



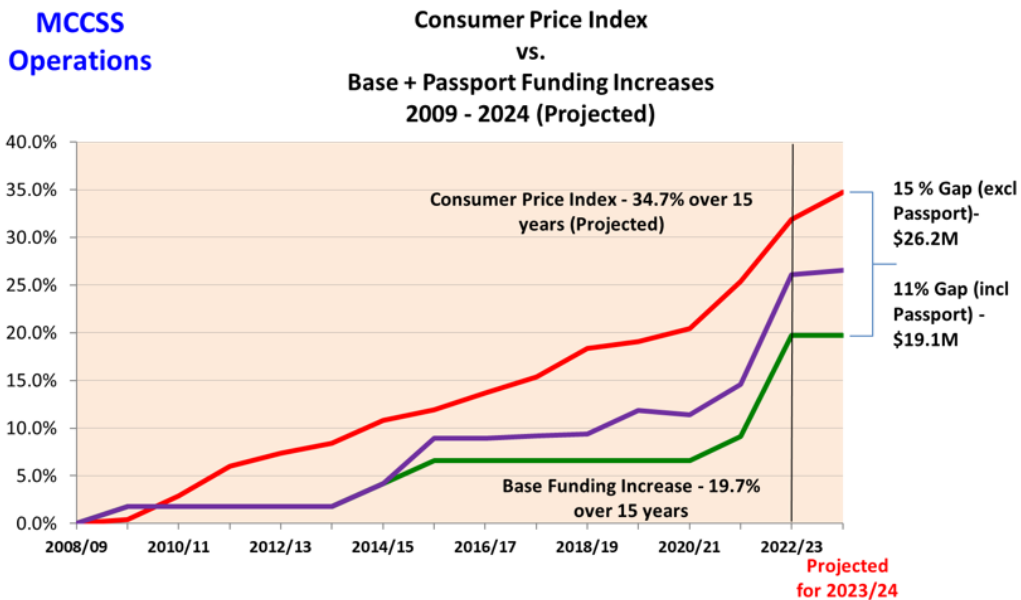
**2024 Pre-Budget Submission
Operational Funding Request**

January 2024

BACKGROUND:

Adults with developmental disabilities in Ontario are no longer receiving the quality of supports they need, with services at risk of being cut further due to years of flat base-budget funding that cannot sustain former or sufficient levels of support.

At Karis Disability Services (formerly Christian Horizons), the flat base-budget funding we’ve received from the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services since 2009-10 has resulted in our organization falling behind the consumer price index by -15%, an annual depreciation of \$26 million, or \$19 million when adding in the important increases to Passport funding.



After years of making very significant adjustments to our spending at Karis, such as reducing food budgets in homes, reducing training to sufficiently equip staff and reducing direct service staff hours, we are now well beyond having further areas to ‘trim’. We are now faced with further reduction of services.

As Ontario’s largest disability services provider, if Karis is impacted so significantly, the impact on our fellow developmental services agencies in the sector across the province are also bearing the incredible weight of this funding crisis – and ultimately the impact on the lives and wellbeing of those we collectively are funded to support.

WHY IS THE NEED FOR MORE FUNDING CRITICAL TODAY?

At Karis, we fully embrace and value the Ontario government's vision expressed in Journey to Belonging. As a large organization of 3,300 employees who support 1,400 people all across Ontario and Saskatchewan, we want to see this vision become a reality, including the nearly 75,000 people in Ontario who are waiting for access to the support they need.

However, as a sector, we are at grave risk of not being able to achieve it.

This is not due to a lack of vision, passion or expertise of a broad and diverse family of like-minded agencies, but rather through the slippery slope of a funding model that has not invested in existing supports to keep up with the pressures of an ever-shrinking dollar.

Without the required base-funding increases, adults with development disabilities will continue to experience reduced supports. These reduced supports are resulting in some critical outcomes that cost our system more including:

- Escalation to complex mental health challenges and crisis behaviours.
- The need for more expensive types of supports long-term.
- People living in our most expensive community locations such as hospitals, jails and mental health facilities.
- Less safe living and working conditions for people supported and our staff.

With the rising health and safety concerns due to reduced direct service staff hours, and insufficient training to support more complex needs, people with disabilities are being reduced to barely receiving basic supports. This is hindering their ability to gain independence, to access community support programs to successfully gain employment and to live a full and vibrant life. It also prevents parents without residential and day supports to be able to successfully care for their loved one at home.

We are committed to the Journey to Belonging. Unfortunately, the risk of service reduction is real and threatens our ability to stay focused on the goal ahead. We fear the lack of investment will force us into a custodial care model when citizenship, choice, self-direction and sustainability is our true goal.

THE ASK

We are desperate today. We have joined our colleagues in similar organizations across the developmental services sector to ask for:

- At least a +5% increase to our base budget as stabilization funding.
- An ongoing structural change that ensures yearly increases based on the inflation rate.
- Year-end requirements to change, allowing us to retain reasonable levels of funding from one year to the next to address urgent challenges like property improvements in our support locations or to offset small deficits in the following years.
- Needs-based individualized funding through Journey to Belonging

CONCLUSION

We share your vision of Journey to Belonging, for Ontario to become a province where people with developmental disabilities can live and contribute to their community, where their gifts are celebrated, and where everyone can access the support they need, including the nearly 75,000 people still waiting for services. We are at significant risk of never being able to fulfill the vision that you are championing.

A sufficiently funded developmental services sector will continue to:

- Invest back into the community and lead us all towards a world defined by belonging and creative and meaningful partnerships.
- Help create new opportunities for those waiting for services, including the nearly 75,000 people waiting for services.
- Be better positioned to welcome people into the community that are inappropriately housed in homeless shelters, hospitals and long-term care homes.
- Help people overcome critical housing challenges.

We as a society, and as humanity, are better when people with developmental disabilities are supported appropriately, where they can contribute their gifts within their communities, and when they can live their best lives – lives of their choosing.