

Transcript for the “Why you should apply for services after getting Passport 5K funding” webcast.

Val: Hello everyone and welcome to Developmental Services Ontario’s webcast, “Why you should apply for services after getting passport 5K funding”. I’m Val Baravi, Communication Specialist for DSO, and I’ll be your host this evening. Today’s webcast will provide you with a brief overview of DSO application package details and understanding the process, reasons why you should apply for services beyond Passport funds, and what happens after you complete the application package?

But before we begin, I have a number of housekeeping issues for you. We will hold the Q&A at the end of the webcast so I would encourage you to type any comments or questions into the chat box at any time.

Below the chat box, there are two tabs. The first is a Feedback Tab that links you to a short evaluation. We would love your feedback on tonight’s presentation. Lastly, we have a Resources Tab that will provide you with other resources and links you may find helpful. If you experience any technical issues, quitting and re-launching your browser solves most issues, failing that there was a Tech Help Tab that provides other tips if needed.

Tanner Stranges is the DSO Service Navigator for Hamilton Niagara Region will join us tonight to share his expertise on the subject and help us understand the important role that the application package can play in your life. Welcome Tanner and thank you for joining us.

Tanner: Thank you very much, Val. I’m very excited to be here today.

Val: Tell me a little bit about yourself and what you do at DSO.

Tanner: I started in DSO in 2018 when the Service Navigation Department was first created. I assist families after the application process has been completed, but I continue to stay involved in the application process and quality improvement.

Val: Let’s talk about DSO. What is DSO?

Tanner: So Developmental Services Ontario or DSO is the access point for ministry funded adult developmental services in Ontario. To apply for adult developmental services in Ontario, you need to prove your residency, your age, and that you have a developmental disability. Once your eligibility has been confirmed, a standard DSO assessor will assist you and your family in completing the application package.

Val: You can actually apply to the DSO at the age of 16, is that correct?

Tanner: That is correct. You can apply as early as 16, but you can't be connected to services until around your 18th birthday.

Val: Let's talk about the application package. Why does it exist?

Tanner: Great question. So the application package came out of transformational work that was done by the Ontario government in 2004, when adults with developmental disabilities were finally being removed from institutions to community living. At that time, the government was conducting a major review of the developmental services system. The two forms we use today were guided by the six key transformational principles that were endorsed by a group of self-advocates, families and professionals across Ontario.

Val: Sounds like a lot of research went into that.

Tanner: Very much so.

Val: Can you tell me why a person needs to complete the application package?

Tanner: Of course. So, the application package is a chance for you and your family to really tell your story. The goal of the application package is to help us understand the right services and supports for you. Since the DSO is your access point to services, look at the application package as an intake to the residential supports or specialized services that you're interested in. Now to go through the application package, it's essentially a process and just like any other process, process takes time.

Val: What can you tell me about the length of that process?

Tanner: So, that depends on you. The assessment is typically scheduled in two, three-hour meetings. The intent of this big chunk of time is to allow you and your family not to feel rushed, to give you time, to tell your story. The DSO will customize this time for you. If you would prefer to do a full day, we could do it that way. Or, if you would prefer, we could do six one-hour sessions. We really are trying to tailor, make this process to what would work best for each individual.

Val: Now to my knowledge, the application package consists of two parts, the ADSS and the SIS-A, what can you tell me about that?

Tanner: Yes. So the ADSS is the application for Developmental Services and Supports. It's a series of questions that really allows the assessor to get to know you and what you need from services. That'll allow them to know what likes you have and also what dislikes you have. In the ADSS, we also take the time to let you know what services exist in your local community that you might be interested in. Now, the second assessment that we have is called the SIS-A and that is the Supports Intensity Scale - Adult Version. The SIS-A is a set of questions, which really helps us understand what types of supports you're going to need in the community to be successful. We do this so

we can make sure of a few things, that we are accurately understanding your day to day needs so that we can match you to the correct supports, as well as understand your daily support needs to help service providers better provide the service to you.

Val: So, if I understand this correctly, the ADSS is about your likes, your dislikes, and your character, right? Whereas the SIS-A is more about your needs.

Tanner: Very good point. Yes. So the ADSS is really around what you like, what you're interested in. And the SIS-A is more about what types of supports that you're going to need in the community to live a successful life.

Val: Now, is it possible to get a copy of the ADSS and the SIS-A by mail, complete the package and just send it to the DSO, or do it online if that's available?

Tanner: Very good question. Unfortunately, there's no way to actually complete the application package without a certified assessor. We are able to send some of the questions from the ADSS beforehand, however, with the SIS-A, it is a standardized assessment and a certified assessor is the only person qualified to complete that assessment.

Val: Do you need to complete the application package to qualify for the 5K from the Passport Program?

Tanner: No, you just need to be eligible for services with Developmental Services Ontario. Once you're deemed eligible for our services, if you request to not have the application process completed, we would just make the referral for the \$5,000 Passport Program.

Val: Can you name me a few immediate or long-term benefits of the application package?

Tanner: Well, it could lead you to more services that you would not have to use your Passport \$5,000 on, and potentially you could receive an increase in Passport funding. Further to that without the application package, the only services that you are eligible for is the passport 5K program. Unless an application package is completed, we cannot match you to any other ministry funded adult developmental services in Ontario.

Val: What happens when a person decides not to go forward with the application package?

Tanner: Well, as mentioned before, the person would not be able to be on any service registry or refer to any other service. For people who live with caregivers in their home, not doing the application package could potentially provide a barrier if a crisis arises as an application package is required to connect to any services. For people living independently in the community, they could be missing out on free services that could

make independent living much easier and allow more opportunity for successful integration.

Val: It's interesting you mentioned the service registry. Can you clarify this for us, the difference between a waiting list and the service registry?

Tanner: Very good question, Val. With the service registry, we try to ensure equity by doing that, we take into consideration each individual's priority, each individual situation, the caregiver situation and we use this information along with the application package to match to services that would be best fit as well as the most in need for a service.

Val: Can I get an application package done right away?

Tanner: No. So we recommend that you check in with your local DSO. Timelines are dependent on scheduling availability with you and the people that know you best.

Val: After I complete the application package, can I get services right away?

Tanner: No. So you'll be placed on the service registry that we just spoke about. When a service becomes available, you'll be contacted by your local DSO. Now it can take time for DSO staff to complete the application, as well as have you waiting on the service registry. DSO offices strive to connect with families after the assessment to ensure that all the information we have is up to date and that nothing in your situation has changed. For that reason we recommend that you please update us when your situation changes, or if you have any questions or concerns. We welcome all phone calls, emails, drop-ins, any type of communication, you and your family prefer.

Val: Can you give us an example or a few examples of a situation change?

Tanner: Of course. So a few examples of things that change are your address if you've moved. A change in caregiver status, whether that is healthcare concerns, anything of that nature. Any service changes added or removed or even a change in support needs. One of the more common things that we would like to know about is a phone number change. We won't be able to get in contact with you if we have incorrect information.

Val: That's great to know. Thank you very much Tanner for sharing this priceless information with us.

Tanner: Thank you, Val.