



	REPORT No.: 2021-11
MEETING DATE: MARCH 18, 2021	DATE PREPARED: MARCH 11, 2021
SUBJECT: SOCIAL SERVICES RELIEF FUND – PHASE 3	

RECOMMENDATION

THAT with respect to Report No. 2021-11 (Integrated Social Services Division) we, The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (the Board), authorize the Chair and Chief Administrative Officer to submit the Social Services Relief Fund – Phase 3 Investment Plan to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing;

AND THAT the Board authorize the Chair and Chief Administrative Officer to execute any required Agreements under the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative for the delivery of the Social Services Relief Fund Phase 3 Funding program, and any other documents related thereto provided there are no significant changes;

AND THAT any necessary By-law be presented to the Board for consideration.

REPORT SUMMARY

To provide The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB or the Board) with information regarding the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) Social Services Relief Fund - Phase 3.

BACKGROUND

As a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, in April 2020 Ontario announced a new, \$200 million Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF). This was a joint initiative between the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) and the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS). From this funding, \$148 million was allocated to Service Managers to address housing and homelessness needs related to COVID-19 in their areas. In April, the Board Chair received confirmation that TBDSSAB's allocation was \$1,168,300.

On August 12, 2020, TBDSSAB received notice that the province was initiating the SSRF Phase 2, to allow the continuation of support to address the COVID-19 pandemic and to address new priority challenges. SSRF Phase 2 includes an operating component and a new capital project component. Under the SSRF Phase 2 announcement, TBDSSAB was eligible to receive an additional \$1,840,459.

On December 15, 2020, TBDSSAB received further notice of the release of the SSRF Phase 2 holdback funds and the allocation of an additional \$1,836,300. Administration recommended to the Board that this entire allocation be dedicated to capital projects to provide longer-term housing-based solutions to homelessness post the COVID-19 pandemic.

Through all phases of the SSRF funding, TBDSSAB has facilitated the operation of an isolation shelter for homeless individuals who require separation from the general population due to possible exposure to the virus while monitoring symptoms. Additionally, TBDSSAB has funded an illness shelter and an overflow homeless shelter to meet the needs of those without suitable shelter during the pandemic. TBDSSAB has also reached out to fund community housing and supportive housing providers to meet the need for cleaning supplies, PPE and requirements for assistance with measures to implement appropriate social distancing and self-isolation. This includes community housing units directly owned by TBDSSAB. An Emergency Pandemic Fund to assist community organizations by offering housing and related supports to individuals and households dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic was also established, with more than \$275,000 distributed widely across the District.

Additionally, more than \$2.9 million has been invested in capital projects, to provide for improvements to the existing emergency shelter and transitional shelter system, as well as the construction of new long-term housing options.

Updates on all phases of the SSRF funding have been provided regularly to the Board. Following is a summary of SSRF funding received by TBDSSAB:

	SSRF Phase I	SSRF Phase II	SSRF Holdback	Total
Capital	-	1,155,000	1,781,211	2,936,211
Community Support Applications	216,784	93,266	-	310,050
Isolation Hotel	399,995	213,736	-	613,731
Overflow Hotel	116,019	36,263	-	152,282
Supports to Housing Providers	26,873	-	-	26,873
Rent Supports	98,698	200,000	-	298,698
TBayTel Phone Services	13,919	17,216	-	31,135
Communications & Technology	11,867	-	-	11,867
Security	172,393	40,600	-	212,993
Additional Cleaning and PPE	78,080	29,164	-	107,244
Administration	33,672	55,214	55,089	143,975
Total	\$ 1,168,300	\$ 1,840,459	\$ 1,836,300	\$ 4,845,059

COMMENTS

On March 10, 2021, TBDSSAB received notice that the province was initiating the SSRF Phase 3, to continue to meet the urgent need to protect the health and safety of vulnerable people to allow the continuation of support for current efforts to address the

COVID-19 pandemic, and to address new priority challenges as the province begins to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The SSRF Phase 3 funding is to be used to mitigate the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the homelessness sector in our community. The funding is only for eligible operating expenses incurred during the funding period, from March 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021. There is no capital expenditure permitted under this phase of funding.

The eligible operating expenses under SSRF Phase 3 include but are not limited to:

- Expanding homeless shelter capacity;
- Use of motels or hotels for isolation or to support social distancing;
- Rental assistance such as funding for rent arrears and short-term housing allowances;
- Transportation costs;
- Food security;
- Enhanced cleaning services;
- Non-medical staffing requirements (e.g., enhanced outreach services);
- Personal protective equipment; and
- Minor retrofits, alterations and repairs under \$50,000 that do not extend the useful life of pre-existing buildings or assets.

Administration is preparing the SSRF Phase 3 Investment Plan, considering all responses to address the needs of the District. The Investment Plan is to be submitted to MMAH by March 22, 2021.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The SSRF Phase 3 is a 100% provincially funded program. TBDSSAB has been notified that it will receive \$2,422,782 upon approval of the SSRF Phase 3 Investment Plan.

TBDSSAB is eligible to use up to 3% of the approved funding allocation for administration costs.



CONCLUSION

It is concluded that this report provides the Board with information relative to the Social Services Relief Fund Phase 3, and the areas of eligible use of this funding.

It is further concluded that the Board authorizes the Chair and the CAO to execute the SSRF Phase 3 Investment Plan and all required agreements related to the program and make all necessary submissions to meet program guidelines.

REFERENCE MATERIALS ATTACHED

- Attachment #1 [Letter from the Honourable Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing dated March 10, 2021](#)
- Attachment #2 [Completed Investment Plan for submission to MMAH \(App B to letter\)](#)

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

**Ministry of
Municipal Affairs
and Housing**

Office of the Minister
777 Bay Street, 17th Floor
Toronto ON M7A 2J3
Tel.: 416 585-7000

**Ministère des
Affaires municipales
et du Logement**

Bureau du ministre
777, rue Bay, 17^e étage
Toronto ON M7A 2J3
Tél. : 416 585-7000



March 10, 2021

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

Dear Lucy Kloosterhuis:

I am pleased to be writing to you today with important details regarding additional provincial funding being offered to you through the third phase of Ontario's Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF). **To receive this funding, the Ministry requires a completed Investment Plan and your sign back to the terms and conditions of the funding by March 22, 2021.**

As you know, protecting the health and well-being of Ontarians has been the government's number one priority throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Our government has made several difficult decisions to safeguard Ontarians, as well as public health and workplace safety measures made in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health and other healthcare experts.

We have also invested \$510 million to support Ontario's Service Managers and Indigenous Program Administrators through two iterations of the province's SSRF, as well as other provincial investments to support those suffering from mental health and addictions issues and to support isolation centre capacity in select municipalities. We know that this funding has been effective in supporting Service Managers and Indigenous Program Administrators to respond quickly, adapt services, and address the housing and economic impacts of COVID-19 in their communities.

However, we also know that the need for this funding will continue beyond March 31, 2021. We have heard from our municipal partners that additional funding is urgently needed to continue to protect the health and safety of vulnerable people as the province begins to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. For that reason, our government has announced an additional investment of \$255 million in one-time operating funding to enable a third phase of the SSRF, bringing the government's total SSRF investment to \$765 million.

I am pleased to confirm that the Thunder Bay DSSAB will receive an additional **\$2,422,782** in provincial funding through a third phase of Ontario's SSRF.

Program Details – Social Services Relief Fund Phase 3

To mitigate the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the homelessness sector, the Ministry has announced funding for a third phase of Ontario's SSRF. This funding supports operating expenses only. Funding is to be used by Service Managers and Indigenous Program Administrators to off-set their eligible operating expenses (in accordance with the Social Services Relief Fund Phase 3 Program Guidelines) beginning March 1, 2021 and incurred up to December 31, 2021.

Additional funding to Service Managers and Indigenous Program Administrators will help allow staff to:

- Maintain, monitor and improve infection prevention and control measures while there is community transmission and risk of transmission in congregate care settings such as emergency shelters; and
- Ensure stability in the homelessness sector by continuing current services and supports that address the negative impact of the on-going COVID-19 pandemic on vulnerable households and more generally on Ontario's economic recovery (e.g., impact of sustained reductions in or loss of income on housing stability and the need for rent supplements or support with rent arrears to avoid eviction).

Consistent with SSRF Phase 2, Service Managers are required to consider the use of operating funding for rental assistance (e.g., "rent banks") to support renter households who may be in rental arrears and at a high risk of becoming homeless.

Of the additional funding, Service Managers and Indigenous Program Administrators may use up to three per cent of their allocation for program administration in line with the approach under the SSRF Phase 2.

Note that unlike the SSRF Phase 2, capital projects are not eligible for funding under the SSRF Phase 3. The funding is only for eligible operating expenses incurred during the funding period. Consistent with SSRF Phase 2, the Ministry will require monthly updates on expenditures under SSRF Phase 3.

This amendment forms part of your Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) Service Manager Service Agreement effective January 1, 2013 with Her Majesty the Queen in right of Ontario as represented by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing ("Service Agreement") and any breach of any of the terms of the amendment shall constitute an Event of Default under the Service Agreement. All other provisions, including Section 17 – Audits and Reviews, of the Service Agreement remain in full force and effect.

Reporting Requirements

Reporting requirements for this phase of the SSRF will be consistent with the current high-level CHPI reporting. However, these requirements will be augmented with monthly reporting to the Ministry. As well, Service Managers will be required to provide specific examples on the use of SSRF Phase 3 funding from time-to-time to demonstrate effectiveness of the investment.

To receive these additional SSRF Phase 3 funds, you are required to complete and submit the sign-back section of this letter and the enclosed Investment Plan, outlining the proposed uses of funding by each eligible spending category and projected quarterly funding needs in your service area and return it to the Ministry by **March 22, 2021**.

Service Managers are encouraged to engage with their local Public Health Unit throughout the delivery of the SSRF Phase 3, to ensure funds are being targeted where they are needed most.

You may submit your signed confirmation and Investment Plan via e-mail to:

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

If the signed-back letter and Investment Plan are not received by March 22, 2021, the Ministry will not be able to commit your allocation under the SSRF Phase 3 and will need to consider reallocating your portion of SSRF Phase 3 funding to other areas of the province. Please note that as this timeline cannot be amended, Service Managers are strongly encouraged to consider the use of emergency council sessions or other strategies to ensure they can complete and submit the required sign-back letter and Investment Plan by March 22, 2021.

Upon receipt of the sign-back and Investment Plan, the Ministry will confirm and communicate its approval of the Investment Plan, and will proceed to initiate your first payment based on your cash flow requirements outlined in the Investment Plan.

On a separate matter, at the onset of COVID-19, Ontario directed Service Managers to put in place outbreak-management plans to prepare for increases in COVID-19 cases in shelter spaces. With new COVID-19 variants of concern now in Ontario, there is an increased risk of spread to vulnerable people.

As a result, the Ministry recently directed Service Managers to add new requirements to their outbreak management plans and to sign and return updated Infection, Prevention and Control (IPAC) attestations. As communicated by the Ministry, these attestations must be signed and submitted to the Ministry by March 19, 2021.

As a reminder, for all provincial housing programs that provide operating funding, Service Managers must acknowledge support of the province in a form and manner as directed by the Ministry. While we understand these exciting funding

opportunities are often met with anticipation by residents and community agencies, these communication protocols have been agreed to by Service Managers. If you wish to make an announcement of funding, I would like to remind you that you are required to notify your municipal services office well in advance for consideration by the province.

Again, protecting the health and well-being of all Ontarians continues to be the government's number one priority. We sincerely appreciate your efforts to assist vulnerable people in your communities and I look forward to continuing to work together as we move forward with recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Yours truly,



The Honourable Steve Clark
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Enclosures

- c. William Bradica, Chief Administrative Officer
- Ken Ranta, Director, Integrated Social Services

The undersigned agrees to the terms of the above letter and to comply with the **Social Services Relief Fund Phase 3 Program Guidelines**.

Service Manager: _____

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Title: _____

Date:

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Title: _____

Date:

I/We have authority to bind the organization.

Appendix “A”

Program Guidelines – Social Services Relief Fund Phase 3

Please see attached.

Appendix “B”

SSRF Phase 3 Simplified Investment Plan

Please see attached.

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF) Phase 3 – Investment Plan

Instructions: Please complete, sign, and e-mail this investment plan as an attachment to your signed SSRF Phase 3 allocation letter to the following address:

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

Service Manager: The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board

Section A: Contact Information and Attestation

Service Manager Contact Information: Click or tap here to enter text.

Attestation and Signature:

I certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the information in this investment plan is correct. I certify that I have the delegated authority to approve this investment plan.

I understand and agree to the reporting requirements under SSRF Phase 3 as set out in the Program Guidelines and Minister's funding allocation letter.

Prepared By (Name and Title): Ken Ranta, Director, Integrated Social Services

Signature: 

Date: March 17, 2021

Approved By (Delegated Service Manager Authority): William Bradica, CAO

Signature: Click or tap here to enter text.

Date: Click or tap here to enter text.

Section B: Projected Use of SSRF Phase 3 Funds

Projected Use of SSRF Phase 3 Funds:

The projected use of SSRF Phase 3 funding should reflect a sound financial plan and forecast of operating expenditures by service category (including program administration). Please refer to the Social Services Relief Fund Phase 3 Program Guidelines for details about eligible program expenses, program administration fees, and key dates.

Instructions:

- To enter the required information, **double click inside the table**.
- Enter your planned expenditures under *Q4 Planned (March 2021)*, *Q1 Planned (Apr – Jun)*, *Q2 Planned (Jul – Sep)* and *Q3 Planned (Oct – Dec)*.
- The totals will appear automatically. The table contains formulas and will calculate these figures.
- Click outside of the table once the required information has been entered and to exit the table.

Total SSRF Phase 3 Allocation					2,422,782.00
SSRF Phase 3 Service Categories	Q4 Planned (March 2021)	Q1 Planned (Apr - Jun)	Q2 Planned (Jul - Sep)	Q3 Planned (Oct - Dec)	Total
Spending Categories					
Emergency Shelter Solutions		135,600.00	101,200.00	75,000.00	311,800.00
Homelessness Prevention		318,670.00	200,000.00	50,000.00	568,670.00
Homelessness Prevention - Rent Relief		150,000.00	200,000.00	150,000.00	500,000.00
Housing with Related Supports					0.00
Services and Supports		486,604.00	276,604.00	206,604.00	969,812.00
Total	-	1,090,874.00	777,804.00	481,604.00	2,350,282.00
Administration Fee				72,500.00	72,500.00
Admin Fee % of Total (max: 3%)	#DIV/0!	0%	0%	13%	2.99%
Total	-	1,090,874.00	777,804.00	554,104.00	2,422,782.00

Section C: Comments

1. Types of Services – Operating

Please provide details on the types of services being funded and a projection of the total number of households supported/assisted by operating spending category and total facilities/beds (Emergency Shelter Solutions only):

Emergency Shelter Solutions: Provision of isolation shelter spaces for individuals who are homeless or precariously housed and require isolation due to COVID-19 positive results or suspected contact (in consultation with public health). Current isolation usage in Thunder Bay is approximately 85 people/night, though this has reached up to 105/night. Provision of overflow emergency shelter spaces as a result of reduced shelter capacity due to COVID-19, including the cost for motels, and public health requirements. Current overflow sheltering numbers average 25/night, though this has fluctuated with the reduced capacities of the emergency shelters. Implementation of IPAC training, education, monitoring and audits, in consultation with public health.

Homelessness Prevention: Implementation of a Community Emergency Fund to address needs related to COVID-19. Examples of support from past grants include provision of PPE, additional cleaning and safety supplies, provision of food security and supports, transportation services, community outreach to vulnerable populations and education supports to reduce the spread of the virus. This fund aims to broaden the supports of COVID relief by engaging community groups to deliver to those in need. Reporting on these efforts will include households reached.

Homelessness Prevention - Rent Relief Only: Direct support to individuals to support renter households who may be in rental arrears and at high risk of becoming homeless. Also includes utility arrears that could put tenancy at risk. In the period of October 2020 through March 2021, 163 households were supported with rent supports totalling more than \$345,000. Reach out through community organizations, legal clinics and directly through landlords to identify those in rental arrears.

Housing with Related Supports:

Services & Supports: Provision of enhanced cleaning at all community housing properties, including non-profit providers, totalling more than 3,700 units. Provision of appropriate PPE for staff and tenants in community housing and at all TBDSSAB offices. Involvement with the MMAH antigen testing initiative, to contract regulated medical professionals to conduct rapid testing in emergency shelters, congregate living facilities and among staff who service these locations.

2. Additional Information – Emergency Shelter Solutions (temporary)

If funding is planned to support additional temporary shelter facilities, please provide details on the number of these temporary facilities, the number of beds and planned expenditures. It is anticipated that we will fund isolation shelter spaces, on a temporary basis, in communities outside the City of Thunder Bay. The estimate for this is 12 individuals at 14 days per stay at \$100/night for a total of \$16,800. Overflow sheltering for individuals

who cannot access emergency shelters due to limits on numbers by public health are estimated to be an average of 20 people/night at \$50/night for 270 nights (9 months). Expenses will vary based on community and access to overflow shelter spaces (motels).

3. Comments

Please provide any additional comments regarding the program or the financial information provided: With 2,500 direct-owned housing units, and another 1,200 units supported through non-profit housing providers, it is anticipated that additional cleaning, sanitizing and PPE will be a key area of focus with Phase 3 funding. There have been recent spikes in positive cases in TBDSSAB properties, and the risk among vulnerable tenants is high.

±