

THE DISTRICT OF THUNDER BAY
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD

2008 Annual Report

Executive Summary

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board

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Children's Services

In partnership with many others, TBDSSAB is responsible for ensuring that quality child care is available to families throughout the District.

WHAT WE DO

The TBDSSAB administers five main child care services as prescribed by the District Social Services Administration Board Act (1999) through formal agreements with 28 direct service providers.

The prescribed services are:

- Child Care Fee Subsidy Program
- Wage Enhancement Grants
- Best Start Hubs (formerly Family Resource Centres)
- Informal Child Care
- Special Needs Resource Services

The complete Annual Report is available in PDF format online!

The 2008 TBDSSAB Audited Financial Statements are also available online in PDF format

We're on the Web!
www.tbdssab.on.ca

2008 Achievements

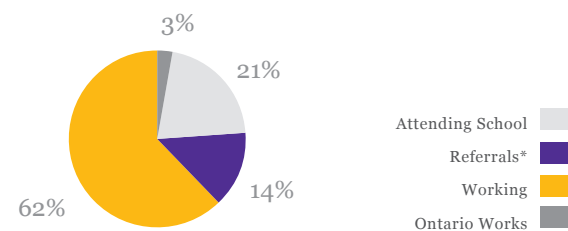
In 2008, Children's Services worked to improve communication to the public about available services through a new pamphlet, and by adding significantly more information to our website. Community agencies were also invited to meet with our staff to clarify roles and procedures and better coordinate services to families.

Under the Best Start plan which reorganizes and improves the delivery of children's services in the province of Ontario, eight Best Start 'Hub' sites along with 14 satellite programs were launched throughout the District with the support of TBDSSAB.

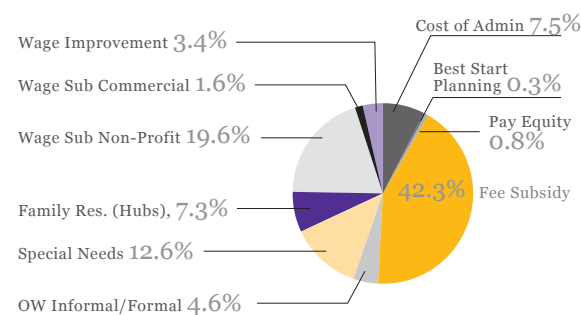
Five new after-school child care programs were established in elementary schools in 2008, and a pilot child care service for extended/overnight care was also initiated. We are also pleased that the closure of Sherbrooke School and George Jeffrey Day Care in Thunder Bay were averted by a partnership to open a daycare and Best Start Hub within the school.

In 2009, TBDSSAB hopes to be able to continue to fund the new Best Start Hubs. The federal funding received by the Province which supports Best Start is scheduled to expire March 31, 2010 as a result of the federal cancellation of the federal-provincial Early Learning and Child Care Agreement. At this time, neither the provincial nor federal government has committed to replacing the funds.

Reasons for Requiring Child Care 2008



Prescribed Services - % of Child Care Total Budget



TBDSSAB:

Serves the entire District of Thunder Bay. We are funded by District municipalities and the provincial and federal governments.

Municipalities:

- City of Thunder Bay
- Municipality of Greenstone
- Municipality of Neebing
- Municipality of Oliver Paipoonge
- Town of Marathon
- Township of Conmee
- Township of Dorion
- Township of Gillies
- Township of Manitouwadge
- Township of Nipigon
- Township of O'Connor
- Township of Red Rock
- Township of Schreiber
- Township of Shuniah
- Township of Terrace Bay
- Territory Without Municipal Organization - Unorganized Areas

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Message from the Chair

I am pleased to present to you the annual report of The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) for 2008.

2008 was a particularly busy year for us from an organizational point of view. After eight years of delivering services through purchase of service agreements and via the staff of four District municipalities, TBDSSAB made the decision to become the direct employer of program management and delivery personnel. This change took effect on January 1, 2009, after much planning and hard work throughout 2008. The main priorities of the Board were that client services and staff not be adversely affected, so we are very happy that the transition went smoothly with no job losses and with no disruptions to client service. I congratulate all involved, and we anticipate that many service improvements will continue to result.

2008 was a challenging year for the planning and delivery of social services in Thunder Bay District for other reasons as well. The District continued to be affected by both short-term economic volatility as well as several long-term economic and demographic trends impacting social services programs and clients. The ongoing downturn in the forest sector, volatility in other industries, the current financial crisis, possibly rising unemployment, and significant changes to the overall structure of the District population directly impacted our communities and clients. These changes, whether recent and unprecedented or long-term and consistent, must be taken into consideration in planning the current and future delivery of social services.

On behalf of the entire Board and staff, I would like to thank our many community partners and staff for making 2008 a very successful year.

We look forward to the challenges of 2009 and the opportunity to help preserve and improve quality of life for all in the District of Thunder Bay.

Sincerely,

Councillor Iain F. Angus
Chair (2008 – 2009)



2008 Activities (Housing Services)

Over the last year, TBDSSAB received an average of 142 applications per month for affordable housing.

In 2008 we continued our collaboration with the federal and provincial governments to implement initiatives under the CMHC – Ontario New Affordable Housing Program (AHP). One component of the AHP, the Northern Home Repair Program (NHRP) made \$2,440,521 in forgivable loans to 127 low to moderate income homeowners for urgently needed home repairs or accessibility modifications. By the time the NHRP is complete in 2009/10, approximately 250 homeowners will have been assisted and close to \$5 million invested in our northern economy.

The TBDSSAB continued to promote housing stability by providing assistance under the Provincial Rent Bank. In 2008, 81 households were assisted by the total amount of \$70,529, for an average of \$870 per household.

Under the Provincial Poverty Reduction Strategy, TBDSSAB was allocated \$1,527,130 to assist affordable housing providers with urgent capital repairs for health and safety, energy conservation and accessibility modifications. Sixteen housing providers were allocated funds and work on these projects commenced in early 2009.

In 2008 the number of new households applying for affordable housing rose to just over 1,700, a 20% increase over 2007, with single households representing 48% of applicants. By the end of 2008, there were 610 households on the centralized waiting list still in need of affordable housing, an increase of 37% from 2007.

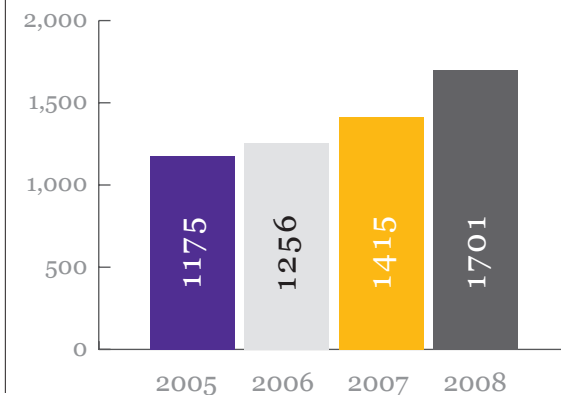
Affordable Housing

Affordable Housing refers to safe, decent rental accommodation located in diverse communities where rents are geared to a household's income. A broad cross section of the population are clients of affordable housing programs, such as the elderly, low income families, the working poor, victims of family violence, people living with physical and developmental challenges or mental illness, the homeless, and 'hard to house' populations.

The TBDSSAB is responsible for the funding and administration of over 4,300 affordable housing units located throughout the District of Thunder Bay. Affordable housing is owned and managed by 26 housing providers or made available by private landlords under various rent supplement programs. TBDSSAB is the sole shareholder of the Thunder Bay District Housing Corporation.

Rent Geared to Income (RGI) application processing and waiting list management offer a central access point for individuals seeking affordable housing. Annually, between 1,500 and 1,700 households visit the TBDSSAB to apply for affordable housing.

Rent Geared to Income Applications Received



Ontario Works

The Ontario Works program provides financial and employment assistance to individuals and families in temporary financial need who meet eligibility requirements in Ontario. Many adult recipients of Ontario Works participate in a wide range of employment assistance activities which help them prepare for, find, and keep a job, such as formal community placements (228), self initiated community placements (482), employment placements (122), in-house skills training (1,152) and education (456) to name a few, provided in partnership with community agencies.

The Division administers a provincially funded Homeless Prevention Program through partnership with community agencies that provide housing supports and services for people with disabilities, as well as outreach services for the homeless. There were 5,498 individuals and families who benefited from homeless prevention programs in 2008. In addition, 44 low-income households were assisted through a limited Energy Emergency Fund that helps households avert homelessness through reconnection or prevention of disconnection of utility services.

During the year, the Division administered \$504,565 to assist approximately 10,800 children from low income families in the District of Thunder Bay through savings experienced as a result of social assistance restructuring and the National Child Benefit Reinvestment Fund (NCBRF). These efforts which are intended to alleviate child poverty supported school and community-based nutrition programs, access to child recreation programs, and assisted with extraordinary needs occasionally experienced by families.



The 2008 Ontario Works caseload consisted of:

- 51% singles
- 2% couples
- 7% two parent families
- 40% sole support parents

Ontario Works in 2008

In summer 2008, a new Ontario Child Benefit (OCB) was introduced by the Province of Ontario within its social assistance restructuring initiative. The OCB is paid directly to families along with other federal child benefits. Ontario Works continues to provide assistance for children of recipients through shelter allowance and mandatory benefits, such as, eye glasses and basic dental care, as well as provides a Child Transitional Benefit until the OCB payments start. In late 2008, the TBDSSAB provided one-time assistance for 1,718 children in need, as a result of challenges with the timing of the new rate structures.

Each year many Ontario Works recipients are assisted with Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) applications; a total of 311 applications were granted in 2008. The Division administers discretionary benefits for eligible ODSP recipients, and during the year also provided employment services for 182 non-disabled spouses and dependent adults of ODSP recipients.

The Ontario Works average monthly caseload began to grow as a result of the economic challenges felt within the District of Thunder Bay in 2008.

Despite all the changes and challenges experienced in 2008, the TBDSSAB Ontario Works clients

continue to move off of assistance and toward self-sufficiency more quickly (14 month average time on assistance) than the provincial average (19 months) through access to employment programming and the assistance of dedicated staff and community partners.

Ontario Works Average Monthly Caseload

