



Office of the Auditor General of Ontario  
Bureau de la vérificatrice générale de l'Ontario

Value-for-money audit of:

# SAMS—Social Assistance Management System

2015 Annual Report, Section 3.12

# Background

- 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



# Audit Objective

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.



# Overall Conclusions

- 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



# Specific Findings

- 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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