



**Ontario Agencies Supporting Individuals with Special Needs**  
**Agences ontariennes de soutien pour les personnes qui ont des besoins spéciaux**

## 2015 Pre-Budget Submission to the Ontario Ministry of Finance

January 2015

Ontario Agencies Supporting Individuals with Special Needs (OASIS) is a volunteer-run association whose over 180 member agencies serve more than 65,000 of Ontario's most vulnerable citizens. These same agencies employ 25,000 full and part time staff. OASIS member agencies currently provide more than 85 per cent of all developmental services

OASIS appreciates the invitation and opportunity to share input into the creation of plans for Ontario's future. Within this report we will strive to provide the Minister with information with a view to increasing efficiencies and improving outcomes in public services.

OASIS believes that in order for us to meet the objectives of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005 we need to begin to plan as a fully integrated community. This belief can be extended to government. Every ministry across the government has goals and priorities aimed at addressing the Act. However, to be truly effective in meeting the needs and to increase the capacity of our communities we must begin to respond as a community.

The solution starts when our policies and practices of working in isolation of each other stops and where we all begin to work together to create a comprehensive multi-faceted approach that is cross sectorial and reflective of all interests and abilities.

### **HOW TO IMPROVE SERVICES FOR ONTARIO'S MOST VULNERABLE**

We welcome the opportunity to offer to the Minister the following recommendations aimed at immediately improving delivery of critical front line services.

1. *Ensure increased funding is used to implement programs that fit a long-term developmental services strategy*

We commend the government for its recent funding injection of \$810 million. This investment means the sector has the money necessary to stabilize wait-lists and address current issues. However, the province must ensure funding is appropriately allocated for the long-term stability of the sector.

✓ **ASK**

That the Minister of Finance ensures that new funding earmarked to address growing waitlists for services is disbursed in a manner that is most impactful for Ontario's most vulnerable, taking into account the key role played by local agencies.

2. *Work with agencies to form an inter-ministerial committee on developmental services*

The Government of Ontario must consider how the developmental services sector can be included within an integrated strategy to address poverty and the need for accessible and affordable housing.

Part of this integrated strategy must include the formation of an Inter-Ministerial Committee on Developmental Services. The committee was the first recommendation in a report from the Select Committee on Developmental Services. Creating an IMCDS would enable Ontario's ministries to work with agencies to develop integrated long-term solutions. The government recognized the complexity of the sector and noted that the coordinating and integrating services is one of its priorities.

✓ **ASK**

That the government create an Inter-Ministerial Committee on Developmental Services.

✓ **ASK**

That OASIS, as the voice for Ontario's agencies, have a permanent seat on the IMCDS.

3. *Creative solutions: the brighter prospects divestiture dividend*

The Huronia Regional Centre in Orillia, and other decommissioned properties, should be divested and the proceeds reinvested as a *Brighter Prospects Dividend*. This would be similar to 2011, when the government sold the Rideau Regional Centre site.

✓ **ASK**

The government must undertake a comprehensive survey and appraisal process of unused properties and assets in the sector. The revenue generated from these divestitures must go directly to relieving pressure on waitlists.