



Family Alliance Ontario Passport Program Survey

Report on Results

Why FAO launched this
Survey
Page 1

Survey Results
Page 1 & 2

Comments About
Passport Criteria
Page 3

Reason for our Survey

In mid June 2015 Family Alliance Ontario, (FAO) launched a very short four-question survey with Ontario families, in order to measure the experiences of families, regarding requests for advance funds from the Passport program. FAO did this because we heard stories from families across Ontario, about the negative impacts they experience, when direct funding is delivered solely via a reimbursement process. We find it deeply disturbing, that some Ontario families must choose between paying for family necessities or for support for their son or daughter, and that the very programs intended to help individuals and families, actually contribute to family poverty.

Families, who cannot afford to pay out of pocket and wait for reimbursement, are forced to accept day programs rather than hire someone qualified to support their son or daughter to pursue community activities. Many segregated and congregated day programs, and sheltered workshops, directly offer families fee schedules that accommodate the reimbursement processes at their local Passport agency. FAO finds it very troubling that any government program, service or process, unfairly favor's privileged families. In a province that has developed legislation that intends to promote social inclusion, we have service processes at Passport program service delivery sites that are making opportunities for real authentic inclusion more accessible to wealthier families.



Survey Results

Over 3/4 of survey respondents or 76.5% were NOT aware that a Passport Agency could advance funds for admissible supports and expenses as per the 'Reimbursement Section' of the 'Passport Program Guidelines for Adults with a Developmental Disability and their Carvers.



Survey Results

continued

The vast majority of families (85.3%) thought they could not ask for advance funds for admissible supports and expenses from their local Passport agency thus only a very small number of families 14.7% have requested this.



A few Selected Family Comments About Requesting Advance Funding

“We have received Passport funding since 2006. Up until near the end of the previous fiscal year 2014/15, we could submit invoices prior to month end (middle of the month) for expenses which were consistent e.g. support worker and receive payment in advance. Things have changed however and now funds cannot be released until the work or expense has been completed (even though it is a consistent support). It was suggested that we bill 2 x per month but it creates too much paperwork when self administering and complicates the process. Families who self administer are put at a huge disadvantage as compared to Agencies who broker funds - it is a huge inequity and one which I believe compromises and obstructs the purpose and intent of Passport Funding i.e. choice/flexibility and individuality.”

“Former Passport Agency gave 25 percent of the funds upfront and then quarterly until last quarter reflected actuals. I had thought with the current agency it was unavailable until just recently and so will request advance of funding in the future.” Advance funding used to be the way the program worked in the beginning.”

“You were given a certain amount of money to “get you going” so you could pay the worker(s) and then you would be reimbursed, so families did not have to come up with the initial funds to get going. Why did that change?”

“The individualization is being eroded by Passport Funding being absorbed into Agency budgets and the individual not having true choice and flexibility for support. It appears a contradiction to the purpose and intent of Passport Funding.”

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November 2015

72.7 % of respondents did NOT understand what determined the level of funding they currently receive!

The following comments are a selection of family comments to our question about the respondents understanding of the Passport criteria that determine eligibility to receive different levels of Passport funding?

I am concerned about the lack of transparency in regards to decisions for passport funding. We need to be aware of the criteria to ensure fairness and equity.

Different DSO offices and TPA agencies are applying the rules differently

My family member received Passport Funding prior to July 2011 and was grandfathered. The current assessment process and small amount of funding that is available puts individuals and families at a disadvantage, as many are unaware of the purpose and intent of the process, which can lead to assessments not providing a true reflection of the

I asked them about it and they answer was that they have a "system" in place to determine that. But when I asked them to explain to me how it works, and if the 'system' is a software or a real person who makes decisions, their answer was: "I am sorry, but I can not tell you that." And this was the answer every time I asked question regarding my sons eligibility, timing, or level of Passport funding. The staff in the Halton Passport office is not helpful at all. They are not willing to disclose any information to us or anyone else about our case, saying that this is a private issue and they can not talk about it.????? They also say that everything will be done in 3 years?? Just wait. I find them to be very rude.

I never used my funding, because I could not provide the money upfront!

The assessment/application format our family member completed was done approximately 3 years ago and has never been updated. There was never any explanation regards levels/amount for funding. Thus we were told our child would receive an amount and we were excited that it finally happened.

I would love to understand further how the DSO intake impacts funding since I see a lot of unbalance in the amounts to various families/clients. I do understand everyone hasn't been reassessed yet.

I just want to understand what we are eligible for and when we will receive it.

From my understanding and experience with passport funding, if your adult child is not "badly disabled", violent, then you do not get much funding. I do not agree with this at all

Different levels. That is a joke, as my funding has not increased since I first started receiving it 12years ago

These should be made available for us to check that what we receive is appropriate!

Are these criteria published anywhere?

Would like information on what constitutes more funding.

As a source of direct funding Passport \$\$\$ available are not sufficient. There is still no real policy on how to use this direct funding for more residential supports such as overnight etc. if primary caregivers wish to go on vacation without the individual they care for or even if they are hospitalized and are the sole caregiver.