



	REPORT No.: 2021-23
MEETING DATE: MAY 20, 2021	DATE PREPARED: APRIL 16, 2021
SUBJECT: SOCIAL SERVICES RELIEF FUND – PHASE 2 FINAL REPORT AND PHASE 3 UPDATE	

RECOMMENDATION

For information only.

REPORT SUMMARY

To provide The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB or the Board) with a final report on the use of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF) Phase 2 funding and an update on Phase 3.

BACKGROUND

On August 12, 2020, TBDSSAB received notice that the province was initiating the SSRF Phase 2 to allow the continuation of support efforts to address the COVID-19 pandemic identified in the initial SSRF allocation, and to address new priority challenges. This information was presented to the Board at the September 17, 2020 meeting (Report No.: 2020-35). Under SSRF Phase 2, TBDSSAB received an allocation of \$1,840,459.

SSRF Phase 2 included an operating component and a new capital project component. The objectives of the SSRF Phase 2 funding were to:

1. Mitigate ongoing risk for vulnerable people, especially in congregate settings;
2. Encourage long-term housing-based solutions to homelessness post-COVID-19;
and
3. Enhance rent assistance provided to households in rent arrears due to COVID-19.

As reported at the January 14, 2021 Board meeting (Report No.: 2021-02), TBDSSAB was approved for an additional \$1,836,300 in SSRF Phase 2 holdback funding to support efforts based on the SSRF Phase 2 business case submission. This submission funding was provided to support capital developments that would address the transitional shelter support for the vulnerable sector and enhance the health and safety of organizations providing these supports.

At the March 18, 2021 meeting, the Board was provided with initial information on the SSRF Phase 3, including the allocation to TBDSSAB of \$2,422,782 and the eligibility of projects and initiatives for these funds (Report No. 2021-11). The Board reviewed and approved the submission on an investment plan to MMAH, outlining the planned areas for expenditure (Resolution No. 21/20A).

An update on SSRF Phase 3 was provided to the Board at the April 15, 2021 meeting (Report No.: 2021-17). In that report, Administration identified key areas of support targeted for the Phase 3 funding. These included rent and arrears supports, emergency sheltering and provision of additional temporary spaces as required, support for community housing providers to promote the safety and stability of those operators and tenants, and re-engaging community partners with the continuation of the Emergency Pandemic Fund, which promotes initiatives to address pandemic pressures directly between service providers and those they serve.

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 (PPE); and
- Minor retrofits, alterations and repairs under \$50,000 that do not extend the useful life of pre-existing buildings or assets.

Capital projects are not permitted under the Phase 3 funding allocation.

COMMENTS

With the MMAH deadline to fully expend the SSRF Phase 2 funds by March 31, 2021, Administration ensured that the entire allocation was appropriately allocated through the eligible expense areas.

The following chart outlines the areas of investment:

	SSRF Phase 2	SSRF Holdback	Total
Capital	1,158,138	1,781,300	2,939,438
Community Support Applications	58,910	-	58,910
Isolation Hotel	503,828	-	503,828
Overflow Hotel	111,981	-	111,981
Supports to Housing Providers	-	-	-
Rent Supports	173,592	-	173,592
TBayTel Phone Services	-	-	-
Communications & Technology	6,824	-	6,824
Security	115,228	-	115,228
Additional Cleaning and PPE	8,959	-	8,959
Administration	55,182	55,000	110,182
Subtotal	\$ 2,192,642	\$ 1,836,300	\$ 4,028,942
Recoveries			
Anishnawbe Mushkiki	(55,000)	-	(55,000)
Reaching Home	(24,319)	-	(24,319)
CHPI	(272,864)	-	(272,864)
Total	\$ 1,840,459	\$ 1,836,300	\$ 3,676,759

The total expenditure realized under SSRF Phase 2 was \$652,183 higher than the initial allocation of \$1,840,459 received from MMAH. Through late February and into March, daily cases were much greater than previously experienced, and this created additional pressure on the isolation shelter being funded by TBDSSAB through SSRF Phase 2. During this period, the City of Thunder Bay declared a state of emergency for the community. TBDSSAB was able to mitigate \$352,183 of the excess costs by utilizing CHPI and Reaching Home funding, and from funds received from Anishnawbe Mushkiki that were dedicated to the isolation shelter.

MMAH suggested it would assist TBDSSAB with the added pressures related to the community outbreak and increase in the numbers of COVID-19 cases. At the end of March, the resulting overspending on expenses related to the isolation shelter (rooms, meals and related costs) was \$300,000, after realizing other recoverables from different funding allocations. This amount was presented to MMAH and a request was made for reimbursement however the Ministry has now stated that there were no funds available at year end to reallocate to assist with these pressures. As a result, Phase 3 funding will be required to cover the additional \$300,000 in isolation shelter expenses.

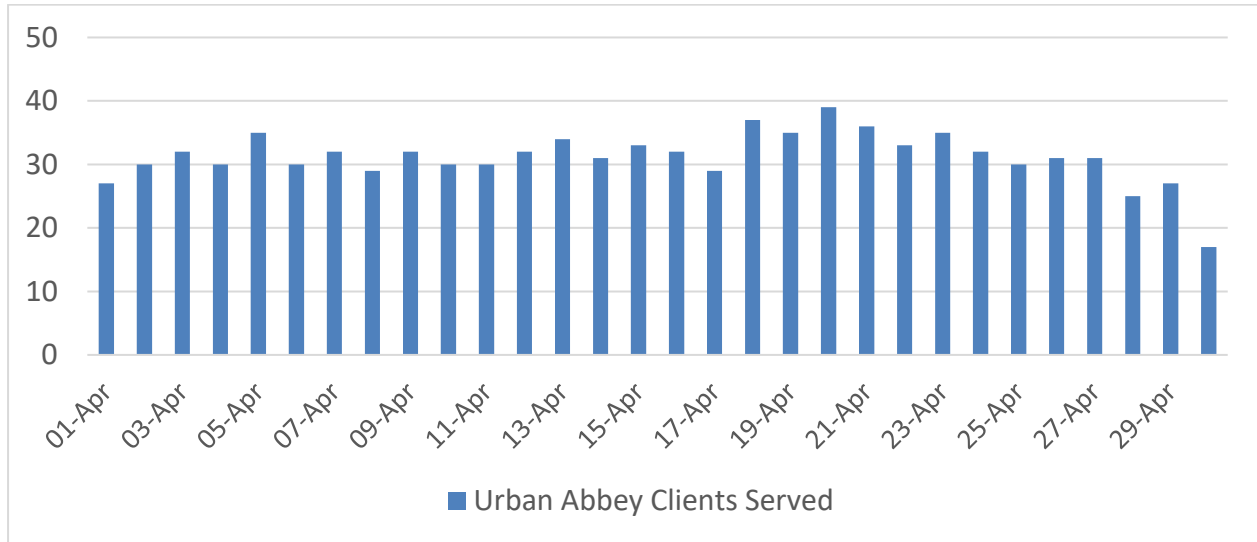
SSRF Phase 2 and Holdback allowed for the investment in capital projects, to provide longer-term housing solutions and to change the physical design of congregate care settings such as emergency shelters. TBDSSAB dedicated a total of \$2,936,300 towards 7 capital project initiatives. All projects relate to improvements in the physical structure to expand services and housing supports and to reduce the impact of COVID-19 spread and protect the safety of individuals. This investment into capital projects adds to the supports provided under SSRF funding towards operating systems. Details of the projects were provided to the Board in Closed Session at the February 18, 2021 meeting. A final Board Report on the SSRF capital projects will be provided once they are completed and permission is granted by the Ministry to publicly disclose the project details.

The SSRF Phase 3 funding implementation began April 1, following the approval of the investment plan by MMAH. As noted above, \$300,000 in expenditures for isolation shelter spaces utilized in March 2021 will be covered using Phase 3 funding.

A key area of support under the Phase 3 funding will again be rent supports to assist those impacted by the pandemic where rent and utility arrears may result in homelessness. Under the Phase 3 funding, it is anticipated that an additional 250 households may be supported.

TBDSSAB is again offering support to community groups through the Emergency Pandemic Fund, an application-based initiative that looks to address the needs in all communities through supporting organizations in directly meeting the needs of the most vulnerable. Eligible expenses through the Emergency Pandemic Fund include shelter, food, transportation, supports, PPE, cleaning supplies and health and safety costs. This fund had been offered through prior phases of SSRF and was fully utilized. Through May 7, three applications under Phase 3 have been received and approved, with a total expenditure of \$119,082.

Continued pressures are expected on the current emergency shelter system as the pandemic has required operational changes. Reduced capacity to meet public health guidelines, and the need to restrict access under static bed lists have resulted in the need for TBDSSAB to provide funding for overflow emergency shelters - temporary spaces provided to facilitate overnight shelter when access to emergency shelters is limited. Overflow shelters utilize hotel rooms, as well as approved space offered and operated by community support organizations. The following chart shows the usage of overflow shelter spaces in the month of April:



The following chart outlines the budget and current expenditure for SSRF Phase 3 as of April 30, 2021.

	SSRF Phase 3	
	Allocation	Actuals YTD (Apr 30)
Rent Supports	473,475	175,666
Support to Community Groups	568,670	89,642
Overflow Shelter	295,000	5,187
Isolation Shelter	243,325	227,753
Additional Cleaning	312,480	6,661
Testing	50,000	-
Personal Protective Equipment	100,000	16,360
Security	307,332	25,143
Administration	72,500	
Total	\$ 2,422,782	\$ 546,412

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The SSRF Phase 2 is a 100% provincially funded program. TBDSSAB received an initial allocation of \$1,840,459, and a subsequent allocation of \$1,836,300 for capital projects under the Phase 2 Holdback. The full funding allocation for operating costs under SSRF Phase 2 has been expended, and all capital funds fully budgeted.

The SSRF Phase 3 is a 100% provincially funded program. TBDSSAB will receive \$2,422,782 based on the approved SSRF Phase 3 Investment Plan submitted in March, for use through December 31, 2021.



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

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that this report provides the Board with final information on the operating portion of SSRF Phase 2 funding and updated information on the SSRF Phase 3 funding.

REFERENCE MATERIALS ATTACHED

None

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