

PGM Consulting & Training Services

Paul G. Muldoon

Phone: 705-322-0226
Cell: 705-427-0400
Fax: 705-322-4634

Box 328, 11 Bailey Crescent
Wyevale, ON L0L 2T0

pgmuldoon@rogers.com



November 16th, 2007

*Ms. Colette Kent
Director, Developmental Service Branch
Ministry of Community & Social Services
4th Floor, Hepburn Block, 80 Grosvenor Street
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1E9*

Dear Colette,

You may recall that at the recent Passport Conference at Horseshoe Valley a discussion regarding current views on the strengths and limitations of the program.

A questionnaire was completed by participants and analyzed for common themes and recommendations for change. This was followed by a facilitated conversation where participants were asked to prioritize areas of change in terms of things that did not require additional funding as well as where additional resources should be prioritized.

The themes articulated in the attached report speak admirably to many of the strengths of the approach being used. Passport-style funding is recognized for its flexibility, individualization and pre-disposition to strengthen community involvement.

Limitations were also seen as might be expected. Participants want to see a more straightforward application process, more consistency in the selection criteria and for the Ministry and agencies alike to address the reality and impact of so few of the applicants (5-10 %) receiving support from the program.

Some solid recommendations are offered in these and other areas.

Your attendance throughout the conference was much appreciated by the participants. Their hope is that you and your staff will review the summary and support as many of the suggestions as possible. Obviously, bringing more resources into the program is seen as critical to any meaningful progress for families and agencies alike.

It was a pleasure to facilitate this session and to see you again!

Sincerely,

Paul Muldoon
PGM Consulting & Training Services

Enclosure

Passport Conference Horseshoe Valley Resort November 2007

Feedback Session Summary Report

Through the analysis of some 40-45 questionnaires from attendees at the Passport conference, the following themes were developed based on a set of questions provided during the proceedings.

What's Working Well with Passport?

- ❖ When resources are provided, they usually go directly to individuals and families.
- ❖ There are real choices to make within Passport in terms of support strategies.
- ❖ Planning as a result becomes more practical and realistic.
- ❖ Community-based supports are much more likely to emerge as a result of this method than with a traditional program model.
- ❖ We are now seeing examples of people self-directed their supports resulting from the Passport program.
- ❖ Supports are much more individualized than in agency-based program approaches. The focus is usually on one person.
- ❖ The financial resources can be used in a multi-variety of ways.
- ❖ Families have more influence in selecting the support workers & greater control over the use of the resources.

Concerns & Challenges

- ❖ Very few are receiving services yet so many are applying. We are creating false hope for the vast majority of people requesting assistance.
- ❖ The criteria used to make decisions appear to be inconsistent from one region of the province to the next. Can this be addressed with more precise criteria and decision guidelines?
- ❖ There is no appeal mechanism for those denied support. While this is not a program based on entitlement, can some form of appeal be considered regardless of resource availability?
- ❖ For the majority who do not receive help from the program, there are no apparent service options except waiting lists in other programs.
- ❖ Some families appear to be pooling their resources and creating “centre based” models. While this approach may result in services that are segregated, they are more affordable for families.
- ❖ As with SSAH, families may be choosing workers in some cases who are untrained or potentially risky. Not all are agency supported.
- ❖ Across the province, people are trying in certain cases to use their Passport funding to have individuals and their workers attend centre based day programs.

Is this an appropriate application of the program’s guidelines? Are agencies liable for what happens in their buildings with workers who are not their employees?

The Application Process – Views Held

- ❖ The application form itself is excessively long (20+ pages), complex and difficult for many families to administer.
- ❖ In the eyes of many people involved in the process, only the most well written and compelling proposals are likely to be funded.
- ❖ The application process is time intensive even with agency assistance.
- ❖ Agencies receive no financial assistance for their contribution in applications that are unfunded. This is the significant majority of applications.

Suggestions for Change

- ❖ Shorten the application form and make it user-friendly.
- ❖ Develop consistent criteria to be used across the province in rendering decisions.
- ❖ We need to be able to be honest with families regarding the current limitations of the funding levels at the application point. We do not want to create expectations that cannot be met in most cases.
- ❖ Most of all, the program needs to create a broader level of funding capacity.

Questions Participants Had about Passport Funding

- ❖ What is most likely to make an application be successful in being granted funding?
- ❖ Is there enough accountability to verify the need in each case, account for how the resources are being used and deal with changing outcomes?
- ❖ What is the risk or liability to agencies if families choose to use support staff that are untrained?
- ❖ When will we see some clear targets for funding levels into the future?
- ❖ How will we deal with the continued strong demand for this service anticipated over the next several years if there are not additional resources?
- ❖ How should we consider requests to use Passport funding to access existing day programs?

How Can We Improve the Passport Process without Accessing additional resources?

Humans Resources

- Comprehensive and coordinated training for staff.
- Permanent full and part-time positions versus contract positions to support and enhance staff consistency & retention.
- Dedicated staff position to assist with application process.

Information to families and community

- Educational /Information events and feedback forums to be held regularly for families.
- Invite Board of Education, teachers, etc. in all locations.
- Develop a Resource Guide for families.
- Support families to understand /consider ALL options and approaches to supporting people.

Support to families in completion of application

- Develop more User-friendly language.
- Applications are available in English only.
- We all need to be straightforward about the likelihood of funding.
- Dedicated staff position to assist with application.

Establish an agency network of Passport providers.

Create a more objective approach to decision-making such as a Panel Review approach vs. a single agency model.

We need a clear vision of the future.

Increased communication between MCSS, Health and Education is needed.

Evaluate and monitor the outcomes being achieved at the "broker sites."

Design a better plan first. Then make application for funding to support the plan and involve partners.

A PLAN should be a requirement for every funded request.

We need to consider some unbundling of traditional day services to free up dollars.

In terms of funding requirements, where would you prioritize funding in relation to:

- a) Direct Supports to Individuals & Families.**
- b) Indirect Services including application support, screening, training, etc.**

a) Direct Support

Service strategies for those who remain on wait lists.

Multi-year funding plan with identified targets.

b) Indirect Support

Independent / Third Party Planning model.

Guaranteed funds to support administrative costs.

Support / guidance to agencies to unbundled their current day support services.

Comprehensive training for staff toward established and identified competencies /standards.

Establish a provincial body to assist with H.R. related issues implicit in direct funding methods.