

**Report to
Rapport au:**

**Community and Protective Services Committee
Comité des services communautaires et de protection
18 June 2015 / 18 juin 2015**

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**Submitted by
Soumis par:**

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Ward: CITY WIDE / À L'ÉCHELLE DE LA VILLE File Number: ACS2015-COS-CSS-0013

SUBJECT: Social Assistance Management System (SAMS) Update

**OBJET: Nouvelles sur le Système automatisé de gestion de l'aide sociale
(SAGAS)**

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Community and Protective Services Committee:

- 1. Receive this report for information; and**
- 2. Approve that staff next report back on the progress of the local SAMS implementation at the September 2015 Community and Protective Services Committee.**

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

Que le Comité des services communautaires et de protection :

1. **prenne connaissance du présent rapport à titre d'information; et**
2. **approuve que le personnel effectue un compte rendu sur les progrès de la mise en œuvre du SGAS local lors de la réunion du Comité des services communautaires et de protection en septembre 2015.**

BACKGROUND

In early November 2014, new case management software was implemented by the provincial government to administer Ontario Works (OW), the Ontario Disability Support Program (OSDP), and Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities (ACSD). The Social Assistance Maintenance System (SAMS) replaced the former case management software, Service Delivery Model Technology (SDMT). Functionality issues with the SAMS software became clear shortly after implementation, affecting the ability of staff to provide service to clients.

A short and medium term recovery plan to re-establish Ontario Works client service levels and to support staff through the transition to the new technology recovery plan was presented to the Community and Protective Service (CPS) Committee on March 23rd, 2015 (ACS2015-COS-CSS-0002). At the meeting of March 23rd, Committee requested that SAMS be a standing item on the CPS Committee agenda until the functionality issues are resolved including the costs associated with SAMS implementation and recovery efforts as well as funds received from the province to reimburse these costs.

Subsequent SAMS Update Reports were presented to the CPS Committee on April 16th, 2015 (ACS2015-COS-CSS-0007) and May 21st, 2015 (ACS2015-COS-CSS-0008) to report on the client service delivery impacts, staff impacts and the financial impacts of SAMS.

DISCUSSION

Service and Staffing Update

The SAMS Update report presented to CPS Committee on April 16th, 2015 (ACS2015-COS-CSS-0007) outlined a strategy to assign experienced front line staff to support SAMS implementation. Staff competitions have now been completed for the following

positions: Administrative Clerks, Team Leads, Intake Specialists, Employment Specialists and Case Coordinators. Successful candidates will continue to be deployed to support front line client service. As recovery from SAMS implementation continues staff will monitor vacancies and service requirements to ensure that staffing levels are responsive to service demands and approved budgets.

The SAMS Update report presented to CPS Committee on May 21st, 2015 (ACS2015-COS-CSS-0008) outlined a service strategy to shift staff focus on delivering the most critical services to clients and ensuring the mandate of the Ontario Works program and established outcomes are met. With the introduction of an additional Team Lead at each site staff have been re-aligned into multi-disciplinary teams and are again providing clients with the full suite of mandated services.

Technology Update

The Provincial approach to the on-going implementation of SAMS is structured in three phases; fix, enhance, and simplify. At go-live, daily fixes were being made to the system. As the system began to stabilize a schedule of weekly and then subsequently monthly fixes was utilized. In the coming months, the Province will be shifting from the current practice of monthly fixes to quarterly enhancements. This will address some of the concerns expressed by staff with the efficiency of the system. For example, the current security settings within the system will only allow a Team Lead level staff to transfer files between workers. This is a very administrative task that has historically been completed by the Administrative Services Clerks. Staff will continue to work with the Province to identify and escalate priority issues and operational impacts that require resolution.

Training Update

Currently, there is neither a sufficient training environment nor a standardized training program to support current staff, new staff, or those returning from an extended absence. Staff at the Province have begun to develop a training program for new and existing staff, but it will not be available until later in 2015. In the absence of a coordinated provincial training program, local staff have developed a learning support

program to increase staff confidence and competency with SAMS. The learning support program combines hands on training, job shadowing, and classroom style teaching on topics identified by staff. The learning support program will continue until the Province develops and implements a comprehensive and coordinated provincial training program.

Financial Needs Associated with SAMS

Staff continue to monitor the financial impacts of SAMS. Table 1 reflects the costs to date associated with SAMS. No additional funding has been received from the Province since the update provided to Community and Protective Services Committee on April 16th, 2015 (ACS2015-COS-CSS-0007). To date in 2015, only \$487,350 has been received from the Province for on-going costs.

Table 1: Financial Impact of SAMS to the City of Ottawa

Costs To-Date	Value to April 9th 2015	Value to May 7th 2015	Value to May 31st 2015
Overtime to-date in 2015	\$4,935	\$6,152	\$6,833
Increased Hours for Intake Specialists	\$39,609	\$48,026	\$51,185
Anticipated Future Commitments New staff (Unmet gapping provisions to December 31, 2015)	\$1.4 million	\$1.4 million	\$1.4 million
Total	\$1,444,544	\$1,454,178	\$1,458,018

Conclusion

Staff remain committed to supporting clients and staff during SAMS recovery. Given the relative stability of the technical platform, on-going implementation of the staffing and service strategies and the potential changes from the Province based on the recommendations from the external review, staff recommend that the next update on SAMS be provided to Committee in September. This update will include the on-going

financial impacts of SAMS, any new provincial direction received, and the on-going impacts on clients and staff.

RURAL IMPLICATIONS

SAMS implementation has implications for all social assistance recipients.

CONSULTATION

Public consultation was not required as this report is administrative in nature.

COMMENTS BY THE WARD COUNCILLOR(S)

N/A

ADVISORY COMMITTEE(S) COMMENTS

Advisory Committees were not consulted as this report is administrative in nature.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal impediments to receiving the information in this report and to the direction to staff to report back to this Committee in September 2015.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Ongoing functionality issues with SAMS mean that efficiencies achieved in the Community and Social Support Centres are no longer achieved. Additional staff time is required to complete similar tasks.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

If Social Services does not achieve their vacancy allowance (gapping) target it will result in an expenditure deficit. It is currently estimated that the 2015 financial impact of SAMS to the City of Ottawa is \$1.4 million with \$487,350 of provincial funding currently included in the 2015 funding contract. The City's expectation is to be fully reimbursed for any additional costs required to maintain operational continuity.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

There are no accessibility implications associated with this report.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS

The Province introduced a new technology system (SAMS) in November, 2014 for the delivery of Ontario Works (OW) and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). Functionality issues have negatively affected local client service and increased costs to the City. The City continues to work with the Province to address ongoing issues

TERM OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES

SAMS implementation is connected to the 2010 – 2014 Term of Council Service Excellence Strategic Priority: Improve client satisfaction with the delivery of municipal services to Ottawa residents by measurably increasing the culture of service excellence at the City, by improving the efficiency of City operations, and by creating positive client experiences.

DISPOSITION

Staff will continue to monitor SAMS implementation, address changes to the system and report back to Committee in September. Staff will implement any direction received as a result of this report.