

February 15, 2018



Ontario

OFFICE OF THE WORKER ADVISER

BUSINESS PLAN

2018-19 to 2020-21

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES	6
STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS	9
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.....	11
ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN.....	12
RISK IDENTIFICATION, ASSESSMENT AND MITIGATION STRATEGIES	16
HUMAN RESOURCES CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES	17
COMMUNICATION PLAN	19
ACTIVITIES INVOLVING STAKEHOLDER GROUPS.....	21

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This executive summary deals with the Office of the Worker Adviser's (OWA) two programs: workplace insurance and occupational health and safety reprisals (OHSRP).

Workplace Insurance Program

The OWA's major mandate is advising and representing vulnerable, non-unionized injured workers and their survivors in their workplace safety and insurance claims and appeals. OWA's partnership with the Workplace Safety Insurance Appeals Tribunal (WSIAT) on the reduction of its appeals inventory will continue to be a key priority from 2018-19 to 2020-21. The OWA is the single most important partner for WSIAT, representing 14% of all appeals at that level. In the last 27 months, significant progress was made in the reduction of OWA's inventory at WSIAT, from 1626 in September 2015 to 968 by December 2017 – an overall reduction of 40%. During the three years covered by this plan, OWA will continue to focus resources on accepting all hearing opportunities offered by WSIAT and continuing this progress.

At the same time, OWA will ensure that it can continue to immediately accept urgent and priority cases such as occupational cancers, severely disabled workers and workers in psychological or financial crisis. OWA will work with its referral partners to ensure that high priority cases continue to be accepted in a timely fashion.

There are two additional challenges for the OWA on the horizon:

The growing focus on Occupational Disease Clusters - in recent years, significant clusters of occupational disease have been emerging in various parts of the province. These are a growing prevention priority within the occupational health and safety system and with key stakeholders. As well, there is a significant continuing flow of new occupational disease cluster cases at WSIB. This has resulted in an increased demand for OWA advisory and representation services. Cases related to occupational disease are often complex and high profile and therefore resource-intensive. These cases are expected to continue to exert pressure on the OWA in 2018-19 and beyond.

A projected increase in occupational stress claims – The Bill 127 amendments will expand workplace insurance entitlement to include chronic occupational stress, as of January 1, 2018. This will likely lead to an increase in stress claims and appeals, and a

corresponding caseload increase for the OWA beginning in 2018-19. These cases are legally complex and will centre around difficult issues such as sexual harassment and bullying.

This plan contains a comprehensive multi-faceted strategy to focus resources on WSIAT caseload reduction as well as the emerging pressures. This includes working with WSIAT and employer and worker community partners on early and alternative dispute resolution and other improvements in the appeals system such as video hearings. OWA's new service delivery model, fully implemented in 2016-17, includes rigorous initial case reviews to ensure that only cases with a reasonable chance of success will be appealed. This will divert new cases from the appeal system, with extensive supports for these workers to access alternative sources of support. The plan also includes immediate acceptance of high priority cases such as those from occupational disease clusters.

The plan includes significant learning supports to OWA's staff, with a focus on WSIAT appeals, occupational disease and mental stress, to equip them to succeed in a changing operating environment. Risk mitigation strategies have been developed to ensure that the plan stays on track.

Occupational Health and Safety Reprisals Program (OHSRP)

Effective April 1, 2012, the OWA was given an additional mandate under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*: to advise, educate and represent non-unionized workers who have suffered reprisals in the workplace for raising health and safety concerns. The OHSRP experienced a significant increase in service demand after its inception in 2012. In April 2014, the OWA shifted resources to the OHSRP from the workplace insurance program. Since that time, demand for OHSRP has fluctuated year to year, but is doing so within a fairly stable range. This means that current staffing levels are appropriate.

AGENCY MANDATE

OWA is an operational service agency reporting to the Minister of Labour. The OWA Director is appointed by Order in Council and OWA's employees are public servants.

The OWA's vision is to be a leader in advice, representation, and education in workplace safety and insurance and occupational health and safety reprisals, on behalf of vulnerable non-unionized injured workers and their survivors.

Workplace Insurance Mandate - Section 176(1) of the WSIA establishes the OWA's mandate to "educate, advise and represent workers who are not members of a trade union and their survivors". The OWA supports the government's goal to create a more prosperous and healthy Ontario by contributing to poverty reduction by supporting vulnerable workers through dispute resolution, enabling clients to access benefits and services under the WSIA. This reduces the pressure on social services programs and helps employers by contributing to effective and timely dispute resolution of potentially costly litigation. Supporting injured workers in return to work contributes to Ontario's prosperity by maximizing disabled employment, reducing claims and health costs for these workers.

Occupational Health and Safety Reprisals mandate - Pursuant to s. 50.1 of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA) and O. Reg. 33/12, the OWA is mandated to educate, advise and represent non-unionized workers who have reprisal complaints under Section 50 of the OHSA. The OWA's OHSA mandate supports the following Ministry of Labour priorities: protecting vulnerable workers, protecting workers' health and safety and leading accident prevention efforts, enhancing a culture of health and safety across Ontario and accelerating the transformation of Ontario's occupational health and safety system as recommended by the Expert Advisory Panel.

OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

Workplace Safety and Insurance Program – This program is delivered to non-unionized injured workers and surviving family members by 51 Worker Advisers and 19.5 Client Services Representatives from 16 offices across Ontario, by toll free telephone service and through OWA’s website. OWA staff travel to meet disabled clients and attend hearings and mediations as required. Information Clinics are held in communities where there is no local OWA office. Complex legal advice, education and representation are provided by 4 Legislative Interpretation Specialists and OWA’s General Counsel.

- **Advisory Services** - All workers who contact the OWA for assistance receive information and advice to help them navigate the system on their own. This is provided by telephone, email, website enquiries, letters, community information clinics and in-person appointments.
- **Representation Services** - When advisory service is not sufficient to help workers resolve their problems on their own, OWA provides representation at WSIB, WSIAT and in other related proceedings such as return to work or judicial review. Whenever possible, OWA seeks early and alternative resolution of disputes. OWA reviews all cases before offering representation, accepting only cases that have a reasonable chance of success. This results in diverting around 45% of OWA’s incoming cases from the appeals system. Referrals are then made to the appropriate social agency or disability program.
- **Educational Services** – provided through OWA’s website, printed educational materials and educational sessions in person or by webinar. The website contains information on WSIB benefits and services, worker information kits, frequently asked questions and links to WSIB and WSIAT forms. OWA supports its community partners who provide peer support, counselling and assistance to injured workers.

Occupational Health and Safety Reprisals Program (OHSRP) – This program delivers services to workers under the OWA’s occupational health and safety reprisals mandate. OHSRP services are delivered by three worker representatives and 1.5 legal assistants under the direction of a counsel/manager. The OHSRP provides services from the OWA’s provincial office in Toronto. Workers can contact the program by a toll-free telephone number or through the website. OHSRP staff travel to hearings

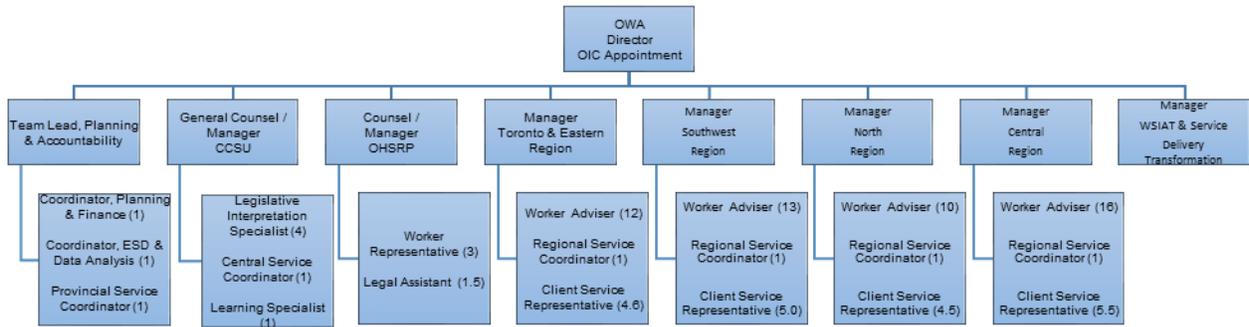
and mediations outside Toronto as required. The OHSRP worker representatives are required to be licenced by the Law Society of Upper Canada as lawyers or paralegals.

Advisory Services - Advisory services are provided primarily by telephone. Initial assistance is provided by a legal assistant and includes information about legal rights and OWA services. Where workers fall within the OWA's mandate or a legal opinion is required to make that determination, they receive an intake interview with a worker representative. If there is sufficient evidence for a reprisal complaint, representation is offered. If there no reprisal or insufficient evidence, workers are provided with detailed legal advice and a referral, if appropriate.

Representation Services - Representation services are provided by worker representatives. If a worker accepts the OWA's offer of representation, the OWA represents the worker in an application to the Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB). The OWA represents workers at every stage of the reprisal complaint process: drafting applications, mediations, hearings and enforcement. Where appropriate, the OWA will also negotiate with employers outside of the formal OLRB process.

Educational Services - Information about rights, processes and sources of assistance is provided directly to workers in response to telephone inquiries. General information about occupational health and safety reprisals and the services provided by the OWA are available on the website as well as in print and email.

OFFICE OF THE WORKER ADVISER – ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



*3.5 FTEs are pending approval

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Workplace Insurance Program

Overall Strategy: The highest priority for OWA in 2018-21, as a partner in the workplace safety and insurance appeals system, is to contribute to appeals inventory reduction at the WSIAT. Because OWA is the single largest source of representation for workers at WSIAT, success by OWA will play an important role in WSIAT's overall efforts.

On September 30, 2015, OWA's inventory at WSIAT reached the highest level in OWA's history. At 1626 cases, it represented almost half of OWA's overall caseload, versus the ideal level of around 650 cases at WSIAT. This significantly affected OWA's ability to efficiently turn over cases and manage incoming workload. In 2016-17, OWA made significant progress in WSIAT inventory reduction, reaching 1265 cases by year-end. In its 2017-18 business plan, OWA committed to continue to focus its resources on efforts to make further progress in reducing WSIAT inventory. As of December 31, 2017, OWA had succeeded in reducing its WSIAT inventory to 968, already exceeding the reduction target of 1116 for the whole fiscal year; and with a projection for additional progress by March 31, 2018. OWA had also increased the percentage of its WSIAT caseload at the resolution stage to 65% versus 62% in the fall of 2015, meaning that overall more of its WSIAT caseload was closer to final resolution.

In 2018-21, WSIAT, to continue progress on reducing its appeals inventory, will offer more hearings than its annual average earlier in the decade. So OWA must be ready to accept those hearings and assist in WSIAT's efforts. OWA will also actively work with WSIAT, employer and worker community partners to identify and pilot innovative approaches to address the appeals inventory and improve dispute resolution and appeals, including early and alternative dispute resolution initiatives and video hearings. Overall, as the wait time for OWA's cases at WSIAT decreases, OWA will be better positioned to resolve cases earlier. Effective and timely dispute resolution in Ontario's workplace insurance system contributes to our economic well being because it provides more certainty to employers and reduces the burden of litigation.

OWA will continue to assign new and existing resources to WSIAT cases awaiting hearing dates, to ensure prompt response to offers of hearings, adjusting regional and individual caseloads as required. Based on current workflow analysis, this will reduce OWA's WSIAT caseload to an ideal level by the end of 2019-20. The continued focus on WSIAT inventory reduction will affect OWA capacity to handle new cases, but this will be sustainable due to a significant reduction in incoming representation work from the high levels earlier in the decade.

OWA operated in 2017-18 at 97.1 FTEs, 3.5 positions above its approved staffing level of 93.6, with the approval of the Ministry of Labour. This was to support OWA's involvement in reducing its WSIAT inventory. This current staffing level will continue in 2018-19. These additional FTEs consist of two Worker Advisers, a half-time Client Service representative and a WSIAT Caseload Reduction and Service Delivery Transformation Manager. The WSIAT and Service Transformation Manager leads the partnership with WSIAT in inventory reduction, the development of improved service delivery processes and a new electronic Case Management System, to support more effective case processing and outcomes. In 2017-18, these additional staff contributed in a vital way to OWA's inventory reduction at WSIAT, representing 31% of the reduction target. It is projected that the additional FTEs will contribute similarly in 2018-19.

To ensure that WSIAT caseload reduction does not impede OWA in dealing with urgent high priority cases such as occupational cancers, OWA will continue to deal with such cases immediately. The current projection is that OWA will accept 200 priority cases in 2018-19, similar to 2017-18. The OWA's new service delivery model, fully implemented in 2016-17, will continue to ensure comprehensive case reviews and evaluation of case merits, to eliminate duplicate reviews, divert cases from the appeals system and ensure that only cases with a reasonable chance of success are accepted.

Development of a new electronic Case Management System (CMS) has begun in 2017-18 and will be completed in 2018-19, in support of the new service delivery model, including a web portal to provide 24/7 access to OWA clients. The \$970,000 cost of the new CMS will be spread over the two fiscal years, at \$485,000 per fiscal year.

The OWA will continue to work with WSIB, WSIAT, other worker representatives and employer representatives to streamline dispute resolution, including video hearings, and to divert cases from formal appeals. As part of this initiative, OWA recruited a Learning Specialist in 2017-18 to ensure learning support to Worker Advisers in effective resolution of workers' cases at WSIB and especially WSIAT. OWA will also strengthen staff training and capacity to refer injured workers to alternative sources of support, including in psychological and financial crisis situations.

Occupational Health and Safety Reprisals Program – The OHSRP experienced a significant increase in service demand after its inception in April 2012. In April 2014, the OWA shifted resources to the OHSRP from the workplace insurance program. Since that time, demand for OHSRP has fluctuated year to year, but is doing so within a fairly stable range. This means that current staffing levels for this program are appropriate.

In 2018-19, OWA will continue to collaborate with the MOL Health and Safety Program, which is currently the main source of referrals to the OHSA reprisals program.

Overall strategy - OWA will carefully monitor demand for services for its two programs during 2018-19 and beyond, and allocate resources accordingly.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

OWA developed a comprehensive operational plan for 2017-18, to ensure implementation of the key strategic directions established in 2016-17. This plan will be renewed for 2018-19. The highest priority from 2018-19 to 2020-21 is to contribute to WSIAT caseload reduction, with the objective of accepting the increased number of hearings to be offered by WSIAT. This will involve an analysis and review of current caseloads, matching them with likely offers of hearings from WSIAT.

Supporting this is OWA's new service delivery model, fully implemented in 2016-17. This new model focuses more resources on the front end through comprehensive case assessments and referrals and support for injured workers who may need to access other disability programs while they await resolution of their appeals at WSIAT. OWA has assigned a full-time WSIAT Caseload Reduction and Service

Delivery Transformation Manager, who will continue to work closely with WSIAT and OWA's management team to ensure nimble management of the inventory reduction initiative, on a provincial level.

The plan will continue to include resources to ensure immediate acceptance of urgent and priority cases, projected at 200 for 2018-19. OWA's caseload for occupational disease clusters and mental stress cases will be carefully monitored and any related resource allocation needs addressed.

Key risks and mitigation strategies have been identified in that section of this business plan.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

WORKPLACE INSURANCE MANDATE

While this part of the scan deals with factors influencing the OWA's workplace insurance mandate, some also relate to the reprisals mandate. Factors relevant primarily to the reprisals mandate are at the end of this scan.

External Factors

- **Fiscal environment** – In both its mandates, OWA must allocate its resources prudently and effectively to maximize impact and benefit.
- **WSIAT Caseload Reduction** – This is the most important external factor. 1,265 cases – 44% of OWA's caseload of 2,874 – were in WSIAT's appeals inventory as of March 31, 2017, down from the maximum level of 1,626 on September 30, 2015 but still significantly affecting OWA's case turnover and its ability to serve new clients. OWA's WSIAT inventory was reduced to 968 (308 – 24%%) by October 31, 2017, already well exceeding OWA's reduction target of 160 for the entire fiscal year. It is projected that inventory reduction will continue, likely at a slower pace, through the rest of 2017-18. From 2018-19 through 2020-21, WSIAT will continue to offer OWA more hearings than in the past. OWA must be ready to accept those hearings as the key to helping to reduce WSIAT's inventory and achieve OWA's ideal target level of 650 cases at WSIAT.

- **Growing number of priority cases, particularly occupational disease** – The OWA has experienced a continuing increase in priority cases such as occupational cancer (with clusters in Peterborough, Sarnia, Timmins, Elliot Lake and Kitchener-Waterloo), severely disabled workers and workers in severe psychological or financial crisis. In 2017-18, OWA is projected to accept around 200 such cases, approximately double the level of 2015-16. It is anticipated that 2018-19 and beyond will see a continuing high level of priority cases. OWA must be able to accept these cases while simultaneously focusing on WSIAT caseload reduction.
- **Implementation by WSIB of entitlement for chronic occupational mental stress** – Bill 127, passed in June 2017, included amendments removing the previous bar on workplace insurance entitlement for chronic occupational mental stress. As of January 1, 2018, WSIB will implement a new policy implementing Bill 127. This will lead to an increase in mental stress claims and for OWA’s representation services. This will need to be carefully monitored.
- **Paralegal regulation** - In 2006, the Law Society of Upper Canada (LSUC) exempted OWA and OEA staff delivering workplace insurance legal services from paralegal regulation. LSUC determined in March 2016 that it would move forward to eliminate this exemption. Following discussions with OWA and the OEA, LSUC has agreed to a transition arrangement where current OWA staff will not have to be licensed paralegals to deliver legal services for workplace insurance. Going forward, however, all new OWA staff delivering legal services will be required to be licenced paralegals. It is currently projected that LSUC will formally implement this arrangement in 2018-19. Overall, the move to LSUC licencing poses recruitment and training challenges for OWA in 2018-19 and beyond.

Internal Factors

- **Staffing levels** –During 2017-18, OWA was approved to operate at 97.1 FTEs overall, 3.5 above its base FTE level of 93.6. These additional FTEs were approved temporarily to support the OWA to work with WSIAT on caseload reduction. The additional positions contributed around 31% towards the inventory reduction target for 2017-18 and will contribute similarly in 2018-19.

- **Staff renewal and succession issues** - OWA is in the midst of a significant staff renewal process. In the seven years from 2013-14 to 2020-21, over 40% of OWA's staff and managers will retire. This has been posing major challenges in recruitment, management renewal, staff training and succession planning. Significantly improved staffing stability is anticipated in 2018-19 as OWA begins to reach the end of this cycle of renewal.
- **Legacy Case Management System (CMS)** – OWA's electronic case management system for its Workplace Insurance Program is nearing the end of its life and does not support the Reprisals Program at all. Development of the new CMS has begun in 2017-18 and will continue in 2018-19. It is anticipated that the development and implementation will be completed by the end of 2018-19. The total cost of \$970,000 will be split equally between 2017-18 and 2018-19.

HEALTH AND SAFETY REPRISAL MANDATE

External factors

- **Growing awareness of workplace stress and harassment** – it is anticipated that the combination of media attention to workplace harassment and implementation on January 1, 2018 of workplace insurance entitlement for chronic occupational stress may lead to reprisal cases around these issues, and potential workload increases for OWA's Reprisals Program. This will need to be monitored.

Internal factors

- **Program Workload** - Following its inception in 2012-13, the OHSRP saw a large increase in demand for service: by 78% in 2013-14 and another 27% in 2014-15. Since that time, service demand for the program appears to have settled into a pattern of annual fluctuations within a fairly stable range. It remains to be seen, however, whether that pattern will hold for the long term. Because the OHSRP is still relatively new, it does not have a large body of historical experience for analysis. Furthermore, the small size of the program means

that relatively small changes in capacity or demand can lead to large variations in results.

RISK IDENTIFICATION, ASSESSMENT AND MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Identified Risk	Agency Objective Impacted	Likelihood	Risk Level	Mitigating Strategies	Lead	Target Date
Operational Risk: Challenge in contributing to WSIAT caseload reduction initiative	Agency objective to increase outcomes at WSIAT , while continuing to respond to new incoming work.	High	High	Analyze Worker Adviser caseloads quarterly to closely match WSIAT assignments with capacity. Quarterly review with WSIAT of gaps or issues to be addressed. At mid-year in 2018/19 , analysis of impact of WSIAT caseload on front end service capacity, with potential re-focusing of case selection criteria if needed. See HR plan for specific training, coaching and other supports to Worker Advisers.	OWA regional managers OWA WSIAT Backlog Reduction and Transformation Manager OWA Director and management team	Quarterly Quarterly in 2018-19 At mid-year October 31, 2018
Operational Risk: Responding to emerging workload from occupational disease clusters and mental stress	Objective to reduce WSIAT appeals inventory while dealing effectively with new incoming work.	High	Medium	Analyze occupational disease and mental stress caseloads quarterly to identify trends and resource needs. Re-allocate resources as needed to address the trends. See HR plan for specific training, coaching and other supports to Worker Advisers	Director and regional managers Director and regional managers	Quarterly As needed
IT Risk: OWA's legacy case management	OWA's objective to maximize organizational	High	High	Complete the development phase in Q3 of 2018-19 and complete implementation	Director with WSIAT and Service Delivery	Complete development by December 31,

system (CMS) reaching end of lifespan	capacity and effectiveness and improve service delivery to clients of both workplace insurance and reprisals programs			planning by end of 2018-19. This will allow cost to be spread over two fiscal years. Work with IT Cluster on maintenance fixes for the current CMS while awaiting development of new CMS.	Transformation Manager and Team Lead, Planning and Accountability	2018 and implementation planning by March 31, 2019
---------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--	--	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------

HUMAN RESOURCES CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES

	Key Challenges	HR Issues and Impact	HR Priorities and Actions	Lead	Target date
1	Succession planning and recruitment	At least 15% of OWA's staff including 3 of 7 managers will retire during the planning period from 2018/19 to 2020/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify management successors and provide acting opportunities, mentoring and training Identify and support feeder group candidates for Worker Adviser positions Ensure specific supports for candidates from diverse backgrounds 	OWA Director Regional managers Regional managers	Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing
2	Paralegal regulation	Elimination of Law Society exemption of OWA from paralegal regulation during the planning period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalize transition plan with Law Society Address implementation details of the move to paralegal licencing 	General Counsel General Counsel	Depends on LSUC timeframe
3	Focusing service priorities on WSIAT caseload reduction	Focus on WSIAT caseload reduction will be a challenge for some Worker Advisers who have less experience at the WSIAT level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen learning supports for Worker Advisers on best practices at the WSIAT level, including key current issues around pre-existing conditions, occupational disease, mental stress and new approaches to dispute resolution Assign more experienced Worker Advisers to mentor and support less experienced ones Ensure regular management review of Worker Adviser WSIAT caseloads to support good 	Learning Specialist Regional managers Regional managers with	

	Key Challenges	HR Issues and Impact	HR Priorities and Actions	Lead	Target date
			<p>planning, case assignment and case management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement of Worker Advisers in developing case strategies and sharing of advocacy and alternative dispute resolution best practices at the WSIAT level, including video hearings 	<p>Manager, WSIAT Caseload Reduction Regional Managers and General Counsel</p>	
4	Increased level of professional responsibility required of OWA staff providing legal services	More demanding operating environment, especially around appeal time limits, requires an increased level of professional responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen learning supports for staff Facilitate identification and sharing of best practices and experience as staff work with the new approach Regular management review of Worker Adviser case review documentation, to ensure that the case reviews meet performance expectations Monitor implementation of new service delivery model to ensure consistent approach to comprehensive case reviews and reduce risk of liability 	<p>General Counsel and Learning Specialist Regional managers Regional managers WSIAT Caseload Reduction and Transformation Manager</p>	
6	Dealing with clients in crisis	Concern about increasing stress on OWA staff from dealing with significant numbers of clients in crisis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track and de-brief from crisis situations and continue active engagement with peer support and Employee Assistance Program Deliver training on dealing with difficult behaviour 	<p>Regional managers Incorporate into learning program developed by Learning Specialist</p>	

COMMUNICATION PLAN

Workplace Insurance Program

Background/context – For the three years covered by this plan, OWA’s highest priority will be contributing to WSIAT caseload reduction. Worker stakeholders and referral partners (MPPs, health care providers, community organizations, legal clinics) will be concerned that by focusing resources on WSIAT caseload reduction, OWA will struggle to deal with its incoming workload. The greatest concern will be OWA’s capacity to accept urgent and priority cases such as occupational cancers, severely disabled workers and workers in serious psychological and/or financial crisis.

Positioning – OWA will continue to position its messaging to align with government and Ministry priorities, which include a focus on WSIAT caseload reduction and support for the most vulnerable workers with the most urgent cases, particularly occupational disease clusters. This will include positioning of OWA’s role in the Ministry’s multi-partner occupational disease rapid response team.

Objectives and desired outcomes – The objectives will be to strengthen support for the priority on WSIAT caseload reduction and confidence that OWA will continue to be able to accept new work in a reasonably timely fashion. For referral partners, the desired outcome will be increased understanding of the types of cases OWA can accept immediately and those which may have to wait somewhat longer for service.

Target audiences – The main target audience will be referral partners, including WSIB, WSIAT, MPPs, legal clinics, community organizations, disability programs, and health care providers. They are the main sources of referrals to OWA. They are best reached through local contacts, which are well established.

Strategies – OWA’s approach will be low-key and targeted. This will focus on an annual cycle of updates to referral partners.

Key messages –

- OWA’s focus on WSIAT caseload reduction will result in improved case turnover and service capacity;

- OWA has reduced waiting times from 2014-15 and these will improve from 2018-19 to 2020-21;
- The community can count on OWA to continue to immediately accept urgent and priority cases.

Tactics – Communication will be primarily through direct contact by OWA’s local partnership leads, by phone, e-distribution lists, individual e-mails and letters. These communications will link back to regular updates and notices on OWA’s website.

Timelines and resources – Resource needs will be minimal and part of ordinary work processes for OWA staff. No significant advertising is planned.

Evaluation – Evaluation will be by mid-year surveys of key referral partners, focused on their level of support for the three key messages.

Occupational Health and Safety Reprisals Program

The communications focus will be on the MOL Operations Division, which is the main source of OHSRP referrals; and on the highest priority communities with vulnerable non-unionized workers who may experience health and safety reprisals.

Communications will be low profile and targeted as with the workplace insurance program.

ACTIVITIES INVOLVING STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

Workplace Insurance Program - The OWA contributes to effective dispute resolution and a healthy economy through partnerships:

- **WSIAT** – collaboration on caseload reduction and input on operational issues through WSIAT’s Advisory Group and by direct agency to agency.
- **WSIB** – input on operational issues through WSIB’s Labour and Injured Worker Advisory Committee (LIWAC) and agency to agency discussions; participation on working tables on service delivery issues such as improving decision writing and return to work; operational collaboration on priority issues such as mental stress and occupational disease clusters.
- **Multi-partner collaborations** – Including Fatalities and Immediate Response (FAIR) Partnership (OWA, MOL, WSIB, Threads of Life) to provide timely, seamless, and comprehensive assistance to family members following a traumatic workplace fatality or a catastrophic injury; WSIB/OWA/WSIAT partnership for support and response to workers in psychological or financial crisis; OWA/ODSP (Ontario Disability Support Program) partnership to improve referrals between the programs.
- **Community partners (injured worker groups, legal clinics, immigrant groups, food banks, First Nations organizations)** – referrals and collaboration to support particularly vulnerable worker populations.
- **Members of Provincial Parliament** – referrals to OWA from MPPs, who are not permitted to represent their constituents before WSIB and WSIAT.

Occupational Health and Safety Reprisals program - The OWA will continue to consult and/or collaborate with the following stakeholders and system partners:

- **Ministry of Labour Occupational Health and Safety Program** – facilitating referrals from health and safety inspectors;
- **Office of the Employer Adviser** – cooperating on dispute resolution;
- **Office of the Chief Prevention Officer** – supporting Ontario’s prevention strategy, especially around support for vulnerable workers;
- **Ontario Labour Relations Board** – cooperating on efficient and effective dispute resolution;
- **Toronto Workers’ Health and Safety Legal Clinic** – case strategy cooperation.

APPENDIX A - Multi-Year Preliminary Planning Base (see attached)

APPENDIX B – Performance Measures (see attached)