



	REPORT No.: 2019-29
MEETING DATE: JUNE 19, 2019	DATE PREPARED: JUNE 7, 2019
SUBJECT: MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH NISHNAWBE ASKI NATION	

RECOMMENDATION

THAT with respect to Report No. 2019-29 (CAO Office), we, the District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board, support the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Nishnawbe Aski Nation;

AND that we authorize the Chair to sign the MOU on behalf of the organization.

REPORT SUMMARY

To present the District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB or the Board) with information related to a request from Nishnawbe Aski Nation to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding.

BACKGROUND

Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN), known as Grand Council Treaty No. 9 until 1983, was established in 1973. NAN is a political territorial organization representing 49 First Nations within northern Ontario with a total population (on and off reserve) of approximately 45,000 people. NAN encompasses James Bay Treaty No. 9 and the Ontario portion of Treaty No.5 with a total land-mass covering two-thirds of the province.

NAN officials contacted Administration with a request that TBDSSAB sign an MOU with NAN to promote discussion and partnership on addressing poverty and homelessness.

NAN has signed MOUs with Cochrane District Social Services Administration Board and Kenora District Services Board.

The Point-In-Time Homelessness Count (PiT Count), conducted in 2018 by TBDSSAB in partnership with Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre and Lakehead Social Planning Council, showed that 66% of the people that reported experiencing homelessness through the survey also identified themselves as being Indigenous. Furthermore, 74% of people surveyed indicated that they were not originally from Thunder Bay; of those, 31% identified as coming to TBDSSAB's service area from a First Nation. Many others identified as coming from large municipalities like Winnipeg (7%). 55% of Indigenous youth surveyed had experience with the foster care system; as of the 2016 census, 52.2% of the children in foster care in Canada were Indigenous, but only accounted for 7.7% of all children under 14.¹

COMMENTS

TBDSSAB Report 2018-60 (Housing Services Division) outlined a number of recommendations resulting from the PiT Count:

Research on Migratory and Transient Homelessness: Data collected in the PiT Count demonstrates that a considerable number of homeless individuals migrate to the City of Thunder Bay from remote communities in northern Ontario (23.6%) as well as from the City of Winnipeg (6.1%). Very little is known about the reasons for migratory and transient homelessness in the City of Thunder Bay beyond anecdotal accounts. As such, partnerships should be formed to research the correlation between migration of individuals from remote communities in northern Ontario and the City of Winnipeg and the numbers of people experiencing homelessness, to inform solutions to homelessness in the District of Thunder Bay. Possible areas of concentration may include substandard housing in remote communities, travel to the City of Thunder Bay to access services and the impacts of insufficient transportation infrastructure linking urban and rural communities.

Recommendation: TBDSSAB will explore opportunities to establish research partnerships to determine the causes of migratory and transient homelessness in order to inform the development of adequate social policy interventions.

Advocacy - Address the Service Gaps in Child Welfare Systems and Individuals Aging out of Foster Care: Over one third of PiT count participants (37.6%) responded that they had been in foster care. That number was significantly higher with participants under the age of 25 (52%). For indigenous participants, experience in the foster care system was higher both in overall responses (43.2%) and for those under age 25 (55%). Alarming, 77.4% of respondents who had first experienced homelessness before the age of 25 had experience in the foster care system. Given this correlation between homelessness and a history of foster care – a correlation well-supported by other research into homelessness – additional resources must be devoted to address service gaps in child welfare systems, particularly to those aging out of foster care.

¹ First Nations Child and Family Services. "Reducing the Number of Indigenous Children in Care." 2019. <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1541187352297/1541187392851>

Recommendation: TBDSSAB will advocate to the Ministry of Community and Social Services to address the service gaps in the child welfare system.

The proposed MOU is a statement of intent by the Parties and is not legally binding.

It is anticipated that partnering with NAN would result in access to better information about the reasons why people leave First Nations for urban centres and how they can be better supported in partnership with NAN. As the proposed MOU seeks to address poverty and homelessness, it will begin an important research partnership to gather more insight on reasons for migratory and transient homelessness, and the child welfare system's impact on poverty and homelessness, especially in regards to the Indigenous population. As 66% of those surveyed in the 2018 PiT Count identified as Indigenous and 22% of all respondents identified as travelling from a First Nation reserve, a partnership with NAN is an important step to understanding and assisting people experiencing poverty and homelessness.

The aims and commitments of the MOU are in alignment with the TBDSSAB 2017-2020 Strategic Plan practical visions of "Enhanced community partnerships" and "Recognized client diversity" as well as the Strategies to "Enhance communication with clients and partner groups" and "Strengthen and deepen our institutional relationships".

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS



It is anticipated that the partnership established with the signing of the MOU would not result in any net cost to TBDSSAB additional to that required to fulfill its mandate. Any costs related to projects that may arise from this relationship would be disclosed to the Board for approval prior to proceeding.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that the signing of the MOU as presented with NAN would be consistent with the 2017 – 2020 Strategic Plan of the TBDSSAB, and the recommendations arising from the 2018 PiT Count and should be supported.

REFERENCE MATERIALS ATTACHED

Attachment #1 – Memorandum of Understanding

PREPARED BY:	William (Bill) Bradica, Chief Administrative Officer Kristyn Lovato-Day, Data and Research Analyst The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board
APPROVED / SIGNATURE:	 William (Bill) Bradica, Chief Administrative Officer The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board
SUBMITTED / SIGNATURE:	 William (Bill) Bradica, Chief Administrative Officer The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board



Nishnawbe Aski Nation
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THE DISTRICT OF THUNDER BAY
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD

Memorandum of Understanding

BETWEEN: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (“NAN”) as represented by the Deputy Grand Chief
and

BETWEEN: The Thunder Bay District Social Services Administration Board (“TBDSSAB”) as represented by the Chief Administrative Officer
(jointly “the Parties”)

WHEREAS the Parties believe that having safe and affordable housing is an essential right for all families and individuals in our communities;

WHEREAS the Parties acknowledge that health equity only exists when everyone in our society has the same opportunities to reach their full potential;

WHEREAS the Parties recognize that homelessness is a serious issue for our communities and is a direct cause of poor health and premature deaths in our communities;

WHEREAS the Parties agree to explore and pursue joint initiatives that will result in the reduction of poverty and homelessness while improving health outcomes for the families in our communities;

WHEREAS the Parties commit to developing a positive and long-term relationship, which will enrich our collaboration and benefit our families and communities.

THEFORE THE PARTIES AGREE THAT:

General Objective

1. This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is intended to establish a forum for the Parties to work collaboratively to design and promote strategies to equip our communities with the skills and resources required to be successful in eradicating homelessness and establishing adequate housing for our members in the urban areas; and

2. This MOU is intended to develop a framework through which Parties will share information and knowledge around housing and homelessness in our communities.

Framework

3. The Parties will work together to address the following agreed-upon priority areas to ensure adequate housing for all families and individuals in our communities.

a. Infrastructure: Explore options to create and improve infrastructure so that there is an adequate amount of housing.

b. Finances: Explore options to finance infrastructure efforts.

c. Communication: Identification of mechanisms to improve communication between NAN and TBDSSAB to streamline and expedite progress.

d. Human Resources: Explore options to facilitate staff positions for this process.

e. Participation: Strategies to encourage engagement from First Nations, TBDSSAB, and all individuals involved.

4. The above list of priorities is not intended to be exhaustive and additional areas may be added or adjusted in the future with the mutual agreement of the Parties.

IMPLEMENTATION:

5. The parties will develop, and update annually, an implementation plan based on the agreed upon priority areas as set out in this MOU, to guide the activities of the Parties. It is recognized that the implementation plan may include the participation of other appropriate participants in the First Nation, Provincial, and Federal organizations.

NAN-CB STEERING COMMITTEE:

6. The Parties agree to establish this NAN-TBDSSAB Collaboration Steering Committee that will oversee the implementation of the commitments set out in this MOU.
7. The Steering Committee will endeavour to identify the barriers and causes for the high number of families and individuals in our communities experiencing homelessness and poverty.

MONITORING:

8. Through the Steering Committee, recommendations shall be provided to the leadership of the Parties.
9. The Parties agree that all reports and studies undertaken to address any of the above priority areas within the context of this agreement will be shared amongst the Parties.
10. This MOU is a statement of intent by the Parties and is not legally binding. It is not intended to define, create, recognize, deny or amend any of the rights of the Parties collectively, nor the parties who are signing on behalf of NAN and TBDSSAB, nor NAN or TBDSSAB individually. It shall not act in a manner inconsistent with any applicable laws and regulations. This MOU is not intended to alter or amend any existing jurisdictional responsibilities concerning First Nation housing nor to impact in any way existing agreements that may be in place with respect to First Nation housing.

SIGNED at _____, Province of Ontario, as of
the _____ day of _____, 2019.

Signed on behalf of Nishnawbe Aski Nation,

Signed on behalf of Thunder Bay District Social
Services Administration Board,

Deputy Grand Chief Walter Naveau

Board Chair Lucy Kloosterhuis