

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

VALUE STATEMENT

I expect that in my time of financial need, I will be treated fairly, with respect, and I will receive the benefits and additional supports I am eligible for in a timely manner.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

What is this Service?

Municipalities provide mandated employment and financial assistance to eligible residents under the provincial Ontario Works (OW) program.

Basic financial assistance helps with the cost of food and shelter, drugs and other exceptional needs. Employment assistance helps participants in obtaining skills that support progress toward sustainable employment and includes assisted job search, volunteering, job-specific skills training, self-employment activity and employment placement. The province assists with the cost of client benefits and program administration.

Objectives May Include:

- Basic needs for food and shelter
- Employment and training-related supports
- Health-related supports (e.g., basic dental, prescription medication, vision care)

Influencing Factors:

- **Client Profile:** The nature of a caseload includes transient clients, those clients moving on and off the caseload from precarious work situations, as well as clients who are receiving assistance for extended periods of time. Caseload turnover significantly impacts administrative support provided to meet program demand.
- **Demographics:** Populations with limited or no English language skills, the case mix and size of families vs. individuals all impact service needs and cost.
- **Economic Conditions:** impact all measures. The cost of living, between municipalities, will affect several measures.
- **Employability:** Clients with one or more barriers to employment including lack of education and skills, little or no work experience and/or no Canadian work experience. Systemic barriers also impact some individual's ability to find and sustain employment (e.g., pardons, affordable transportation).
- **Organizational Form:** Staff caseloads and the degree of support provided that differ between municipalities. Functions of direct client services may be contracted out in some municipalities.
- **Urban Form:** Office location, the availability of public transit, and the method of accessibility i.e., the availability of an intake screening unit (ISU) or a telephone application centre.

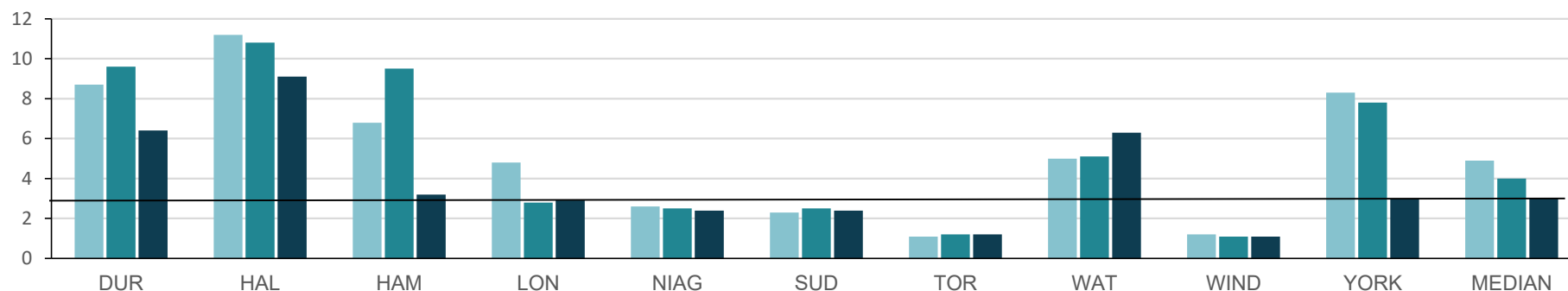
Extenuating Circumstances:

- **COVID-19 Pandemic:** Due to the pandemic, there was a change in how services were delivered, particularly with staff transitioning from in-person client visits to working from home and providing additional services virtually. Service was also impacted by federal and provincial changes that were implemented during the pandemic.

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Figure 29.1 Social Assistance Response Time to Client Eligibility (Days)

This measure provides an indicator of service and accessibility for Ontario Works programs by providing the average number of business days from the day that the application was submitted to the day the application was processed (i.e. approved or denied).



Region	2018	2019	2020
DUR	8.7	9.6	6.4
HAL	11.2	10.8	9.1
HAM	6.8	9.5	3.2
LON	4.8	2.8	2.9
NIAG	2.6	2.5	2.4
SUD	2.3	2.5	2.4
TOR	1.1	1.2	1.2
WAT	5.0	5.1	6.3
WIND	1.2	1.1	1.1
YORK	8.3	7.8	3.0
MEDIAN	4.9	4.0	3.0

Source: SSIM405 (Customer Service)

Durham: The increase in the response time from 2018 to 2019 was the result of a clean-up of a report from the Ministry on old application cases that were stuck without a decision of eligibility. Cases were assigned a decision of eligibility and have since been corrected. 2020 results are back to a normal response time to client eligibility.

Halton: Improved timelines in 2020 are a result of intake process changes and service optimization.

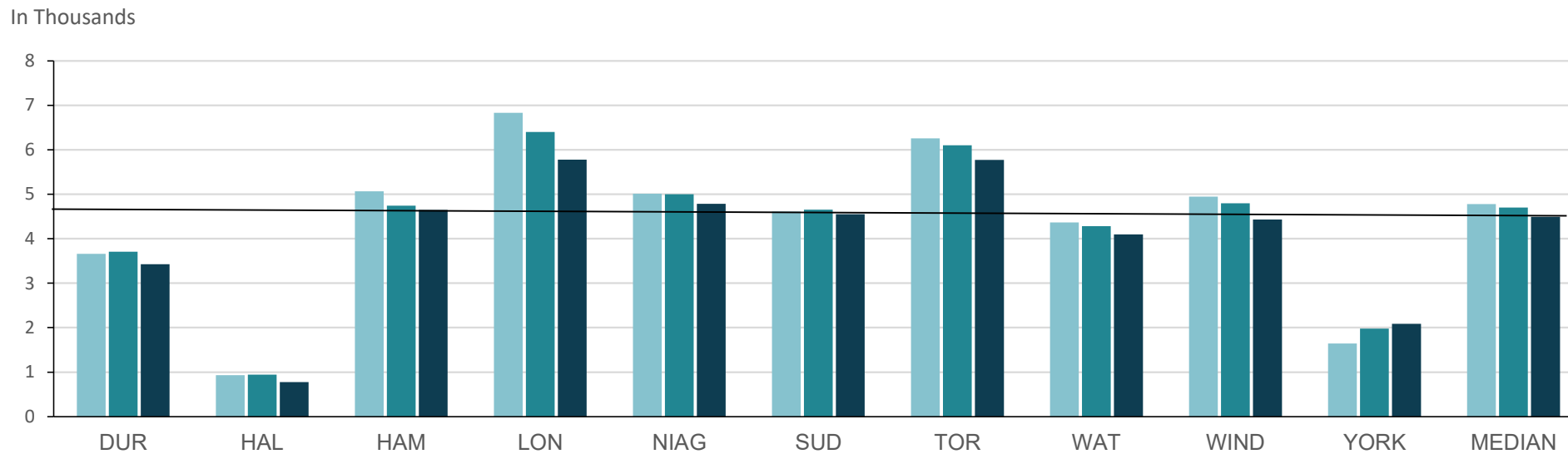
Hamilton: Increase in numbers for September and October 2019 due to the outdated pending application clean up activity. The decrease in response time in 2020 is a result of the implementation of a risk-based application process in response to the pandemic to support a remote working model as well as participation in the provincial centralized intake prototype in the latter part of 2020.

York: Response time improvement due to implementation of York Region's new Ontario Works service delivery model in 2019, Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS). Centralized Intake process in October 2020 and a reduction in the monthly average of OW applications in 2020.

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Figure 29.2 Monthly Social Assistance Case Load per 100,000 Households

This measure provides a metric that allows for accurate comparison of the number of Ontario Works cases in each community, as well as indicating whether Ontario Works usage is increasing or decreasing in a community.



2018	3,660	934	5,065	6,831	5,013	4,610	6,257	4,363	4,946	1,642	4,778
2019	3,709	946	4,742	6,402	4,997	4,655	6,102	4,283	4,797	1,977	4,699
2020	3,428	776	4,648	5,780	4,786	4,552	5,772	4,098	4,430	2,087	4,491

Source: SSIM206 (Service Level)