

# Developmental Services Human Resource Strategy

Ontario Developmental Services  
*Make a difference every day.*

## Financial Supports Provided by DS Agencies to Developmental Service Worker Programs and Statistical Data Collection Survey Findings

---

*A reference document for Developmental Services Agencies and Developmental Services Worker College Programs considering the provision of bursaries from agencies to students in DSW Programs*

Developmental service agencies in Ontario make substantial investments in the professional development of the workforce to ensure high quality supports and services. This includes continuing education and life-long learning opportunities for current direct support professionals through agency-based training. To attract great people to work in the sector, agencies also provide formal educational supports through colleges such as the DSW program. To better understand how DS agencies in Ontario are supporting efforts to make the sector a career of choice, the DS Human Resource Strategy conducted a survey to identify the prevalence of bursaries and scholarships offered by DS agencies. This report summarizes that survey, but does not address the many other ways organizations support professional development through direct training and education benefits.

### Introduction/Background

---

In 2008, the Developmental Services (DS) Human Resource (HR) Strategy was launched as a partnership between the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) and the Provincial Network on Developmental Services. The main goals of the DS HR Strategy are to professionalize the Developmental Services (DS) sector, to improve and maintain a quality workforce and to promote the sector as a “career of choice”. A DS HR Strategy Steering Committee co-chaired by a representative from MCSS and a representative from the Provincial Network was established to oversee the project.

In the same year, six committees, with representation from the DS sector were established to move the DS HR Strategy forward. In 2011, the committees submitted their final reports. This report is based on work done to reflect recommendations made by two of these six committees: the Program Standards Committee and the Agency-based Training Committee.

In 2011, the Steering Committee established three new committees, tasked with implementing the recommendations from the previous committees. One of these committees, the Workforce Development and HR Practices Implementation Committee (WDHRPIC) was given the mandate of ensuring implementation of recommendations as they relate to the training and education of DS employees and best HR practices in DS agencies.

In order to respond to two of these recommendations:

- Encourage agencies to consider the provision of awards and bursaries at the secondary and college level, and
- Ask colleges to collect data related to DSW students/graduate,

the WDHRPIC decided to collect relevant information from colleges that offer a DSW program. Following an analysis of the options available, the Research Task Group (a sub-committee of the WDHRPIC) decided that a self-administered survey would be the best method to collect the information needed.

## Purpose of survey

---

The main purpose of the survey was to collect information from colleges regarding financial supports offered to DSW students by Developmental Services agencies.

The information collected will present the extent of this practice in Ontario's DS sector from the college perspective and will be used as a piece of the research presented to support recommendations made in the DS HR Strategy's sub-committee Program Standards final report regarding the provision of awards and bursaries.

In addition, the survey requested colleges to provide a list of statistics that they currently collect related to DSW students/graduates. The answers to this question will support any further recommendations regarding the importance of gathering training and education related statistics (by both colleges and agencies) in order to effectively assess the impact of training and education in the DS sector.

## Methodology

---

The survey, developed by the Research Task Group of the WDHRPIC, was reviewed by the DS HR Strategy Steering Committee and distributed to colleges presently offering the two year Developmental Services Worker diploma program. The colleges were: Northern, Confederation, Fanshawe, Georgian, Loyalist, Humber, St. Clair, La Cite, Centennial, Cambrian and Algonquin.

The survey, distributed in both French and English, was sent to the Developmental Services Worker program Co-ordinators at each of the colleges. It was comprised of the following five open-ended questions:

1. Do you receive any monetary support from agencies for your DSW students?
2. What type of monetary support do you receive? (Is this support for first or second year students? Is it in the form of a bursary or award for achievement? Is it related to a particular course or achievement?)
3. What, if any, are the criteria for selection? (Class standing, field placement results, testimonials, etc.) (refers to the response of question 2)
4. Is there any other information regarding this support you think would be important for us to know about?
5. We are seeking to recommend the collection of statistical data pertaining to DSW students/graduates both from the Colleges and Developmental Services agencies in Ontario. It would be very helpful to have a comprehensive list of the type of statistics currently collected to know/identify the gaps that may impact the sector. Please provide below the type of statistical information that colleges collect with regards to DSW college and apprenticeship students and DSW graduates. (This may include the highest level of education, experience in the DS field for applicants, intention to work in the sector, etc.) **This request provided a chart (see below).**

Type of statistics related to applicants to the DSW college program	Type of statistics related to students in the DSW apprenticeship program	Type of statistics related to DSW graduates

The surveys were sent by email the week of April 16, 2012 with an expected return date of May 4, 2012. An extension to the initial deadline was provided and a follow-up phone call was initiated.

## Survey response

---

Of the eleven surveys distributed, ten were completed; (three by phone and seven via e-mail).

The information collected through surveys and interviews was analysed and main conclusions drawn.

The following presents a summary of responses for each question.

### **1. Do you receive any monetary support from agencies for your DSW students?**

Nine of ten respondents indicated that they received some form of financial support from agencies for some of their students.

### **2. What type of monetary support do you receive? (Is this support for first or second year students? Is it in the form of a bursary or award for achievement? Is it related to a particular course or achievement?)**

All respondents reported that the financial support takes the form of a bursary and/or an award of achievement.

All but one of the respondents reported that they received bursaries from local agencies and, in one case, a private donor/family. One of the respondents indicated a bursary was provided for a first year student toward the purchase of books for the second year of the DSW program. One college indicated that some students received financial support from their employers toward associated fees for either the DSW diploma or the Apprenticeship programs. In most cases the financial support is targeting students in second year, but a few bursaries for 1<sup>st</sup> year students are also available.

The amount provided by agencies as a bursary/award ranges from \$250.00 to \$1,000.00. Only one college reported that financial support provided was over \$3000. This amount was in reference to the provincial Velleman bursary that combines as criteria GPA, references and contribution to the field.

### **3. What, if any, are the criteria for selection? (Class standing, field placement results, testimonials, etc.) (Refers to the response of question 2)**

The main criteria for financial support are related to academic achievement/outstanding performance (including performance during field placement) and community involvement/volunteer work.

A couple of colleges cited financial need or residency in a particular geographical region as important criteria as well.

Competencies (such as professionalism, dedication to field and sincerity), advancing the francophone cause and serving specific populations/disabilities were also mentioned as criteria by respondents.

### **4. Is there any other information regarding this support you think would be important for us to know about?**

Question four elicited few responses. Four colleges did have comments and they included:

- “Would agencies provide or be interested in providing an easier path to employment for students that excelled in placements?”
- Exit interviews should be conducted with senior management of the agency at the end of the placement.
- Students to be included in training events that employees participate in.
- The bursaries help to create awareness of community partners and support the effort to retain students as employees in northern region.
- “Most financial support for DSW students comes from larger endowment funds that provide bursaries and/or awards for which recipients are selected from large groups of students (province-wide or students from many different programs). Very few awards are funded by developmental service agencies.”
- “Inviting students to appreciation events is done now and should continue”.

**5. We are seeking to recommend the collection of statistical data pertaining to DSW students/graduates both from the Colleges and Developmental Services agencies in Ontario. It would be very helpful to have a comprehensive list of the type of statistics currently collected to know/identify the gaps that may impact the sector. Please provide below the type of statistical information that colleges collect with regards to DSW diploma and apprenticeship students and DSW graduates. (This may include the highest level of education, experience in the DS field for applicants, intention to work in the sector, etc.)**

This final question required respondents to populate a chart regarding the type of statistics currently collected by colleges with regards to applicants and students in the DSW Diploma stream and the DSW Apprenticeship programs.

All participants in the survey indicated that they are responsible for addressing the college program statistics required by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU, KPI – Key Performance Indicators). Key performance indicators include: graduation rates, graduate program satisfaction, employment stats six months after graduation (employment rate, field of employment, type of employment, wages) and continuing education.

In addition, at the application stage, some colleges collect demographic information (e.g., age, gender, highest level of education, permanent residency, aboriginal status) and information on previous experience and preferred method of program delivery. Also some colleges collect statistics about conversion rates (number of applicants versus the number of people who enter the program) and one college collects information about application trends over 5 years.

It was noted by one respondent that beyond the required collection, six months after graduation, tracking of graduates tended to be personal in nature (i.e. requests for references).

Only five colleges provided statistics related to the DSW Apprenticeship program (*Please note that not all colleges offer this program*).

Some of the statistics reported as being collected by these colleges were: satisfaction with the course/program/college, number of students bridging to the DSW diploma, demographic information about age and previous education.

## Main conclusions

---

The information collected through the surveys and interviews has been analyzed and results in the following conclusions:

- Most colleges receive financial support in the form of a bursary or award of achievement for some DSW students at graduation. Academic achievement/outstanding performance (including performance during field placement) and community involvement/volunteer work are cited more often as the criteria for selection.
- All but one college reported receiving bursaries from local DS agencies. One college received bursaries from five different agencies while the majority of colleges reported receiving a bursary from only one agency. Given that there were 10 colleges participating in this survey and there are now about 15 colleges offering a DSW program and about 370 DS Agencies in the province it would appear that there is a very limited percentage of agencies that offer financial support (ranging from \$250 to \$1,000 maximum) to colleges/DSW students.
- There is a significant lack of statistical data collection done by colleges beyond the mandatory statistics related to the KPI Indicators requested by MTCU.

## Recommendations

---

- Recommendations related to college bursaries:
  1. Further research is required to understand the financial support offered to DSW students and graduates. It is acknowledged that some agencies provide support for education in other ways, such as tuition reimbursement, partnerships in training with colleges and providing space for education. Further qualitative research is required to generate accurate information on these practices across the province. There would be benefit in sharing the findings from that research with agencies and colleges as we work towards stronger relationships that focus on best practices for educating the DS Workforce in Ontario.
- Recommendations related to the collection of statistics:
  2. Recommend to colleges that they collect DSW student/graduates statistics beyond the KPI data requested by MTCU, such as:
    - a) Statistics related to graduates from the DSW diploma program including:
      - Educational background prior to enrolment in the program;
      - Drop out/unsuccessful completion rates;
      - Successful completion rates;
      - Employment rate after graduation; and
      - Field employed in after graduation – annually, to track retention of graduates in the DS sector (The Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities gathers this statistic only once soon after graduation).
    - b) Statistics related to graduates from the DSW Apprenticeship Program including:
      - Educational background prior to enrolment in the program;
      - Drop out/unsuccessful completion rates;
      - Successful completion rates;
      - Retention rates after certification annually and by graduation year; and
      - Number of apprentices that bridge into the diploma program and number that graduate after bridging.