

## Independent Facilitation: Fee For Service Challenges and Issues

**OIFN Policy Statement:** OIFN believes citizenship is key to inclusion. OIFN is committed to advancing citizenship for all people. Citizens are free to choose how they will live out the responsibilities of their citizenship. Investing in stable funding for Independent Facilitation supports choice and increases options for people living with developmental disabilities and their loved ones/families. It is an effective option with cost benefit that helps stabilize families and builds positive futures. Stable infrastructure funding will strengthen and expand organizations that provide Independent Facilitation and build the foundation for quality independent facilitators to be trained, supported and available to people and families throughout Ontario.

### Background Context

Experience and key learnings from those providing 20 years+ of Independent Facilitation in Ontario, has shown that infrastructure funding is critical for Independent Facilitation to be a sustainable, viable practice that is a feasible option for those who would choose it. Organizations that have provided Fee for Service have found that this model only works if the organization has stable infrastructure funding, and is thus able to (quite extensively) subsidize travel, facilitator training, support for family networks and human resources. Existing data around the complex challenges that people accessing Independent Facilitation face supports the need for solid ongoing infrastructure support.

The two-year Independent Facilitation Demonstration Project (IFDP) funded by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS), and extended an additional two-years, built organizational and facilitator capacity. Over the course of the project, the infrastructure created through the IFDP has trained and built the capacity of 80 independent facilitators. Currently, 57 active facilitators continue to support 1700 people and families across Ontario.

Beyond jeopardizing the sustainability of existing Independent Facilitation Organizations, the Fee for Service funding model would not provide needed capacity and infrastructure to extend the practice across the province. The Fee for Service approach does not allow demonstration of larger community impact, nor does it allow for needed community development work that OIFN began in emerging communities through the IFDP.

While Fee for Service may appear to be a pragmatic solution on the surface, it does not take into account the reality that citizens and their families would be forced into allocating their limited resources toward expensive service costs rather than effective planning that maximizes natural supports, builds on existing strengths of people, their loved ones/families, personal support networks, and creatively mobilizes resources. Research indicates that a lack of planning can lead to crisis conditions as people age and/or face complex challenges. This results in increased trips to emergency wards, hospitalizations, and inappropriate placements in nursing home and other institutions. The vast disparity between direct funding for citizens and families choosing to live a life in community, in comparison to the resources allocated to those in service, is inequitable.

Finally, we note that there continues to be agency (TPA) infrastructure funding for group homes and day programs across Ontario. Families have an expectation that these structures are in place and stable for years to come. Agencies can count on the Provincial government to fund a reliable infrastructure that they can build on. People and families are not given the same level of security when they choose to customize and individualize the supports they need toward a full meaningful life. Thus, Independent Facilitation, Individualized Funding and innovative housing are not seen as viable options when these supports do not have the same secure and stable funding. Yet, it is these tailored supports that utilize existing community resources as a first resort. Leveraging these private resources saves money and creates lasting impact for people, and as a result, entire communities.

### **Key Considerations (Challenges and Issues)**

- Independent Facilitation is not sustainable on a Fee for Service basis only. Fee for Service can be seen as an enhancement, but it is not a viable option without ongoing infrastructure support. The experience from past projects funding Independent Facilitation shows that when grants and project funding dried up, Fee for Service alone did not sustain the practice.
- Developmental Service agencies funded by the Ministry have had the same experience and need of infrastructure support to provide effective services. People and families can choose to purchase a service from an agency, but if they decide to move on, the agency does not lose its core infrastructure funding.
- Experience over four years of the IFDP shows that Independent Facilitation Organizations supported many people and families in crisis situations. A loss of this support will spiral people back into crisis mode, overwhelming over-extended emergency wards and other institutions, increasing costs.
- Crisis management responses also overwhelm the waiting list for residential options — putting a strain on group homes, nursing/old age homes, and other emergency placements.
- In a Fee for Service option only, families are placed in an undesirable conundrum: they must choose to utilize whatever funds they have available to contract for daily supports that are needed for survival; or choose to contract for longer term planning and engagement. Longer term planning helps avoid crises and builds a stronger foundation for the future with their loved ones. When funds are limited and life is in crisis, decisions are made to alleviate difficulties and suffering in the short term.
- A Fee for Service only model would result in the option of Independent Facilitation ceasing to exist. The organizations created to make it available in the course of the IFDP cannot survive on fluctuating and limited resources provided via individual family contracts. Nor should families be expected to shoulder this burden.
- Dismantling the organizations that support independent facilitators will also terminate facilitation training, development and capacity building structures vital to this practice. The talents of this newly skilled workforce will be marginalized, under-utilized and lost.

### **Conclusion**

Independent Facilitation needs to be a viable option for people and their loved ones/families who would choose it. A Fee for Service model is not equitable, and does not provide a viable option for all people with a developmental disability and their families/caregivers to choose direct, Individualized Funding, so they can customize and individualize their supports, that helps them to take up their citizenship by contributing to their communities.

For that to happen, Independent Facilitation needs to have the same provisions as other supports offered across the province. It needs to be stable, portable, flexible and relevant for families. Families need to know that Independent Facilitation Organizations are not likely to disappear over the short or long term. Over the past four years, families have put their belief and faith in Independent Facilitation as a way forward, to help them figure things out, including relationships, support networks, community connections, information/resources and help with for planning the future with their loved ones.

## Appendix A (historical events)

### **A LIST OF SOME KEY HISTORICAL EVENTS RELATED TO FEE FOR SERVICE**

*This list is far from exhaustive, and is meant to give a snapshot of events that lead to facilitation and planning becoming independent of direct service provision.*

- 1988 – Wolf Wolfensburger had people thinking about the importance of people with disabilities having valued social roles.
- 1988 - People First of Ontario formed, with advisors and the *People First Advice for Advisors* is written. People themselves telling others what they need!
- Prior to 1998: Marsha Forest challenged families with young children about the importance of inclusion for their lives. Parent leaders formed, such as Susan Beayni, Rose Galati, Michelle Friesen, Alison Ouellette, Marleen Crawford and many others. Their sons and daughters are all adults now and fully included in their neighbourhoods/community.
- The Individualized Funding Coalition for Ontario (IFCO) formed with John Lord, Judith Snow and many others.
- 1998 – **Three pilot projects funded by MCSS** to evaluate what was called then unencumbered planning and individualized support and funding in Windsor/Essex, Toronto and Thunder Bay.
- 1999 – John O'Brien wrote a paper called *Community Engagement – A Necessary Condition for Self-determination and Individualized Funding*
- 1999 - **Individualized Funding: A New Vision, 'Report from the 1998 Symposium'** "Individualized funding is consistent with the principles of self-determination and autonomy that are at the heart of human rights protections for persons with disabilities."
- 1999 - **Citizen Advocacy Ottawa requested by the Regional Office of MCSS to implement a Person-Centered Planning Pilot Project.** Funds were provided to recruit and train independent person-centered planning facilitators and pilot the approach with 37 families. The project included an evaluation.
- 2000 - **More Choice and Control for People with Disabilities: Review of Individualized Funding** - "Whether it is a broker, facilitator or network builder, there needs to be a person and an organization that can help individuals and families build their capacity and individualized plans. And this person and organization must be free of conflict of interest from service providers and government. Keeping infrastructure supports separate from the direct service system helps ensure that the supports will be individualized and person centred. Facilitators not attached to the service system can put all their energy into supporting the person and family as opposed to concerning themselves with program and service issues."
- 2000 - **Linking Individualized Supports and Direct Funding, Making Money Work for People, 'The Round Table Report'** — "Continuous planning and implementation support – Local planning for the individual should be unencumbered, and kept separate from service provision. Infrastructures, such as facilitators, are in place to assist individuals and their networks to plan and access their supports. ... The implementation directions and strategies emphasize the importance of eliminating any possibility of

“conflict of interest” of facilitators. Our research has strongly pointed to the value of unencumbered planning. In other words, facilitators should not be tied in any way to the service system, but *be free to plan and advocate with individuals and families.*”

- 2000 - **Support to Aging Families Trillium project** in Dufferin, Guelph and Durham regions offering Facilitation support to individuals and their families. Supported by four local TPA’s and one Family Group.
- 2001 – A statement from 10 Ontario Disability Organizations – Time for change: allocation of MCSS Funding for 2002 for people with developmental disability — this paper urged the minister to ensure that at least 25% of all new funding be allocated toward individualized funding arrangements.
- 2004 – IFCO holds a Workfest - People and families said that they had little choice and control over the services and supports they accessed. The service tended to segregate people with disabilities.
- 2005 – **Common Vision for Real Transformation** was created by the 4 provincial grassroots organizations: Family Alliance of Ontario, IFCO, People First of Ontario and SSAH (Special Services at Home). These documents stress the elements important for change — independent planning and facilitation, funds for disability supports (individualized funding), housing separate from support programs, and they talk about the impact of Independent Planning and Independent Facilitation.
- 2006 – Ministry published a plan called *Opportunity and Action – Transforming Support Services for People who have a Developmental Disability* – committed to individualized funding.
- 2006 - Moving Toward Citizenship: A Study of Individualized Funding in Ontario - “All families were very positive about the importance and helpfulness of their facilitators. The strength of this theme gives credence to research that suggests that independent planning and facilitation are an essential infrastructure with individualized funding.”
- 2006 – Citizen Advocacy Ottawa requested by the Regional Office of MCSS to create a person-directed project to assist “individuals and families most in need” including those in hospital. Over 6 years, **Real Plans for Real Life** was funded to work intensely with close to 100 individuals and families using an independent person-directed planning and facilitation approach.
- 2006 – MCSS paid to have members of IFCO write a *Guide on Person-Directed Planning*.
- 2008 – 2011 – **A provincial project called Modelling Community Change and Innovation (MCCI) funded through Trillium. Kevin Costante, MCSS Deputy Minister wrote a letter of support for this project.** It involved three communities in Ontario, including the Near North, to create an autonomous independent planning organization.
- 2009 – **MCSS funded Evaluation of Person-Directed Planning Demonstration Project.** This project evaluated the work done by those organizations who received Foundation Dollars. Evaluator was Carolyn Sherk.
- 2009 – **MCSS funded project and evaluation. An Evaluation Report compared planning done by a service providing agency, planning done by APSW’s and independent facilitation.**

- 2010-2012 – Families for a Secure Future loses their core funding and begins exploring hybrid model of fee for service and grants. Documents their experience in: “Fee for Service” funding model for Independent Unencumbered Facilitation and Person-Directed Planning Organizations: An analysis based on two years of experience within Families for a Secure Future
- August 2011 – Individualized Funding – *A Framework for Effective Implementation – National Individualized Funding* group created and distributed this document
- 2011 - Families for a Secure Future writes paper “The Future of Independent Unencumbered Facilitation and Person-directed Planning in Ontario: What is at Stake?”
- 2011 - John Lord and Peggy Hutchison, write Pathways to Inclusion: Building a New Story with People and Communities.
- 2012 – Funds earmarked for the Real Plans for Real Life program at CAO are cancelled and redirected to support additional case management services at Service Coordination Ottawa.
- 2012-2013 - Ministry funds the Person-Directed Planning Capacity Building Initiative providing funding to build capacity and knowledge transfer among people interested in learning about Independent Facilitation and offering training for families.
- 2014 - CAO requested by the Regional Office of MCSS to provide independent person-directed planning for up to 60 individuals and families using person-directed planning funds.
- 2015-2017 – **Ministry funds the Independent Facilitation Demonstration Project**
- 2017 – 2019 **Ministry extends funding** to the initial seven Independent Facilitation Organizations involved in the independent facilitation demonstration project.