

Ontario Workforce Reserve for Senior Support (OWRSS)

About the Ontario Workforce Reserve for Senior Support Program

The Ontario Workforce Reserve for Senior Support (OWRSS) program is designed to increase workforce capacity in long-term care (LTC) homes. OWRSS will recruit, train, and deploy non-health care professionals as Resident Support Aides (RSA) to support LTC homes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

OWRSS has a robust application and screening process for LTC homes and people who apply to be RSAs. Partners across the health sector will collaborate to facilitate safe and appropriate deployments of RSAs to LTC homes. LTC homes that receive RSA support will be able to bolster current staffing levels and optimize workflows to alleviate the capacity constraints caused by the pandemic.

Advantages of OWRSS:

- Reallocates human resources functions from LTC homes to health sector partners,
- Seeks motivated individuals to fill RSA role,
- Provides pre-deployment training to RSAs to help with the onboarding process, and
- Helps avert staffing crises at LTC homes.

How is the Program Administered?

LTC homes are encouraged to apply for RSA support by completing an [application](#) and sending it to their regional partners. More details on the application process are [below](#).

After the Ontario Health (OH) Region assesses a LTC home's readiness to accept non-health care professional staff, the OH Region will collaborate with a local Partner Agency to deploy (a) pre-screened and trained RSA(s) to the eligible LTC home. For more details on program administration, please see the [OWRSS Stakeholder Guide](#).

Currently OWRSS is open to LTC homes in the Greater Toronto Area, including York and Peel Regions, and Ottawa. As the program evolves, there may be opportunities for LTC homes in other areas to seek RSA support.

Long-Term Care Home Eligibility

Ensuring safety is a cornerstone of OWRSS implementation and it is critical that LTC homes provide adequate support to deployed RSAs. LTC homes seeking RSA support will be assessed and must meet the following criteria to participate in the OWRSS program:

- 33% or more of the LTC home staffing is in place;
- LTC home has sufficient administrative capacity, including onsite supervision, adequate personal protective equipment, and infection prevention and control policies and procedures; and
- LTC home can, to the best of its ability, confirm that RSAs will not be working with any COVID-19 positive residents or staff.

LTC homes that meet these criteria and are in an OWRSS [catchment area](#) are encouraged to apply for the program.

What is a Resident Support Aide (RSA)?

RSAs are non-health care professionals who have been screened and given basic training for a non-clinical role in a LTC home. RSAs will report to registered LTC home staff and perform non-care related tasks like helping visitors, mealtime set up, helping residents with technology or recreational activities, and restocking supplies.

OWRSS targets people experiencing unemployment or underemployment due to the COVID-19 pandemic and learners in education programs. By giving RSAs a unique opportunity, LTC homes will also support pandemic recovery efforts across Ontario.

What is a Partner Agency?

Partner Agencies are usually hospitals that work with OH Regions to administer the OWRSS program. They remove the administrative burden from LTC homes by hiring and deploying RSAs. In addition to facilitating proper onboarding and support for RSAs, Partner Agencies retain RSAs on their payroll unless a LTC home decides to hire the RSA directly. The relationship between a Partner Agency and a LTC home will be formalized through a memorandum of understanding.

PLEASE NOTE: Should the LTC home wish to hire the staff directly (subject to the agreement of an RSA), they can work with the partner agency do to so once the application has been approved by the Ontario Health region. LTCs homes can advise the Ontario Health Region of their intent to hire immediately as early as their submission of their application.

As the Ontario Workforce Reserve for Seniors evolves, we will be working with partner agencies and other partners to streamline this process to make it easier for LTC to hire these resources.

How to Apply for OWRSS

For LTC homes interested in applying for OWRSS, the following steps are required:

- 1) Review the [eligibility criteria](#) above and ensure your home meets these criteria.
- 2) Complete the [application](#), which includes the Resident Support Aide Request Form and Long-Term Care Home Attestation.
- 3) Submit the completed application to the regional contact hub for your LTC home's OH Region.

Once applications have been reviewed, regional contacts will follow-up with LTC homes about next steps.

Regional Contact Information

To apply for OWRSS, LTC homes must submit completed applications to regional contact hubs for their OH Region. If your LTC home's OH Region is not listed below, you can still learn more about how OWRSS could support you by contacting your OH Region. LTC homes are encouraged to check this page frequently for updates.

OH Region	Contact Information
East Region (includes Ottawa/Champlain)	ch-OWRSS-Intake@lhins.on.ca
Toronto Region	trtestingintake@tc.lhins.on.ca
Central Region (includes Peel, York, Mississauga Halton, Central West, and Central)	hhrcentralregion@lhins.on.ca