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| | REPORT No.: 2020-30 |
| MEETING DATE: JUNE 18, 2020 | DATE PREPARED: JUNE 16, 2020 |
| SUBJECT: COVID-19 TEMPORARY PANDEMIC PAY INITIATIVE | |

RECOMMENDATION

For information only.

REPORT SUMMARY

To provide The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB or the Board) with information regarding the Province of Ontario's COVID-19 temporary pandemic pay initiative, aimed at helping frontline staff who are experiencing challenges and are at heightened risk during the COVID-19 outbreak.

BACKGROUND

On April 25, 2020, the Ontario government announced they would provide workers on the frontlines of COVID-19 with temporary pandemic pay in recognition of their increased risk related to COVID-19.

This payment would provide four dollars (\$4) per hour worked on top of existing hourly wages, regardless of the qualified employee's hourly wage. In addition, employees working over 100 hours per month would receive lump sum payments of \$250 per month for a 16-week period beginning on April 24, 2020 and ending on August 13, 2020. The payment would also allow for any increased costs related to statutory payroll deductions and contributions (i.e. Canada Pension Plan, Employment Insurance, and Employer Health Tax remittances).

Similar to the Social Services Relief Fund announced on March 23, 2020, funding for COVID-19 temporary pandemic pay initiative will be provided by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) to Service Managers through an addendum to the existing Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) Service Manager Service Agreements. As a result, no new transfer payment agreement is required to receive this funding.

COMMENTS

On June 12, 2020, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing provided an information letter to the TBDSSAB Chair and released program guidelines for the temporary pandemic pay. The guidelines clarified how Service Managers will provide the hourly and lump sum payments directly to eligible workers or through to Service Manager -funded employers with eligible workers.

An eligible worker refers to an individual who works in an eligible position in the Supportive Housing Sector or the Emergency Shelter Sector, whether employed or on contract, whether on a full-time or part-time basis, and who is paid for his or her services by an eligible employer or home employer.

An eligible employer refers to an entity that operates a facility in the Emergency Shelter Sector or a residence in the Supportive Housing Sector or that provides support services to such a facility or residence and that is funded by the Service or by MMAH through the Service Manager, pursuant to a transfer payment agreement with the Service Manager.

MMAH Temporary Pandemic Pay does not apply to individuals employed in a management capacity or individuals in a management capacity who are redeployed to an otherwise eligible position.

There are two forms of temporary pandemic pay that employees may be eligible for – a temporary top-up to hourly wages and lump-sum payments for designated 4-week periods.

To receive MMAH temporary pandemic pay, eligible workers must be working in a position listed on the Province of Ontario's Temporary Pandemic Pay webpage (www.ontario.ca/pandemicpay), primarily providing direct in-person (face-to-face) services in the Emergency Shelter Sector and the Supportive Housing Sector or in designated auxiliary positions, which primarily support the delivery of front-line care and work directly in the Emergency Shelter Sector (facility) and congregate care and/or dedicated Supportive Housing buildings.

Under the guidelines, Service Managers must identify and reach out to those eligible organizations and must advance payments for their eligible workers. Eligible employers would then provide the hourly temporary pandemic pay and lump sum payments directly to their eligible workers. Eligible employers would retain and provide such documentation and records as may be requested by the Service Manager and/or MMAH to substantiate the use of the temporary pandemic pay funds provided to it. Service Managers would amend or enter into contracts with those identified eligible employers to allow for the flowing of temporary pandemic pay and to meet reporting requirements.

Service Managers will provide each eligible employer with an employer reporting package for completion. Each eligible employer will be required to submit its employer reporting package to their respective Service Manager twice throughout the temporary pandemic pay period on July 10, 2020 and on September 11, 2020. A final reconciliation of actual expenditures and funding paid will be completed through final report-backs to

the province to ensure total funding was used for eligible expenses. Any funding that is not spent on eligible expenses by September 30, 2020 shall be returned to MMAH.

Based on a review of the program guidelines and the services provided by organizations in current contractual relationships with TBDSSAB, several external organizations would be deemed as eligible for pandemic pay under the Emergency Shelter Sector.

Administration will reach out to these organizations to provide information on the temporary pandemic pay initiative and initiate the process to determine eligible employees.

Under the program guidelines, there may be organizations funded by TBDSSAB or through MMAH who would qualify for temporary pandemic pay under the Supportive Housing Sector. Administration will reach out to these organizations to provide information and initiate the process to determine eligible employees. There may also be other organizations offering supportive housing that will qualify for funding through another provincial ministry (Ministry of Health or Ministry of Children Community and Social Services).

Administration will determine if any frontline staff of TBDSSAB may be eligible for the temporary pandemic pay benefit.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The COVID-19 temporary pandemic pay initiative is a 100% provincially funded program.

An initial “float” payment of \$194,667 will be processed to TBDSSAB, with a subsequent payment planned based on interim actuals for the first 8-week period and forecast for the remaining period of Temporary Pandemic Pay, as submitted through a mid-project report (due July 10, 2020).

To support Service Managers in administering the COVID-19 Temporary Pandemic Pay, MMAH will provide 5 per cent (5%) of the initial float (\$9,733) as upfront administration funding.



All payments made by MMAH will be reconciled against actuals reported through a final report (due September 11, 2020).

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that this report provides the Board with information relative to the COVID-19 temporary pandemic pay Initiative and the process under which eligible organizations and employees may be able to receive this provincial benefit.

REFERENCE MATERIALS ATTACHED

Attachment #1 – [Letter from the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to Board Chair Kloosterhuis, dated June 12, 2020](#)

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| PREPARED BY: | Crystal Simeoni, Manager, Housing Programs The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board |
| APPROVED / SIGNATURE: |  |
| | Ken Ranta, Director, Integrated Social Services Division 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 |

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June 12, 2020

Ms. Lucy Kloosterhuis
Board Chair
Thunder Bay DSSAB
231 May Street South
Thunder Bay ON P7E 1B5

Dear Board Chair Kloosterhuis:

As you know, Ontario's frontline workers have demonstrated remarkable responsiveness to the COVID-19 pandemic as the outbreak has evolved locally and globally. The province is making every effort to support our frontline workers as they fight to stop the spread of COVID-19 and support Ontario's most vulnerable residents, including seniors and people with disabilities.

Protecting the health and safety of frontline workers and the household members they care for is a critical priority for our government. That is why on April 25, 2020 we announced the **COVID-19: Temporary Pandemic Pay** initiative, aimed at helping frontline staff who are experiencing severe challenges and are at heightened risk during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Temporary Pandemic Pay will provide an additional **\$4 per hour** for eligible front-line workers, effective for 16 weeks from April 24, 2020 to August 13, 2020. Eligible workers who work at least 100 hours in a designated 4-week period will also receive an additional lump sum payment of **\$250** per 4-week period, for a possible total of \$1,000 over the 16-week period.

For more information on Temporary Pandemic Pay, please visit www.ontario.ca/pandemicpay. This website will be updated regularly, and outlines specific details pertaining to eligibility, duration and implementation.

Temporary Pandemic Pay – Funding for Service Managers

Further to the communication you received on May 27, 2020, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) is working as quickly as possible to move the funding forward for this initiative. MMAH will be administering Temporary Pandemic Pay through Service Managers for eligible staff working in the supportive housing and emergency

shelter sectors. As part of Temporary Pandemic Pay, MMAH will be providing the necessary funding to Service Managers to support the wage premium and lump sum benefit.

Similar to the Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF), funding will be provided through the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) Service Manager Service Agreement to ensure that Temporary Pandemic Pay is delivered as quickly as possible to eligible front-line staff.

To expediate delivery of funding to Service Managers, we are asking each Service Manager to do the following, as soon as possible:

- Review the attached Temporary Pandemic Pay Program Guidelines and complete the sign-back at the bottom of this letter acknowledging that the organization agrees to the use of funds as set out in these Program Guidelines as soon as possible;
- Along with the sign-back, submit a list of names and addresses of Eligible Employers in your service area who are funded through either MMAH and/or municipal programs; and
- As required, reach out to Eligible Employers and amend existing agreements to allow for flowing of Temporary Pandemic Pay.

Please note that your first payment is conditional on your execution of the sign-back below and your submission of a list of Eligible Employers and their addresses in your service area. You may send your email confirmation and list to:

Jim Adams, Director of the Housing Programs Branch
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
jim.e.adams@ontario.ca

As Temporary Pandemic Pay began on April 24, 2020, an initial “float” payment of **\$194,667** will be processed within five business days of the submission of your sign-back below and employer list. This amount has been based on staffing information collected through the Emergency Shelter Survey provided by Service Managers and will help ensure funding is available to flow as soon as possible.

If additional funds are required before the second payment installment, please return the voluntary budget report-back as soon as possible to demonstrate expected expenditures for Temporary Pandemic Pay (hourly wage top-up, lump sum payments, and statutory entitlements and deductions). An additional payment will be processed within five business days of receipt of your completed budget report-back template.

A subsequent payment is planned to be made based on interim actuals for the first 8-week period and forecast for the remaining period of Temporary Pandemic Pay, submitted through a mid-project report (due July 10, 2020). All payments made by MMAH will be reconciled against actuals reported through a final report (due September 11, 2020).

Additional programmatic details and requirements are included in the attached Temporary Pandemic Pay Program Guidelines. These Program Guidelines are added as Addendum A to the CHPI Guidelines. This amendment forms part of your CHPI Transfer Payment Agreement (“TPA”) and any breach of any of the terms of the Guidelines shall constitute an Event of Default under the TPA. All other provisions of the TPA remain in full force and effect.

Please note that this Temporary Pandemic Pay funding is in addition to your base 2020-21 CHPI allocation and the funding allocated to you under the SSRF that MMAH previously communicated in April 2020.

Temporary Pandemic Pay will help stabilize the workforce in the supportive housing and emergency shelter sectors while also enabling employers to attract prospective employees to the sector to maintain safe and sufficient staffing levels and support continuation of critical operations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As always, I am pleased that our government is able to continue to support the important work you do to improve the lives of our most vulnerable residents. In these challenging times, I look forward to continuing our work together as we serve the people of Ontario.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steve Clark".

The Honourable Steve Clark
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

- c. William Bradica, Chief Administrative Officer, Thunder Bay DSSAB
Ken Ranta, Director of Housing, Thunder Bay DSSAB

Enclosure

The Service Manager agrees to the above amendment and to use funds from Temporary Pandemic Pay as set out in the Program Guidelines attached herein.

Service Manager: _____

Name:
Title:

Date:

Name:
Title:

Date:

I/We have authority to bind the organization.