

# BOARD TO BOARD

## Family Service Ontario Newsletter FALL 2021



### Looking Forward: An Opportunity for Change

Throughout the pandemic, mental health has received significant media attention. This issue will likely remain at the forefront for the next provincial election. Federal and provincial associations have been advocating for action to address wait times and the underfunding of our mental health system, through social media messages such as "Kids can't wait", "Everything is not okay", and "Costs should never get in the way of mental health care."

The pandemic has created an opportunity for change within the mental health system. With months to go before the writ drops for the provincial election, government relations has never been so important. As an association, we need all the candidates to understand the vital role of family service organizations in the mental health ecosystem.

To learn more about how your board can engage in effective government relations, check out this link to watch the recording of our 2021 FSO Conference presentation "[Advocacy in the New World Order](#)".

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# The Impact of COVID-19: Spreading the Word

Family Service Ontario is spreading the word through our government relations about some of the current challenges being faced by our membership. Based on what we have heard, these are some of the challenges we are highlighting:



- More than double the demand for service
- Growing wait lists
- Increase in family violence
- Increase in request for couple and family therapy
- A human resource crisis with a loss of therapists
- Loss of available fundraised dollars, with greater impact anticipated in the upcoming fiscal year
- Decreased ability to meet the needs of the most vulnerable Ontarians who are falling through the gaps in care

## Good Reads

For your reference, the following provides some reports and policy statements for consideration as boards engage in strategic planning and government relations.

- **Roadmap to Wellness**

A plan to build Ontario's mental health and addictions system.

- **Child Welfare Redesign Strategy**

A strategy to transform child and family services, focusing on improving children, youth and family wellbeing and enhancing prevention and early intervention to keep more families together.

- **Journey to Belonging: Choice and Inclusion**

A long-term vision for developmental services where people with developmental disabilities fully belong in their communities and are supported to live the lives they choose.

- **Ontario Not-for-Profit Policy Priorities**

ONN's 2021-22 priorities to create a more enabling environment for a strong and resilient sector, so that nonprofits can focus on supporting Ontario's vibrant communities.

- **Imagine Canada's Sector Monitor**

Check in on the health and well-being of Canada's charities, including impact of the pandemic on priorities, finances and human resources.



## It's Lonely at the Top: Supports Provided to Executive Directors

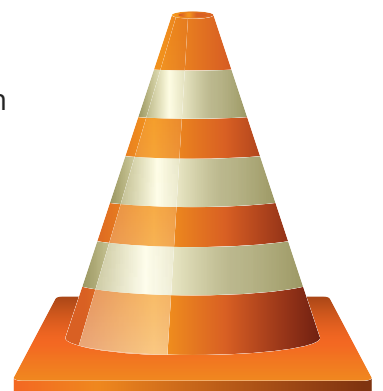
This pandemic has resulted in a need for leaders to make an unprecedented number of critical decisions, often with limited information. Virtual service delivery policies, return to work policies and vaccination policies are a few examples of our new and changing realities in our workplaces. To support executive directors during this time, here are some of the services provided by Family Service Ontario:



- Bi-monthly Lunch n' Learns to provide an opportunity to learn about directions and decisions in other family service organizations.
- Summary documents of these Lunch n' Learns for members who could not attend.
- Links and resource materials regarding return to work and vaccination policies and procedures.
- Sample policies for return to work and vaccinations.
- Collection of sample policies and resources to be posted on the new website for members to access.
- Regional Directors Meetings.

## Projects in Process

- Healthy Communities Initiative Proposal to develop a province-wide booking system for booking counselling intake.
- Research project - psychotherapy for individuals with developmental disabilities.
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Project - A toolkit for organizational change.
- Group Purchasing Power - Exploring opportunities for cost savings through group purchasing of insurance, benefits, pensions and telecommunications expense management services.
- Risk Assessment - designing a comprehensive organizational risk management tool that meets the standards for Canadian Centre for Accreditation.
- Framework for virtual group services delivery for Partner Assault Response Programs.
- Creation of a digital marketing strategy by the Ivey School Social Impact Club, to raise the profile of our work.



## Top 6 Reasons to Belong to a Network

**If you are new to the board of directors of a family service organization, you may not be aware of the reasons an organization would choose to belong to a provincial network. The following provides some of these reasons:**

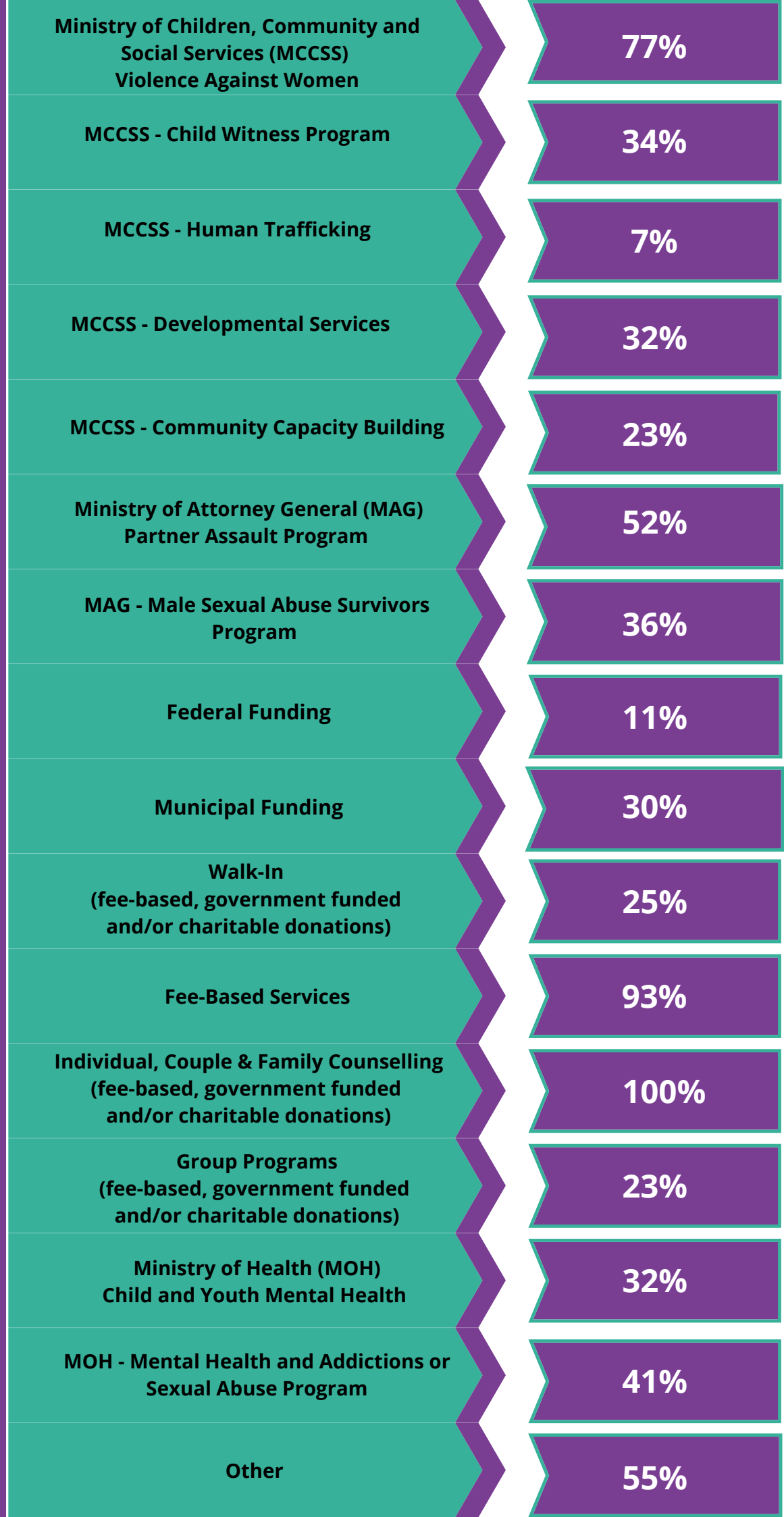
- 1** A collective voice at Queen's Park.
- 2** Access to timely updates about opportunities, trends and government news.
- 3** Belonging to a community of like-minded organizations that can provide support and resources.
- 4** Access to resources, policies, procedures and tools.
- 5** Supporting the greater cause to strengthen the family service network across the province.
- 6** Opportunities to participate in provincial pilot projects and initiatives.

### GREETINGS FROM OUR NEW BOARD PRESIDENT

*I am honoured to serve Family Service Ontario and the network as the board president. The board and our CEO are currently engaged in the process of refreshing our strategic directions to reflect the current state and the opportunities and challenges ahead of us. The ongoing impact of the pandemic is front-face in our plans and strategies. The connection, commitment, and wisdom in our member network continues to fuel optimism in our collective ability to ride the seas of change and create a strong recovery.*

*Chondrena Vieira-Martin*

# PROFILE - PROGRAMS/SERVICES PERCENTAGE OF MEMBERSHIP



## **Vision**

Family Service Agencies are well supported and resourced so that Ontarians have responsive community-based services that support healthy relationships and resilient individuals and families.

## **Mission**

All relevant policy makers, stakeholders and funders value and count on Family Service Ontario for advice, direction and responsive leadership to changing community needs.



**FAMILY  
SERVICE  
ONTARIO**

**We're stronger together**