

Understanding Developmental Services Ontario (DSO)



What is DSO?

Developmental Services Ontario (DSO) is the access point for adult developmental services funded by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) in Ontario.

DSO helps connect adults with developmental disabilities to available ministry-funded services and community-based supports that promote independence and engagement. There are nine DSO locations across the province.

Once confirmed eligible, your area DSO will help you:

- Understand and complete the application process.
- Determine the kind of services and supports you need.
- Get access to MCCSS-funded services and supports that you need when a spot is available.
- Find relevant information and resources in your community.

What is a developmental disability?

A developmental disability:

- is present at birth
- or develops before 18 years of age
- affects a person's ability to learn and is permanent (can be mild or severe)

When should I apply?

When you turn 16, apply online or contact your area DSO to see if you are eligible for services. By starting the application process early, you may be able to reduce the service gap between children and adult services. DSO will help you determine the supports that are available in your area and that meet your needs after you turn 18.

Update your information

It may take some time before you get your services and supports. In the meantime, it is important to keep your area DSO up to date about any changes in your situation. Contact us if you are planning to move or change your phone number. This helps us to make sure that we have your current contact information and to confirm that you wish to remain in the service registry.

How to apply?

Call your area DSO and complete the initial referral with a Service Navigator or go through the online application on dsontario.ca. The referrals can be made once the person is 16 years old, but services cannot begin until after they turn 18 years old.

Finding your area DSO

DSO Central East Region

Serves Durham, Haliburton, Kawartha Lakes, Northumberland, Peterborough, Simcoe, and York.
1-855-277-2121
TTY 905-898-1609

DSO Hamilton-Niagara Region

Serves Brant, Haldimand-Norfolk, Hamilton, and Niagara.
1-877-376-4674
TTY available through Bell Relay*

DSO South East Region

Serves Frontenac, Hastings, Lanark, Leeds & Grenville, Lennox & Addington, and Prince Edward.
1-855-237-6737

DSO Central West Region

Serves Dufferin, Halton, Peel, Waterloo, and Wellington.
1-888-941-1121
TTY available through Bell Relay*

DSO North East Region

Serves Cochrane, Muskoka, Nipissing, Parry Sound, and Timiskaming.
1-855-376-6376
TTY 1-800-855-0511

DSO South West Region

Serves Bruce, Chatham-Kent, Elgin, Essex, Grey, Huron, Lambton, Middlesex, Oxford, and Perth.
1-855-437-6797
TTY available through Bell Relay*

DSO Eastern Region

Serves Ottawa Region, Prescott-Russell, Renfrew, Stormont, Dundas, and Glengarry.
1-855-376-3737
TTY 1-855-777-5787

DSO Northern Region

Serves Algoma, Kenora, Manitoulin, Rainy River, Sudbury, and Thunder Bay.
1-855-376-6673
TTY 1-866-752-5427

DSO Toronto Region

Serves Etobicoke, North York, Scarborough, and Toronto.
1-855-372-3858
TTY 416-925-0295

*Call Bell Relay by dialling 711, enter your area DSO number, type GA and Bell Relay will connect you

Visit dsontario.ca to connect with your area DSO online.