



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
Ministry of Social Development and Family Services

MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT MINISTER CALLS ON SOCIAL WELFARE BOARD MEMBERS TO PUT PEOPLE FIRST IN THE EXERCISE OF THEIR DUTIES

Port of Spain, March 23, 2025- Senator the Honourable Donna Cox, Minister of Social Development and Family Services reminded Social Welfare Board Members of the Ministry's overarching mission to put people first as they exercise their duties. Minister Cox was addressing the Social Welfare Board Meeting/Training session, which was held on Saturday March 22, 2025 at BPTT's Hospitality Suite, Queen's Park Oval.

The training session was designed to reinforce the board members' understanding of their duties and obligations, as outlined in the Act, as well as to ensure a clear grasp of their roles and responsibilities, as these extend beyond just reviewing cases.

Minister Cox reminded the board members that care must be taken to avoid discrepancies, by giving matters before the board the scrutiny they deserve. She stated that, "another area (of concern) is the growing number of deferrals, as delayed decisions ultimately lead to delayed relief to clients who are in need." Minister Cox called on the board members to guard against complacency and poor decision making, by ensuring due diligence is incorporated into the decision making process. The Ministry, she affirmed, "is here to serve the most vulnerable and how we serve is just as important as the services that we provide."

Social Welfare board members from across Trinidad and Tobago participated in the training, which focused on areas of Governance & Legal Authority; Compliance – Error, Fraud, & Corruption, as well as an Overview of Grants & Eligibility, with the aim of equipping the board members with the means to carry out their roles with diligence, professionalism and integrity.

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Caption: Minister Cox with (l-r) Vera Deonanan-Balkaran, Deputy Permanent Secretary, MSDFS; Vijay Gangapersad, one of the training facilitators; Wendy Guy-Hernandez, Deputy Permanent Secretary, MSDFS; Ryan Ramcharan, Permanent Secretary (ag), MSDFS and Lenor Baptiste-Simmons, Permanent Secretary, MSDFS.



Caption: Senator the Honourable Donna Cox, Minister of Social Development and Family Services as she addresses Social Welfare board members.



Caption: One of the training facilitators, Vijay Gangapersad interacts with the audience during his presentation.



Caption: Some members of the Social Welfare boards during the training session.



Caption: Social Welfare board members listen intently as presentations are made during the training session.



Caption: A representative of one of the Social Welfare boards asks questions of facilitators during the training session.



Caption: Minister Cox presents a certificate of participation to one of the Social Welfare board members at the conclusion of the training session.