and is a resource you can access. Contact her at tkruze@rogers.com if you need assistance, help or coaching with any television, radio or print opportunities.

We are also looking for stories we might share in the media from all regions for #WaitingToBelong in the coming months. [HERE](#) is the link to the story submission platform. These stories will be integral to our success in the coming months in getting our voices and concerns heard with our local MPPs and at Queen's Park.

Social Media: *Once you've made your submission, leverage platforms like X, Instagram and Facebook to share key points from your submission, personal stories, and calls to action. Use hashtags and tag relevant MPPs or organisations to increase visibility. The below posts are just suggestions based on the new #WaitingToBelong campaign. Please feel free to adjust the text to better suit your agency or network's tone and the specific submission details or create your own original post. You may also download the suggested graphics using the links provided.*

Tile	Caption
 <p>50,000 People are Waiting To Belong</p> <p>Currently, over 50,000 adults with intellectual disabilities are waiting for services in Ontario.</p> <p>#WaitingToBelong</p> <p>COMMUNITY LIVING Ontario oasis</p> <p>Download image here: Tile 1.png</p>	<p>Long version</p> <p>Yes, it's true—over 50,000 adults with developmental disabilities are currently on the waitlist for services in Ontario. This number will continue to grow unless the Ontario government takes urgent action to address their needs.</p> <p>Help us raise awareness by reposting and using the hashtag #WaitingToBelong</p> <p>#WaitingToBelong #OntarioGovernment #DSsector</p> <p>Short version</p> <p>50,000+ adults with developmental disabilities are currently on the waitlist for services in Ontario. This number will continue to grow unless the government takes urgent action to address their needs. Help us raise awareness by reposting and using the hashtag #WaitingToBelong</p>



Download image here: [Tile 2.png](#)

Long version

Over 50,000 adults with developmental disabilities are currently on the waitlist for services in Ontario. Some have been waiting for more than a decade to get the support they need.

Help us raise awareness by reposting and using the hashtag #WaitingToBelong

#WaitingToBelong #OntarioGovernment #DSsector

Short version

50,000+ adults with developmental disabilities are currently on the waitlist for services in Ontario. Some have been waiting for more than a decade to get the support they need. Help us raise awareness by reposting and using the hashtag #WaitingToBelong



Download image here: [Tile 3.png](#)

Long version

Did you know? On top of the 50,000+ adults with developmental disabilities already on Ontario's waitlist for services, approximately 3,000 additional people apply each year. Shockingly, only about one-third of these applicants will receive services, while the rest are added to the waitlist. As the waitlist grows, so does the uncertainty for thousands of people.

Help us raise awareness by reposting and using the hashtag #WaitingToBelong

#WaitingToBelong #OntarioGovernment #DSsector

Short version

On top of the 50K+ adults with developmental disabilities on Ontario's waitlist for services, around 3K more apply each year. Shockingly, only about 1/3 of them will receive

services, while the rest are added to the waitlist. Raise awareness by reposting with #WaitingToBelong



Download image here: [Tile 4.png](#)

Long version

Did you know? Over 50,000 adults with developmental disabilities are on the waitlist for services in Ontario, while less than 35,000 people are currently receiving the support they need. Most of the 50,000 people on the waitlist will require lifelong support services. Without urgent action from the Ontario government, this waitlist will continue to grow, leaving many without the crucial services they desperately need.

Help us raise awareness by reposting and using the hashtag #WaitingToBelong

#WaitingToBelong #OntarioGovernment #DSsector

Short version

Over 50,000 adults with developmental disabilities are on the waitlist for services in Ontario, while less than 35,000 people are currently receiving the support they need. Help us raise awareness by reposting and using the hashtag #WaitingToBelong



Download image here: [Tile 5.jpg](#)

Long version

Get the facts about the waitlist for developmental services in Ontario:

- Over 50,000 adults with developmental disabilities are currently waiting for services
- Some have been waiting for over a decade
- Only about a third of the 3,000 people who apply for services each year actually receive them

Take action now by contacting your representative to advocate for change, and by reposting and using the hashtag #WaitingToBelong

#WaitingToBelong #OntarioGovernment #DSsector

Short version

Did you know: 50,000+ Ontarians with developmental disabilities are currently waiting for services, some for over a decade? And

	the list continues to grow each year. Take action by contacting your representative and by reposting and using the hashtag #WaitingToBelong
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Key Messages

These are not meant to be fulsome and are meant as a guide for you to keep in mind as you prepare your submission. Don't feel the need to include everything, summarise as much as possible. And always be sure to add your own local experience and individual pressures and challenges.

Challenges Faced by the Developmental Services (DS) Sector

- The DS sector is experiencing a significant labour shortage, with low wages and limited training incentives. Developmental Services Workers (DSWs) often leave for better-paying roles in hospitals, schools, and other public sectors, resulting in a shortage of qualified staff to support people with developmental disabilities.
- Increased numbers of people are entering the system with complex needs, including health and mental health challenges, putting immense strain on service providers with already limited resources.
- **More than 50,000 adults with developmental disabilities in Ontario are on waitlists** for critical services and supportive housing. For many, this means waiting indefinitely for the services they need to live healthy, supported, and safe lives. For families, the wait is not just a number. It represents lost opportunities for early intervention, essential supports, and community inclusion.
- The current funding model has left service agencies struggling to meet demand, leading to programme closures and staff shortages.
- The lack of necessary financial support places organisations and staff at risk and ultimately **creates the possibility of fewer, and lower quality, services and supports for people living with developmental disabilities in Ontario.**
- In addition, the housing crisis has left tens of thousands without appropriate housing. People are often forced into inappropriate settings such as hospitals and long-term care facilities, which are both costly and unsuitable.

Funding History

- We appreciate the Ontario Government's commitment of a portion of the **\$310 million outlined in the 2024 budget**, equating to an approximate **3%** increase for Developmental Services (DS) agency base budgets. This is a positive step toward supporting the sector.
- Despite the 3% increase, this investment is not enough to address the historical funding shortfall. Between 2013 and 2024, agency base funding increased by only **5.2%**, while the cost of living rose by **30%**.

- While any additional resources allocated to the DS Sector are always appreciated, the lack of necessary financial support places organisations and staff at risk and ultimately **creates the possibility of fewer, and lower quality, services and supports for people living with developmental disabilities in Ontario.**
- Even with the announced increase, **80% of agencies** surveyed are still projecting a deficit in 2025/2026; this means:
 - *Reductions in staff*
 - *Reductions in service and programming*
 - *Reduction in building repairs*
 - *Reductions in housing and housing supports.*
 - *And by extension, all of this represents a reduction in the safety and security of those we support.*
- With increased demands, skyrocketing costs, and a profound human resource and labour shortage, the system of care that has existed to ensure the safety and well-being of Ontarians with developmental disabilities is **facing collapse.**

Urgent Need for Action

- Recent investments and efforts are appreciated but more support is needed to address the ongoing crisis in the DS sector.
- Cutbacks in response to underfunding are leading to increasing pressure on families, as well as on the health care, mental health, long-term care, and shelter systems. We need adequate and appropriate funding for the sector to provide effective services and supports that ensure safety, security, and quality of life.
- Adequate funding is crucial to provide effective services and supports that ensure safety, security, and quality of life for people with intellectual disabilities.
- We call for a collaborative, comprehensive wait-list strategy to be developed as part of the "*Journey to Belonging*" vision to end waitlists for services. This strategy should involve sustained funding and consultation with the developmental services sector, families, and individuals to reduce waitlists and ensure equitable access to services.
- **A balanced funding model that provides both direct support to people and sustained funding to agencies** is needed, along with **stabilizing the DS workforce through educational and other incentives, as well as expanding community-based housing options** and reducing wait times for supportive housing. This approach will help stabilise the DS sector and prevent the collapse of essential services, ensuring that no one is left waiting for a safe, inclusive, and supported future.