



Human Services Integration in Ontario



Human Services Integration in Ontario



Ontario's 47 Service System Managers, the Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs) and District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSABs), have been advocating for and working towards Human Services Integration for many years. This philosophy of how to deliver integrated services focuses on improving the client experience, enhancing outcomes for people, and finding administrative and financial efficiencies that can be reinvested back into human services at the local level.

It requires sustainable and responsive community networks and services, integrating economic development, planning, health care and the justice system with human services.

It also requires breaking down silos between Ministries at the provincial level and within departments at the local level.

In a siloed system, those seeking services have difficulty navigating through a complex web of programs and supports. A person-centred approach to Human Services Integration will improve outcomes, improve efficiencies, and improve the overall client experience in a manner that is flexible meeting local needs.

Sustainable, cost-effective, and efficient health and human services are fundamental to Ontario's prosperity and economic recovery. High quality, affordable child care, affordable and stable housing, and income and employment supports are crucial components of local economic prosperity, healthy populations, and community safety and well-being.

Ontario's 47 Service System Managers are well positioned to deliver services locally in a way that meets unique needs and challenges in urban, suburban, rural, and northern communities in Ontario.

Ontario's 47 Service System Managers are **Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs)**, or upper-tier (regional) and single-tier municipalities across Ontario, and **District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSABs)** in areas where there are no regional municipalities in Ontario's north

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Outside of core services such as social assistance, employment, housing, homelessness, emergency services, early years and child care, municipal governments also deliver additional services or have partnerships that can offer additional supports to people. Navigation must be clear for people to find services. Integration may look different in each community, but it is important to improve outcomes, collaboration, and overall satisfaction with the service.

To advance the goal of Human Services Integration, Service Managers have put forward the following recommendations:

Collaboration must occur between provincial and municipal governments as equal partners in the development, implementation, and transformation of all parts of the human services system. To achieve this:



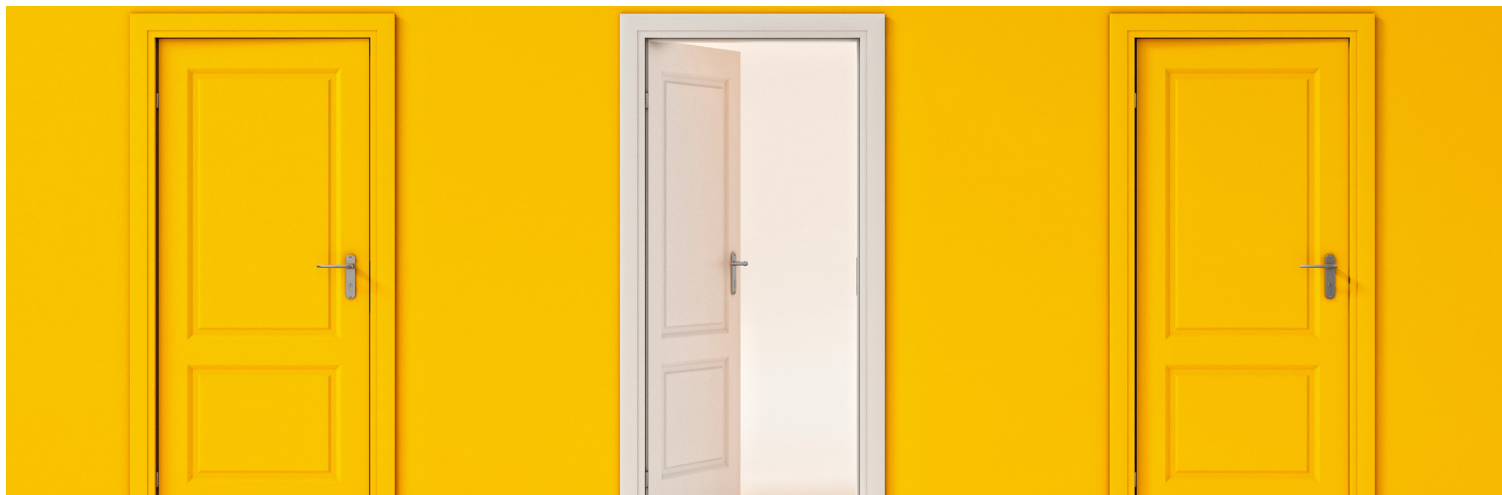
- The existing Provincial-Municipal Collaborative Human Services Table should include the Ministry of Health and all relevant Ministries. It must be utilized to advance the goal of Human Services Integration through a true co-design process between the province and the 47 Service System Managers at the highest level of human services leaders.
- Transformation in early years and child care, employment, social assistance, housing, homelessness; Ontario Health Teams, public health, long-term care and mental health program design should be done with a lens towards Human Services Integration.
- The province should ensure a municipal voice within Ontario Health Teams and ensure that there is an Ontario Health Team in every Service Manager area.
- Shared outcomes and accountability should be co-designed between the province and Service System Managers. Efforts should be made to clarify roles, responsibilities, and expectations.

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Information technology and data are key supports to achieving Human Services Integration and measuring successful outcomes of this work. To achieve this:

- The province should consider upfront costs and move forward with the integration of technology. Several programs are currently being used by Service Managers across services (i.e. SAMS / YARDI / HIFIS / OCCMS / OneHSN / BENN). A single system that serves the client across these programs or a platform that allows communication among the existing platforms should be implemented.
- The province should collaborate with municipal partners to determine the best practices for data collection, reporting, and information sharing to ensure informed decision-making at both the local and provincial levels.
- The province should continue to move forward with the municipal reporting burden initiative first started by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Efforts should be made to reduce reporting and administration across human services programs.
- A broadband strategy and digital access strategy is needed to support communities and clients with the move towards more virtual and digital services.



Clear provincial and municipal roles are important requirements to support local municipal Human Service Integration of services for clients. To achieve this:

- The province should reaffirm the role as Service System Manager and allow for local flexibility towards implementation of Human Services Integration. A one-size-fits-all approach will not work across urban, suburban, rural, and northern communities.
- The province should work towards common eligibility requirements and verification processes across locally managed programs including Ontario Works, Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI), housing, and child care. Efforts should also be made to simplify rules and regulations to encourage a more streamlined process.
- A directive related to privacy that allows information sharing across municipal departments should be provided. This is needed to ensure that clients only must tell their story once and to help ensure they receive all benefits they are entitled to. A “no wrong door” approach is needed from the client’s perspective.
- Support should be provided to municipalities to build capacity, train staff across all programs and support change management as part of Human Services Integration efforts.

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Funding requirements must be adequate for each area of human services required for local implementation of programs and service system management: To achieve this:

- There should be a common human service envelope provided to Service Managers to support all programs. Multi-year planning allocations should also be considered to assist with planning.
- The province should increase support for emergency social services. The COVID-19 pandemic, Ukrainian refugee supports, and various climate-related disasters including flooding and fires show that a proactive approach is needed in this area instead of a reactive approach.
- A full provincial-municipal fiscal review should be undertaken to ensure that property taxes are not being used to support health or human services initiatives. These issues require provincial and federal financing to remain sustainable.
- Reinvest any savings realized from Human Services Integration back into the human services system helping realize the goal of “putting people first.”
- The province should continue to support community hubs and co-location efforts within Ontario Service Manager communities.

Human Services Integration in Ontario



Legislation and policy must support Human Service integration. To achieve this:

- A full review of relevant and applicable legislation, regulations, policies, and funding models to identify and remove barriers to Human Services Integration.
- Supportive housing and stabilization support services are two clear areas where a Human Services Integration approach is needed. The supportive housing review and focus on mental health and addictions is an opportunity for the Ministry of Health to be at the table as part of human services integration.

Working in Partnership on Human Services Integration:

OMSSA and its Members, along with AMO, have been advocating on the issue of Human Services Integration for over 15 years. Some progress has been made in recent years but there is an opportunity to move forward in the coming years because of all the transformation currently happening in the areas of social assistance, child care, housing, and homelessness.

Ontario's 47 Service System Managers stand ready to co-design and help support efforts to advance Human Services Integration with our partners at the Province of Ontario. OMSSA encourages the Province to utilize the Provincial-Municipal Human Services Collaborative Table and invite all relevant Ministries to focus on Human Services Integration at both levels. After 15 years of study and talk, the time has come to move forward with real action towards these goals that benefit people, communities, and all stakeholders. Further detailed information supporting this paper and Human Services Integration can be found in the accompanying Appendix.

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Human Services Integration Defined

- ▶ **Human services** include any services that meet the economic, social, and health needs of people.
- ▶ **Human services planning** is a process that anticipates and identifies current and future needs for human services and supports, and services that meet the economic, social, and health needs of people. This planning for social infrastructure and resulting social investment is just as important as planning for physical infrastructure.
- ▶ **Integrated human services** are a system of services which are effectively coordinated, seamless, and tailored to the needs of people so they can maximize their potential, enhance their quality of life, and contribute to their community. Both the individuals who receive service and the communities in which they live benefit. Integration suggests that services are being coordinated and managed, that the web of relationships which connect them is recognized and considered when decisions are made, and that it all exists for the purpose of being positive change for people receiving services and for the communities in which they live.

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Human Services Integration Principles

- Proactive not reactive system
- Putting people first
- Quality assurance in services
- A system-wide approach to planning
- Common vision between the province and municipal governments
- Clarity of roles between the province and municipal government
- Results-focused planning
- Shared accountability for outcomes
- Provide training and capacity support to frontline staff
- Reduce rules and policing to allow for more time with clients
- True co-design between the province and municipalities
- Reduce administration and reporting burdens
- No additional downloading to municipalities
- Local flexibility and avoid one-size-fits-all approach

Timeline: History of Human Services Integration and Supporting Papers

The concept of Human Services Integration is not new. OMSSA has been advocating for Human Services Integration for over 15 years. In 2007, OMSSA Members authored a paper “A Guide to Thinking About Human Services Integration: Making a Greater Difference for People and Communities” While there is no clear model for full Human Services Integration, examples from New York City, San Diego, Alberta, UK, Ireland, Australia, and others offer evidence of the benefits of increased Human Services Integration. In Ontario, discussions on Human Services Integration go back to the 1990s when human services were initially downloaded to the municipalities.

The Provincial-Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review led to the promise of a full upload of costs by 2018 acknowledging that health and human services could not be funded with property taxes. Following the 2008 Great Recession, the Ontario Government wanted to improve outcomes and reduce costs following the 2014 Drummond Report. In 2016, the Human Services Integration Office (HSIO) was formed and, in 2018, the HSIO released a report on the state of Human Services Integration in Ontario. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need for integrated health and human services.

OMSSA and its 47 Members, and AMO, would like to make a renewed push to the Province to move forward on Human Services Integration with the Ministry of Health at the table. An opportunity exists to build off of the Homelessness Prevention Program, Community Housing Renewal, the Supportive Housing Review, the National Housing Strategy, the Canada-Wide Early Learning & Child Care Program (CWELCC), Employment System Transformation, Social Assistance Renewal, Ontario Health Teams, and Community Safety and Well-Being Plans.

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Transformation is happening in the health and human services sectors. It is important to co-design and consult with service managers while building a health and human services system that has a lens focused on integration, innovation and local flexibility.

A Timeline of Important Dates in Human Services Integration

- Local Service Alignment (CMSMs and DSSABs formed) - March 1998
- OMSSA forms Human Services Integration Committee – 2006
- A Guide to Thinking about Human Services Integration: Making a Greater Difference for People and Communities. (OMSSA) - 2007
- Provincial-Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review (AMO, City of Toronto, Province of Ontario) October 2008
- Commission on the Reform of Ontario's Public Services (the Drummond Report) – 2012
- Keeping it Local: Community Hubs and Integrated Human Services (OMSSA) - 2015
- Province establishes Human Services Integration Office (HSIO) 2016
- Community Hubs Strategic Framework (Ontario) 2017
- Bearing the Burden: An Overview of Municipal Reporting to the Province, (the Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario) – 2017
- The Current State of Human Services Integration in CMSMs and DSSABs (Ontario) - 2017
- OMSSA Human Services Integration Forum – October 2018
- OMSSA Policy Briefing Papers: Early Years & Child Care, Housing & Homelessness; Employment & Social Assistance; Local System Management – June 2018
- Human Services Integration reports by Mowat/KPMG, Accenture and Deloitte
- Provincial Municipal Human Services Collaborative Table Formed - 2020
- Human Services Integration Maturity Model – November 2021
- Urban Commissioners Discussion Paper – 2022
- OMSSA Human Services Integration Policy Briefing Paper - 2022

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Human Services Integration Framework

To move forward with the next steps of Human Services Integration, several components must be considered to achieve that vision. At the planning stage, a partnership is required between the Province of Ontario and municipal governments including all ministries relevant to the process. The Provincial-Municipal Human Services Collaborative Table is a good vehicle for these discussions.

Planning and Collaboration

- Provincial-Municipal Human Services Collaborative Table (province-wide integrated planning related to Human service policy)
- Review the *Ontario Works Act, Housing Services Act and Childcare and Early Years Act* to find policy alignment between programs.
- Leverage the Community Safety and Well-Being Plans (local integrated planning of health, human services and policing) as a integration plan and provide support to municipalities to implement and update the plan.

Implemented Core Service Coordination

- Work towards a single intake for human services with a common assessment tool so that the client only has to tell their story one time and receives all support benefit for which they are entitled.
- Use a common eligibility criteria (i.e. income levels) to qualify for RGI Housing, Ontario Works and subsidized child care
- Provide support for training of caseworkers across all programs and assist municipalities with culture change to make this successful.

Technology

- Work towards a procurement or design of coordinated technology that puts the person at the centre of service. Currently multiple technologies and privacy barriers prevent information sharing across programs.
- Utilize Transfer Payments Ontario to streamline reporting, funding and administration across all human services programs delivered by municipal Service Managers.

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Funding

- Provide a single envelope for human services programs that removes individual budgets and complicated allocations of funding for administration.
- Supporting integrated planning and service implementation.
- Share planning allocations for future years to allow for sustainability and service planning.
- Engage in a review of shared provincial-municipal human services funding to ensure programs are adequately funded, that costs are not downloaded to municipalities, and recognizing that property taxes cannot fund these services given municipal budget constraints.
- Reinvest any savings from Human Services Integration back into frontline services.

Community Service Coordination

- Allow for flexibility and encourage an integrated connection to services and enhanced partnerships in the community (food banks, mental health, shelters, library, recreation, child welfare, developmental services, supportive housing, etc.)
- Avoid a one-size-fits-all approach and encourage innovation in services recognizing that solutions in Toronto may be different than solutions in Kenora.
- Negotiate an outcomes framework, clarify roles, and ensure accountability to ensure a Human Services Integration approach produces desired results.

OMSSA Members look forward to partnering with provincial Ministries to make Ontario a leading jurisdiction for Human Services Integration.

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Impacted Legislation, Guidelines, and Policy

Legislation, regulation, guidelines, and policy are all impacted by human services integration. A goal should be to streamline services, work towards policy alignment and common eligibility, link various technologies, allow for data and information sharing, simplifying rules and allowing for local flexibility and innovation within the system. The person should always be at the centre of system co-design. Here is a list of impacted legislation, guidelines, and policy to consider:

- Housing Services Act
- National Housing Act
- Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing Act Policy Statement:
- Service Manager Housing and Homelessness Plans
- Canada-Ontario Social Housing Agreement
- Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative Program
- Homelessness Prevention Program
- Guidelines Investment in Affordable Housing Program Guidelines
- Service manager Administration Agreement: Investment in Affordable Housing for Ontario
- Special Priority Program (SPP)
- Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 Education Act
- Ontario Child Care and Child and Family Program Service Management and Funding Guideline
- 2017 District Social Services Administration Boards Act
- Municipal Act
- Ontario's Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA)
- Ontario Early Years Child and Family Centres Planning Guidelines for Service System Managers
- Ontario Works Act
- Ontario Works Policy Directives
- Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy
- Community Safety and Well-Being Plans (CSWB)
- Ontario Health Teams
- Ontario Digital Strategy
- Employment System Transformation (EST)
- National Housing Strategy
- Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement (CWELCC)
- Ministry of Community and Social Services Act
- Transfer Payment Accountability Directive (TPAD)

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Key Ontario Ministry Partners

Many provincial programs and ministries are siloed and could play an important role in advancing Human Services Integration. For example, supportive housing has programs and funding associated with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of the Solicitor General.

Clarifying roles, coordinating services, and ensuring the client has the supports that they need could lead to a supportive housing system that is more integrated, generates better outcomes, and improves the overall navigation experience for vulnerable people. In 2020, the Provincial-Municipal Collaborative Human Services table was formed. This table attempts to bring all 47 Ontario System Service Managers with relevant Ontario ministry partners to discuss Human Services Integration. It is important to have health, justice, employment, education, and human services at the same table.

- Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS)
- Ministry of Education (EDU)
- Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH)
- Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD)
- Solicitor General (SOLGEN)
- Ministry of Health, Long Term Care, Mental Health & Addictions and Ontario Health
- Indigenous Affairs
- Women and Social Policy
- Treasury Board
- Finance

Municipally Delivered Programs in Scope

There is a wide array of health and human services that would benefit from Human Services Integration. Housing, homelessness, child care, social assistance, employment, and community safety and well-being are core services delivered at the local level with shared responsibilities between municipal, provincial and the federal governments. Human Services Integration discussions in Ontario have mostly been focused on income supports, housing and child care but can include:

- Community Housing
- Homelessness Services
- Social Assistance
- Employment
- Early years and childcare
- Emergency Social Services
- Community Safety and Well-Being

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Related Provincial Responsibilities Relevant to Human Services Integration

Human services often operate in silos but people's needs do not operate in silos. From the beginning to the end of a person's life, many types of supports may be needed. Many people are discharged into homelessness through the hospital or justice systems. Police calls often involve people suffering from mental health and addictions. CMSMs and DSSABs may work closely with the child welfare sector or operate long-term care homes. Developing Community Safety and Well-Being plans is an important goal for communities across Ontario. Creating healthy communities and improving the social determinants of health is critical to local economic prosperity. It is important for the health, justice, and education systems to be linked with human services.

- Health
- Mental Health and Addictions
- Hospitals
- Long-term Care and Home Care
- Justice System
- Supportive Housing
- Education
- Community Hubs
- Child Welfare
- Developmental Services
- Human Trafficking and Domestic Violence
- Poverty Reduction

Related Local Community Services Relevant to Human Services Integration

Ontario's 47 Service System Managers are well positioned to deliver services locally in a way that meets unique needs and challenges in urban, suburban, rural, and northern communities in Ontario. Outside of social assistance, employment, housing, homelessness, emergency services, early years and child care, municipalities also deliver other services or have partnerships that can offer additional supports to people. Navigation must be clear for people to find services. Integration may look different in each community, but it is important to improve outcomes, collaboration, and overall satisfaction with the service. This involves forming partnerships and strong relationships with local service providers.

- Food banks
- Libraries
- Transportation
- Emergency Services
- Recreation
- Public Health
- Ontario Health Teams
- Local Non-profits and Charities
- Community Hubs
- 211 Navigation Services

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Benefits of Human Services Integration

There are many benefits to health and human services integration. Opportunities to reduce costs, duplication, administration, and reporting exist but the focus should remain on improving outcomes and serving people.

- People centred service
- Improved staff morale
- Person tells their story once
- Faster service
- More time for integrated casework
- Innovative
- Flexible
- Better outcomes
- Reduced duplication
- More efficient
- Maximum use of resources
- Clarity of roles and expected outcomes
- Meets local needs
- Improved planning and evaluation
- Less reporting and administration

Barriers to Human Services Integration

Human Services Integration is easy to talk about but harder to implement. Many barriers exist including Ministries or municipal departments operating in silos. Privacy legislation, regulations, rules, and government policy is often implemented without consideration for Human Services Integration. Staff resistance or a lack of buy-in from senior management may stall efforts. Municipal and provincial budget cycles are not currently aligned. Often we get caught up and overwhelmed by overall system design instead of achieving small wins that take us closer to the goal of integration.

- Ministry and municipal silos
- Privacy legislation
- Data not shared
- Broadband and access to technology
- Training
- Culture change
- Eligibility rules
- Some programs have specific budgets
- Technology cannot communicate between systems
- Municipal and provincial budget cycles not aligned
- Funding, reporting, and administration

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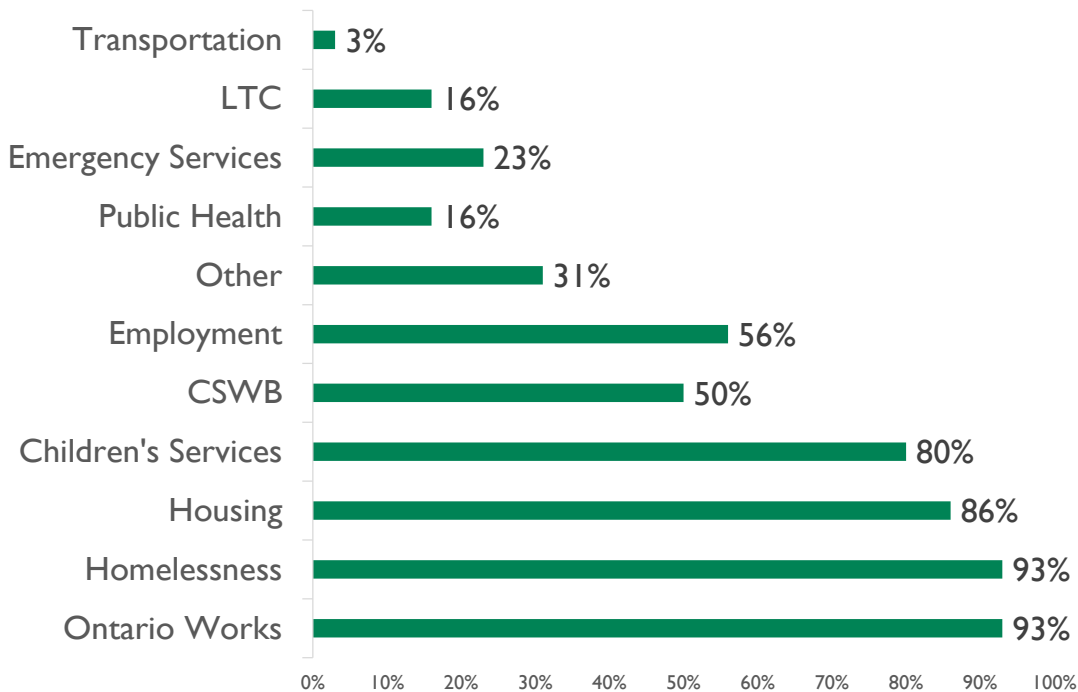
Top Priorities to Move Forward with Human Services Integration

Policies, processes, programs, and structures at both the provincial and municipal levels must be aligned with human services plans. A co-design process must include OMSSA Members, all relevant ministries and those with lived experience. A focus must be placed on policy alignment, information sharing, integrating technology, and reducing administrative and reporting burdens. These were the four immediate priorities of the Office of Human Services Integration.

Current State of Human Services Integration

OMSSA surveyed its 47 Members to get a feeling where Human Services Integration currently stands across the province. 37 responses were received. This survey took place in March 2022.

Services Currently Integrated in Your Community



Other includes:

- Ontario Health Teams
- Local immigration partnerships
- Contact centre
- Poverty reduction
- Community partnerships
- Anti-Human Sex Trafficking
- Adult protective services worker program

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Survey Results

90%

allow for clients to apply for programs online



83%

have a consent waiver allowing for information to be shared



60%

co-locate health and human services in a single location



57%

have Community Hubs

**20% have proposals awaiting funding and/or approval*



33%

have a centralized intake

**23% have it under consideration / in transition*



13%

have case workers trained across all programs



2.9

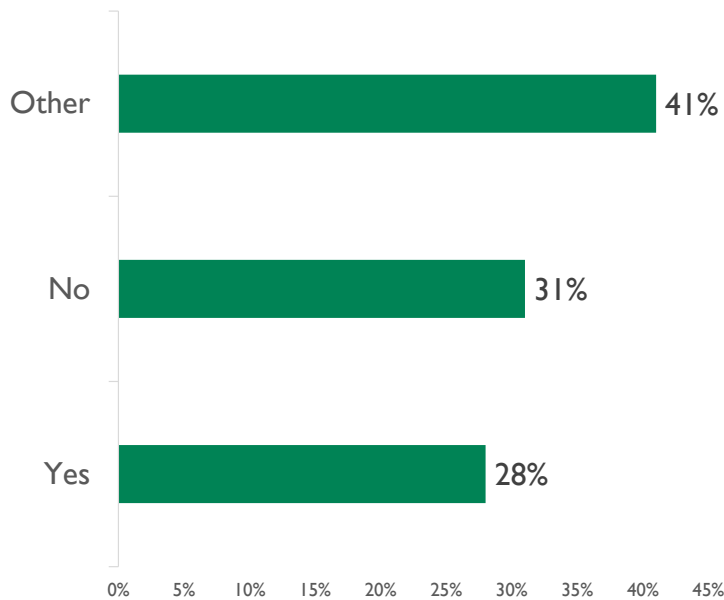
How members rate HSI in their area (on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the most integrated)

2.6

How members rate community integration (on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being most integrated)

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Using Community Safety and Well-Being Plans as a Master Human Services Plan



Other includes:

- CSWB plan could be used for further integration
- They are already linked with HSI
- Not sure this should be lead document as it is driven by SOLGEN
- Multiple plans for multiple ministries takes valuable resources away
- Certain elements could be coordinated but not all
- Departments may not want to share resources or funding but may want greater say in human services
- Not efficient way to plan as it's not led by Service Manager