



	<b>REPORT No.: 2020-31</b>
<b>MEETING DATE: JULY 16, 2020</b>	<b>DATE PREPARED: JULY 6, 2020</b>
<b>SUBJECT: 2020 ASSOCIATION OF MUNICIPALITIES OF ONTARIO BRIEFINGS PACKAGE</b>	

### **RECOMMENDATION**

THAT with respect to Report No. 2020-31 (CAO Division), we, The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB or the Board), approve of the 2020 Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Briefings Package, as presented;

AND THAT we direct the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to submit delegation requests to the appropriate provincial Ministries;

AND THAT the CAO attend the virtual 2020 AMO conference to provide support to the Board Chair and other Board members in their meetings with provincial officials regarding these issues.

### **REPORT SUMMARY**

To provide the 2020 Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Briefings Package for review and approval.

### **BACKGROUND**

The Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) will be holding its 2020 Annual Conference virtually, August 17-19, 2020. As part of the programming for the Annual Conference, municipal delegations may submit requests to meet with a Minister or Parliamentary Assistant.

### **COMMENTS**

The Briefings Package contains 3 key recommendations.

- 1) That the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing advocates for Service Managers in Ontario be the Community Entity for the Federal Reaching Home program in all Designated Community locations.
- 2) A request to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services for an additional \$282,000 more in Ontario Works Program Delivery Funding than the 2018 actual spending (\$141,000 MCCSS share).

- 3) Urge the Ontario government to consider providing the resources to allow vulnerable people to access computer and phone technology, and service plans, to remove barriers to accessing education, training, employment and community services.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**



There are no financial implications related to this report.

**CONCLUSION**

It is concluded that the 2020 Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Briefings Package be reviewed and approved as presented.

**REFERENCE MATERIALS ATTACHED**

Attachment #1 [Association of Municipalities of Ontario Briefing Package](#)

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THE DISTRICT OF THUNDER BAY  
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD

Hon. Todd Smith, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services

Hon. Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

August XX, 2020

**Presented by:**

Lucy Kloosterhuis, Board Chair

George (Jodi) Davis, Board Member

Kevin Holland, Board Member

Bill Bradica, Chief Administrative Officer



**THE DISTRICT OF THUNDER BAY  
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD**

**Brief: Ontario Service Manager's as the Community Entity for the Federal Reaching Home Program**

**Hon. Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing**

**Summary**

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) requests that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing advocate for Ontario Service Manager's to be the Community Entity for the Federal Reaching Home program.

**Background**

As part of the National Housing Strategy, the Government of Canada announced a total investment of \$2.2 billion for homelessness over 10 years. This investment is delivered through the Reaching Home program.

Reaching Home is a community-based program aimed at preventing and reducing homelessness by providing direct support and funding to Designated Communities (urban centers), Indigenous communities, territorial communities and rural and remote communities across Canada.

The Reaching Home program functions locally through a Community Advisory Board (CAB) that is responsible for the solicitation and selection of the Community Entity (CE).

The CAB is a catalyst for developing and supporting a local homeless-serving delivery system, with an emphasis on a Coordinated Access system for housing the homeless. The CAB is representative of and strongly linked to the homeless serving system and sectors in its community. The CAB is also expected to take a comprehensive or 'whole systems approach' to knowing the role of their community stakeholders, understanding the issues, and ensuring all partners are engaged.

All Designated Community (as defined by Reaching Home) CABs, and Aboriginal CABs are responsible for developing, approving, and signing-off the Reaching Home Community Plan. To do so, the CAB gathers all available information related to homelessness issues in the community and makes decisions on priorities based on evidence. The CAB reviews and updates the Community Plan annually, to ensure the priorities and activities remain appropriate and to set targets for the following year.

The CAB, in partnership with the Community Entity (CE), develops terms of reference for the solicitation and assessment of applications for community homelessness project funding. Following the review of applications, the CAB is responsible for making recommendations for funding to the CE.

The CE, through an agreement with the Government of Canada, supports the implementation of the local approach by managing the Reaching Home funding delivered in the community. The CE is responsible for providing investment planning and support, approving contract agreements, monitoring and reporting on project results and ensuring sound management of performance.

The selection of the CE is determined by the CAB. With each new Reaching Home funding contract the CAB must reconfirm the selection of the CE.

In Ontario, there are 22 Designated Communities as established by Reaching Home. These are communities where a CAB has been established, and the requirements for Reaching Home funding have been set. Of these communities, 14 have selected the municipality/regional government as the CE, 4 have the United Way as CE, 2 DSSAB's act as the CE, with the final 2 selecting not for profit organizations as their CE.

In Ontario, the Service Manager is legislatively responsible for addressing homelessness and the 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan establishes the goals for addressing this responsibility. However, where the Service Manager is not the CE for Reaching Home there exists the potential for divergent goals and resource allocation. This leads to the potential for a fractured, disjointed system that may potentially underutilize resources and result in lower outcomes for vulnerable individuals that these resources are meant to assist. Further, where two distinct organizations, one provincially funded and one federally funded, are responsible for homelessness, there is a duplication in the administration and implementation of goals and objectives.

**Therefore, TBDSSAB recommends that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing advocates for Service Managers in Ontario be the Community Entity for the Federal Reaching Home program in all Designated Community locations.**



THE DISTRICT OF THUNDER BAY  
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD

## **Brief: Increasing Ontario Works Administrative Funding for the TBDSSAB**

**Hon. Todd Smith, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services**

### **Summary**

Comparing The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) 2019 budget to the Ontario average Ontario Works cost per case basis, the TBDSSAB is last in Northern Ontario and sits 44<sup>th</sup> of 47 Service Managers in Ontario, but with a much higher than average client acuity. The TBDSSAB average cost per case amounts to \$2,509, compared to the Ontario cost per case average of \$3,256. The TBDSSAB, therefore requests an additional \$282,000 more than the 2018 actual spending (\$141,000 MCCSS share). This would increase TBDSSAB's cost per case by less than \$100 per case.

### **Background**

The TBDSSAB manages vital social services for individuals and families living in the District of Thunder Bay. TBDSSAB supports people to improve their lives and become self-sufficient through the delivery of quality social services including Child Care, Community Housing and Ontario Works.

The TBDSSAB serves 15 member municipalities, plus the Territories without Municipal Organization, and our District spans almost 104,000 square kilometers, the equivalent of 15 times the GTA; or larger than Central Ontario, the Golden Horseshoe and Southwestern Ontario combined. The District of Thunder Bay represents 11.4% of Ontario's landmass. The population of the District of Thunder Bay is 146,048 (2016 census), 1.1% of the population of Ontario.

The TBDSSAB had an average of 2,941 OW Cases per month for 2019, which represents 2.1% of caseload per capita for all adult beneficiaries (15<sup>th</sup> highest in Ontario). In addition, the District of Thunder Bay had 5,982 ODSP cases at the end of 2019 (4.1% per capita - 14<sup>th</sup> highest in Ontario) and a combined OW and ODSP per capita caseload of 6.2% (15<sup>th</sup> highest in Ontario).

### **Service Integration and Efficiencies**

The TBDSSAB began the process of integrating service delivery by implementing a centralized services Intake in 2012. This centralized Intake has resulted in a one door

and one reception for Community Housing, Childcare and Early Years and Ontario Works services. The TBDSSAB has continued to work towards the further integration of services ensuring that staff from all departments communicate and coordinate efforts to support shared clients.

The TBDSSAB's work to further integrate services resulted in a reorganization in 2020, amalgamating Housing and Client Services divisions to create the Integrated Social Services Division. This created a reduction in senior management and administration positions so that limited resources could be more focused on client facing positions.

In 2019, the TBDSSAB committed to conducting process reviews for a number of services areas. One of the process reviews resulted in the increase of the annual average proportion of applications processed within 4 business days from 43% to 69%. A Process Review Lead position has been added to the budget in 2020 to continue the important work of developing efficiencies and improving service effectiveness across all departments.

### **Client Barriers to Success**

In 2019, 54% of OW beneficiaries in the District of Thunder Bay were without a secondary school diploma (5<sup>th</sup> highest in Ontario), compared to 36% for all OW beneficiaries in Ontario and 73% of clients scored not ready for employment on their initial Employment Readiness Scale assessment.

The District of Thunder Bay has been experiencing a plethora of social issues that, while not unique to this area, are much more profoundly manifested. For example, the crime severity index for the City of Thunder Bay is 94.29, an increase of 9.2% from 2017 to 2018; compared to 59.96 for Ontario as a whole. The mental illness hospitalization rate per 100,000, both in the City of Thunder Bay (972) and the broader North West LHIN service area (933), is more than double the provincial rate (392).

The City of Thunder Bay has the highest population-adjusted mortality rate for opioid deaths in Ontario at 22.7 deaths per 100,000. In 2018, emergency department visits in the City of Thunder Bay attributable to alcohol were more frequent than all other substances combined. The rate of heavy drinking as reported by the NW LHIN was 24% in 2015, compared to 16% in Ontario, and the rate of emergency department visits from alcohol was 287.7 per 10,000 people; this is six times the rate of Ontario at 44 per 10,000.

Data from the 2018 Point in Time Count, shows that 45% of people surveyed reported suffering from a mental health concern, and 71% reported suffering from an addiction with 49% of total respondents reporting increased substance use after becoming homeless. 33% of respondents reported addiction as the main factor causing their homelessness.

Indigenous peoples are vastly overrepresented in the population experiencing homelessness; 67% of people surveyed in the homeless enumeration identified as

Indigenous, compared to 13% of the general population of the District of Thunder Bay. The rates of self-reported addiction increased in the group of respondents who identified as Indigenous with 73% reported struggling with addiction, while 42% reported having a mental health concern.

The low rate of secondary school achievement and the high rate of addiction and homelessness in our service area mean that proportionately more TBDSSAB clients face multiple barriers to employment than the average in Ontario.

### **Ontario Works Caseload**

Over the last 5 years, there has been an average annual caseload increase of 1.7%.

**2015: +8.5%**  
**2016: -0.5%**  
**2017: -0.7%**  
**2018: -3.2%**  
**2019: +4.2%**

In 2019, the caseload increase is likely due to the cancellation of the Basic Income Pilot, as well as people migrating from First Nation communities into the TBDSSAB service area. The ODSP caseload has increased by an average 0.9% per year since 2015. The TBDSSAB also serves ODSP clients through discretionary fund requests and ODSP participating dependents and spouses. The increased caseload numbers for both OW and ODSP cause operational pressure with more staff required to meet the demand of issuing discretionary requests and to manage caseloads.

### **Exists to Employment**

The TBDSSAB experienced a dramatic increase in exits to employment due to filling vacant caseworker positions in early 2019. This improvement closed the gap with the Provincial average and will be an area that TBDSSAB continues to build upon. The TBDSSAB is committed to continuing to work to assist clients reach self-sustainability. The TBDSSAB strategic plan for 2020-2023 includes objectives such as increasing placements for clients and moving to the provincial average for % terminations to employment.

### **Average Annual % of Caseload Exiting to Employment**

	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>
Province	1.01%	1.29%
District of Thunder Bay	0.21%	1.17%



## **OW Administration and Budget**

In 2019, the TBDSSAB completed the Eligibility Verification Process (EVP) on average in 28 calendar days from identification to completion versus the Ontario average of 34 calendar days (7th of 47) and are 4<sup>th</sup> of 47 for assignment to completion (17 days average compared to Ontario average of 30).

The total TBDSSAB funding envelope for PDF is \$14,948,800: (Upload \$2,969,000 + MCCSS 50% \$5,984,900 + Municipal share 50% \$5,984,900) an increase of \$1.3 million, or 9%, from the 2018 envelope of \$13,646,500.

The TBDSSAB approved an Ontario Works Program Delivery budget of \$11,352,500 on March 21, 2019. That Board-approved budget represented a 0.6% increase over the 2018 approved budget of \$11,283,700. The Board achieved a budget increase less than the Ontario consumer price index by reducing meeting and travel costs.

It is acknowledged that actual spending for 2018 was less than the Ministry approved budget. That result was due mainly to caseworker position vacancies that occurred throughout the year. The majority of the variance from the 2018 budget submission and the 2018 actual costs; \$541,212 of the \$643,467, pertains to position vacancies.

In anticipation of changes to the PDF formula, most vacancies that occurred in 2017 and 2018 few years have been filled with temporary staff. Posting permanent position vacancies as temporary has proved to be challenging because it is more difficult to attract qualified staff than for permanent placement.

When comparing the TBDSSAB 2019 budget to the Ontario average cost per case basis the TBDSSAB is last in Northern Ontario and 44th of 47 Service Managers in Ontario, but with a much higher than average client acuity. The TBDSSAB average cost per case amounts to \$2,509, compared to the Ontario cost per case average of \$3,256. This funding reality is very difficult for the TBDSSAB to accept given the situation that is being faced in our service area.

The MCCSS-approved funding is more than \$4 Million under the MCCSS calculated planning envelope. and the TBDSSAB request is an additional \$282,000 more than the 2018 actual spending (\$141,000 MCCSS share). This would increase TBDSSAB cost per case by less than \$100 per case.

The TBDSSAB requires this small increase in funding to achieve continued improvement in key outcome measures. The TBDSSAB will also find it difficult to continue to pursue restitution orders on fraud convictions without the adequate funding to cover the associated legal and collections costs.

In addition, TBDSSAB supports the Ministry's efforts towards Electronic Data Management (EDM), however, based on the current MCCSS funding level will not be able to fully fund the initial estimated \$275,000 cost to convert Ontario Works files to electronic records.

**Therefore, TBDSSAB requests Ontario Works Program Delivery Funding of \$282,000 more than the 2018 actual spending (\$141,000 MCCSS share). This would increase TBDSSAB cost per case by less than \$100 per case. In addition, TBDSSAB requests MCCSS cost sharing for the one-time costs related to conversion to an electronic data management system.**



**THE DISTRICT OF THUNDER BAY  
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD**

**Brief: Provide the resources to allow vulnerable people access to technology and service plans to remove barriers to accessing education, training, employment and community services.**

**Hon. Todd Smith, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services**

## **Summary**

Individuals and families without adequate resources to acquire communication devices face additional barriers in trying to access employment and training opportunities and accessing other community resources and services. The resources should exist to allow vulnerable people to access technology and service plans in order to remove barriers to accessing education, training, employment and community services.

## **Background**

The inadequacy of access to communication technology and devices for individuals and families supported by The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) increases the barriers that people face in trying to access employment and training opportunities and limits access to other community resources and services.

There has been an increasing shift in the number of programs and services that are now available through a digital platform and a corresponding decrease in the number of services available in person. This shift includes services provided or funded by the Province of Ontario. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted this shift and poses a challenge for those without access to computer and phone technology.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, it became increasingly apparent that our tenants and clients are lacking in technological supports. There are many people that do not have the financial resources to ensure the same access that others in our community have. With the closure of many of the computer resource centres across the District of Thunder Bay, many of those who had access to computers and internet no longer do. In a time of uncertainty and potential crisis, this means having no way to reach out for assistance, nor the ability to be reached by family, health and service providers or community organizations.

In response to this issue the TBDSSAB partnered with Tbaytel, the largest independently owned telecommunications provider in Canada that offers products and services that include Phone, Mobility, Internet, TV and Security.

In early April, Tbaytel provided the TBDSSAB with 66 mobile devices to be distributed to clients and tenants in the District of Thunder Bay. Most of these devices came with data packages and some with only calling / texting capacity. These plans were set to expire at the end of June 2020. Based on the positive impact these devices have made on the lives of those who received them, TBDSSAB has extended the service plans through September 2020.

The value of the 66 mobile devices and plans provide by Tbaytel (From April 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup>) totals \$16,365.

The distribution of the mobile devices during the COVID-19 pandemic was intended to assist individuals with medical appointments, counselling services, appointments with their financial assistance caseworker, tenant support worker, prospective employment connections, prospective landlords and to provide a method of communication for those suffering from isolation.

The devices were distributed to people in various circumstances including existing vulnerable tenants, social assistance clients, high needs homeless individuals and vulnerable youth.

Through this pilot program, 66 vulnerable individuals and families now have the means to communicate to access employment and training opportunities and to access other community resources and services. However, long-term funding support and an expansion of the supply and service agreements are required to ensure ongoing support.

**Therefore, TBDSSAB urges the Ontario government to provide the resources to allow vulnerable people to access computer and phone technology and service plans, to remove barriers to accessing education, training, employment and community services.**