Value-for-money audit of:
SAMS—Social Assistance Management System

2015 Annual Report, Section 3.12
2002-2014: Ministry uses IT system called Service Delivery Model Technology (SDMT) to administer Social-Assistance Programs

11,000 front-line caseworkers use SDMT to provide annual benefits of $6.6 billion to 900,000 people

2009: Government approves Ministry proposal to replace SDMT with SAMS by March 2013, and provides $202.3 million for the project

2014: SAMS launched in November, 20 months late, at total cost of at least $290 million
Assess whether Ministry had effective systems and processes in place to ensure that:

- development and implementation of SAMS was planned and managed economically, effectively and efficiently, and in compliance with applicable policies and requirements; and
- SAMS was adequately supporting the economical and efficient administration and delivery of Ontario’s social-assistance programs.
SAMS was not fully tested during its development and not properly pilot-tested prior to launch

Premature launch created service disruptions for Ontario’s most vulnerable, along with benefit-calculation errors totalling about $140 million

More than a year after launch, Ministry still working to identify and fix defects
SAMS contained nearly 2,400 serious defects at launch that caused many different types of errors in clients’ eligibility for benefits.

Nine months after launch, SAMS still not working properly and 771 defects still outstanding.

Defects required caseworkers to spend more time with SAMS and less time helping clients.

Ministry’s Executive Committee understood SAMS did not meet launch criteria but decided to proceed anyway.
Recommendations

- Make repair of defects a priority and assign adequate resources to it
- Develop process to identify and reconcile all SAMS benefit-payment errors
- Assign qualified ministry staff to supervise consultants
- Ensure that all future IT systems are launched only after a ministry has received complete and relevant information
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