



Committee Report

To:	Warden McQueen and Members of Grey County Council
Committee Date:	March 12, 2020
Subject / Report No:	SSR-CW-03-20
Title:	Ontario Works Electronic Document Management
Prepared by:	Melissa McCulloch
Reviewed by:	Barb Fedy
Lower Tier(s) Affected:	
Status:	Recommendation adopted by Committee as presented per Resolution CW65-20 March 12, 2020; Endorsed by County Council April 9, 2020 per Resolution CC40-20;

Recommendation

1. **That Report SSR-CW-03-20 be received; and**
2. **That the Ontario Works department adopt an Electronic Data Management system under the guidelines of the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services; and**
3. **That the contract to implement Electronic Data Management in the Ontario Works department be single sourced to Nimble Information Strategies Inc; and**
4. **That the costs of implementing Electronic Data Management, not to exceed \$59,021.50 plus HST, be provided from the Social Services General Caseload Reserve.**

Executive Summary

Electronic Data Management (EDM) is part of the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) strategy to modernize Social Assistance. EDM allows for master files and all incoming documents and mail to be managed and retrieved digitally, resulting in reduced administrative processes for staff and opportunity for faster, simpler service for Social Assistance recipients.

Grey County Ontario Works (OW) proposes to implement an EDM strategy using Nimble Strategies Inc. as the vendor, under the guidelines of the MCCSS and direction of the Municipality.

Nimble Strategies is the vendor of record for the province for the EDM initiative, they have the established infrastructure and experience implementing in 13 ODSP offices and Toronto Ontario Works.

Background and Discussion

The ministry announced in January 2020 plans to move forward with the EDM-OW project to allow for the imaging and electronic storage and retrieval of required Social Assistance recipient documentation for participating municipal Ontario Works offices. EDM has been part of the [Social Assistance Modernization Strategy](#) released in 2017.

Grey County Ontario Works department has been modernizing the delivery of social assistance at every opportunity. The OW department has been developing a [Journey to Modernization](#) since 2014 and is strategically working towards reducing filing and promoting Mobile Self-serve options for improved client service and reduced administration. Since December 4th 2019, 16% of the caseload has signed up for [MyBenefits](#), an online self-serve option for Social Assistance recipients. Grey County OW has the 3rd highest enrollment onto MyBenefits in the province, demonstrating clients and staff are enthusiastic about the digital strategies. Continued enrollment into MyBenefits will further reduce the need to handle documents and will over time reduce the cost of EDM.

EDM will consolidate time consuming processes into a [channelled digitization approach](#) allowing staff to access all mail in the centralized digital mail room. All other forms and documents after digitized will be viewable in SAMS, a system staff work in almost exclusively already. Early feedback from staff in offices where EDM has rolled has been extremely positive. An early rollout of EDM would position the department well to further reduce administration and focus staff resources on achieving Ministry targets.

EDM has been implemented by MCCSS using vendor of record Nimble Information Strategies Inc in 13 Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) offices with plans to implement in all 37 by 2021. In 2019 Toronto Employment and Social Services (TESS) implemented EDM across 13 OW offices after entering into a single source contract with Nimble Information Strategies Inc.

While Nimble Information Strategies Inc. was the successful vendor of record for the province, municipalities have the option of negotiating a contractual agreement with any vendor for the digitization of their Ontario Works files or completing the digitizing of records in-house. However, contracting with a vendor other than Nimble Information

Strategies Inc. would result in the Municipality incurring additional costs to establish the infrastructure that would enable the vendor to communicate with the province's network and interface with OpenText repository. These costs will not be incurred by the Municipality through an agreement with Nimble Information Strategies Inc. as the infrastructure is already in place. As well, by contracting with Nimble, the Municipality would not be responsible for the cost of any technical and administrative changes in the digitization process that might result from technology changes in the provincial Social Assistance Management System (SAMS) application.

Due to efficiencies already realized through modernization strategies and in combination with provincial cutbacks, the department has reduced the administrative support by 2 FTE positions. Currently, the department does not have the capacity to complete the digitization of files in-house.

Legal and Legislated Requirements

If approved by Council, Grey County will enter into an agreement with Nimble Strategies Inc. The contractual agreement will address Intellectual Property Indemnity and the protection of personal information.

Financial and Resource Implications

The cost to implement EDM in Grey County by Nimble Strategies Inc is quoted as follows:

Master File Digitization and Moving Costs	\$51,709
Digital Mail Room	\$6062.50 (\$1212.50 Monthly Aug – Dec)
In-house secure scanner and set-up	\$1250.00 (\$250.00 Monthly Aug – Dec)

The total estimated cost to implement EDM for approximately 1400 active Ontario Works files is \$59,021.00. The funds for set-up and maintenance for 2020 are requested from the Social Services General Caseload Reserve (1-10 ADM-00-00). Monthly costs in 2021 will be offset and savings are expected after full implementation as less staffing time will be required to manage filing and mail. The Social Services General Caseload Reserve has a 2019 year-end balance of \$658,950.06.

Minimal staff time will be required to implement EDM if Nimble Strategies Inc is the vendor. An OW project team consisting of 5 staff will attend training sessions and provide consultation where needed while Nimble manages logistics.

Relevant Consultation

- Internal IT, Finance/Purchasing, Clerks Staff
- External (list)

Appendices and Attachments

[Social Assistance Modernization Strategy](#)

[Journey to Modernization](#)

[MyBenefits Self Serve Options](#)

[Channelled Digitization Approach](#)