

FTR Now

Ontario Announces Plans to Seek Feedback from Interested Parties on Improving Child Welfare System

Date: August 26, 2019

On August 23, 2019, the Ontario government announced that it would engage youth, families, caregivers, frontline workers and child welfare sector leaders to provide input concerning the child welfare system. The consultation process is aimed at addressing certain challenges identified by the government.

The News Release sets out the following challenges:

- Children and youth don't always get the quality of care they deserve
- A disproportionate number of Black and Indigenous children and youth are in the care of children's aid societies
- Children and prospective adoptive parents are not being matched together for adoption as often as could be possible
- The supports and services children and families access when they need help are not consistent across the province
- Despite a 23 per cent reduction of the average number of children in care over the past six years, the system is not operating as efficiently as it should.

The government is seeking feedback from individuals who have experience with the child welfare system through an online survey aimed at gathering information on gaps, barriers and opportunities to improve outcomes. The government states that it wants to hear from:

- Youth or former youth who are receiving, or have received services from a children's aid society or have received residential care
- Parents, family members or caregivers who have had involvement with a children's aid society or with licensed child and youth residential services
- Frontline workers from:
 - children's aid societies
 - licensed child and youth residential services
 - other community-based service providers that work with children, youth and families involved with the child welfare system and with licensed residential services.

The survey will be available on August 30, 2019. Information concerning the survey can be found at:

<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/professionals/childwelfare/engagement.aspx>

The government advises that Indigenous partners, service providers and stakeholders will be contacted directly by the Ministry for input. It has also indicated that a third party provider will be engaged to "assess and provide independent advice on modernizing services to ensure they are better coordinated, focused on prevention and are high-quality, culturally appropriate, and truly responsive to the needs of children, youth and families."

Should you participate in the consultation process and require any assistance, please contact [your Hicks Morley Lawyer](#).